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The greatest of these is love

Week of Prayer messages
for October 28 to
November 4, 1978



**"If I speak with the tongues of men
and of angels, but do not have love,
I have become a noisy gong
or a clanging cymbal."**

1 Corinthians 13:1, N.A.S.B.

Message from the General Conference officers

Probably no other group of Seventh-day Adventists has a better opportunity to observe and feel the needs of the global church than the workers at the General Conference. The General Conference headquarters is in constant contact with practically all parts of the world wherever God's people live and work.

Every working day hundreds of letters, reports, telephone messages, cables, and telexes pour into and out from the world headquarters buildings. There is never a time when some General Conference representatives are not visiting some areas of the world field. Few religious organizations can match the Seventh-day Adventist international contact with its scattered membership.

What do administrative leaders, who have access to a wealth of church information, see as the greatest need for God's church at this special time in the world's history?

Without a moment's hesitation we answer: a spiritual renewal for each individual church member. In saying this, we by no means ignore other pressing needs that confront us, such as: more personnel, money, liberty, literature, institutions, equipment.

The list is endless. But first and foremost looms the need for spiritual renewal, a more personal commitment to Jesus Christ, daily communion with the living God, and wholehearted dedication to the church's mission.

The Week of Prayer is an opportunity for each one of us individually and for the church as a whole to make such a commitment and to experience a spiritual renewal.

First, the promises of God are plain. James writes, "The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much" (chap. 5:16).

Tremendous power is available through prayer. Ellen White says, "Prayer is the breath of the soul. It is the secret of spiritual power. No other means of grace can be substituted, and the health of the soul be preserved."—*Gospel Workers*, pp. 254, 255. She points out that "at the sound of fervent prayer, Satan's whole host trembles."—*Testimonies*, vol. 1, p. 346.

Second, we know from experience what prayer can accomplish. Looking back on the Weeks of Prayer at the Adventist schools we attended, we remember what they meant to us. Some of us found our Saviour for the first time. We made decisions. We began an intimate fellowship with Christ during those special Week of Prayer sessions. God is no different now. Access to His treasure is still open. He was never more willing than now to place Heaven's best at our disposal.

Love is the theme for the 1978 Week of Prayer. Workers of experience from several fields have written on this theme, which has universal appeal. Readers in different sections of the world may want to study messages written in their style and adapted to their cultural backgrounds. We believe that the writers from different ethnic and cultural backgrounds and with different experiences in life have given of their best in these messages.

We extend to you a cordial invitation to take an active part in the 1978 Week of Prayer. Tremendous power is available for today's tremendous needs. It is well to remember that "it is a part of God's plan to grant us, in answer to the prayer of faith, that which He would not bestow did we not thus ask."—*The Great Controversy*, p. 525.

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God is love



Love cannot be commanded;
it cannot be won by
force or authority.
Only by love is love awakened.

By ELLEN G. WHITE

"God is love" (1 John 4:16). His nature, His law, is love. It ever has been; it ever will be. "The high and lofty One that inhabiteth eternity," whose "ways are everlasting," changeth not. With Him "is no variableness, neither shadow of turning" (Isa. 57:15; Hab. 3:6; James 1:17). Every manifestation of creative power is an expression of infinite love. The sovereignty of God involves fullness of blessing to all created beings. . . .

The history of the great conflict between good and evil, from the time it first began in heaven to the final overthrow of rebellion and the total eradication of sin, is also a demonstration of God's unchanging love. . . .

The law of love being the foundation of the government of God, the happiness of all intelligent beings depends upon their perfect accord with its great principles of righteousness. . . .

So long as all created beings acknowledged the allegiance of love, there was perfect harmony throughout the universe of God. It was the joy of the heavenly host to fulfill the purpose of their Creator. They delighted in reflecting His glory and showing forth His praise. And while love to God was supreme, love for one another was confident and unselfish. There was no note of discord to mar the celestial harmonies.¹

Man was originally endowed with noble powers and a well-balanced mind. He was perfect in his being, and in harmony with God. His thoughts were pure, his aims holy. But through disobedience, his powers were perverted, and selfishness took the place of love. His nature became so weakened through transgression that it was impossible for him, in his own strength, to resist the power of evil. He was made captive by Satan, and would have remained so forever had not God specially interposed.²

Satan led men to conceive of God as a

being whose chief attribute is stern justice—one who is a severe judge, a harsh, exacting creditor. He pictured the Creator as a being who is watching with jealous eye to discern the errors and mistakes of men, that He may visit judgments upon them.³

The earth was dark through misapprehension of God. That the gloomy shadows might be lightened, that the world might be brought back to God, Satan's deceptive power was to be broken. This could not be done by force. The exercise of force is contrary to the principles of God's government; He desires only the service of love; and love cannot be commanded; it cannot be won by force or authority. Only by love is love awakened. To know God is to love Him; His character must be manifested in contrast to the character of Satan. This work only one Being in all the universe could do. Only He who knew the height and depth of the love of God could make it known.⁴

The gift of Christ reveals the Father's heart. It testifies that the thoughts of God toward us are "thoughts of peace, and not of evil" (Jer. 29:11). It declares that while God's hatred of sin is as strong as death, His love for the sinner is stronger than death. Having undertaken our redemption, He will spare nothing, however dear, which is necessary to the completion of His work. No truth essential to our salvation is withheld, no miracle of mercy is neglected, no divine agency is left unemployed. Favor is heaped upon favor, gift upon gift. The whole treasury of heaven is open to those He seeks to save. Having collected the riches of the universe, and laid open the resources of infinite power, He gives them all into the hands of Christ, and says, All these are for man. Use these gifts to convince him that there is no love greater than Mine in earth or heaven. His

greatest happiness will be found in loving Me.

At the cross of Calvary, love and selfishness stood face to face. Here was their crowning manifestation. Christ had lived only to comfort and bless, and in putting Him to death, Satan manifested the malignity of his hatred against God. He made it evident that the real purpose of his rebellion was to dethrone God, and to destroy Him through whom the love of God was shown.⁵

The thick darkness with which Satan had endeavored to enshroud the throne of Deity was swept away by the world's Redeemer, and the Father was again manifest to men as the light of life.

When Philip came to Jesus with the request, "Show us the Father, and it sufficeth us," the Saviour answered him: "Have I been so long time with you, and yet hast thou not known me, Philip? he that hath seen me hath seen the Father; and how sayest thou then, Show us the Father?" Christ declares Himself to be sent into the world as a representative of the Father. In His nobility of character, in His mercy and tender pity, in His love and goodness, He stands before us as the embodiment of divine perfection, the image of the invisible God. . . .

God's love unfathomable

The dearest gift that heaven itself had to bestow has been poured out that God "might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus." By that gift men are uplifted from the ruin and degradation of sin to become children of God. . . .

Brethren, with the beloved John I call upon you to "behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God." What love, what matchless love, that, sinners and aliens as we are, we may be brought back to God and adopted into His family! We may address Him by the endearing name, "Our Father," which is a sign of our affection for Him and pledge of His tender regard and relationship to us. And the Son of God, beholding the heirs of grace, "is not ashamed to call them brethren." They have even a more sacred relationship to God than have the angels who have never fallen.

All the paternal love which has come down from generation to generation through the channel of human hearts, all the springs of tenderness which have opened in the souls of men, are but as a tiny rill to the boundless ocean when compared with the infinite, exhaustless love of God. Tongue cannot utter it; pen cannot portray it. You may meditate upon it every day of your life; you may search the Scriptures diligently in order to understand it; you may summon every power and capability that God has given

you, in the endeavor to comprehend the love and compassion of the heavenly Father; and yet there is an infinity beyond. You may study that love for ages; yet you can never fully comprehend the length and the breadth, the depth and the height, of the love of God in giving His Son to die for the world. Eternity itself can never fully reveal it.⁶

We must reflect His love

The life of Christ was a life charged with a divine message of the love of God, and He longed intensely to impart this love to others in rich measure. Compassion beamed from His countenance, and His conduct was characterized by grace, humility, truth, and love. Every member of His church militant must manifest the same qualities, if he would join the church triumphant.⁷

During every hour of Christ's sojourn upon the earth, the love of God was flowing from Him in irrepressible streams. All who are imbued with His Spirit will love as He loved. The very principle that actuated Christ will actuate them in all their dealing one with another.

This love is the evidence of their discipleship. "By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples," said Jesus, "if ye have love one to another." When men are bound together, not by force or self-interest, but by love, they show the working of an influence that is above every human influence. Where this oneness exists, it is evidence that the image of God is being restored in humanity, that a new principle of life has been implanted.⁸

We are to love God supremely and our neighbors as ourselves.⁹ There are some who manifest great affection for their relatives, for their friends and favorites, who yet fail to be kind and considerate to those who need tender sympathy, who need kindness and love. With earnest heart, let us inquire, Who is my neighbor?¹⁰

Christ has shown that our neighbor does not mean merely one of the church or faith to which we belong. It has no reference to race, color, or class distinction. Our neighbor is every person who needs our help. . . . Selfishness and cold formality have well-nigh extinguished the fire of love, and dispelled the graces that should make fragrant the character. Many who profess His name have lost sight of the fact that Christians are to represent Christ. Unless there is practical self-sacrifice for the good of others, in the family circle, in the neighborhood, in the church, and wherever we may be, then whatever our profession, we are not Christians.¹¹

In heaven none will think of self, nor seek their own pleasure; but all, from pure, genuine love, will seek the happi-

ness of the heavenly beings around them. If we wish to enjoy heavenly society in the earth made new, we must be governed by heavenly principles here.¹²

But we can never come into possession of this spirit by *trying* to love others. What is needed is the love of Christ in the heart. When self is merged in Christ, love springs forth spontaneously. The completeness of Christian character is attained when the impulse to help and bless others springs constantly from within—when the sunshine of heaven fills the heart and is revealed in the countenance.

