

Review

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HASTENING THE HARVEST

READINGS
FOR THE
WEEK OF
PRAYER

NOVEMBER
3-10/1973



HASTENING the HARVEST

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

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

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

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

Review



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DEVOTIONAL MESSAGES FOR THE WEEK OF PRAYER

*To be read in all Seventh-day Adventist churches,
November 3 to 10, 1973*

Time of the Harvest

By D. A. DELAFIELD



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

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

The Times in God's Hands

As we study prayerfully this Week of Prayer "harvest" theme the conviction in many Seventh-day Adventist minds will deepen that the time for probation to close is near and that the earth's harvest is ripe and the coming of the Lord is at the door. But as we study specifically the theme, "Time of Harvest," let us recall the words of our Lord to His disciples, "It is not for you to know the times or the seasons, which the Father hath put in His own power. But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me" (Acts 1:7, 8).

And the Spirit of Prophecy tells us that "God has not revealed to us the time when this message will close, or when probation will have an end. Those things that are revealed we shall accept for ourselves and for our children; but let us not seek to know that which has been kept secret in the counsels of the Almighty. . . ."

"Letters have come to me asking me if I have any special light as to the time when probation will close; and I answer that I have only this

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message to bear, that it is now time to work while the day lasts, for the night cometh in which no man can work. Now, just now, it is time for us to be watching, working, and waiting."—*The SDA Bible Commentary*, Ellen G. White Comments, on Rev. 22:10-12, p. 989.

Mrs. White declared: "In a special sense Seventh-day Adventists have been set in the world as watchmen and light bearers. To them has been entrusted the last warning for a perishing world. On them is shining wonderful light from the word of God. They have been given a work of the most solemn import—the proclamation of the first, second, and third angels' messages. There is no other work of so great importance. They are to allow nothing else to absorb their attention."—*Testimonies*, vol. 9, p. 19.

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

All to Be Witnesses

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

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

Harvest of Wheat and Tares

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

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

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

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

When Will the Harvest Be?

When will this time of harvest be? A year from now? Five years? Ten years? Certainly the time of the reaping of the harvest is overdue. The Lord's return is near, but Seventh-day Adventists are not and never have been time setters. In an article in the *Review* of March 22, 1892, Ellen White wrote: "Instead of exhausting the powers of our mind in speculations in regard to the times and seasons which the Lord

has placed in His own power, and withheld from men, we are to yield ourselves to the control of the Holy Spirit, to do present duties, to give the bread of life, unadulterated with human opinions, to souls who are perishing for the truth."—*Selected Messages*, book 1, p. 186.

The servant of God explained in the year 1883:

"The angels of God in their messages to men represent time as very short. Thus it has always been presented to me. It is true that time has continued longer than we expected in the early days of this message. Our Saviour did not appear as soon as we hoped. But has the word of the Lord failed? Never! It should be remembered that the promises and threatenings of God are alike conditional."—*Ibid.*, p. 67.

What Might Have Been

The time of the final harvest of the world is God's mystery. Even the angels do not know the definite day and hour. And it is beyond the ken of man. No minister or Bible student can predict it. No true message from God will ever again be based upon time. There is no Biblical tracing of time after 1844. The third angel's message must never be hung upon definite time as was the 1842-1844 message. Wrote Mrs. White: "The people will not have another message upon definite time. After this period of time, reaching from 1842 to 1844, there can be no definite tracing of the prophetic time. The longest reckoning reaches to the autumn of 1844."—*The SDA Bible Commentary*, Ellen G. White Comments, on Rev. 10:1-11, p. 971.

And again in *Early Writings*, page 75: "Time has not been a test since 1844, and it will never again be a test."

Ellen White wrote reflectively in 1883 of the Millerite movement: "Had Adventists, after the great disappointment in 1844, held fast their faith and followed on unitedly in the opening providence of God, receiving the message of the third angel and in the power of the Holy Spirit proclaiming it to the world, they would have seen the salvation of God, the Lord would have wrought mightily with their efforts, the work would have been completed, and Christ would have come ere this to receive His people to their reward. But in the period of doubt and uncertainty that followed the disappointment, many of the advent believers yielded their faith. . . . Thus the work was hindered, and the world was left in darkness. Had the whole Adventist body united upon the commandments of God and the

faith of Jesus, how widely different would have been our history!"—*Evangelism*, pp. 695, 696.

The messenger of God explained that "it was not the will of God that the coming of Christ should be thus delayed. God did not design that His people, Israel, should wander forty years in the wilderness. He promised to lead them directly to the land of Canaan, and establish them there a holy, healthy, happy people. But those to whom it was first preached, went not in 'because of unbelief.' Their hearts were filled

It is the unbelief, the worldliness, unconsecration, and strife among the Lord's professed people that have kept us in this world of sin and sorrow so many years.

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

"For forty years did unbelief, murmuring, and rebellion shut out ancient Israel from the land of Canaan. The same sins have delayed the entrance of modern Israel into the heavenly Canaan. In neither case were the promises of God at fault. *It is the unbelief, the worldliness, unconsecration, and strife among the Lord's professed people that have kept us in this world of sin and sorrow so many years.*"—*Ibid.*, p. 696. (Italics supplied.)

Hastening Our Lord's Return

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

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

We are told in these same inspired messages that "by giving the gospel

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

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

No Disorganization of the Church

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

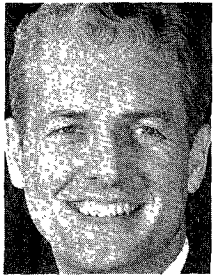
"Some have advanced the thought that as we near the close of time, every child of God will act independently of any religious organization. But I have been instructed by the Lord that in this work there is no such thing as every man's being independent. The stars of heaven are all under law, each influencing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

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

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

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

We can make this a week of revival in our own hearts. Let all attend the services wherever possible and pray for an outpouring of God's Spirit upon the church. Pray, "Lord, send a revival and help me personally to experience the salvation of God." "And when the last great harvest is gathered in," Ellen White wrote concerning His servants, "the sheaves that they are enabled to bring to the Master will be the recompense of their unselfish use of the talents lent them."—*The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 340. □



Why Jesus Waits

By HERBERT E. DOUGLASS

WHEN WE PLANT our gardens we do so with the reasonable hope that eventually we will have a harvest of good things. Who plants corn merely to watch it struggle with the weeds? The full-time farmer and the part-time gardener both look toward the harvest as the goal of their labors. No other goal makes sense.

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

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

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

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

Harvest Principle Emphasized

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

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

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

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

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

This line of thought is not new to Seventh-day Adventists. In 1883 Ellen White pleaded with fellow church members to understand why Jesus was delaying His return: "It is true that time has continued longer than we expected in the early days of this message. Our Saviour did not appear as soon as we hoped. But has the word of the Lord failed? Never! It should be remembered that the promises and threatenings of God are alike conditional. . . .

"Had Adventists, after the great disappointment in 1844, held fast their faith, and followed on unitedly in the opening providence of God, receiving the message of the third angel and in the power of the Holy Spirit proclaiming it to the world, they would have seen the salvation of God, the Lord would have wrought mightily with their efforts, *the work would have been completed, and Christ would have come ere this to receive His people to their reward.*"—*Selected Messages*, book 1, pp. 67, 68. (Italics supplied.)

Truth Vindicated in Character

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

Furthermore, Ellen White warned that Adventists must not, no matter how plausible the reasoning, blame God for the delay in the Advent. "It was not the will of God that the coming of Christ should be thus delayed. God did not design that His people, Israel, should wander forty years in the wilderness. . . . For forty years did unbelief, murmuring, and rebellion shut out ancient Israel from the land of Canaan. The same

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sins have delayed the entrance of modern Israel into the heavenly Canaan. In neither case were the promises of God at fault. It is the unbelief, the worldliness, unconsecration, and strife among the Lord's professed people that have kept us in this world of sin and sorrow so many years."—*Ibid.*, pp. 68, 69.

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

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

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

But if Jesus could have come long before 1883, as Ellen White notes often (see L. E. Froom, *Movement of Destiny*, pp. 561-582), none of these human explanations have validity. The simple reason for the delay in the Advent is contained in the harvest principle—even though Jesus could have come a century ago, even though the harvest should have ripened four or five generations ago, Jesus will return only when the harvest is ripe.

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

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

In His glorious answer to the question regarding the time of His second advent, Jesus emphasized

the state of the church rather than the state of the world. His church primarily, and not conditions in the world, determines when the Lord returns to His faithful servants, when the Bridegroom comes to His bride, when the Businessman returns to His employees to whom He has given various responsibilities.

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

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

Qualitative Difference

Only when this qualitative difference is seen in all its glory and power all over this world will pro-

bation close and the end come. "When the fruit is brought forth, immediately he putteth in the sickle, because the harvest is come" (Mark 4:29).

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

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

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

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

Monday, November 5



The Harvest Generation

By C. D. BROOKS

TODAY'S BILLIONS of people around the circle of the globe—with all their myriad activities and problems; their sanguinary nationalism, militarism, and terrorism; their

mighty complexes and power politics; their unbridled lust and frenzied hedonism; their blatant infidelity and nominal religion; their seething hatreds and unnatural affections; their awful poverty and incredible wealth—are living in the very end of the ages. These billions

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with their mind-jolting inventions and deep spiritual ignorance, their secularism, paganism, their "form of godliness," their eating, drinking, marrying and "giving in marriage" are the harvest generation of prophecy. Over this fact they exercise no veto. Their opinion is disallowed, their plebiscite is invalid. Prophecy has indicated that this is the final age of this world and prophecies of divine origin are invincible in their forward march to fulfillment.

Men seem oblivious to the fact that for more than a century and a quarter their fortunes and destinies have been residing between two verses of Scripture—between verses 13 and 14 of Revelation 6. They are spared and sustained by the amazing grace of a patient God who loves them with unspeakable love and who is "longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance. But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up" (2 Peter 3:9, 10).

In her messages to the church, Ellen White says that "had the purpose of God been carried out by His people . . . Christ would, ere this, have come" and that the saints would have been in the kingdom. This was written at the turn of the century. She placed responsibility on the church for the delay in Christ's coming. For to "whomsoever much is given, of him shall be much required" (Luke 12:48). It is an awesome thing to repeat what has become an Adventist cliché: "God has brought us out of darkness into this marvelous light." The awesomeness is in the responsibility concomitant with light.

Haven't we been saying for scores of years that the coming of Jesus is imminent? This oft-repeated warning is like the Aesop tale of the boy who cried "Wolf" when there was no wolf. He did it only to amuse himself with the gullible shepherds. (Howbeit, the wolf finally came and the boy paid dearly for deceiving others.) I can remember in my own experience, especially when I was a child, hearing sermons of such disturbing urgency concerning the end of the world that I could hardly sleep at night. When God called me into the ministry, I fretted in those days of the atomic bomb and the Korean war that Jesus would surely appear before I could finish school and actually do what I felt so mightily convicted God had called me to do. I remember a professor bringing me

back to the sane, safe counsel of the Spirit of Prophecy to put my mind at ease. Today, after more than two decades in the ministry, I am called a veteran, and I'm beginning to feel like one.

Was Joseph Bates wrong to walk the streets in his day proclaiming to all that Jesus is coming soon? All the pioneers felt this way. Emerging from the debris of that bitter Disappointment in 1844 and being privy to the special secrets of God through the precious gift of prophecy to His servant Ellen White, we did with clear vision and conviction begin to proclaim that Christ was soon to appear. Did we miscalculate? Were we off track again so soon after the Disappointment? Is that why even today so many are embarrassed and uncomfortable listening to an explicit sermon on this most urgent truth?