It is not possible for the heart in which Christ abides to be destitute of love. If we love God because He first loved us, we shall love all for whom Christ died. We cannot come in touch with divinity without coming in touch with humanity; for in Him who sits upon the throne of the universe, divinity and humanity are combined. Connected with Christ, we are connected with our fellow men by the golden links of the chain of love. Then the pity and compassion of Christ will be manifest in our life. . . .

It will be as natural for us to minister to the needy and suffering as it was for Christ to go about doing good.¹³

In order for the church to prosper there must be a studious effort on the part of its members to cherish the precious plant of love. Let it have every advantage that it may flourish in the heart. Every true Christian will develop in his life the characteristics of this divine love; he will reveal a spirit of forbearance, of beneficence, and a freedom from envy and jealousy. This character developed in word and act will not re-

pulse, and will not be unapproachable, cold, and indifferent to the interests of others. The person who cultivates the precious plant of love will be self-denying in spirit, and will not yield self-control even under provocation. He will not impute wrong motives and evil intentions to others, but will feel deeply over sin when discovered in any of the disciples of Christ.

Love vaunteth not itself. It is a humble element; it never prompts a man to boast, to exalt himself. Love for God and for our fellow men will not be revealed in acts of rashness nor lead us to be overbearing, faultfinding, or dictatorial. Love is not puffed up. The heart where love reigns will be guided to a gentle, courteous, compassionate course of conduct toward others, whether they suit our fancy or not, whether they respect us or treat us ill. Love is an active principle; it keeps the good of others continually before us, thus restraining us from inconsiderate actions lest we fail of our object in winning souls to Christ.¹⁴

Our theme in heaven

God's wonderful purpose of grace, the mystery of redeeming love, is the theme into which "angels desire to look," and it will be their study throughout endless ages. Both the redeemed and the unfallen beings will find in the cross of Christ their science and their song. It will be seen that the glory shining in the face of Jesus is the glory of self-sacrificing love. In the light of Calvary it will be seen that the law of self-renouncing love is the law of life for earth and heaven; that the love which "seeketh not her own" has its source in the heart of God;



Through the good Samaritan parable Christ has shown that our neighbor does not mean merely one of the church or faith to which we belong. Our neighbor is every person who needs help.

and that in the meek and lowly One is manifested the character of Him who dwelleth in the light which no man can approach unto.¹⁵

And the years of eternity, as they roll, will bring richer and still more glorious revelations of God and of Christ. As knowledge is progressive, so will love, reverence, and happiness increase. The more men learn of God, the greater will be their admiration of His character. As Jesus opens before them the riches of temptation and the amazing achievements in the great controversy with Satan, the hearts of the ransomed thrill with more fervent devotion, and with more rapturous joy they sweep the harps of gold; and ten thousand times ten thousand and thousands of thousands of voices unite to swell the mighty chorus of praise.

"And every creature which is in heaven, and on the earth, and under the earth, and such as are in the sea, and all that are in them, heard I saying, Blessing, and honour, and glory, and power, be unto him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb for ever and ever" (Rev. 5:13).

The great controversy is ended. Sin and sinners are no more. The entire universe is clean. One pulse of harmony and gladness beats through the vast creation. From Him who created all, flow life and light and gladness, throughout the realms of illimitable space. From the minutest atom to the greatest world, all things, animate and inanimate, in their unshadowed beauty and perfect joy, declare that God is love.¹⁶

REFERENCES

- ¹ *Patriarchs and Prophets*, pp. 33-35. (Italics supplied.)
- ² *Steps to Christ*, p. 17.
- ³ *Ibid.*, p. 11.
- ⁴ *The Desire of Ages*, p. 22.
- ⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 57.
- ⁶ *Testimonies*, vol. 5, pp. 739, 740.
- ⁷ *Fundamentals of Christian Education*, p. 179.
- ⁸ *The Desire of Ages*, p. 678.
- ⁹ *Sons and Daughters of God*, p. 52.
- ¹⁰ *Ibid.*
- ¹¹ *The Desire of Ages*, pp. 503, 504.
- ¹² *Testimonies*, vol. 2, pp. 132, 133.
- ¹³ *Christ's Object Lessons*, pp. 384, 385.
- ¹⁴ *Testimonies*, vol. 5, pp. 123, 124.
- ¹⁵ *The Desire of Ages*, pp. 19, 20.
- ¹⁶ *The Great Controversy*, p. 678.

Questions for discussion

1. What law is the foundation of God's government? How is this law most simply stated? See Matthew 22:36-39. How are these two commandments elaborated for the benefit of sinners? See Exodus 20:3-17; Romans 13:8-10.
2. Why was Jesus the only One who could reveal the love of God to fallen men?
3. What blessings result from Christ's death on the cross?
4. How much does God love us? Can we have the same love for others as God has for us? If so, how? If not, why not?
4. How essential is it for me to be a loving Christian? To whom?
6. Give a description of the Christian who truly reflects Christ's love.
7. What will men and angels study throughout eternity?

Sunday, October 29

Love is the greatest



The Christian world owes
a great debt of gratitude
to Paul for his treatise
on love found in 1 Corinthians 13.

By DON F. NEUFELD

"Now abide faith, hope, love, these three; but the greatest of these is love" (1 Cor. 13:13, N.A.S.B.).

Faith is important in Christian experience, as is hope. But more exalted is love. Why is this? What type of experience is comprehended in the term "love"?

Answers to these questions are found in 1 Corinthians 13. The Christian world owes a great debt of gratitude to Paul for his treatise on love found in this chapter.

Since the composition of this masterpiece on love, no Christian has any excuse for misunderstanding love or for failing to exhibit it in his life. If he wishes to know how well he is doing in his exhibition of love, all he needs to do is to look into the mirror of 1 Corinthians 13. Immediately any shortcomings become painfully apparent.

It is this chapter on love, 1 Corinthians 13, that forms the base for our Week of Prayer readings this year. As during this week this chapter's message is restudied and, by the grace of God, reapplied to our lives, it is inevitable that changes will be wrought in our lives, our homes, and our churches.

The purpose of 1 Corinthians 13

Where shall we begin our study of Paul's psalm of love? Let us look at it first in its context. What accounts for its place in Paul's letter to the Corinthian church?

Paul wrote this letter to the Corinthians to correct certain faults and misconceptions that had begun to plague the young congregation. Among other things, the believers were more zealous in outward religious show than in the condition of the heart. They exulted

particularly in the miraculous gifts of the Holy Spirit, which were especially evident in their congregation. "Ye come behind in no gift; waiting for the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ" (chap. 1:7), Paul told them.

Each member of the congregation had been given some miraculous gift (chap. 12:7). But instead of profiting from these gifts, some members used them for outward display and self-glory.

We should not be too hard on these Christians. They were new in the faith. In fact, when they were converted, Christianity was only some 20 years old. They did not have many of the advantages we have today. The New Testament was just beginning to be written, and copies of the Old Testament were scarce. No wonder these Christians had shortcomings; and, interestingly, it was these shortcomings that gave rise to Paul's great masterpiece of love.

Paul's ode to love is sandwiched in between his extended discussion of the charismatic gifts in chapter 12 and the continuation of this topic in chapter 14. The Corinthians were making these gifts ends in themselves. They were proud of their gifts and without warrant exalted some gifts above others. Paul pointed out to them that this was wrong. Though gifts were important and though it was proper to "covet earnestly the best gifts" (chap. 12:31), the gifts were secondary when compared with love. Without love, Paul told them, "tongues" were mere sounding brass; without love, "prophecy," "knowledge," "faith," are meaningless. The gifts serve temporary needs and will one day vanish, because in a perfect world they will no longer be needed. But love will remain throughout all eternity. Only those who love will enter that better land.

And so it is important that this week we restudy what love is; that we take a

Don F. Neufeld is an associate editor of the ADVENTIST REVIEW.

fresh look into the mirror of 1 Corinthians 13. If our Christian service is mere playacting without love, we should make certain we acquire and exhibit in our lives the all-important essential—love.

Love is a principle

The theme of love is a thread that runs through the entire Bible. John the apostle defined love simply when he said, "God is love" (1 John 4:8).

In other words, if we want to know what love is, we must look at God. His character is love. The way He treats people is love. If we treat people the way God treats them, we love them.

Some people confuse Bible love with emotional feeling. They think that to love a person they must feel toward him as they feel, for example, toward their spouses or members of their families. But Bible love is something that can be directed even toward people we don't like. It is not dependent on feeling. It is a principle.

It is true that love toward certain people evinces warm, satisfying, emotional feelings, but the reason such feelings are present is that the persons loved respond with reciprocal feelings.

But Bible love extends to all people regardless of responses. It is this type of love that God has demonstrated to us. "God so loved the world" (John 3:16). He loves even those who are at enmity with Him.

This type of love we, too, must have. We, too, must love our enemies. Jesus specifically commands us to do so (Matt. 5:44). Obedience to such a command would be impossible if Christians were expected to feel toward their enemies as they feel toward members of their immediate families. But this is not what God requires.

What is required is that Christians treat their enemies as God treats those who are at enmity with Him, namely with concern and without partiality. Jesus goes on to explain: "That ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven: for he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust" (verse 45).

When it is grasped that to love people is to treat them as God treats them, love becomes understandable and possible.

We also get an interesting definition of love when we look at the law of God. In their preaching of the law, Seventh-day Adventists have not always emphasized its love aspect. As a result some people have gotten the idea that love stands in antithesis to law, that whereas love is warm and dynamic, the law is cold and legalistic. That people should get such an impression from Seventh-day Adventist proclamation of the law is regrettable. The law must not be proclaimed nega-

tively and legalistically as a mere system of do's and don'ts, but positively as an expression of God's character, and God is love. Therefore to love is to fulfill the law, and to fulfill the law is to love.

Thus in the law we have another definition of love. Summed up, the law says to us, "Be like God." How much more effective our preaching of the law would be if we proclaimed it as summed up in love. Jesus summed up Old Testament teaching in two great commandments, "Love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind," and "Love thy neighbour as thyself" (chap. 22:37, 39). He added, "On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets" (verse 40).

Thus the love Jesus, Paul, and John speak about is far more than some indefinable emotion, some mysterious force that either is or is not present, depending upon circumstances. Bible love is a principle that can be commanded, controlled, and directed toward friends and enemies alike.

If God is love, then in Paul's definition of love in 1 Corinthians 13, if we substitute the term "God" for "love," we should have a true statement.

Will it work? Let us begin, for example, with verse 4. This is how it would read: "God is patient and kind" (R.S.V.). Is that true? Most assuredly. God's lovingkindness endures forever. His long-suffering is repeatedly extolled.

Since Jesus and the Father are one, and since Jesus came to reveal the Father, we can substitute the name of Jesus where "love" appears. If we did this, verse 5 would read: "Jesus is not arrogant or rude. Jesus does not insist on His own way; He is not irritable or resentful." How true a characterization this is of our Saviour!

We can love like that

But now comes the difficult part of our experiment. Substitute your own name where "love" appears in verses 4 to 7. This is the crucial test. Are the statements in verse 4 to 7 true if your name is substituted—"John/Jane is patient and kind . . . not jealous or boastful . . . not arrogant or rude"?

If they are not true, there is something we must do. We must set about to correct the situation immediately. There is a fountain that has been opened in the house of David for sin and uncleanness. Into it we must plunge for cleansing. Jesus bids us to come to Him if a look into the mirror of 1 Corinthians 13 reveals defects and shortcomings. "Through faith in Christ, every deficiency of character may be supplied, every defilement cleansed, every fault corrected, every excellence developed."—*Education*, p. 257.

No matter how impressive our record

of Christian service may be, how many hours each week we devote to church work or personal evangelism, without love we are nothing. Even though others may be helped, our wearisome toil profits us nothing, unless, as Paul emphasizes, our characters reflect the character of God. God has made every provision by which such a transformation may be effected. Jesus died on the cross so that our natures may be changed.

At the same time, it must be remembered that reflecting the image of God and of Jesus is a progressive experience. We can reflect that character only insofar as we know what that character is like. 1 Corinthians 13 gives us much helpful information, as we shall discover this week. But the entire Scriptures are a revelation of the character of God.

To grow in love, therefore, we must daily gain fresh glimpses of God's character. We gain this by a daily study of the Word. 1 Corinthians 13, as beautiful a poem on love as it is, in reality is only a beginning, whose study should be a stimulus to drive us to study all of Scripture, that we may see love in all its intricate aspects.

Thus we grow in love as we feed on the Word. And perhaps this is the most important decision we can make during this Week of Prayer—to resolve every day to search the Word for some fresh revelation of the character of God our Father and Jesus Christ His Son; and when we make a discovery, by the grace of God to incorporate that newly revealed aspect of God's character into our lives. More is involved here than merely praying that we may reflect love. God works through the Word and through our intelligent understanding of that Word and through our wills to effect transformations of character.

Thus we must progress until, as Paul says in 1 Corinthians 13, "That which is perfect is come" (verse 10). At that time we shall see "face to face" and we shall "know even as also" we are "known" (verse 12).

Questions for discussion

1. How does the type of love that the Christian is enjoined to exhibit differ from the experiences the world calls love?

2. What do you think of the conclusion some draw that the love that God has for the human family leads Him to be soft and to excuse defects of character? What are some Bible examples of God's attitude toward sin? What can we learn from these examples?

3. To what extent should we allow our love for others, including our children, to excuse undesirable traits in their characters? At what point does our alleged love become indulgence?

4. In what way is it possible to love those we do not like?

5. In what way is love greater than faith? than hope?

Love in action



The world is starving for something
that will fill the needs of the heart,
something that will satisfy the
cravings of the human soul.

By G. J. CHRISTO

It was a modern enactment of an old story, one that has been repeated by Christians in every age since the telling of the original story by Jesus. The ancient setting was different, as were the characters, but the spirit of concern, the principle of love, was the same.

An unknown stranger lay dying by the gate of the mission office in northeast India. As is common, scores of passersby ignored the unconscious man. Christian love, however, prompted three women from the mission to come to his rescue.

The local doctor had pronounced his condition hopeless and had left him to die. The stranger had no will to live. His family and friends had forsaken him. His plot of land had been taken by one of his creditors. To the women, though, he was a man for whom Christ died. How could they let him die without making an effort to save him?

Lovingly they cared for him. As strength returned, he was introduced to Jesus. He was told of His love. He recognized that love, for he had seen it demonstrated in the ministry of his new Christian friends. A few months later the once-dying stranger gave his heart to Christ.

It is difficult to explain to some non-Christians that giving is the natural fruit of Christianity. A man who gives an annual Ingathering contribution once responded to words of appreciation, "I do not give because I want to help you, but like a good Hindu I am building up credit for my next life." He unashamedly admitted that his giving was not prompted by another's need, but by future profit. His motive was to receive a reward.

Love is the foundation of God's every action. This love expressed itself in the

creation of mankind, and God intended that love should be the basis of men's and women's relationship to their Maker and to one another. The intrusion of sin brought about a change in this relationship, but Calvary made possible a restoration of what had been lost.

Without love, there is no Christianity. "God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son" (John 3:16). In that gift, all Heaven was emptied. God the Son voluntarily left His heavenly home, and condescended to share the lot of sinful man and to pay the penalty of man's sin. Why? Among other reasons, to enable mankind to demonstrate the same kind of love that prompted God to extend His love to all of us. This love principle takes root in a person when he chooses Jesus as his King. Such love cannot be hidden.

"When self is merged in Christ, love springs forth spontaneously."—*Christ's Object Lessons*, p. 384. This love transcends all racial and cultural barriers. It seems to serve a neighbor's highest good, which is more than just providing the basic necessities of food, clothing, and shelter. Love does more than take care of someone's physical and social needs. Love also does all it can to bring others into relationship with God, in whose image they were created.

For some Christians, one of the motives for doing good seems to be to increase church membership. If by this is implied the winning of souls for God's eternal kingdom, the motivation is justified. Christians should perform good deeds without thought of returns, personal or organizational. The Christian will do his works of love motivated by the love of God. He will not need competition or other man-devised incentives to motivate him.

Millions find it easier to do good than to love. Doing good brings to them a

degree of satisfaction. It inflates their ego and establishes for them a reputation. Like the rich young ruler, many rationalize that strict adherence to doctrine and performance of duty can meet the Master's approval. When Jesus pointed out the young ruler's lack, "he went away sorrowful" (see Matt. 19:16-22). "The young man desired no further enlightenment. He had cherished an idol in the soul; the world was his god. He professed to have kept the commandments, but he was destitute of the principle which is the very spirit and life of them all. He did not possess true love for God or man. This want was the want of everything that would qualify him to enter the kingdom of heaven. In his love of self and worldly gain he was out of harmony with the principles of heaven."—*Ibid.*, p. 392.

When one loves Jesus, he is zealous to save all those whom Jesus loves. Everyone who comes into contact with a Christian must be made aware of the potential he can reach in Christ. Bishop Pickett, who gave a lifetime of service in India, tells of an outcaste who led his Brahmin master to Jesus. The outcaste was cruelly beaten by his master for refusing to join in stealing fruit from a neighbor. The moral firmness of his menial servant infuriated the Brahmin. Later, when he heard the servant praying for him, asking God to forgive him, his proud spirit broke, and he gave his heart to God.

Love is accepting others

Many of us have observed the good accomplished by the zeal of a spirit-filled literature evangelist, the selfless ministry of a pastor, the patient love of a teacher, or the healing touch of a Christian physician. Through their loving service, new impulses were awakened in sin-darkened lives. The lamp of love they carried with them ignited a spark of hope for those who considered themselves hopeless. If Adventist Christians could only catch a vision of what they might accomplish by love in action, how soon the work of God might be finished. "If we would humble ourselves before God, and be kind and courteous and tender-hearted and pitiful, there would be one hundred conversions to the truth where now there is only one."—*Testimonies*, vol. 9, p. 189.

As one travels around the world, he becomes impressed with the fact that Christianity has produced much that dazzles the eye. There are famous edifices with the most exquisite works of art that appeal to man's aesthetic nature. There are monuments of learning that have shaped the lives and destinies of those who have thronged their halls. There are renowned institutions that have ministered to the physical maladies

G. J. Christo is secretary of the Southern Asia Division Advisory Council.

of man. There are the lofty ideals of a moral code of behavior that have influenced the constitution of many a nation. All of these have served to attract people to Christianity. But although these may thrill and dazzle, the world is starving for something that will fill the needs of the heart, something that will satisfy the cravings of the human soul.