Spiritual Anchors

There ought to be certain spiritual anchors in our lives, and when the devil assails us we should never retreat beyond these anchors. (Anchors such as the Bible, the Spirit of Prophecy, our belief in this great message and church, our conversion, our faith in the ultimate triumph of truth, et cetera.) The Lord's prophet spoke of the nearness of the end more than a century ago and in the most urgent terms. She wrote in *Early Writings*, page 58, that Jesus' work in "the most holy place was nearly finished and that time can last but very little longer." But wait! Paul did no less in 1 Corinthians 7:29 when he declared, "the time is short." In Romans 13:12 he proclaimed, "The night is far spent, the day is at hand." John wrote from Patmos, "The time is at hand." And he closed the canon with "Surely I come quickly," and "Even so, come, Lord Jesus." The true saints of God have always held the promise of the Lord's return as so beloved and blessed, so necessary and true that they lived in an attitude of constant, precious expectancy. Far from making them lose confidence, or turning them into scoffers, it brought fresh thrills of positive delight and hope—especially in the times of great trial.

Mrs. White makes it clear that there has never been a time in the history of the church that this message should not have been proclaimed with a great sense of urgency. "The angels of God in their messages to men represent time as very short."—*Selected Messages*, book 1, p. 67. The urgency of the message says to the honest in heart, "Get ready! Stay ready!" "And every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself" (1 John 3:3).

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

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

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

The great heavenly signs are past history. The last of them, the falling stars, occurred 140 years ago. Only the spiritually perceptive can now clearly discern the harbingers of the coming end and hear the footsteps of God. Without this spiritual perception, the thunder and lightning of Mount Sinai would not arrest the mind infatuated with pleasure and materialism. Besides, there are the "easy, logical explanations." Creation is perverted into "evolution;" the Star of Bethlehem was simply a "conjunction of planets"; Christ was a historical figure, but purely human though an exceptionally good man; and God is just an "idea." These are all explained to the car-

nal mind in easy terms. But there is still one amazing thing in this amazing age, and that is a transformed life. When doctrines, exhortations, laws, and dogmas fail, then God says, "Ye shall be witnesses unto me."

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

A Practical Faith

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

In Noah's day the people did not really notice any earth-shaking events that would tell them that they were doomed. Even the miraculous procession of beasts into the ark could be attributed to certain explainable phenomena. The deceitfulness of sin is astonishing! If men will not believe God, then they will believe any fantastic thing. There

is no philosophy so low to which they will not give hospitality. "If our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost" (2 Cor. 4:3). So day after day in Noah's time men went their way. The sun was beneficent and kind. There were no thunders except the perverse utterances of men. There was no lightning save for the fire of their incisive rhetoric. There were no violent rumblings except from violent hearts. The music wailed, the laughter was easy. The ark's door slammed shut, scarcely heard above the unwary hilarity. Then seven days more—seven normal, uneventful days of marriages and divorces and parties and orgies of vice and concupiscence. There was business as usual until that final day when the dark battalions of storm clouds rode their black chargers across the heavens to the cadence of thunderclaps and bursting earth springs. The lightning made its cosmic debut, flashing a code of wrath, and water spouts were turned on in the fury of the Lord. It was the day of final things. But it began as such an ordinary day.

"So shall also the coming of the Son of man be." God's word is sure. His prophecies are true. They will come to pass. On the final day men will go about business as usual. The great department stores will open. In giant factories parking lots will fill and production lines will roll; new cars will sparkle on showroom floors. Presses will whir out the news and the ads. Arrogant men will boast, politicians will make prom-

ises, airplanes will drone in the heavens and great ships will ply the seas, curtains will go up in the theaters, burglars will violate unattended dwellings. Mothers will pack school lunches and send children off. Pampered women will walk pampered dogs, hoods will menace the streets, racists will harangue, the music will blare. Business as usual! Then suddenly probation closes. Christ thrusts in His sickle and begins to reap. Tares and wheat are separated forever—"Two . . . shall be grinding at the mill; the one shall be taken, and the other left" (Matt. 24:41).

When I was a farm boy the day came when the harvest was ready and ripe. The great combine would roll with its blades clattering to assault the waiting field. It was an exciting time. The giant reel brought every stalk into account—wheat and tare. Inside the mechanized heart of the ponderous combine there was judgment going on. The golden grain spewed through two chutes to be transported to the sheltered garner while the straw and the chaff and the fruitless tares were blown to the ground. Snakes and rats and other creatures scampered and slithered, exposed as the huge machine cut disclosing swaths. No more would they exploit the fields and spoil the grain. The harvest had come. When it ended there was rest and delight. When God reaps, everyone will be brought into the circle of His sickle. The precious faithful will be gathered to Him, the others will be consigned to the flames. □

Tuesday, November 6



Mission of the Harvest

By PAUL H. ELDRIDGE

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

Paul H. Eldridge is president of the Far Eastern Division.

Harvest is God's word for the final work of the church. He has no other plan. By prophecy, parable, and command He has kept this goal before His people. He has guided, inspired, protected, and empowered; but He has left the work to us. Now it is harvesttime.

No other generation has had so high a privilege, nor such an awesome responsibility. What, exactly, does God expect us to do? What kind of people does He expect us to be?

It is important that we see the mission of the harvest as God sees it.

Two inspired pronouncements give us this divine concept of harvest.

The first is found in Matthew 24:14: "And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come."

The second is from *Christ's Object Lessons*, page 69: "Christ is waiting with longing desire for the manifestation of Himself in His church. When the character of Christ shall be perfectly reproduced in His people, then He will come to claim them as His own."

Worldwide proclamation of the gospel and reproduction of the character of Christ in His people—these two accomplishments combined are what God means by gospel harvest. The work is not finished until both goals are reached. Then Jesus will come.

These two goals are neither competitive nor contradictory. They are simultaneous and complementary. God saw it would be easier for the church to complete the harvest by working on both projects at the same time. In God's view, from the divine perspective, they constitute one goal—the gospel harvest—seen in two dimensions: scope and depth.

Harvest in Two Dimensions

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

A simple illustration will help us understand this duality of harvest.

Brought up on a farm, my mother, even when she became a busy pastor's wife, still loved the soil. Flowers were about all she had time for. Her favorites were gladiolas. She had acquired some prize-winning varieties, and her blossoms always brought sighs of admiration from viewers. But what intrigued me was to discover that she was after a double harvest. At the same time that her gladiolas were bearing those lovely blooms they were also producing, unseen, a crop of new bulbs. Mother treasured these, perhaps even more than the flowers.

In much the same way, God's unique plan of harvest provides that spreading the gospel and develop-

ment of character will proceed together and will be mutually beneficial.

Paul, the first great missionary to the Gentiles, captured this concept. His method became the model for every subsequent mission thrust. Paul pushed on and on and on. He described his passion as a ceaseless urge "to preach the gospel in the regions beyond" (2 Cor. 10:16). Yet at the same time, he also had another goal. He addressed the church in Galatia as "My little children, of whom I travail in birth again *until Christ be formed in you*" (Gal. 4:19).

Let us consider in more detail each of these dimensions in which God views the gospel harvest.

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

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

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

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

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

opportunity to hear our message. Even in some areas that are open to us the population explosion outdistances our most energetic efforts.

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

Impressive Results

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

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

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

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

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

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

Here are the results we can expect:

1. Diversions of sin will be eliminated. It is amazing how much trouble sin causes besides the guilt itself. Anyone who has struggled

with a burden of remorse knows how seriously it diverts attention from work that must be done. Peace of mind restores our powers of concentration. Furthermore, since sin is a thief of time, when it is eliminated our capacity for good works increases.

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

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

Both Dimensions Completed

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

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

Personal participation develops character.

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

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

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

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

This is the refining process. It is only as we participate in Christ's

program that He finds in us the true reflection of His character.

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

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

poured out, and thousands were converted in a day.

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

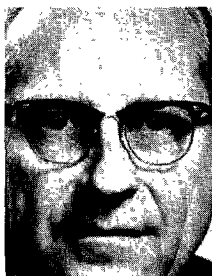
This is the mission of the harvest. It is intensely personal. It is not a church or the world that is saved. It is people, one by one.

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

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

Your answers help to determine how quickly Christ can come. □

Wednesday, November 7



Lord of the Harvest

By WILLIS J. HACKETT

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

Is it possible that those who are older in the faith have been remiss in meditating upon our Lord's love and goodness until their lives have failed to reflect the sheer joy of knowing Him? Maybe their attention to the details of a law-abiding Christian experience has at times overshadowed their inner love and admiration for the Lord of the

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harvest. Could it be that their anticipation of the coming of the Lord of the harvest has become dull by the delay, so much so that the demonstration of radiant religion has been dimmed? Has their preoccupation with the "occupy till I come" blurred their vision of the nearness and glory of the coming of the Lord of the harvest and of the great sacrifice He made to redeem them?

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

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

The proclaimer of the coming of

the Lord of the harvest needs oil in his lamp. A Czech theologian said, "Today's Christian has light but no heat. The materialist has heat but no light." Surely we who know our Lord will have both light and heat.

Perhaps the young man was right. Let us ask ourselves whether or not the radiant love of Christ shines out in our life-styles, in our countenances, and in our daily ministrations. I suppose we can never fully appreciate the sacrifices made by God and His Son to redeem lost humanity. Note the words of inspiration: "Christ came to the earth, taking humanity and standing as man's representative, to show in the controversy with Satan that man, as God created him, connected with the Father and the Son, could obey every divine requirement."—ELLEN G. WHITE, in *Signs of the Times*, June 9, 1898.

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

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

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

How wonderful was His love, that He should lay aside His kingly

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

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

Divinity and Humanity Blended

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

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

"Though higher than any of the angels, though as great as the Father on the throne of heaven, He became one with us. In Him God and man became one, and it is in this fact that we find the hope of our fallen race. Looking upon Christ in the flesh, we look upon God in humanity, and see in Him the brightness of divine glory, the express image of God the Father."—ELLEN G. WHITE, in *The Youth's Instructor*, Nov. 21, 1895.

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

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

There is a tendency on the part of some to minimize the temptations of Christ and the struggle through which He passed in securing man's redemption. But He verily overcame where man failed: "For four thousand years the race had been decreasing in physical strength, in mental power, and in moral worth; and Christ took upon Him the infirmities of degenerate humanity. Only thus could He rescue man from the lowest depths of his degradation."—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 117.

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

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

"The King of glory proposed to humble Himself to fallen humanity!

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

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

No Miracle on His Account

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

"The Saviour of the world became sin for the race. In becoming man's substitute, Christ did not manifest His power as the Son of God. He ranked Himself among the sons of men. He was to bear the trial of temptation as a man, in man's behalf, under the most trying circumstances, and leave an example of faith and perfect trust in His heavenly Father."—*Ibid.*, p. 278.

Note the words of inspiration again:

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

"Entire justice was done in the atonement. In the place of the sinner, the spotless Son of God re-

ceived the penalty, and the sinner goes free as long as he receives and holds Christ as his personal Saviour. Though guilty, he is looked upon as innocent. Christ fulfilled every requirement demanded by justice."—Ellen G. White, in *The Youth's Instructor*, April 25, 1901.

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

"To many, Jesus Christ is only a grand subject for a painting, a heroic theme for a pen, a beautiful form for a statue, or a thought for a song. But to those who have heard His voice, who have felt His pardon, who have received His benediction, He is music, warmth, light, joy, hope, and salvation, a friend who never forsakes, who lifts us when others try to push us down. We cannot wear Him out; we pile on Him all our griefs and troubles. He is always ready to help us; He is always ready to lift us. He addresses us with the same love; He beams upon

us with the same smile; He pities us with the same compassion. There is no name like His. It is more inspiring than Caesar's, more musical than Beethoven's, more conquering than Napoleon's, more eloquent than Demosthenes', more patient than Lincoln's. The name of Jesus throbs with all life, weeps with all pathos, groans with all pains, stoops with all love. His breath is laden with perfume. Who like Jesus can pity a homeless orphan? Who like Jesus can welcome a prodigal back home? Who like Jesus can make a drunkard sober? Who like Jesus can illuminate a cemetery plowed with graves? Who like Jesus can make a queen unto God out of a lost woman of the street? Who like Jesus can kiss away our sorrows?"

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

Thursday, November 8



The Life That Hastens the Harvest

By GEOFFREY E. GARNE

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

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

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

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

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

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superintendent, or MV leader?

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

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

Am I that kind of person?

"What manner of person ought I to be in all holy conversation and godliness?" The word *conversation* as used in the New Testament is not confined to the narrow usage applied to it today—namely "spoken communication." The word thus translated means, "manner of life," or "way of life." Christianity is not merely a creed—it is a way of life!

Especially is this true of the brand of Christianity that must be exhibited to the world at a time when everything around us is going to be dissolved.

The question indicates that our way of life is very important to God. (For let us not overlook the fact that it is God and not Peter who is asking us the question!) The Bible is full of God's questions to man. The first is recorded in Genesis 3:9 when He asked Adam and Eve, "Where art thou?" And one of God's last questions to man is this one in 2 Peter 3:11. It is a question addressed by God to Seventh-day Adventists—to those who live in anticipation of the fact that soon, very soon, everything around us is going to be dissolved. Surely God has a right to expect that our way of life shall correspond to the urgency of the hour in which we live!

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

What kind of home life should such a person live?

What kind of thought life?

What kind of social life?

What kind of recreational life?

What kind of business life?

What kind of professional life?

What kind of community life?

What kind of personal life?

What kind of prayer life?

What kind of reading life?

What kind of music-listening life?

What kind of TV-screen-watching life?

What kind of eating and drinking life?

What kind of love life?

What kind of money-spending life?

What kind of witnessing life?

What kind of giving life?

What kind of *total* life?

God's question, as it relates itself to every sphere of my life, challenges me as to what kind of husband or wife I ought to be; what kind of father or mother; what kind of son or daughter; what kind of teacher or student; what kind of preacher or parishioner; what kind of craftsman or farmer; what kind of neighbor

and citizen; what kind of employer or employee; what kind of driver on the highway; what kind of customer or supplier; what kind of tax payer, tithepayer, or steward; what kind of Sabbathkeeper; what kind of missionary-worker!

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

An Impossible Attainment?

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

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

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

A railroad freight car has no power to move itself so much as an

inch along the track. Neither by shaking itself nor by straining every one of its steel muscles would it be able to get itself mobile. The only hope it has of moving is in becoming coupled to the mighty locomotive, which possesses all the power the freight car needs to do for it what it cannot do for itself. As long as it remains linked up, it can travel at whatever speed the locomotive travels, and scale whatever gradient it scales. Through the coupling, the power of the locomotive is actually transferred to the car. Uncouple it, and it immediately becomes as motionless and dormant as it was before. Thus it is that we receive power to live the Christian life by becoming linked to God, the source of all power, through Jesus Christ.

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

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

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

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

"None need fail of attaining, in his sphere, to perfection of Christian

character. By the sacrifice of Christ, provision has been made for the believer to receive all things that pertain to life and godliness. God calls upon us to reach the standard of perfection and places before us the example of Christ's character. In His humanity, perfected by a life of constant resistance of evil, the Saviour showed that through cooperation with Divinity, human beings may in this life attain to perfection of character. This is God's assurance to us that we, too, may obtain complete victory. . . .

"Of himself man is utterly unable to reach this condition. The holiness that God's word declares he must have before he can be saved is the result of the working of divine grace as he bows in submission to the discipline and restraining influences of the Spirit of truth. Man's obedience can be made perfect only by the incense of Christ's righteousness, which fills with divine fragrance every act of obedience. The part of the Christian is to persevere in overcoming every fault. Constantly he is to pray to the Saviour to heal the disorders of his sin-sick soul. He has not the wisdom or the strength to overcome; these belong to the Lord, and He bestows them on those who in humiliation and contrition seek Him for help."—*The Acts of the Apostles*, pp. 531, 532.

Do you feel as you read these precious promises that you wish it were possible in your case, but, knowing your weaknesses, you realize it is quite out of the question so far as

you are concerned? If this is the way you feel, then the following precious lines were penned especially for you.

Write them in the flyleaf of your Bible.

Commit them to memory.

And may God's wonderful Spirit write them upon the tables of your heart:

"Nothing is apparently more helpless, yet really more invincible, than the soul that feels its nothingness and relies wholly on the merits of the Saviour. By prayer, by the study of His word, by faith in His abiding presence, the weakest of human beings may live in contact with the living Christ, and He will hold them by a hand that will never let go."—*The Ministry of Healing*, p. 182.

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

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

A Sifting Coming

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

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

A similar sifting will take place in the church in a more specific way than is now taking place. It will affect

Friday, November 9



Sifting the Harvest

By WADIE FARAG

WHAT WE ALL would like to see is a church that is made up of genuine Christians who are spotless and who bear the perfect image of Christ. We would like to see the ministers stand as God's mouthpieces to the people, men who in thought, word, and action represent their Lord. We would like to see every minister sense his responsibility as God's ap-

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pointed guardian of the church and as a watchman on the walls of Zion, ever ready to sound the note of alarm at the approach of the enemy; ministers whose spiritual senses are not numbed but who are always able, because of their constant connection with Christ, to discern any danger and in love, patience, and holy boldness to warn the people of any peril.

We would like to see every lay member in the church ringing true

every person. This sifting, while it will purify and strengthen some, will purge out the weak and faithless.

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

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

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

or speak of the precious chapters in their experience.

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

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

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

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

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

"The shaking of God blows away

multitudes like dry leaves. Prosperity multiplies a mass of professors. Adversity purges them out of the church."—*Ibid.*, vol. 4, p. 89.

"Ministers and people are unprepared for the time in which they live, and nearly all who profess to believe present truth are unprepared to understand the work of preparation for this time. In their present state of worldly ambition, with their lack of consecration to God, their devotion to self, they are wholly unfitted to receive the latter rain."—*Ibid.*, vol. 1, p. 466.

"Many a star that we have admired for its brilliancy will then go out in darkness. Chaff like a cloud will be borne away by the wind, even from places where we see only floors of rich wheat. All who assume the ornaments of the sanctuary, but are not clothed with Christ's righteousness, will appear in the shame of their own nakedness."—*Ibid.*, vol. 5, p. 81.

Many Shaken Out

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

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

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

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

"The sieve is moving. Let us not say: Stay Thy hand, O God. The church must be purged, and it will be."—*Testimonies*, vol. 1, p. 100. Three important events among others bring about the sifting of the wheat from the chaff, the good from the bad. First, the crisis of the mark of the beast. "The time is not far distant when the test will come to every soul. The mark of the beast will be urged upon us. Those who have step by step yielded to worldly demands and conformed to worldly customs will not find it a hard matter to yield to the powers that be,

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rather than subject themselves to derision, insult, threatened imprisonment, and death. The contest is between the commandments of God and the commandments of men. In this time the gold will be separated from the dross in the church."—*Ibid.*, vol. 5, p. 81.

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

Introduction of False Theories

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

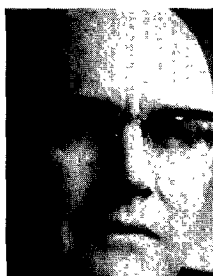
When that test comes to us, where will we choose to stand? In the church—or outside of it? "If you indulge stubbornness of heart, and through pride and self-righteousness do not confess your faults, you will be left subject to Satan's temptations. . . . The multitude of deceptions that will prevail in these last days will encircle you, and you will change leaders and not know that you have done so."—Ellen White, in *Review and Herald*, Dec. 16, 1890. "There is a class . . . who cherish secret feelings of dissatisfaction against those who bear the burden in this work. . . . The great sifting time is just before us. The jealous and the faultfinding, who are watching for evil, will be shaken out."—*Testimonies*, vol. 1, p. 251. "Only those who have been diligent students of the Scriptures and who have received the love of the truth will be shielded from the powerful delusion that takes the world captive."—*The Great Controversy*, p. 625. "Those who are true to principle will not be shaken."—*Life Sketches of Ellen G. White*, p. 93.

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

Let us never think for one moment that the church will fall. This

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

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



Harvest Home

By ROBERT H. PIERSON

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

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

About six o'clock several large new cars roared onto the mission property. The cry went up, "The king is here! The king is here!" Word spread quickly. Running from all directions the people hurried back to

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

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

Sabbath, November 10

the church to meet their king. Many, however, who had grown tired of waiting and gone to their homes were not present for the occasion. They missed greeting the king because they had given up and gone about their own work.

Another King Is Coming

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

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

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

What is wrong? Just God's people—you and I—still delay the Master's

return! Listen to these words of our Saviour: "When the fruit is brought forth, immediately he putteth in the sickle, because the harvest is come" (Mark 4:29).

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

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

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

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

Although it is true that in His mercy God has postponed the day of Jesus' return, this does not mean He will postpone it indefinitely. According to Bible prophecy a series of events will be initiated that will quickly precipitate the end. "The final movements will be rapid ones." Those who put off their preparation until the crisis comes may find suddenly that their opportunity for salvation is forever past. This is why Jesus warned, "Therefore be ye also ready: for in such an hour as ye think not the Son of man cometh" (chap. 24:44).

Whether or not individually we are ready, when God, in whose power are the times and seasons, decides to bring the end, it will come. Many at that time will be unready. The five foolish virgins pleaded, "Lord, Lord, open to us" (chap. 25:11), but they were denied. The man who buried his talent was cast out "into outer darkness" (verse 30).

"The evil servant says in his heart, 'My lord delayeth his coming.' He does not say that Christ will not come. He does not scoff at the idea of His second coming. But in his heart and by his actions and words he declares that the Lord's coming

is delayed. He banishes from the minds of others the conviction that the Lord is coming quickly. His influence leads men to presumptuous, careless delay. They are confirmed in their worldliness and stupor."—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 635.

As God's people we dare not declare by lip or life, "My Lord delayeth His coming."

"For yet a little while, and he that shall come will come, and will not tarry" (Heb. 10:37).

"The return of Christ to our world will not be long delayed. Let this be the keynote of every message."—*Testimonies*, vol. 6, p. 406.

We May Hasten His Return

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

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

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

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

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

In this closing generation of earth's history God desires a church made up of Christlike men and women who will vindicate His word and His will. He will present to His

Father and to the unfallen beings of other worlds a people who measure up on every point. They must appear "not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing" (Eph. 5:27). Only such will be "called unto the marriage supper of the Lamb" (Rev. 19:9).

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

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

Never again will there be war in heaven. Never again will the seeds of sin be sown among the ransomed of the Lord. The traits of character that cost Lucifer his place in heaven must never be found in the glory land. Those whose feet walk "the way of holiness" will be men and women who have gained full and final victory over sin. Their characters will resemble that of their great Exemplar, who made their presence in His prepared place possible. "The unclean shall not pass over it." *Heaven will be a safe place* because it will be inhabited by safe people who are like Jesus. None other will enter the gates of God. No others would be happy there!

Begin Heaven Here and Now

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

Heaven will be a safe place because those who "follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth" in the earth made new will be those who fol-

lowed Him during their earth-bound lifetime, those who caught the beauty of His character and by His grace became like Him!

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

Centuries ago Christ came in the likeness of human flesh; He "was in all points tempted like as we are" (Heb. 4:15). "Christ, the outshining of the Father's glory, came to the world as its light. He came to represent God to men."—*Christ's Object Lessons*, p. 416. God sent Him that He might reveal what character the redeemed must possess if they are to have part in the harvest and inherit the place Jesus has gone to prepare for those who love Him. Christ came the first time to reveal to the world the kind of people He would take back to heaven with Him when He returns the second time. You and I must know more about this needful preparation. When we do we will know much more about revival and reformation, which the Lord tells us must and will come among God's people before Jesus returns.

Ellen White beautifully sums up what God expects of His people in Christlikeness: "The religion of Christ means more than the forgiveness of sin; it means taking away our sins, and filling the vacuum with the graces of the Holy Spirit. It means divine illumination, rejoicing in God. It means a heart emptied of self, and blessed with the abiding presence of Christ. When Christ reigns in the soul, there is purity, freedom from sin. The glory, the fullness, the completeness of the gospel plan is fulfilled in the life. The acceptance of the Saviour brings a glow of perfect peace, perfect love, perfect assurance. The beauty and fragrance of the character of Christ revealed in the life testifies that God has indeed sent His Son into the world to be its Saviour."—*Ibid.*, pp. 419, 420.