Love is witnessing to others

The greatest need of the church is not for more and larger institutions, better facilities, or even more streamlined methods of witnessing. Its greatest need is for love in the life of each witness. A spirit of secularism and materialism in the church has militated against the church's witness so that it no longer reflects the selfless, loving ministry of the Saviour. "A profession of Christ without this deep love is mere talk, dry formality, and heavy drudgery."—*Steps to Christ*, p. 45.

Unless our activity witnesses of this love, our feverish attempts are as "sounding brass" and a "tinkling cymbal." The church needs a spirit of concern for broken lives. It needs to awaken in men and women a sense of their need of the healing touch of Jesus. "The last message of mercy to be given to the world, is a revelation of His character of love."—*Christ's Object Lessons*, p. 415.

A loving, lovable Christian life of self-denial and service is the church's greatest asset. People will be drawn to Jesus when they see His love on display. "Our influence upon others depends not so much upon what we say as upon what we are. Men may combat and defy our logic, they may resist our appeals; but a

life of disinterested love is an argument they cannot gainsay. A consistent life, characterized by the meekness of Christ, is a power in the world."—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 142.

The absence of this spirit in us leads people to exclaim, "We like your Christ, but we have no time for Christians." Our lives of contradictions and hypocrisies have not impressed them. Recognizing the magnetic power of Christ's love, Mahatma Gandhi observed, "If Christians were to live the life of Christ, all India would respond to Christianity."

If the members of the church were filled with the love of Jesus, organizational and institutional witness would be augmented by a mighty thrust of personal witnessing. Then would come to pass the prediction of the servant of the Lord: "Hundreds and thousands were seen visiting families and opening before them the Word of God. Hearts were convicted by the power of the Holy Spirit, and a spirit of genuine conversion was manifest."—*Testimonies*, vol. 9, p. 126.

The history of the early Christian church underlines the efficacy of personal involvement. "The early Christian church was blessed with some great preachers, but the fact that Christianity spread over that hard Roman world like a forest fire was due not so much to great preachers as to the personal testimony of ordinary men and women who went out to tell their friends the amazing difference that knowing Jesus had made in their lives."—Clovis G. Chappell, *When the Church Was Young*.

It is the duty of every minister to lay the burden of witnessing upon his mem-

bers. "Earnestly and untiringly he seeks to inspire the believers with a desire to win souls for Christ, remembering that every addition to the church should be one more agency for the carrying out of the plan of redemption."—*The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 207. When one does not use the faculties given to him by the Spirit, these powers will lose their vitality.

Love enriches everyone

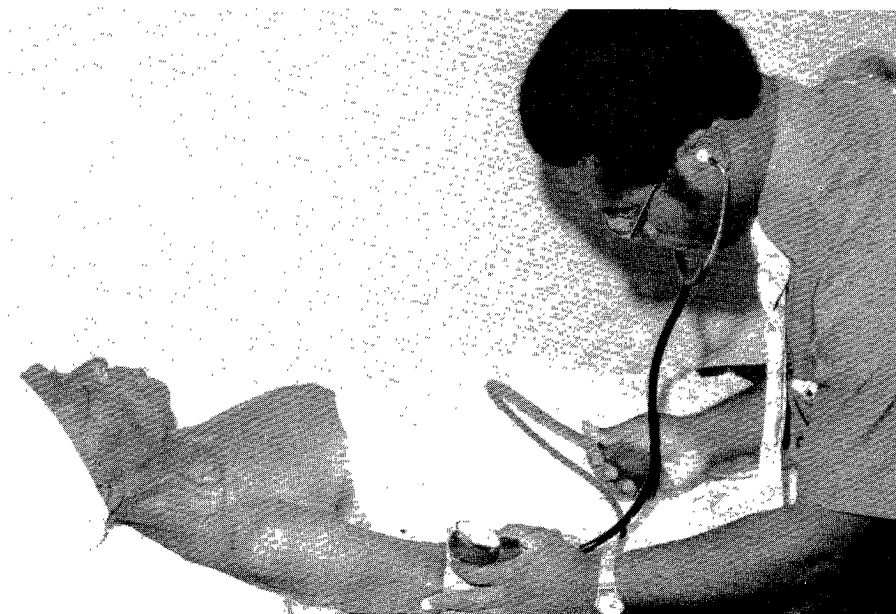
Among the myriad non-Christian philosophical diversions of the East, in crude pagan devil worship and in satanic cults, as well as in the neospiritualism of the intellectuals, one finds Satan's grand design to negate the love of God. As J. B. Phillips remarked, "Somehow Christians must recapture on a grand scale this basic certainty that God is love. Unless they do, unless they feel it and know it, and show it, and live it, it is unlikely that the surrounding world, burdened by the apparent contradictions and all the ills and accidents of this mortal life, will ever grasp the fundamental fact of all creation."—*Making Men Whole*, pp. 45, 46.

A life of loving service and self-denial does not come naturally. It must be nurtured. The carnal heart fights for the ascendancy. Every tendency toward the assertion of self must be suppressed, every effort toward self-preservation must be resisted. The devil does not willingly give up the control of a life to the reign of God's love. "Love cannot live without action, and every act increases, strengthens, and extends it. . . . Love works not for profit nor reward; yet God has ordained that great gain shall be the certain result of every labor of love."—*Testimonies*, vol. 2, p. 135.

Those who faithfully minister to the needs of their neighbor, who take every opportunity of demonstrating the love of God in selfless and humble service, will continue to receive bountifully of Heaven's blessings. Their lives will be enriched and their spiritual faculties revitalized.

Questions for discussion

1. How much did love cost God?
2. What is the greatest argument in favor of Christianity?
3. What is Satan's purpose in attempting to negate the love of God?
4. How can Christian missions answer the charge of offering inducements to gain adherents?
5. What should motivate us in our service for God?
6. How can one cultivate and nurture a spirit of loving service?
7. What conditions in the church cause it to project a secular and materialistic image to the world?
8. What are some factors that mute the witness of the church?



A loving, lovable Christian giving self-denying service is the church's great asset. Many people are drawn to Jesus each year through the witness of personnel at various Adventist institutions and organizations, such as at this clinic in Port-au-Prince, Haiti. But this form of witness must be augmented by the witness of other Adventists all around the world.

Love is giving



Love is giving,
and our little world
is a lesson book of love
for the universe.

By E. C. WARD

A little boy was standing with his father on a hill overlooking the Golden Gate Bridge at San Francisco Bay. To the north loomed Mount Tamalpais and the range of hills beyond. Looking eastward, they saw the Bay and the cities. Toward the south was rolling country covered with homes and highways. As they viewed the panorama, the father said, "Son, God's love is as big as all that." The lad looked in each direction for a moment and then replied, "Then we must be right in the middle of it."

Yes, we are right in the middle of God's love, a love that is giving, a love that God has been giving to all of His creation from the days of eternity.

Love is giving, and our little world is a lesson book of love for the universe. "The glory shining in the face of Jesus is the glory of self-sacrificing love. In the light from Calvary it will be seen that the law of self-renouncing love is the law of life for earth and heaven; that the love which 'seeketh not her own' has its source in the heart of God."—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 20. The greatest example of a love that gives is the love manifested in the character of the meek and lowly One. We are in the middle of that love and have been from the days of eternity.

Love is taking time

A little boy asked his mother which of the characters in *Pilgrim's Progress* she liked best. She replied, "Christian, of course; he is the hero of the story."

The son said, "I don't, Mother. I like Christiana best, because when Christian went on his pilgrimage, he started alone, but when Christiana went, she took the children with her."

Ellen White says, "He [God] will co-operate with those parents who carefully

and prayerfully educate their children, working out their own and their children's salvation. He will work in them to will and to do of His own good pleasure."—*The Adventist Home*, p. 207.

"Let parents devote the evenings to their families. Lay off care and perplexity with the labors of the day."—*Ibid.*, p. 192.

"Let fathers and mothers make a solemn promise to God, whom they profess to love and obey, that by His grace they will not disagree between themselves, but will in their own life and temper manifest the spirit that they wish their children to cherish."—*Ibid.*, p. 178.

"Human effort alone will not result in helping your children to perfect a character for heaven; but with divine help a grand and holy work may be accomplished.

"When you take up your duties as a parent in the strength of God, with a firm determination never to relax your efforts nor to leave your post of duty in striving to make your children what God would have them, then God looks down upon you with approbation. He knows that you are doing the best you can, and He will increase your power. He will Himself do the part of the work that the mother or father cannot do; He will work with the wise, patient, well-directed efforts of the God-fearing mother."—*Ibid.*, p. 207.

Parents "must cling closely to their children and to God. If parents work in patience and love, earnestly endeavoring to help their children reach the highest standard of purity and modesty, they will succeed."—*Ibid.*, p. 208.

"As you take up the work of saving your children and maintaining your position on the highway of holiness, the most provoking trials will come. But do not lose your hold. Cling to Jesus. He says, 'Let him take hold of My strength,

that he may make peace with Me; and he shall make peace with Me.' Difficulties will arise. You will meet with obstacles. Look constantly to Jesus. When an emergency arises, ask, Lord, what shall I do now?"—*Ibid.*, pp. 207, 208.

Love is taking time with our children and families so that we may help them on their journey with us to the heavenly kingdom.