The Christ life includes the forgiveness of sin, but it is more. "It means taking away our sins." It means cleansing "us from all unrighteousness" (1 John 1:9). It means even more—it includes "filling the

vacuum with the graces of the Holy Spirit."

"The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance" (Gal. 5:22, 23). In heaven all will be love and joy and peace. There will be no hatred, no sullen sulking, no conflict, no violence. Long before the redeemed receive their inheritance they will have gained victory over these un-Christlike traits.

Like their great Leader, those numbered with the redeemed will reveal "gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness," even in this life. Their hearts will have been "emptied of self, and blessed with the abiding presence of Christ."

Evil thoughts and acts will be put away, for "adultery, fornication, uncleanness," are "works of the flesh" (verse 19). "When Christ reigns in the soul, there is purity, freedom from sin."

"Idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like" will all be overcome through the grace of Christ, for "they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God" (verses 20, 21).

There Is a Life of Unselfish Service, Too!

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

In the dark world in which we live the active service of Christ, as well as the more passive attributes of the Master, will shine through to those with whom we come in contact. "All around us are heard the wails of a world's sorrow. On every hand are the needy and distressed. It is ours to aid in relieving and softening life's hardships and misery.

"Practical work will have far more effect than mere sermonizing. We are to give food to the hungry, clothing to the naked, and shelter to the homeless. And we are called to do

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

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

How Such a Character Is Perfected

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

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

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

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

Annual Sacrifice Offering to Be Taken at This Time.

The Allegory of Arnion

By BEATRICE M. NEALL

TO THE LEADER:

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

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

FIRST DAY

OUTSIDE THE GATE

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

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

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

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

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

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"You can get out if you want to," said Arnion. "The gate is always open."

"Oh, Arnion, why don't you close the gate? I'm afraid Ophis might get in!" cried Yalda in alarm.

"Don't worry, Yalda. That's a special kind of gate—the kind you can go out of; but once you are out, you can't come back in. Ophis cannot come in. You are safe inside."

"But, Arnion, why don't you close the gate so I can't go out? Maybe I will forget. Maybe I will walk in my sleep. Maybe . . ."

"I leave the gate open, Yalda, because I don't want you or my servants to stay here unless you love me. You must be free to go anytime."

"We would never leave you, Arnion!" exclaimed Yeled. "I can't understand why Ophis would ever want to leave you."

"It happened this way," explained Arnion. "One day he found a way to look at himself. You know that here in the palace we never look at ourselves—we look only at one another and at Great King. But when he saw himself he thought he was very good looking—as glorious as Great King. He decided he wanted to be king. So he persuaded some of the servants to side with him, and he started a fight right here in the palace. But my servants cast him out, with his servants. If you want to be safe from him, you must stay away from the gate."

Now I saw that Yeled and Yalda, along with all the servants and Arnion himself, wore beautiful white robes that glowed with lovely colors, as a white cloud is full of rainbow hues, or a white pearl glows with delicate colors. Yeled often told his sister how lovely she looked in her white robe, and she told Yeled how handsome he looked. But one day Yalda began to think, "I wonder what I look like. I wish there were some way I could look at myself." She tried to forget the evil thought, but it kept coming back. Then she saw a flash of light. Walking over to investigate, she saw something strange—a girl looking at her. She held out her hand—and the girl held out *her* hand. But instead of touching the other girl's hand, she felt something cold and hard and shiny.

"Yalda, how beautiful you are!" said a soft voice.

Yalda noticed that a servant was standing behind the tall shiny object, holding it in his hands. She felt a little frightened. He was not one of the servants who lived in the palace. She remembered, too, that she was not supposed to look at herself. But she took one more look. *I am beautiful!* she thought, as a shiver of delight went down her spine.

Still facing her, the stranger stepped back one pace. Yalda stepped forward. Then she noticed that she was standing right between the posts of the palace gate. Instantly she froze.

"Yalda, you are beautiful," repeated the stranger. "I know how to make you even more beautiful! I have a magic drink that can make your eyes sparkle with wit and charm. Come with me, Yalda."

"I cannot," said the girl. "Arnion says I must stay inside this gate."

"If you stay here, you are just a prisoner. Why should you be a slave to Arnion? Come with me! I have many things to show you. The

world outside is beautiful. Just one more step, and you will be free!"

Yalda hesitated. Then she took one step forward. The stranger stepped back again. Yalda looked at the girl in the mirror and took another step. Then she called, "Yeled, come here! Come see what you look like!"

Yeled came running. "Yalda, you went out the gate! You went out the gate!" he screamed.

"It's nice out here, Yeled. Come with me. Why should you be a slave to Arnion? Come see what you look like!"

Yeled followed Yalda.

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

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

Down, down the hill went the children with the stranger. "What is your name?" they asked.

"Ophis," he answered. Yeled and Yalda looked at each other. "I suppose Arnion has told you many bad things about me," he continued, "but you mustn't believe what he says. He is a tyrant. I am your friend."

It was nighttime when the children reached the palace of Ophis, aglow with a thousand lights. Inside, the walls were covered with mirrors. The children had never seen such magic beauty. Then Ophis brought them each a drink. "Take this, children," he said. "It will open your eyes to see the most beautiful colors. Your ears will be opened to hear the most exciting music. Your minds will be opened to understand great mysteries."

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Then the battle began. Oh, what a struggle it was! What shouts from Ophis, what groans from his attacker. Suddenly the children recognized that it was the voice of Arnion. They listened in horror as he cried out in pain. For

hours the battle raged. Then all was quiet, and night came on. In the darkness Yeled and Yalda sobbed and sobbed. Where was Arnion? Had Ophis killed him? Would they always be his prisoners?

Early the next morning the door to the prison opened. The children's heads ached so from crying that they hardly knew what they saw. Then they heard a voice. "Yeled. Yalda. I have come for you. The door is open. You may come out."

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

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

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

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

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

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

The children looked into Arnion's face and wept at the blood and bruises they saw. "Oh, Arnion, how you suffered to rescue us! We're so glad that you came and got us! Take us back to the palace and we'll never go out the gate again!"

Discussion:

1. The characters

- Who is Great King? (God.)
- Can you guess who Arnion is? (Jesus.) *Arnion* means "Lamb" (Gr.), a name often given to Jesus.
- Who do you suppose Ophis is? (Satan.) *Ophis* means "serpent" (Gr.).
- Who are the servants? (Angels, good and bad.)
- Who are Yeled and Yalda? *Yeled* means "boy" and *Yalda* means "girl" (Heb.). Does their experience remind you of someone else's? (Adam and Eve.) But as the story continues, you will see that this boy and girl could be you.

2. Places

- Where is Great Mountain? (Heaven.)
- What is Polluted Land? (This earth.)

3. Concepts

- Why was the gate to the palace always open? (God gives His children freedom to obey or disobey Him.)
- What is the meaning of the mirror? (In this story the mirror is a symbol of self-ishness—thinking about yourself. There are two dangers that come from looking at yourself: (1) either you become proud, as Ophis and Yalda did, or (2) you become very discouraged, as the children did when they saw their rags. It is best to look to Jesus.)
- What was the magic drink of Ophis? (The drink described here is a drug that brings pleasure at first, but all the horrors of addiction later on. It represents sin. There is much pleasure in sin, but it lasts only a short time (Heb. 11:25).)
- What was the terrible battle between Arnion and Ophis? (The struggle at the cross, when Satan wounded Jesus by the crown of thorns on His head, and the nails in His hands.)
- Why did the children have to come out the door by themselves? (We have to make the decision to come to Christ. As soon as we decide to obey, He gives us the strength to obey.)

SECOND DAY

A LINE TO THE THRONE

I SAW that as Yeled and Yalda climbed out of the dungeon they clung trembling to Arnion, afraid that Ophis would come after them. "Take us back to the palace," they begged, "and we'll never go out again!"

Arnion hurried them out of Ophis' palace grounds before he spoke. "Children," he said sadly, "you cannot go back to the palace now. Once you go out the gate, it is hard to return."

"Give us another chance, Arnion!" they pleaded. "We will never disobey again!"

"I am giving you another chance," said Arnion. "Only now you must live here in Polluted Land where Ophis can tempt you. And if you stay true to me, then someday I will take you back to the palace."

Now, as they walked through the streets of Sin City, the children were afraid. "Can you stay here with us, Arnion?" asked Yalda.

"No, children, I must go back to my father's house."

"Why do you have to go?"

"I want to prepare a special place for all my children who live in Polluted Land—more beautiful than you have ever seen before," Arnion answered. "And then I will come back and take you home with me." (John 14:3.)

"But how are we going to live while you're gone? Are you going to leave us alone in this awful place?" Yalda looked at the crowded buildings and shabby people of the city, and began to cry.

"I won't leave you alone, Yalda. I'm going to take you to the house of the king's family to live. I have many children there, and you will be happy with them. I will also send you Helper to be with you forever. (John 14:16.) He will help you to overcome temptation and to work for me. And I will also send Kerub and Saraf to be with you."

"Oh, wonderful, Arnion! I want to see them so badly!" Yalda skipped for joy as the three of them walked on together.

Once again Arnion sounded sad. "Did you know, Yeled and Yalda, that something has happened to you since you breathed the smog of Polluted Land and drank the poison of Ophis? You can no longer see or hear as you once did."

"But Ophis told us our eyes and ears would be opened!"

"They have been opened to know sorrow and shame. But now you can no longer see the people from the world above and the world below."

The children's faces fell. "You mean we won't be able to see Kerub and Saraf?"

"Only with your *inner* eyes," explained Arnion. "Keep your inner eyes and ears open, because the wicked servants of Ophis will fight to get control of you. If you see them, you can call on Kerub and Saraf to help you. But if you can't see them, Ophis will catch you again!"

"I'm afraid, Arnion!" exclaimed Yeled. "What if I see only the world around me, and forget the unseen world where the battles are being fought? How terrible to be blind in the middle of a battle!"

"I have special help for you, Yeled," replied Arnion. "I'm going to give each of you a life line to connect you with the world above. You are in a sea of smog down here, but through this life line you may breathe the pure air of Great Mountain above. If you stay in contact with the world above, your inner eyes and ears will be open to see what is happening around you."

"Notice that you can also talk through this line and keep in touch with the throne room above. I will be there, standing by Great King, ready to receive your messages and send you help. Be sure to use this line constantly!"

"You mean we can still talk to you even though we can't see you!" exclaimed Yalda.

"That's right," said Arnion. "But I warn you right now that Ophis will try to cut your life

line. Or he will try to make you so busy that you forget to use it."

The children walked quietly for some distance, worried about the dangers they faced in Polluted Land. If only they had not left their beautiful home above! If only they had not walked out the gate!

Now I saw that by this time they had reached the edge of town where there was a large, pleasant house at the base of a hill. On the front was a sign: The House of the King's Family. "Look, children, this is where you will live," said Arnion. "But before you go inside, I want to show you something else." And he led them past the house up a hill where birds sang cheering songs to them and the flowers smiled away their sadness.

Then they came to a rushing mountain stream, with cool, clear water bubbling over the rocks. "This stream comes down here straight from the throne above," said Arnion. "It is the water of life. I want you to come here every morning to drink. As long as you drink this water, you will never thirst for the poison of Ophis. And every morning you will find manna on the rocks, fresh from heaven. But remember one thing, when the sun gets high, the manna melts and is gone. (Ex. 16:21.) So you must come here early each day. Here in this place Kerub and Saraf and Helper will come close to you, and you will be near the throne above."

"Now that we have fresh air to breathe and good food to eat I just wish we had nice clothes to wear," said Yeled. "Ophis took away our white robes and left us with these rags. Will we ever have good clothes again, Arnion?"

"I was hoping you would ask me that," he replied. "Yes, I have new robes for both of you. Do you want to put them on now?"

"Oh, yes!" they exclaimed.

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

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

"What if we get them dirty?" asked Yeled.

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

"Your blood? Oh, Arnion!"

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

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

Then Arnion stood before the whole company and said, "Children, I want you to love one another as I have loved you. (John 15:12.) And remember that I have many other children not of this family. (John 10:16.) You must go through all of Polluted Land and invite them into the family. Tell them they have a loving father above. Many will not believe you—they will hate and persecute you. But others will receive you gladly. There are thirsty ones—you must bring them the water of life. There are hungry ones—you must bring them living manna. There are orphans—you must bring them into the family. When you have given the invitation to every one in Polluted Land, I will come back to get you all and bring you to the palace. (Matt. 24:14.)

"Now, my children, it is time for me to go. Remember to come to the fountain every morning. Remember to keep your robes white and your life lines open. Remember that I will

be standing by the throne listening for messages from you. Good-by!"

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

He was gone.

But they were not alone!

Discussion:

1. What is the house of the king's family? (The church.)
2. Who is Helper, whom Arnion promised to send? John 14:16. (The Holy Spirit.)
3. What is the inner eye? (The eye of faith.)
4. What is the life line? (Prayer.)
"Prayer is the breath of the soul." We can live for weeks without food, and for days without water, but only for a few minutes without air. A diver down in the sea must have an air line from above, or he will die. So we, in this world of sin, are *constantly dependent* on God for spiritual life.
5. What does it mean to climb the hill each morning to drink the water of life and eat the living manna? (Morning worship.)
 - a. What is the manna? John 6:31, 33, 35. (Jesus. We find Him by reading about Him in His Word.)
 - b. What is the water of life? John 7:37, 39. (The Holy Spirit.)
6. What is the white robe? Rev. 19:8. (The righteousness of Christ.) The only thing we can take out of this world to the next is a righteous character.

THIRD DAY

YELED GETS IN TROUBLE

NOT LONG after Yeled and Yalda had settled down in the king's house, I saw Yeled go out for a walk. Suddenly he heard the shrieks and yelps of a terrified animal. Rounding a curve in the road, he came upon a group of boys throwing rocks at a mangy dog, so thin that all its bones stuck out. The boys laughed as the wounded animal hobbled away on three legs.

Yeled was indignant. "Stop! What are you doing that for?" he demanded.

A heavy-set fellow with bulging arm muscles walked up to Yeled and stuck out his jaw. "Who do ya think you are?" he demanded. "Yeled."

"Well, I'm Tough. Pleased to meet you!" The other boys gathered around. "Say, what's that get-up you've got on?"

"That's a saint's robe," scoffed a boy called Rough. "Now, if he just had a halo to go with it . . ." The others laughed. "Saint Yeled!" continued Rough. "Bet you wouldn't even touch us, would you? Might get your robe dirty."

Finally Yeled found the courage to speak. "This is Arnion's robe," he said quietly. "It shows that I belong to him."

Tough swore. "So you believe in Arnion, ha? Have you ever seen him?"

"Yes, I have. And I talk to him every day."

Tough swore again. "I suppose you believe in Ophis, too. Tell me, have you ever seen *him*?" Yeled admitted that he had.

"What does he look like? A great red dragon with seven heads and a long tail?" At this all the boys broke into uproarious laughter.

Sweat broke out on Yeled's face. He wanted to get away from the boys, but did not want to look like a coward. Finally he spoke up bravely. "You do not believe in Arnion because you have never seen him. But he stands by the throne of Great King up on Great Mountain."

"Where is that?" Tough asked, pretending that he wanted to know.

"Up there," said Yeled, pointing far up to where the mountain was. But no one had ever

seen the top, because of the dense smog around its base.

"I can't see a thing," said Tough, squinting.

"Maybe you could see the other place better," commented Rough. And the group laughed again.

"You don't believe in Arnion or Ophis because you can't see them," continued Yeled. "Your eyes have been blinded by the smog so that you can see only this land. But there is a land up above and Great King knows and loves you. You can't really be happy until you know him."

"Are you happy?" asked Tough.

"Yes, I am," answered Yeled.

"Let's see how happy he is!" said Rough. "Let's mess up his robe."

"Yeah, Saint Yeled," sneered Tough. "You think you're holier than we are! Well, you won't look so holy when we get through with you!"

Yeled turned his back and walked away. The boys followed, throwing dirt until the air was full of dust. But his robe stayed as white as ever. "Get some mud!" shouted Rough. The boys found some smelly slime in a ditch and hurled it at Yeled. But even that would not stick to the white robe. This made them so angry they knocked him down, beat him up, and then went looking for more trouble to get into.

Yeled got to his feet and walked home. He was so upset he didn't want to talk to anybody. Not until he had shut himself in his room did he speak. "So these are the people you want me to win, Arnion!" he complained. "They don't even believe you exist! They hate me! And they make fun of my robe!"

There was no answer from the throne. Yeled hadn't asked for an answer. He wasn't using his life line. He was just talking to himself. After pacing the floor awhile, he threw himself face down on the bed, kicked his feet angrily in the air, and dropped off into an unhappy sleep.

Next morning at the first gray light of dawn, the birds began to sing their wake-up songs. But Yeled didn't wake up. He just rolled over in bed and kept on sleeping. He didn't get up until late, and then he was grumpy all day. Toward evening he went outside for a breath of fresh air. His heart sank when he saw one of the fellows in the gang coming toward him.

"Don't look so sad, old boy," began the stranger.

Yeled said nothing.

"Look, those fellows aren't so bad if you just don't try to be so different. I believe in Arnion too, but just let me give you a little advice. The best way to win them over is to become one of them. Join the group. Do the things they do, even if you don't agree with everything."

"Like throwing stones at dogs and beating people up?"

"Well, you can do like I did—just hold a stone in your hand and pretend to throw it, or throw it so it doesn't hit anybody. No one will know the difference. Then when you're their friend you can tell them about Arnion and Ophis. They'll listen to you if you're one of the gang."

"They'd never want me after what happened yesterday."

"Sure they would. You acted cool—didn't get scared and run. They know you've got what it takes."

Yeled lifted his head a little higher.

"Of course, that outfit you're wearing really turns them off. You'll have to get rid of that."

For the first time Yeled sensed danger. "I can *never* take this off," he said. "I promised Arnion I would always wear it."

"O.K., O.K. No need to lose your cool. Wear it if you have to. But Arnion didn't say you couldn't hide it on occasion. You're in a war, you know, and sometimes in wartime you have to hide your true colors from the 'enemy.'"

"Say, what's your name?" Yeled asked.

"Turncoat," said the boy. "I change my clothes according to the group I'm with."

"Well, Turncoat, I think you've got something there."

Turncoat found a jacket and jeans he could

spare, and Yeled managed to put them on, tucking his robe inside.

"O.K., let's go," said Yeled. "Where's the gang?"

"Down in the den. I'll show you where."

Yeled followed Turncoat down the streets of a shabby section of the city until they came to a dark staircase that led to a basement room. As Yeled's eyes got used to the dark, he could see boys and girls sitting around in the room. The air was heavy with smoke.

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

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

"Leave him alone, you guys!" said Turncoat.

"Lay off, will you?"

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

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

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

Yeled swore. "Who cares about Arnion?" he said.

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

"My name's not Yellow!"

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

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

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

"Arnion, I failed you," he moaned. "I was ashamed of you and your robe. I'm a yellow coward. Oh, Arnion, can you ever forgive me?" Yeled dropped his face into the grass and sobbed.

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

"Arnion, you *know* that I love you," he whispered back. His line to the throne was alive!

"Son, be of good cheer. Your sins are forgiven," came back the voice. "Now go and find Yalda. She is in danger."

Discussion:

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



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- as was his custom for his morning manna.
- He hid his robe. Should we ever hide the fact that we are Christians?
 - He thought he could help the other fellows by becoming like them.
 - He was ashamed of Arnion. He cursed and swore.
3. Is prayer a two-way conversation? When we talk to God, does He talk back to us? (God talks back to us through His Word. We hear His voice by reading the Bible. Sometimes He also impresses our minds.)

FOURTH DAY

A MESSAGE FROM ARNION

AS I CONTINUED to look through the glass, I saw that Yalda's white robe caused some problems for her too. The neighbor girls coaxed and teased and scolded her to get her to wear clothes like theirs. But she only smiled and said she liked to wear Arnion's robe. She *expected* to be different from the other girls, so what they said had no effect on her.

But Yalda was puzzled to see many of the girls in the king's family wearing worldly dress. Some of them, especially Vanity and Pride, did all they could to get her to join them. "We are king's daughters just like you," they said. "We see nothing wrong with this kind of dress."

So I saw that while Yalda wouldn't listen to the neighbor girls, she did listen to the girls in the family. These girls also persuaded her to go places with them and their boy friends, Pleasure and Love-the-World. At first Yalda was afraid that Ophis would catch her again, but when nothing terrible happened, she stopped worrying and enjoyed the fun.

Then Yeled spoke to her. "Yalda," he said, "why aren't you wearing your white robe anymore?"

Yalda laughed. "Lots of the king's daughters wear this kind of dress," she said. "So why can't I?"

"But, Yaldá, you haven't been climbing the hill in the morning to get your morning manna," persisted Yeled. "In afraid you're making Arnion very sad."

At this Yalda got angry and walked away, though she had a worried look on her face. But soon she went back to her pleasure-loving friends and forgot what Yeled had said. Other young people, and even some older ones, joined in pleasure seeking, while fewer and fewer came near to the throne each day.

Pastor became very worried about his family, and called to Arnion for help. And not long after, a visitor came to the house. "My name is Prophet," he announced. "I have a message from Great King for you." Pastor gathered the family together in a large upper room so they could hear what Prophet had to say.

"You remember that before Arnion left, he said, 'I go to prepare a place for you' (John 14:2)," began Prophet. "Now I bring you wonderful news: he has finished his work! Can you guess what kind of place he has prepared?"

"A garden like Eden," said one.

"Mansions," said another.

"Eden is there, and mansions are there, but there is more than that," answered Prophet. "He has prepared a whole city for us. This is the city to which Abraham looked forward (Heb. 11:10) and now, just think, it is finished!"

"Did you see it?" asked Yeled.

"Yes, indeed I did. One of Great King's servants took me to a great high mountain and showed it to me. (Rev. 21:10, ff.) The city looks like a jewel, sparkling with rainbow colors. The wall, the foundation, the streets, the houses, are made of precious stones, crystal, and gold, all transparent, so that the glory inside flashes through to the outside. I saw before the city a sea of glass so glorious that it appeared to be mingled with fire (Rev. 15:2); I stood on it and looked down into its depths. I saw that there were 12 gates to the city, three on a side, each a solid pearl. Arnion himself opened the main

gate and showed me the glories of the place. First I saw the great white throne, where Great King himself sat, so glorious that I could hardly look at him, though I could make out the form of a man. (Eze. 1:26.) In the cloud of glory that surrounded him was a rainbow (verse 27), emerald green in color (Rev. 4:3). From the throne flowed a fiery stream (Dan. 7:9) through the center of the main street of the city. (Rev. 22:1, 2.) I saw the tree of life on either side of the river. At first I thought it was two trees, but then I looked again and saw that they were united at the top. Its branches were bowed down under the weight of its glorious fruit. (*Early Writings*, p. 17.)

"I looked and saw most glorious houses, that had the appearance of silver, supported by four pillars set with pearls most glorious to behold. (*Ibid.*, p. 18.) The houses were surrounded by gardens with grass of living green and flowers from Eden.

"But as I looked at Arnion, I was surprised to see tears in his eyes. I wondered how he could be sad in the midst of such great beauty. Then I looked again at the city, and noticed something strange about it—it was empty! The mansions were all unoccupied. The streets were deserted except for some angels walking quietly up and down."

"How could the city be deserted?" asked Yalda. "Isn't that where all the angels live?"

"No, Yalda," answered Prophet. "The city was not built for angels, but for men. It has the names of *men* written all over it. On the gates are the names of the twelve tribes of Israel. On the foundation stones are the names of the twelve apostles. (Rev. 21:12, 14.) The city was built for Great King's children—for you and me, who have been strangers and pilgrims down here and are seeking a homeland above. (Heb. 11:13-16.)