Love is extending kindness

Boarding a train en route to a city where he was to speak, Dr. Courtland Myers hoped to prepare his message while on the train. Spreading out his books, he began studying. A stout lady and four dirty children sat behind him. One boy started to climb on Dr. Myers' seat and accidentally put his dirty fingers on his shirt collar. The gentleman was tempted to put the boy in his place. Instead, neglecting his sermon preparation, he spent time telling stories to the urchins as the hours went by.

A man about to leave the train came to Dr. Myers. With tears in his eyes he thanked him for his kindness to the children. He said that the people in the car had been watching and saying, "That's real Christianity."

"I do not understand," said Dr. Myers. He was told that the old lady was the grandmother. The mother was in a coffin in the baggage car.

Ellen White says, "In every department of the cause of God, there is need of men and women who have sympathy for the woes of humanity; but such sympathy is rare."—*Review and Herald*, May 6, 1890. "We need more of Christ-like sympathy; not merely sympathy for those who appear to us to be faultless, but sympathy for poor, suffering, struggling souls, who are often overtaken in fault, sinning and repenting, tempted and discouraged. We are to go to our fellow-men, touched, like our merciful High Priest, with the feeling of their infirmities."—*Gospel Workers*, p. 141.

A man and his wife were driving slowly down a dangerous road. At a narrow place the wife became frightened and seized the steering wheel. Her husband quietly let go and permitted her to steer. Then she was more frightened than ever, and said, "Oh, please don't let go!" He answered, "Two people cannot drive one car; either I must drive or you must!" Then she gave him the wheel and he drove safely past the danger.

In a similar manner, love is giving God the control of the steering wheel of our lives and wills. If we wish God to rule over us we must give everything into His hands and let Him do the managing for us. Either Christ must be our Lord and King or self will rule as we travel over the danger spots of this life. Let us per-

mit Christ to take control right now, for "underneath are the everlasting arms" (Deut. 33:27).

A pastor sat by his study window, watching worshipers park their cars and walk toward the church. It was a crisp morning. People were smiling, children were holding their parents' hands, and the church bells pealing in the tower seemed to express the joy the psalmist expressed when he said, "This is the day which the Lord hath made; we will rejoice and be glad in it" (Ps. 118:24).

Then the pastor began to reflect upon the lives behind some of the faces. Here was a man whose business was on the brink of disaster. Here was a couple who had just buried their firstborn. There was a young woman whose mother was desperately ill. There was a family, hand in hand, one wayward 16-year-old conspicuously missing. Over there, parking their car, he saw a family in danger of losing their home. Walking with Bible and quarterly in hand was a woman, alone. Her son had just been sentenced to three years' probation for car theft; her husband was home in bed. There was a family out of work, and almost overwhelmed with debt. There was a young couple with a child in the hospital. There was a man anxious about his health.

As the minister watched his parishioners move past the window, he recalled that almost every family that walked by was wrestling with a heartache or a problem. There was hardly one whose life had not been touched by sorrow, anxiety, or pain. They were coming to church that Sabbath morning to express their personal devotion to God. They would sing "We Gather Together" with enthusiasm, and when they sang "He forgets not His own," they would mean it.

Love is a thankful overflow of the heart in response to God's goodness. This love recognizes the light above the shadows. It sings at midnight, and under difficult circumstances (see Acts 16:25). "You can do much to brighten the life of others and strengthen their efforts, by words of hope and holy cheer."—*Steps to Christ*, pp. 119, 120.

Miss Murphy was a teacher in Northampton, Massachusetts. One day she was assisting her pupils in reciting the twenty-third psalm. She noticed that one little boy was not reciting it correctly. The next time the class recited the psalm, she stood near the boy and found, when it came to the verse which said, "Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life," that he said: "Surely good Miss Murphy shall follow me all the days of my life."

What this rendering may have lacked in accuracy in no way detracted from a truth that was caught by the child. And what is true of the Miss Murphys who

teach our children should be more true of the parents and spiritual guardians whom God has charged with the responsibility of rearing children. It is no secret that in counseling disturbed and emotionally wrought people, both professional counselors and parents are finding that the scars of an improper home can follow people all through their lives.

Love is living a good example

As a parent, how is my devotional life? Does my family observe me consistently studying the Sabbath school lesson, reading the Morning Watch devotional book, attending regularly the prayer meeting and divine worship, the Week of Prayer, and revival meetings? How do I begin the Sabbath in my home? Do I regularly begin worship on time at the going down of the sun? Am I still making what should have been pre-Sabbath preparations after sunset on Friday nights or on Sabbath mornings? Do I read my secular mail on Sabbath, or do I let it wait along with the daily magazines and newspapers until after sunset? Do I give the radio and television a "rest" on the Sabbath?

What is my example on the airlines or other modes of transportation as to principles of temperance and diet? Do I take that cup of coffee, or eat that steak, or down that Coke, salving my conscience by misapplying the Bible text that says, "Whatsoever is set before you, eat, asking no question" (1 Cor. 10:27)? At the distant motel or hotel where I stay overnight, would I pick up from the newsstand magazines, books, or tabloids to "relax" with that I would not want my family or church members to know I was interested in?

Love is living a good example; for like the apostles, "we are made a spectacle unto the world, and to angels, and to men" (chap. 4:9).

In western Kansas the harvest season is the high point of the year. Towns are nearly deserted as farmers gather the wheat. Out in the hot fields the huge combines move back and forth. But this pleasure is never so great that the harvester forgets to grease his equipment. From three to five times a day everything stops while the crew lubricates the machinery. If one lubrication of the com-

bine is neglected there will be trouble. Bearings burn out, chains snap, and repair bills mount. No time is really lost in the busy harvest, by taking time for these jobs.

We are now living in the harvesttime. Time spent in personal preparation for the coming of our blessed Lord, by regular prayer habits, Bible study, worship, and one-to-one witnessing for Christ is not wasted. The three angels' messages of Revelation 14 are rapidly being carried to every nation, kindred, tongue, and people by pen and press, preaching and witnessing, medical and relief services, and the penetration of radio and television. We risk breakdown and loss if we do not prepare ourselves and others for the soon coming of Christ.

Ellen White says, "I saw that Satan bade his angels lay their snares especially for those who were looking for Christ's second appearing and keeping all the commandments of God. Satan told his angels that the churches were asleep. He would increase his power and lying wonders, and he could hold them. 'But,' he said, 'the sect of Sabbath-keepers we hate; they are continually working against us, and taking from us our subjects, to keep the hated law of God. Go, make the possessors of lands and money drunk with cares. If you can make them place their affections upon these things, we shall have them yet. They may profess what they please, only make them care more for money than for the success of Christ's kingdom or the spread of the truths we hate.'"—*Early Writings*, p. 266.

Love must give priority to personal preparation for our Lord's soon return. "And that, knowing the time, that now it is high time to awake out of sleep: for now is our salvation nearer than when we believed. The night is far spent, the day is at hand: let us therefore cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armour of light" (Rom. 13:11, 12).

Questions for discussion

1. In what three ways can I demonstrate in my home and in my association with others that I believe love is giving rather than receiving?

2. What should I do if my husband/wife/children/family does/do not seem too interested in responding to my love that reaches out to help them attain heaven?

3. When my kindness, understanding, or sympathy is mistaken for weakness or softness, am I justified in standing up for my "rights"?

4. How can one set a good example without exhibiting a "holier than thou" attitude or without appearing to seek salvation by "good works"? Why can't I be just myself? Isn't that a good enough example?

5. How can a person prepare for the second coming of Christ without becoming fanatical? How does he know when he is prepared for Jesus' coming?

To grow closer

By HELEN METZ RHODES

As the vine entwines its tendrils
Round the sturdy trunk of a tree,
So shall I entwine my tendrils,
Clinging, Saviour, close to Thee.

Love thinks



The Christian must learn
to control his thoughts.
What a person thinks, he is.

By ETHEL YOUNG

Love never dwells on anything immoral. Love does not consider causing harm, pain, trouble, injury, or disaster. Love thinks no evil (see 1 Cor. 13:15).

The one who has Christlike love in his heart carefully controls his thoughts. The equation is simple: evil thoughts produce an evil person; loving thoughts produce a candidate for heaven. The person striving for excellence must train his thinking processes.

In Eden, God the Father met with Adam and Eve and taught them face to face. God's love was the basis of Eden's curriculum. Eden's school was to serve as a model throughout the ages (see *Education*, p. 20).

Adam and Eve loved the Lord with all their heart, soul, and mind. Their every thought was exercised for the good of their whole being. When they sinned, these relationships were marred. Only through an educative process in which the physical, mental, and spiritual powers would be harmoniously developed could these relationships be restored. True education promotes the development of body, mind, and soul, so that the divine purpose of the creation of the human family is realized. This is the work of redemption and the object of education (see *Education*, pp. 13-16).

The "R" of renewal

The word "education" is usually thought of as synonymous with the impartation of skills in the three R's: "reading, 'riting, and 'rithmetic." But to the Adventist Christian there are three other R's that have greater significance: renewal, restoration, and redemption.

The apostle Paul said, "Be not conformed to this world: but be ye trans-

formed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God" (Rom. 12:2).

Ellen White wrote, "As the mother teaches her children to obey her because they love her, she is teaching them the first lessons in the Christian life. The mother's love represents to the child the love of Christ, and the little ones who trust and obey their mother are learning to trust and obey the Saviour."—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 515. The education that is given to children in their early years is extremely important. Any character trait that is not taught a child before he is 3 will be increasingly difficult to teach him after that age (see *Child Guidance*, p. 194).

Ellen White further says, "Let selfishness, anger, and self-will have its course for the first three years of a child's life, and it will be hard to bring it to submit to wholesome discipline. Its disposition has become soured; it delights in having its own way; parental control is distasteful. These evil tendencies grow with its growth, until in manhood supreme selfishness and a lack of self-control place him at the mercy of the evils that run riot in our land."—*Temperance*, p. 177.

If adults accustomed to thinking evil thoughts wish to begin to "think no evil," their minds must be renewed. Think how much pain, trouble, injury, and misery are inflicted on innocent sufferers by people whose minds are unrenewed and whose evil thoughts are not subdued and controlled. Much of the blame must be laid to faulty early home education.

To restore means to bring back to a former condition by rebuilding, or reforming.

Spiritual rebuilding includes tearing away old, unprofitable thoughts and

substituting Christian thoughts. Viewing immoral television programs, studying books that give a distorted picture of the Christian life, listening to records that glorify the devil more than God are not ways to restore the mind. Only as our wills are guided by the Holy Spirit can our thoughts be pure, kind, and true.

"Our work is reformatory; and it is the purpose of God that through the excellence of the work done in our educational institutions the attention of the people shall be called to the last great effort to save the perishing."—*Testimonies*, vol. 6, p. 126.

If man is to rebuild his mind, the restoring process must be initiated in the home and then continued in school. Any school will not do. "Satan has used the most ingenious methods to weave his plans and principles into the systems of education, and thus gain a strong hold on the minds of the children and youth. It is the work of the true educator to thwart his devices. We are under solemn, sacred covenant to God to bring up our children for Him and not for the world; to teach them not to put their hands into the hand of the world, but to love and fear God, and to keep His commandments."—*Ibid.*, p. 127.

The second "R" is restoration

Ellen White clearly states the object of Seventh-day Adventist education: "To restore in man the image of his Maker, to bring him back to the perfection in which he was created, to promote the development of body, mind, and soul, that the divine purpose in his creation might be realized—this was to be work of redemption. This is the object of education, the great object of life.

"Love, the basis of creation and of redemption, is the basis of true education. This is made plain in the law that God has given as the guide of life. The first and great commandment 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.' Luke 10:27. To love Him, the infinite, the omniscient One, with the whole strength, and mind, and heart, means the highest development of every power. It means that in the whole being—the body, the mind, as well as the soul—the image of God is to be restored."—*Education*, pp. 15, 16.

One of the most difficult aspects of restoring man to the image of his Maker has to do with the training of his mind. "Every human being, created in the image of God, is endowed with a power akin to that of the Creator—individuality, power to think and to do. . . . It is the work of true education to develop this power; to train the youth to be thinkers, and not mere reflectors of other men's thought. Instead of confining their study

Ethel Young, until her recent retirement, was associate director of the General Conference Education Department.

to that which men have said or written, let students be directed to the sources of truth, to the vast fields opened for research in nature and revelation. Let them contemplate the great facts of duty and destiny, and the mind will expand and strengthen. Instead of educated weaklings, institutions of learning may send forth men strong to think and to act, men who are masters and not slaves of circumstances, men who possess breadth of mind, clearness of thought, and the courage of their convictions.

"Such an education provides more than mental discipline; it provides more than physical training. It strengthens the character, so that truth and uprightness are not sacrificed to selfish desire or worldly ambition. It fortifies the mind against evil."—*Ibid.*, pp. 17, 18.

"The education that consists in the training of the memory, tending to discourage independent thought, has a moral bearing which is too little appreciated. As the student sacrifices the power to reason and judge for himself, he becomes incapable of discriminating between truth and error, and falls an easy prey to deception. He is easily led to follow tradition and custom."—*Ibid.*, p. 230.

If parents and teachers would educate their children "to be thinkers, and not mere reflectors of other men's thought," they must provide them with opportunities for decision-making. Children must be taught the thought processes involved. First, they must learn to recognize that there is a problem and that a decision must be made concerning it.

Second, a tentative position must be taken and evaluated in terms of right and wrong. Third, alternate positions may be taken and similarly evaluated. Finally, one of the solutions must be chosen.

Thus trained, children will be able to stand for principle in a crisis, as Martin Luther stood before the emperor and declared, "'Since your most serene majesty and your high mightinesses require from me a clear, simple, and precise answer, I will give you one, and it is this: I cannot submit my faith either to the pope or to the councils, because it is clear as the day that they have frequently erred and contradicted each other. Unless therefore I am convinced by the testimony of Scripture or by the clearest reasoning, unless I am persuaded by means of the passages I have quoted, and unless they thus render my conscience bound by the word of God, I cannot and I will not retract, for it is unsafe for a Christian to speak against his conscience. Here I stand, I can do no other; may God help me. Amen.'"—*The Great Controversy*, p. 160.

The third "R" is redemption

Redemption involves the process of buying back, recovering, setting free, rescuing, delivering from sin and its penalties. Ellen White wrote, "In the highest sense the work of education and the work of redemption are one, for in education, as in redemption, 'other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ.'"—*Ibid.*, p. 30.

"By sin man was shut out from God.

Except for the plan of redemption, eternal separation from God, the darkness of unending night, would have been his. Through the Saviour's sacrifice, communion with God is again made possible. . . . Sin not only shuts us away from God, but destroys in the human soul both the desire and the capacity for knowing Him. All this work of evil it is Christ's mission to undo."—*Ibid.*, pp. 28, 29.

It was love that caused Jesus to come to this world to redeem man. It is love that inspires parents and teachers to educate themselves and their children in a manner as nearly like the original pattern as possible. Ellen White says, "Under changed conditions, true education is still conformed to the Creator's plan, the plan of the Eden school. . . . The great principles of education are unchanged. 'They stand fast for ever and ever' (Psalm 111:8); for they are the principles of the character of God."—*Ibid.*, p. 30.

This being true, it is possible for us to love God fully, completely, so that our thoughts reflect His (see 2 Cor. 1:3-6). The principle of love can become a power in our lives to shape our decisions. A union with Christ can be formed that will give us power and strength to obey God. The promise is, "A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you: and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh. And I will put my spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep my judgments, and do them" (Eze. 36:26, 27).

It is the work of the Adventist home, church, and school lovingly to teach the three R's of Heaven: renewal, restoration, and redemption. The parent, the pastor, or the teacher who accepts this challenge is a co-worker with Christ, molding minds for the kingdom of God.

Questions for discussion

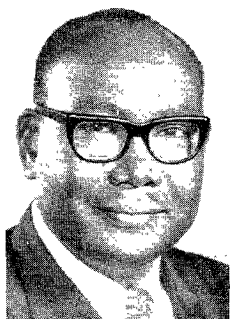
1. What is meant by the verse "Keep thy heart with all diligence; for out of it are the issues of life" (Prov. 4:23)?
2. Identify ways Paul would encourage a Christian to use in "bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ" (2 Cor. 10:5).
3. Discuss the following sentence from Ellen White: "It is in the home school that our boys and girls are to be prepared to attend the church school."—*The Adventist Home*, p. 185.
4. In what way could children suffer if sent to school too early? (See *Child Guidance*, p. 302.)
5. How is it possible for the work of redemption and the work of education to be one?
6. What influences affect our thinking?
7. What did Paul mean when he said, "When I was a child . . . I thought as a child" (1 Cor. 13:11)?

Creation Calendar

By A. F. BROWN

- On Sunday I realize that light comes from God
and that every dawn is a divine display.
- On Monday the winds that flow in the firmament
remind me of God's moving Spirit.
I rejoice in room to breathe between sky
and deep waters.
- On Tuesday I greet the good green earth
and give thanks for fruit and flower.
- On Wednesday I realize the reach and rhythm
of sun and star
and glorify the measureless Master
of infinite space and time.
- On Thursday I am cheered by a song in the air
and by thought of One who values both me
and the sparrow.
- On Friday I find people
and enjoy them, all made in the image
of God.
- On Sabbath I find God Himself
and remember all the gifts of each day
in the presence of the Giver.

Love endures



Jesus came to show us

what God is like.

He came to prove once and for all
the enduring nature of love.

By G. RALPH THOMPSON

"Love bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. Love never ends; as for prophecies, they will pass away" (1 Cor. 13:7, 8, R.S.V.).

On every hand we see evidences that this world of ours is sick, bruised, battered, bleeding, and dying. Man's inhumanity to man is the world's greatest sin. As one looks at the world, he comes to the conclusion that something is desperately wrong.

Why do good people suffer under the sovereignty of a God of love? If a guilty person suffers the consequences of his sin and folly, this is easily understandable. But the question that puzzles people is, Why do innocent people have to suffer? Why does a loving God allow suffering, sickness, pain, sorrow, and all the tragic things that engulf human beings? If God exists, why doesn't He kill the devil?

A father who had been notified that his son had been killed in battle came to his pastor and from the depths of his sorrow cried out, "Where was God when my son was killed?" With love and understanding, the pastor turned to him and said, "Friend, God was in the same place when your son was killed as He was when His own Son was killed. God understands your sorrow."

How did suffering originate?