"Children of the king! I want you to look at Arnion. See him walking the streets of the city alone. See the tears falling from his eyes. He loves you so much that he came down to do battle with Ophis and rescue you. He loves you so much that he returned to Great Mountain to prepare everything he could think of to make you happy. But what grieves him—what tears his heart—is that many of you don't even want him to come back. You are happy down in Polluted Land, with the smog and the sin, the sickness and the misery.

"Arnion wants me to tell you that he is lonesome. He cannot be happy when his family is so far away. Did you know that when you have your feasts of bread and wine, Arnion gets especially lonely; because he said he would not drink the wine again until he drinks it with you in his kingdom. (Matt. 26:29.) And all this time he has been waiting!"

"Why doesn't he come back, Prophet?" asked a little girl. "Why is he waiting so long?"

"He is waiting until you are all ready to meet him," answered Prophet. "But as he looks at you, he sees that many of you are not wearing the beautiful white robes he gave you. It grieves him to see so many of you wearing the clothes of this country. Here is what he says to you: 'Blessed are all who are awaiting me, who keep their robes in readiness and will not need to walk naked and ashamed.' (Rev. 16: 15, Taylor.) 'Everyone who conquers will be clothed in white, and I will not erase his name from the Book of Life, but I will announce before my Father and his angels that he is mine.'" (Chapter 3:5, Taylor.)

Tears came into Yalda's eyes as she heard these words. How could she have been so careless as to change her robe?

"There is another reason why Arnion hasn't come back yet," said Prophet. "He has done the work that he promised to do, but you have not done your work. You know what it is. You must preach the gospel to every living creature, and then the end will come. (Mark 16:15.) Arnion and his servants weep over his lost children in Polluted Land because you are leaving them to perish in the control of the enemy. Wake up, children of the king! Go out with love in your

hearts. Bring Arnion's lost children to your house. This is the work he wants you to do."

"But the work is so big," said Evangelist, "and we are so few. How can we do it all?"

"You need to ask Arnion to send mighty Helper to come upon you, and then you can be witnesses for him" (Acts 1:8), said Prophet.

"Now, brothers and sisters," he continued, "I have some exciting news for you. Arnion is going to get married soon! Great King has prepared a great marriage feast for him and his Bride. I even saw the great supper table, many miles in length, all set for the feast! There are places for a great number of guests. All of you are invited to the wedding feast! 'The Spirit and the Bride say, Come.' (Rev. 22:17.) Great King is ready. The groom is ready. The bride is ready. (Rev. 21:2.) The supper is ready. (Luke 14:23.) But, oh, what a shame!—the guests aren't ready! How long are we going to keep them waiting?"

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

Prophet continued, "There is something you can do about it. Great King wants you to go out and invite everybody you can to the great feast, so that his house can be filled. (Luke 14:23.) Say to the people, 'Everything is ready: come to the marriage feast.' (Matt. 22:4.) As soon as you give the invitation to everyone in Polluted Land, Arnion will come and bring us to the Holy City to his marriage supper."

Discussion

- What are the clothes of Arnion, and the clothes of this world? (The character of Christ, and the character of this world. We are talking about more than the dress issue here, though dress is an indication of character.)
- What two things is Arnion waiting for before he comes to take his people home?
 - He is waiting until his people wear the robes he gives them. "When the character of Christ shall be perfectly reproduced in His people, then He will come to claim them as His own."—*Christ's Object Lessons*, p. 69.
 - He is waiting for them to preach the gospel to all the world.
- Who is Prophet? (God has given a prophet to His people in these last days—Ellen G. White. He also speaks to us through the prophets of the Bible.)
- Who is Arnion's bride? Rev. 21:9, 10. (The Holy City, New Jerusalem.) It is also possible that the city, with the names of the 12 tribes and 12 apostles on it, is a symbol of God's church through the ages. (Rev. 19: 7, 8.) But in this story, the church is symbolized by the guests.
- What is the wedding feast? (In this story, it refers to the time when God will gather His people to eat with Him in His kingdom. Matt. 26:29; *Early Writings*, p. 19.)

FIFTH DAY

COME TO THE BANQUET!

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

"You must ask Arnion to wash your robes so that they are without spot or wrinkle or any such thing" (Eph. 5:26, 27), he said. "You must clean out the dirt that clogs your life lines, and then ask Arnion to send down the mighty Helper to fill you with power to do his work."

The king's family began meeting every day in the upper room to plead for the blessing. But

Vanity and Pride and their friends were annoyed by these earnest meetings. "Why all the excitement?" they wanted to know. "Why do we have to be so different from other people?" They sat coldly through several services, and then finally packed their things and left. Yalda and Pastor pleaded with them to stay, but they would not listen. Sadly the two of them went back to the upper room.

"Mighty Helper, come down upon us!" prayed Pastor. "Come as the light and drive away the darkness. Come as the wind, and breathe new life into us. Come as fire, and warm our hearts with love for souls. Come as tongues, and give us words to speak to stir the hearts of men!"

Suddenly, in answer to their prayer, there came the sound of a rushing mighty wind that filled all the house where they were sitting. (Acts 2:2.) And there appeared tongues of fire, resting on each of them. The fire lighted the darkness. The wind brought life to their souls. The fire warmed their hearts with love. The tongues gave them power to speak to the hearts of men.

Right away some of the brothers went to work printing thousands of invitations to the wedding. "You must scatter these as the leaves of autumn," counseled Prophet. "Here is a work that even the children can do. Wherever you go, carry a supply of these with you."

Armed with invitations, food, and water, the brothers and sisters paired off by twos to do their work. As they were leaving the house, Prophet had one more word for them. "As you go, proclaim liberty to the captives. Open the prison to those who are bound. (Isa. 61:1.) Break every yoke. Share your bread with the hungry. Bring the homeless poor to your house. Cover the naked. (Isa. 58:6, 7.) Remember that all those who come to Great King's banquet must wear the white wedding garment." (Matt. 22:11.)

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

I heard Yeled say to Yalda, "Just think, Yalda, we're not alone. Kerub and Saraf are right by our side. They will help us reach the most hardened sinners." Together they gave out invitations all up and down one street. Then as they looked down the road, they saw a shocking sight. A man was lying by the side of the road half naked and bleeding. Several people passed by, but no one helped him. (Luke 10:30-32.) The children ran to his side.

"He's been beaten and robbed!" exclaimed Yeled. "But he's still alive." Carefully the children stopped the bleeding and washed his wounds. The man's lips moved as if in thanks, but no sound came out.

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

"What is your name?" Yeled asked.

"Victim," he whispered.

"Well, Victim, we have good news for you. Great King has sent us to tell you that he loves you. He wants you to belong to his family. He has even built a beautiful home for you up on Great Mountain."

"That's too good to be true," said Victim.

"It really is true!" Yeled assured him. "And that's not all. Great King has prepared a great wedding feast for his son, and he wants you to come!"

"Me go to a king's banquet? I'm just an ordinary man. I . . ."

"No, you are very special," said Yalda. "Great King paid a high price for you—he sent his son, Arnion, down here to save you."

"But I don't even have clothes for a banquet," continued Victim. "The robbers took everything I had."

"Arnion supplies the wedding garment him-

self," explained Yeled. "He says, 'Buy from me white garments to clothe you.'" (Rev. 3:18.)

"But I have no money to buy anything."

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

"Then I could never pay."

"You can if you really want to. Arnion wants you—all of you—your heart, your strength, your love, your all. If you are willing to pay that high a price, He will give you the white robe."

"I would gladly give all that. But how can I find Arnion? Where is he?"

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

"Then he is far away."

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

"King of Great Mountain, thank you for sending these children to save my life," said Victim.

"Thank you for inviting me to the wedding feast of Arnion. I want to go, but I have no wedding robe to wear. I have no money to pay for this costly gift, so I just give myself to you."

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

Victim heard a voice, clear and comforting: "Remove the filthy garments from him."

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

Then the voice said to Victim, "Behold, I have taken your iniquity away from you, and I have clothed you with rich apparel. (Zech. 3:4.) And now your name shall no more be called Victim, but Victor, because you have gained the victory over your foes."

Victor was delighted to see that he was clothed in a glorious robe, richer than Solomon's.

"Come, Victor," said Yeled. "Now you belong to the king's family. Now you must come to his house." Yeled and Yalda got on either side of him, and supported him as they led him home.

There was great rejoicing that evening as the brothers and sisters met together in the upper room to tell their experiences, and introduce the new members of the family.

Two little girls named Timid and Tiny were among the first to get up and tell their story. "Daddy and Mommy went on one side of the street while we went on the other," said Tiny. "And we had a hard time! The first man I invited said, 'I have bought a field and I must go look at it. Tell Great King to excuse me!'"

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

"And the third man gave the silliest excuse of all," piped up Tiny again. "He said, 'I just married a wife, so I can't come.'" (Luke 14:18-20.)

"I said, 'Bring your wife along too,'" added Timid, "but he just slammed the door!"

"We didn't have much success the rest of the day, either," Tiny broke in. "Nobody seemed to want the invitations, and many threw them on the ground. We got so discouraged we wanted to go home. But then we remembered to talk to Arnion about it."

"And you know what happened?" interrupted Timid. "A girl came running up to us with a dirty invitation she had picked up from the ground. Somebody had stepped on it. And she said, 'Is this still good? Can I come to the wedding?' And I said, 'Do you want to come?' And she said, 'Yes!' So we brought her home with us, and here she is!"

Everybody was just delighted with Timid and Tiny's story. Many others related their experiences. Then Prophet stood up. "When you give out invitations, you never know what will prosper, this or that," he said. "Brothers and sisters, Arnion is happy tonight. But he wants me to tell you that there is still room for many more at his table. Go out into the highways and hedges and compel them to come in!" (Luke 14:23.)

Day after day the brothers and sisters went

out. When Victor was strong enough, he even went out on the streets of Sin City and cried: "Ho, everyone who thirsts, come to the waters; and he who has no money, come, buy and eat!" (Isa. 55:1, 2.) "Let him who is thirsty come, let him who desires take the water of life without price." (Rev. 22:17.) Most of the city people paid no attention to him, but before evening came he led some thirsty ones to the fountain of living water and brought them to the king's family.

Then one night, as the brothers met to discuss their work, Prophet looked very solemn. "I saw that Ophis and his hosts are very angry at the work we are doing," he said. "But still we must press the battle against him. There is a section of Sin City where he keeps his most wretched slaves. We must rescue all who want to be free. We must break every bond and open every iron gate. When we do this, we will surely suffer persecution. But Arnion says, 'Do not fear what you are about to suffer. Be faithful unto death, and I will give you the crown of life.'" (Rev. 2:10.)

Discussion:

1. Who is Helper? John 14:16, 17. (The Holy Spirit.)
2. Of what does the story of the upper room remind you? Acts 2:1-4. (Pentecost.) Can we expect to receive the Holy Spirit today? (Yes. The Spirit was poured out when the church first began its work, and it will be poured out again in greater measure as the church finishes its work.)
3. Can you guess what the wedding invitations are? (Literature.) We need to scatter Christian literature like the leaves of autumn.
4. Does Victim remind you of someone Jesus told about? (The man who was attacked by thieves in the story of the good Samaritan.)
5. What can juniors do to tell people about Jesus' soon coming? (Give out literature, enroll people in the Bible course, invite people to evangelistic meetings or Sabbath School, et cetera. Get the juniors to supply all the ideas they can.)

SIXTH DAY

FREING THE SLAVES; OPHIS FIGHTS BACK

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

I watched the group go to a section of Sin City called Liberation Land, which really was a strange name, because all the people there lived in cages. I learned that Ophis had named the place himself to make all his slaves think they were free. Now as the men looked over the territory, they decided to attack all the cages at once so that they might, if possible, rescue the slaves before Ophis could make trouble.

As Steward and Teacher wondered where to go, they were astonished to see a cage made of pure gold. And what they saw inside was more amazing still: a man with dark rings under his eyes sat chained, hand and foot, with gold chains attached to gold bars so heavy that he could hardly move. Also there were gold bars stacked all around him. On his name tag was the name Money Lover.

"Tell me, sir," said Steward (making the man jump), "why are you so nervous, and why do you have such dark rings under your eyes?"

"Alas," replied Money Lover, "I have not slept for many a night."

"Why can't you sleep?" asked Teacher.

"Why, I no sooner lie down than I hear footsteps, or see eyes peering at me through the

bars of this cage, and I know someone is trying to steal my gold. This cage around me is no protection from thieves. So I have to sit up all night, keeping watch over my treasure."

"If you were only like me," said Teacher, "you would sleep very sweetly, as the wise man said: 'The sleep of a labouring man is sweet, . . . but the abundance of the rich will not suffer him to sleep' (Eccl. 5:12)."

"Doesn't it bother you that your gold has imprisoned you and weighted you down so that you are a slave?" asked Steward.

"I love this gold," said Money Lover, "and I know how to get more of it. I just wish I had a safer place to keep it."

"I know of a safe place," said Steward. "Listen to this advice from the greatest Banker there is: 'Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, . . . where thieves break in and steal, but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, . . . where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also'" (Matt. 6:19-21, R.S.V.)."

"My heart is right here with my treasure, and I mean to keep it here," said Money Lover.

Sadly the men walked away. "Enslaved by gold!" said Steward, "and he wants to stay that way! No wonder Arnion said, 'How hard it will be for those who have riches to enter the kingdom of God!' (Mark 10:28, R.S.V.)."

Now while these two were talking to Money Lover, Evangelist and Yeled came upon a man with both eyes gouged out, walking around and around in a circle as he ground at the mill. (Judges 16:21.) In spite of his bulging arm and shoulder muscles, he had to strain with all his might to turn the heavy millstone.

"Sir, why are you doing such heavy work?" asked Evangelist.

"I'm trying to get ahead," droned the man, without stopping his tread.

"He's not getting ahead—he's just going around in circles," muttered Yeled under his breath.

"How many hours a day do you do this kind of work?" continued Evangelist.

"Two shifts—the day shift and the night shift."

"What do you get for all your labor?"

"Nice green paper," he answered. "I must have quite a pile of it by now. My wife keeps it for me."

Yeled could hardly hold back his anger as he saw the wife, named Spendthrift, sitting in one corner of the cage, burning the green paper as fast as her husband turned it over to her.

"Stop a minute!" begged Evangelist. "Listen to me! Why do you spend your strength for that which doesn't satisfy? (Isa. 55:2.) You were not made to be an ox or a machine. You were made to love and be loved! You are a child of Great King!"

The man lifted his head, but his mind seemed as blank as his empty eyes.

"You can have eternal life!" continued Evangelist.

"I don't want to live forever!" groaned the man as he continued grinding.

At this, Evangelist prayed softly, "O Arnion, open this man's inner eyes, that he may see." Then he said to the man: "You don't know what life is, because you are not really living. Great King wants to give you life right now—a life of love, joy, and peace."

For the first time the man stopped grinding. "What is love?" he asked.

Then Evangelist and Yeled told him about the greatest love of all—the love of Arnion for his children who ran away from him. And as the man listened, tears began to roll out of his empty eyes, showing that his inner eyes had been opened. Joyfully he let Evangelist release him from the millstone and lead him out of the cage.

But when Spendthrift saw what was happening, she was furious. "I'll report you to his owners!" she shrieked as she ran away.

A roar and a scream brought Shepherd and Rescue to another cage, where they saw a girl of eighteen clinging to the branch of a tree

while a lion, flicking its tail, watched her with greedy eyes from beneath.

"Help! I can't hang on much longer!" she screamed.

"Hold on!" called Shepherd, while he drew out his sling and fired off a stone that struck the lion on the head. As the great beast rolled over stunned, the girl dropped from the tree and landed right on top of him. Quickly she scrambled off, while the men entered the cage.

"How did you get yourself in such a dangerous position?" asked Shepherd.

"Why, I have had that lion since he was a cub," said the girl. "He was my pet—playful as a kitten—and ate out of my hand. But in just a few months' time he grew so big and strong that I had to be careful with him. Time after time he would spring on me from behind and knock me down; but though he banged me up quite badly, I thought he was just being playful. I never dreamed he wanted to hurt me. Then one day he killed a man and tasted blood, and from that time on I could not trust him anymore."

"You are lucky to be alive," exclaimed Rescue, as he led the girl out of the cage and locked the lion in. "Remember this—our enemy always behaves that way. First he acts friendly until we trust him, and then he turns on us as a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour." (1 Peter 5:8.)

Physician and Healer, meanwhile, had run to help a man who was crying out in pain. As they came near to his cage, the smell was so horrible that they could hardly get up close. The sight they saw was even worse. A man had a dead body tied to his back! On the dead body was written the word GUILT. "If he doesn't get rid of that soon," said Physician, "the dead body will infect his own body until it slowly rots away."

"How did you get such a terrible burden?" Physician asked the man.

"I lived a life of crime," he mourned, "and when I was finally arrested and tried, the judge sentenced me to this fate. O wretched man that I am! Who shall deliver me from this dead body?" (Rom. 7:24.)

"Arnion will save you!" exclaimed Healer. (Verse 25.)

"What did you say?" asked the poor man.

"You don't have to carry that terrible load," explained Healer. "Arnion has already suffered the punishment for your crimes. Would you like to get rid of your burden?"

"Oh, yes!" exclaimed the man.

Physician and Healer entered the cage and slashed the ropes so that the dead body slid to the floor.

"No more guilt! No more condemnation!" (Rom. 8:1), cried the man as he ran out of the cage. Then Physician and Healer washed him with strong soap, and instructed him to ask Arnion for a pure white robe to cover himself with. And as he asked, and received, and rejoiced in the great change that had come over him, Physician and Healer told him that he was now a member of the king's family and was invited to the wedding feast of Arnion. And the man jumped for joy.

But when the guard came to the cage and found the prisoner gone he pressed a button that sounded off a loud alarm.

Temperance and Self-control found a gloomy den with barred windows, in which a number of men and women were sitting at a long bar, drinking fiery red wine. Their eyes were red and bloodshot, and blood ran from their wounds. (Prov. 23:29, 30.) As one of the women lifted the tall glass to her mouth, Temperance was alarmed to see an adder coiled in the bottom of the glass. He looked at the others, and saw that their glasses were the same. "Don't look at wine when it is red!" he cried out. "At the last it bites like a serpent and stings like an adder!" (Verses 31, 32.)

At this the people at the bar became very angry, and rose to attack Temperance and his partner, shouting and brawling until there was a great uproar.

Now it happened at just this time that Spendthrift came running with her master, who was furious to find his slave gone. And at the same time the alarm went off, bringing a great number of guards running to see what had happened. On finding many of the cage doors opened, and the slaves escaped, the guards shouted: "Catch those men! Don't let one of them escape!"

At the sound of all the noise, a great mob from that section of the city gathered together to join in the excitement. "Away with those fellows! They're not worthy to live!" they shouted. Then I heard shots and shouts and cries, and saw some of the king's men fall to the ground. But in the confusion I could not tell who they were except that Evangelist was among them. Others were seized by the guards and thrust into dark prison cells. And as the mob was looking for more mischief to do, someone cried out, "On to the king's house!" and the others took up the cry.

Now I saw that Rescue was able to escape, and by running through side streets, managed to reach the house before the mob got there. As he burst panting into the house, he cried out, "Flee for your lives! The mob is coming!"

Discussion:

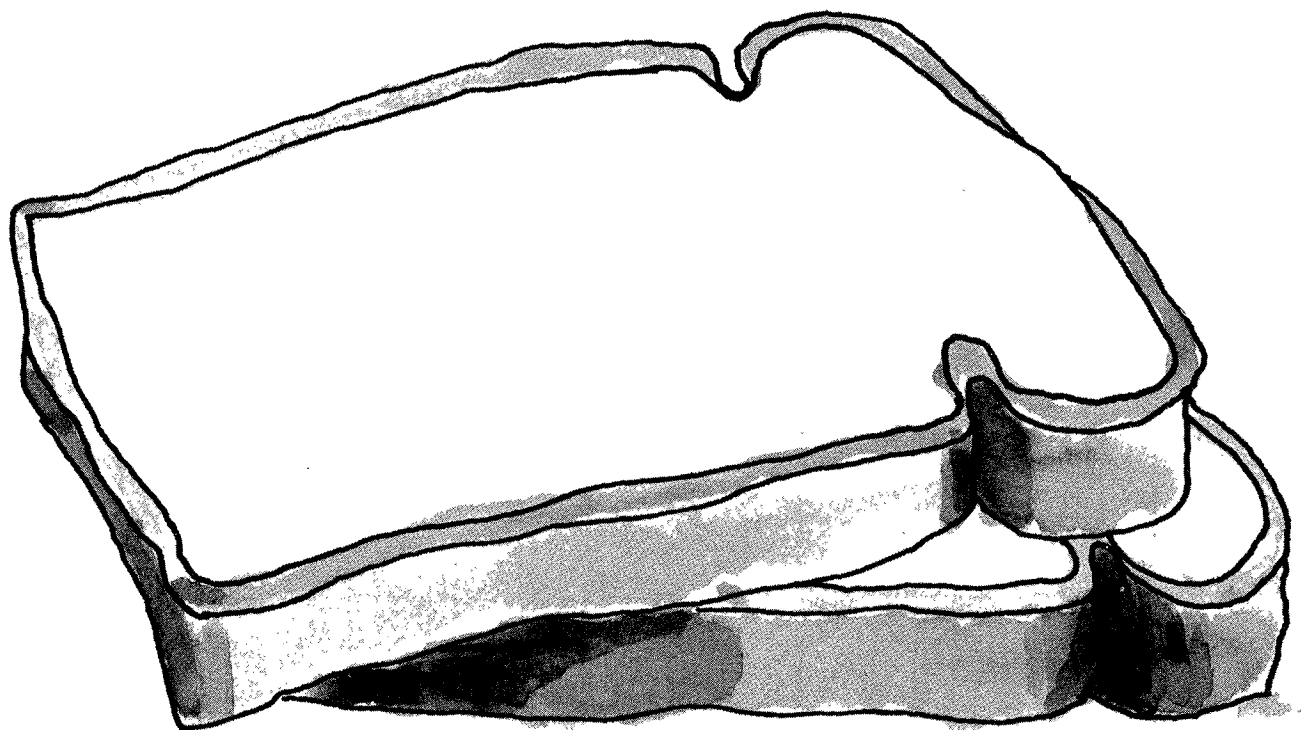
1. What is the meaning of Liberation Land? Did you know that Satan always promises you freedom while making a slave out of you? (Be free—cheat in a test, go shoplifting, smoke pot, try drugs—but sin never brings freedom, only slavery.)
2. Did you ever think it would be fun to have a lot of money? Well it isn't! People with money worry about how to keep from losing it and how to get more. The best place to keep our money is in God's bank. How do we put it there?
3. Does the man who was grinding at the mill remind you of someone in the Bible? (Samson.) Did you know there are people like him today? They work so hard trying to "get ahead" that they have no time to enjoy life with God and with their families and friends. What is the meaning of the blind eyes? (They are blind to the real joys of life.)
4. Who is the lion that wanted to eat the girl? 1 Peter 5:8. (Satan.) First Satan comes to us in the form of some pet sin that we think is harmless. Then it gets too strong for us. Even *one* sin that we love and refuse to give up has power to destroy us.
5. Did you know that guilt is a terrible burden that can kill us? Jesus never intended for us to carry this load. If we confess our sins and make all wrongs right, He will take the load from us.
6. Do you know any of Satan's slaves whom you can set free? Jesus has promised to send His angels to help you in this work.

SEVENTH DAY

RESCUED!