But let us ask ourselves, Where does suffering come from? How did it originate? The Biblical answer to these questions is that the devil originated sin, which resulted in sorrow and suffering. The God of love is not the author of sin, suffering, and death. The devil would be happy to have people blame God. When

certain calamities, such as earthquakes, fires, floods, illness, and terrible accidents, take place many are inclined to say, "Well, that is the work of God." Often these happenings are called acts of God. But in reality are they acts of God? Is God in the business of bringing disease and death upon people? Is this like God? The resounding answer to this question must be, Absolutely not. The devil, not the God who "so loved the world, that he gave" (John 3:16), is the author of all these things that afflict humanity.

Lucifer was once an exalted being of majesty, beauty, and attraction. But the mysterious thing called sin entered his heart. We cannot justify it. To give an adequate explanation for it would be unreasonable. There was no excuse for sin in God's perfect universe. Becoming dissatisfied with his position next to Christ, Lucifer rebelled.

Why didn't God destroy Satan as soon as Satan began to sow the seeds of discord among the angels? Certainly, it would seem, the world would have been spared the misery, problems, suffering, and death that have followed the entrance of sin.

I would like to suggest three reasons why God chose not to kill the devil. First, Satan's lie was so attractive and persuasive that one third of the angelic host thought he was right. God, therefore, had to allow time to prove that Satan's claims were false.

Second, if God had destroyed the devil immediately, then fear would have become the basis of law and order. Unfallen intelligences would have viewed this as an act of God's vengeance and would have worshiped Him through fear.

Third, God can accept worship only if it springs from a heart of love. The devil could lie and misrepresent the character

of God, but God is truth and honesty. He had to allow time to prove to intelligences of other worlds that Satan was wrong. With the acceptance of the devil's lie one third of the angelic host, together with Satan, were expelled from heaven. Soon they set out to spread sin to this world by deceiving Adam and Eve. Satan, then, not God, who is love, must be blamed for the troubles of this world. When life's hard experiences of trouble, woe, and sorrow come our way we must not be deterred or be discouraged. We will see beyond the dark cloud of trouble to God's silver lining of hope. One day God will destroy the author of evil. That is why the Christian, in spite of all the troubles through which he has to pass, can afford to be an optimist. We may not know what the future holds, but thank God we know who holds the future. And as Ellen White says, "God never leads His children otherwise than they would choose to be led, if they could see the end from the beginning, and discern the glory of the purpose which they are fulfilling as coworkers with Him."—*The Desire of Ages*, pp. 224, 225.

Romans 8:28 does not say that all things are good, but that all things work together for good to them that love God. God is the "divine Chemist" who can bring good out of evil. He can transform the wrecking circumstances of life into a means of grace. He can change ignominious defeats into glorious victories. God can take the darkest places in our lives and transform them into a holy of holies. He is the One who changes the wrath of men into songs of praise.

We must never forget that it matters to God about us. Nothing the devil does must ever cause us to doubt the love of God. Jesus Christ came to demonstrate to the human family, to you and to me, that God loves each one of us. If you were the only person on earth who needed God's salvation, Jesus Christ would have come and died for you. Let the thought of God's love become the foundation stone on which we build our house of faith. When the devil has done his worst, God is master of the situation still.

How do we relate?

Love for God will cause us to have love for others. We will love men and women not for what we can get out of them, but for what we can share with them. Because of our love for God, the souls of others will be precious in our sight. We will reach out to others and share with them God's love.

The world is dying for a little bit of love, true Christian love. While there is hatred, prejudice, and inhumanity on every side, God's people will reach beyond these barriers and help plant the

seed of God's love in the hearts of men and women everywhere. It is by this they will know that we are Christians and that God is a God of love.

If you and I are going to make it into the heavenly kingdom, we will have to endure to the end. Love endures. And faithfulness to God will require such endurance. When we are tempted to give up, we will not. Our love for God will cause us to endure. We will see in men and women not the broken, emaciated wrecks the devil has made of them, but rather the beautiful symmetry of their reflection of the Lord Jesus Christ—that which they can become through His grace. We will keep on loving them even when they reject us and cause us to suffer.

The Biblical example of Job is one that ought to help us to understand more fully the problem of suffering, as well as the reality of God's love. We are familiar with the circumstances through which Job passed. Job was a man of wealth, prestige, and honor. Suddenly, through a series of devastating setbacks caused by Satan, such as the loss of property and children, Job became a pauper. Next, the devil touched his body with disease. His own wife, who until now had faithfully stood by him, could take it no longer. One day she looked at her husband's wasted, rotten body and said to him out of pity and disgust, "Job, why don't you curse God and die?" For some people this would have been the last straw. Not so with Job. He was learning in the school of suffering.

Love endures. The same God who had given him wealth and health could also, if He chose, give him healing and restoration. Job would not sin foolishly with his mouth, because he loved God. He could hang onto God's love when everything else failed. Love finally won out. The last state of Job was better than the first.

What is it that has helped so many people in times of bitter disappointment, severe sickness, and sudden calamity to come through their trials victoriously? It is God's love! Love remains even when events are difficult to understand; when it takes absolute faith and nothing else, love endures. It's not always an easy road. It's a road of utter faith in God and love for Him.

How can we know enduring love?

The greatest example of enduring love is the love exhibited by Jesus Christ. One reason Jesus came was to show us that God is love and that suffering, sickness, misery, and death are the results of Satan's work. In the Garden of Gethsemane, when Jesus faced the awful agony of the cross and with the weight of the world's sins pressing out His life, He cried out to God, "If it be possible, let

this cup pass from me" (Matt. 26:39). Jesus didn't have to die. There was no sin in Him. He didn't have to go through with the shame, the agony, the indescribable trauma of a crucifixion. It was possible for the cup to pass. With one word He could have smitten His accusers.

But Jesus came to prove once and for all that love endures, and even though man had strayed from God until God's image in man had been nearly defaced, His love for man had never ceased. From the first day man sinned, through all his wanderings from God, and in the depths of his degradation, God was saying to him, "I still love you." And Jesus Christ came to prove it!

So Jesus went to Calvary battered and bruised, a crown of thorns upon His head. Cruel men drove rough spikes through His quivering flesh. The mob at the foot of the cross was screaming for His blood. They mocked Him, laughed at His claims to be the Messiah. In that moment when the cruelty of man had reached its height Jesus cried out, "Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do" (Luke 23:34). Why did He pray such a prayer under such circumstances? Because His love for us endured.

It is this example of God's matchless love that causes you and me to put our trust in God. We believe that if we entrust all things to Him He will see that everything comes out all right. It was this example of Jesus Christ that caused the early disciples to endure all kinds of

hardships. They could be thrown to the lions, burned at the stake, drowned in the swift-running rivers, endure all kinds of unmentionable horrors, because they loved their Lord—and love endures!

When you meet the troubles and trials of today, don't get discouraged. This is the devil's chief weapon that he uses so successfully against God's people. He whispers in our ears that because of troubles and trials that come our way God doesn't love us anymore. Because we were overlooked in a promotion, or we didn't get elected to a post, or the church members didn't show their appreciation by mentioning our name with those who contributed to the success of a particular program, don't ever get discouraged and doubt God's love for you. His love endures!

Discouragement is the anesthetic the devil injects into your veins just before he takes your heart out. The devil is a defeated foe. Jesus met him in the Garden of Gethsemane, defeated him there, and then went on to the cross and died triumphantly. Jesus' cry "It is finished" was really a cry of victory (see *The Desire of Ages*, p. 758). That cry sounded the death knell of the devil. And at that glorious morning of the resurrection Jesus Christ could arise and exclaim, "I am He that liveth, and was dead; and, behold, I am alive for evermore . . . and have the keys of hell and of death" (Rev. 1:18).

Everyone who puts his trust in Jesus Christ will conquer. Never doubt it. Never give up. Never believe the devil's lie, but reach out and trust God. Take Him at His word, and one of these glorious days it will be our privilege to look up and say, "Lo, this is our God; we have waited for him, and he will save us: this is the Lord; we have waited for him, we will be glad and rejoice in his salvation" (Isa. 25:9). That will be the moment of victory. Our faith will give way to sight. Our suffering and sorrow will give way to happiness and joy, for love will have conquered all.

Questions for discussion

1. Did a loving God make a bad devil? Why didn't God destroy Lucifer the moment he sinned?
2. Why do good people whom God loves have to suffer? Is suffering a sign of God's disfavor?
3. What lessons can we learn from Job's experience?
4. What is the relationship between temptation and sin?
5. Why is love so basic in meeting life's troubles?
6. Discuss the statement "If you want to know what God is like, look at Jesus Christ."
7. How does being faithful to God relate to love and endurance?
8. How do you interpret Romans 8:28?
9. In spite of trials and disappointments, why can Christians afford to be optimistic?

Realization

By
CHRISTINE
APLIN DALTON



I think of the cross,
Feel a stab of pain,
Mayhap shed a tear or two.

But life rushes back;
I stumble again,
And wound my dear Lord anew.

Oh, why can't I stay
Near the heart of God?
Why does my lamp flicker dim?

Perhaps I've not tread
The prayer path He trod,
Nor watched the long night with Him.

Love is made perfect



As Paul concludes his love chapter
he looks forward to the time
when Eden will be restored.

By A. C. BERGER

A God of love made a perfect world and peopled it with perfect beings. "As man came forth from the hand of his Creator, he was of lofty stature and perfect symmetry. His countenance bore the ruddy tint of health and glowed with the light of life and joy."—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 45.

God filled this perfect world with living creatures, from the large elephant to the delicate butterfly, and from the shimmering goldfish to the monstrous whale. Everything in nature, animate and inanimate, was perfect. When the living creatures were brought to Adam, he named them all. All had been created male and female, "but for the man there was not found a helper fit for him" (Gen. 2:20, R.S.V.).