NOW AS I continued to look through the viewing glass, I saw the king's family run out the back door of the house to flee to the mountain. The older ones and the children could not run very fast, and the way was steep and rough. Desperately they scrambled over rocks and roots, frightened by the shouts of the mob getting closer and closer. Pastor stayed with the slowest ones, who were so bruised and bleeding and out of breath that they finally had to rest. Suddenly a group of armed men rushed upon them with raised swords to strike them. But as I watched, Pastor raised his arm and they dropped their swords and fell helpless to the ground. (*Early Writings*, pp. 15, 284, 285.) Then the little group struggled on until at last they and all the others were hidden by companies in the dens and caves of the rocks. And as their enemies still pursued them, they cried out, "Arnion, come and save us, or we will all

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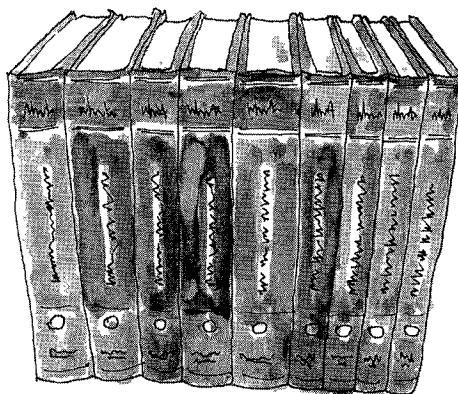
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be slain!" And the answer came back, "Stand fast! Help is coming!" (*The Great Controversy*, p. 633.) Then I saw that Saraf and other servants of Arnion were standing guard over them. The evil men could not get through that mighty guard.

I looked for Yeled, and saw him shivering in a dark, damp cell deep under the earth. "Yalda," he was moaning, "where are you? Evangelist, are you dead? Am I the only one left alive? Does anyone know where I am?" But there was no answer to his questions. Alone he lay trembling in the terrifying darkness, without food or fresh air, seemingly buried alive, left to die alone.

Then he remembered his life line to the throne. "Arnion, have you forgotten me?" he cried out in despair.

"I am with you always," came back the words, clear and distinct. "I will never leave you nor forsake you." (Matt. 28:20; Heb. 13:5.) Then fresh air from Great Mountain flowed through his life line, giving him new strength. Kerub brought him manna and water. Arnion's love warmed his heart through and through. The room glowed with a soft light, and the prison became as a palace. (*Ibid.*, p. 627.)

Yeled was no longer afraid, even when he heard the rattle of keys in the door, and a guard pulled him out to show him the death chamber. As he looked, he saw a deep pit with slime in the bottom. "Joseph and Jeremiah were once in there," boasted the guard. A little farther on he saw an ax and a chopping block. "Here is where John the Baptist and James and Paul came to their end," the guard reminded him. Next he saw a den of hungry lions, and a burning fiery furnace. "These are the tools we use against the followers of Arnion," said the guard, "and soon your turn will come!" Then he shoved Yeled back into his cell and slammed the door. Still Yeled was not frightened. It seemed to him that Joseph and Daniel and Paul were saying to him, "Be faithful unto death, and you will receive a crown of life." (Rev. 2:10.)

Now I saw that Ophis and his hosts thirsted for the blood of the king's children. One day all the rulers of Polluted Land gathered together in a great council meeting, and made a law saying that at midnight on the last day of the month all the king's family should be destroyed. Copies of the decree were sent all over the land. "Let us wipe them off the face of the earth!" they cried.

At last the dreadful day came. Ophis organized his great army into companies and assigned them their territory. "As soon as it gets dark," he commanded, "sneak up on the foe and wait. Then at midnight, when you hear the bells toll, shout, rush on them, and kill them!"

As darkness fell that evening, bands of evil men surrounded the prison ready to burst in on the prisoners. Other bands climbed the mountainside and waited silently outside the caves and dens, so none could escape. Suddenly all the bells in Polluted Land began to ring, and a great shout rent the air as the evil men rushed upon their prey.

Instantly black darkness covered the land. "I'm blind!" screamed one of the attackers. Others cursed and swore. Then they saw a brilliant rainbow shine across the whole sky and circle each little group of the king's family. And as they watched in terror, all the smog of Polluted Land rolled back like a scroll, and the starry heavens appeared in all their glory. Looking far up, they could see Great Mountain, and on top of it Great King on his throne, encircled by the rainbow. The shouting and the cursing were hushed, and nothing was heard but the voice of wailing. (*The Great Controversy*, pp. 636-639.)

Then as the whole army of Ophis watched, they saw Arnion appear in splendor, seated on a white horse. His eyes were as a flame of fire, and on his head were many crowns. As he rode forth to make war, all the armies of heaven followed him, seated on white horses, and clothed in white robes. Out of his mouth came a sharp sword with which to smite his

enemies. (Rev. 19:11-15.) The hosts of evil trembled as the mighty army came charging down the mountain to make war.

Under the pounding of the horses' hoofs, the ground shivered and shook. From the heart of the earth came a rumbling noise that grew louder and louder. Huge boulders broke loose from the mountain and fell crashing to the valley below.

In terror the army of Ophis—kings, generals, rich men, slaves, and freemen—hid themselves in the caves of the mountain and cried to the mountain and rocks, "Fall on us and hide us from the face of the king on his throne, and from the wrath of Arnion, for the great day of their wrath has come, and who shall be able to stand?" (Rev. 6:15-17.)

And as I watched I saw the army of Ophis fall to the ground, slain by the sword of Arnion and by the glory of his majesty.

Then as Arnion came closer, he cried with a loud voice, "You who lie in the prison house of death, come forth!" Suddenly the rumbling inside the earth swelled to a roar. The earth was rent, and the thick walls of a great underground prison split open. A host of prisoners held by Ophis from the time of faithful Abel down to the time of fearless Evangelist came forth in the glory of everlasting life. Then Arnion sent his armies before him to gather all his children together and escort them back up the mountain to meet him.

Oh, what a gathering that was, as the servants of the king entered the prisons and dens of the earth to lift out the king's children and carry them up to meet Arnion. What rejoicing there was as friends, long separated by death, met never to part again! Kerub lifted Yeled from his lonely cell, and Saraf brought Yalda out of her cave, and carried them up to Arnion, where they met with shouts of joy.

Then the whole vast host ascended together to the glorious Holy City at the top of Great Mountain. When they reached the sea of glass, Arnion arranged them in a great hollow square, while he stood in the center and presented to each one a crown, a harp, and a palm branch. I saw that some crowns were heavy with stars, while others had but few. (*Early Writings*, p. 16.) Yeled and Yalda smiled when they saw the stars in their crowns.

Then Arnion said in his lovely voice, "Come. O blessed of my father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you. For I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me, I was naked and you clothed me, I was in prison and you came to me." (Matt. 25:34-36.)

Yeled was so surprised that he spoke right up: "Arnion, when did we ever see you hungry and thirsty and naked and helped you?"

And Arnion answered, "When you helped all those poor people in Polluted Land, you were really helping me! Now, my children, because you have washed your robes and kept them white, you have a perfect right to enter the gates of the city and eat of the tree of life." (Rev. 22:14.) And when he said that, all the servants inside the city sang out: "Open the gates, that the righteous nation might go in!" (Isa. 26:2.) And Arnion swung the pearly gates open wide and led the great host into the city. Yeled and Yalda could hardly believe they were safe inside. How much had happened since that awful day when Ophis had lured them out of the gates of the palace!

As the children looked at the great company standing around the great white throne, they were thrilled to see some there whom they had invited. Victor was there, and he had brought others, and they had brought still more. The man who ground at the mill was there, with eyes to behold his king. And wonder of wonders, even Tough had accepted the invitation to come! As the children saw their friends, forever saved from the power of Ophis, their hearts overflowed with joy.

Then Arnion presented them all to Great King. "Father, these are your children, saved from the land of the enemy," he said. "They all

bear your image. They are all clothed in the pure white robes of my righteousness. All have come out of great tribulation and have washed their robes and made them white in my blood." (Rev. 7:14.)

Then Great King said, "It is done! The great work of salvation is done! And now I will dwell with you, and I will be your God, and you shall be my people." (Rev. 21:3.)

When Yeled and Yalda heard these words, they remembered their great sin and the tremendous sacrifice that was made to save them. And as they looked into the face of their king, tears filled their eyes and rolled down their cheeks.

Then as I watched, Great King stepped down from his throne and walked right up to the two children. With his own hand he wiped the tears from their eyes. (Rev. 21:7.) And then as he greeted his other children, he said to them, "You will never hunger and thirst any more; death shall be no more, neither shall there be mourning nor crying nor pain any more, for the former things have passed away." (Rev. 21:4.)

When they heard these words, all of the king's family and the king's servants raised their voices and sang: "Blessing and glory, and wisdom, and thanksgiving, and honor, and power, and might, be to our God for ever and ever!" (Rev. 7:12.)

Then I heard the lovely voice of Arnion say, "Come, my people, you have come out of great tribulation and done my will—come in to supper, for I will gird myself and serve you." And he led them to a table of pure silver, many miles in length, spread with the most delicious food—the fruit of the tree of life, the manna, almonds, figs, pomegranates, grapes, and other kinds of fruit. (*Early Writings*, p. 19.) And as the great family was seated about the long, long table, I heard an angel choir, like the sound of a hundred oceans, singing:

"Hallelujah! For the Lord our God the Almighty reigns.

Let us rejoice and exult and give him the glory

For the marriage of Arnion has come;
And his bride has made herself ready."
(Rev. 19:6-8.)

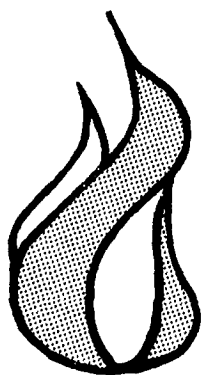
Then Great King himself said with a loud voice, "Blessed are those who are invited to the marriage supper of Arnion!" (Verse 9.)

And as I looked, I wished myself among them.

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

Discussion:

1. Would you like to have a viewing glass so that you could see the worlds above and below? You have one already! Guess what it is! (The Bible and the Spirit of Prophecy books.) If the children liked this story, encourage them to read Ellen G. White's first vision in *Early Writings*, pages 13-20, and then direct them to other readings.
2. Where will God's people be when Jesus comes to rescue them? (Some in prison cells, some in caves and dens of the mountains. Others will be in the prison house of death.)
3. What comfort will they have during this time? (Angels are guarding them and supplying their needs. They can still talk to Jesus. They have the promises of the Bible that He will never leave them nor forsake them.)
4. What is the death decree? (A law that all God's people must be slain.)
5. Who are the armies that come with Arnion on white horses? (The angels.)
6. What do you think is the greatest joy of heaven? (Seeing Jesus and God, seeing those we have won, being reunited with our friends, getting acquainted with God, going to the marriage supper of the Lamb, et cetera.)



The Promise of Power

By DeWITT S. OSGOOD

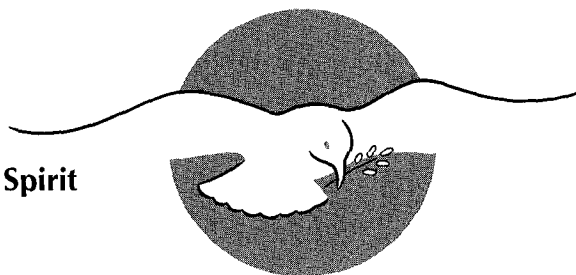
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A Message From the General Conference President

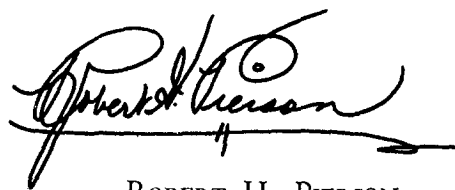
Must Reading in the Seventies

AT EVERY camp meeting, and nearly every church I visit, the experience is the same—everywhere our workers and members have words of warm appreciation for the new “good old REVIEW.” The new REVIEW has all the features of the “good old days,” plus many new features that make it *must* reading in the 1970’s.

I’ve just glanced through one of the recent issues. Here is what I found: deeply spiritual editorials by the editors on topics of current interest; letters from readers airing their opinions on articles that have appeared, or on matters pertinent to the church in our day; regular features for young and old that grip one’s attention; spiritual messages from church leaders; articles on family living; reports from all parts of the world dealing with a rapidly finishing work—something for every member of the family.

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God bless you and yours!

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Robert H. Pierson". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long horizontal flourish at the end.

ROBERT H. PIERSON