In His great love and wisdom God chose to involve Adam in the creation of a perfect companion for him. So God caused a deep sleep to fall upon Adam and from a rib taken from Adam He created Eve. When Adam saw her, he said, "This is now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh" (verse 23). "They shall be one flesh," declared God (verse 24). Then on the seventh day God finished His work and rested on the Sabbath day and hallowed it.

God planned that Adam and Eve should live together in perfect harmony and joy. Every day they experienced God's love anew. Daily they saw their Creator face to face and were instructed by Him in the principles of life and the mysteries of love. God told our first parents that their continued happiness was dependent on their loyalty to the principles of righteousness. Referring to the universality of these principles, Ellen White says, "The law of love being the

foundation of the government of God, the happiness of all intelligent beings depends upon their perfect accord with the great principles of righteousness. God desires from all His creatures the service of love—service that springs from an appreciation of His character. He takes no pleasure in a forced obedience; and to all He grants freedom of will, that they may render Him voluntary service. So long as all created beings acknowledged the allegiance of love, there was perfect harmony throughout the universe of God."—*Ibid.*, pp. 34, 35.

But man failed God's test of allegiance. Because they sinned, Adam and Eve were driven from their garden home. Henceforth toil, sorrow, and suffering would be their lot. No longer would they be able to hold open communion with their Creator. Finally death would terminate their existence.

A wonderful promise

At first Adam and Eve tried to excuse their sin. Then seeing the enormity of their transgression, they repented in deep sorrow, and God accepted their repentance. As they made their way out of the garden, they carried with them a promise of redemption. The Creator had told them He would give His life to redeem them. The human family would not be separated forever from God's presence. A way had been opened to return to the fountains of love.

Adam believed the promises of God. Again and again he and his sons returned to the entrance of the Garden of Eden, bringing their offerings and renewing their vows of obedience. Although angels barred the entrance to the garden, Adam's family had the privilege of gazing upon the forfeited home of innocence. As they did so, they were repeatedly reminded of the wonderful promise of the final restoration.

The promise of ultimate restoration was repeated throughout the ages. Through patriarchs, prophets, kings, and apostles God spoke to His servants. And in his chapter on love, Paul referred to the restoration, saying, "Now we see in a mirror dimly, but then face to face. Now I know in part; then I shall understand fully, even as I have been fully understood" (1 Cor. 13:12, R.S.V.). This promise is especially precious to those who believe. God has promised that man will once again be able to see his Creator, and shall understand fully.

The promised Redeemer

Jesus Christ has ratified this promise of salvation and restoration made in Eden. He left His place in heaven, took human nature, experienced the sorrows, tribulations, and temptations that are the lot of humanity, lived a life without sin, and died and rose for our justification. Christ came to save mankind, as well as to vindicate the character of God before the universe.

Jesus chose to be born into the human family as a little child, a babe in a manger. We hear little about His life as a child in Nazareth, but what we hear is encouraging. He was a good child, obedient to His parents, a child of God, kind, polite, and well acquainted with the Word of God. "Wonderful in its significance is the brief record of His early life: 'The child grew, and waxed strong in spirit, filled with wisdom; and the grace of God was upon him.' In the sunlight of His Father's countenance, Jesus 'increased in wisdom and stature, and in favour with God and man.'" "Jesus is our example. . . . It is in His home life that He is the pattern for all children and youth."—*The Desire of Ages*, pp. 68, 74.

As a young man Jesus lived close to His heavenly Father. In His compassion for His contemporaries He relieved their suffering and sorrow, thus demonstrating that true religion does not consist of selfishness, but of love. Because of His insistence on a "Thus saith the Lord" or an "It is written," He often found Himself in conflict with human tradition. No human theory was good enough for Him. His whole life was governed by an implicit loyalty to, and a deep sense of love toward, His heavenly Father.

Jesus is the example for every young man and woman. To live as He lived, to act as He acted, to have the mind and speech full of His word, is the true path to a happy Christian experience.

Our Saviour met difficulties and conflicts. The human race had departed from the Word of God, and Jesus could never sanction the mingling of human requirements with divine precepts. In His gentle and humble way He set an example of complete obedience to God.

A. C. Berger is lay-activities, Sabbath school, and stewardship director of the West Nordic Union Conference.

Psalms for modern Israel

By MARIAN FERNER

One

When I go out in the morning, I am filled with dismay.
I pass through throngs of busy women with tinkling feet
and stiffened hair. And they smile with wanton eyes
and speak with glib tongues. But they do not know You.
And the men of business talk knowingly of the world
and have much passion for many things.
But they do not know You.
The young ones, the children, are full of terror and despair.
Many are abused and mistreated. The old ones, full of years,
are cast aside and forgotten, because those who do not know You
do not treat them with kindness or gratitude.
Who shall tell them, Lord?
Shall I stand upon a street corner and cry, "The Lord loves you"?
They will laugh scornfully or say,
"Move on, fool. Do not disturb us, or we will take you to the law."
Though I pledge myself a willing servant,
I do not know how to speak for You
except to wait and watch for an honest heart.
Give me the courage to blow the trumpet in the marketplace.

Two

How could I die of despair?
When I sink
in the murky waters of hopelessness,
my feet touch at last the flat rock of faith.
And I spring upward to light.

Three

How Satan rages!
The cities are covered with smoke.
Fear and death roam the dark streets.
Everyone seeks to be rich,
each stepping on the one below him.
Evil prevails as people are consumed
by unnatural appetites and passions.
Though I stand on a crowded corner
and seek intently,
I cannot find one face that shows
contentment.
But when I go into the field
I find sweetness in the wildflower.
The wind offers its gentle music.
And there is innocence yet
in the eyes of little children.

Marian Ferner is a receptionist at Harris Pine Mills in Pendleton, Oregon.

Four

When I drive a difficult road,
a prayer goes before me that I might pass safely.
When I fly as with wings of an eagle,
I pray that no storm or stress will cause my downfall.
And though disease is rife in the land,
yet will I trust You for strength to resist its ravages.
My heart is as a tree full of yellow flowers,
in thankfulness for Your mercy and protection.

Five

Sing me no sad song.
The dreary undertone of sorrow
is a great weariness on my heart.
The eternal twanging and commanding drum
cause unrest and a forlorn spirit.
The birds of the air know no lament.
The hum of bees is as a chant of praise.
Make of me a shimmering lake of gladness
that my countenance may be bright
and that I might sing out a truthful testimony
to Your goodness.

Six

My heart is torn in two.
I long for my Father's house.
The fair land where He lives is my hope and stay.
I pray for deliverance from a dark world,
but my children are not ready.
I cry for strength and reach out a nervous hand.
My faith increases, and my yearning is satisfied.
But my children do not know God or travel in His ways.
I am broken apart with wanting heaven, yet loving them.
O Lord, save my children and make me whole.
For I must love You first and last and best.

Seven

If I set my house under a fragrant tree
or dwell in a cave in the forest,
it is all the same to me.
If I put my feet upon a carpet
or upon the cold stones of poverty,
I do not care.
Whether my food is delicacies from the store
or roots from the garden,
it is of no matter.
I have worn fine wool,
and it comforted me no more than rags.
My destiny is not of this world;
its merchandise tempts me not.
I travel lightly that I may go quickly,
and not look back.

Jesus was the Messiah, the fulfillment of the promise. The life of Jesus, in childhood, youth, and manhood, is our example for daily Christian living. We must study His life, pattern after it. If we do, our lives will be full of meaning and happiness. We will still have temptations to meet and problems to solve, but Jesus in the heart will give us victory over sin.

"It is written" is the answer to every question of social and moral behavior. When we are confronted with problems of education, courtship, marriage, child guidance, home life, recreation, or missionary service, we find the answer in God's Holy Word and the writings of the Spirit of Prophecy.

The blessed hope

Admittedly, even after searching the Word, some questions in this life will remain dim and blurred. But the plan of redemption is clear enough, so none need err. When Thomas asked in distress and doubt, "How can we know the way?" Jesus answered, "I am the way, the truth, and the life" (John 14:5, 6). His life is our example.

When Paul says, "Now we see in a mirror dimly, but then face to face," he is referring to the time all things will be restored. The hope of such a restoration has warmed the hearts of millions of believers throughout the ages as they looked forward to the time when the darkening veil will be removed and we shall see God face to face.

We do not know the day or the hour when God will restore all things, but we know that the second coming of Christ is near. We are living in the time of the end. Soon Jesus will appear in the sky to take the redeemed home. God will make everything new, and that which is imperfect will pass away.

Ellen White says, "As the ransomed ones are welcomed to the City of God, there rings out upon the air an exultant cry of adoration. The two Adams are about to meet. The Son of God is standing with outstretched arms to receive the father of our race—the being whom He created, who sinned against his Maker, and for whose sins the marks of the crucifixion are borne upon the Saviour's form. As Adam discerns the prints of the cruel nails, he does not fall upon the bosom of his Lord, but in humiliation casts himself at His feet, crying, 'Worthy, worthy is the Lamb that was slain!' Tenderly the Saviour lifts him up and bids him look once more upon the Eden home from which he has so long been exiled."—*The Great Controversy*, p. 647.

The promise is fulfilled. Man has reached the end of the long journey from Eden to Eden. Love is made perfect. Jesus sees the multitudes who have been saved by His agony and humiliation. Joy

and gladness fill every heart and mind.

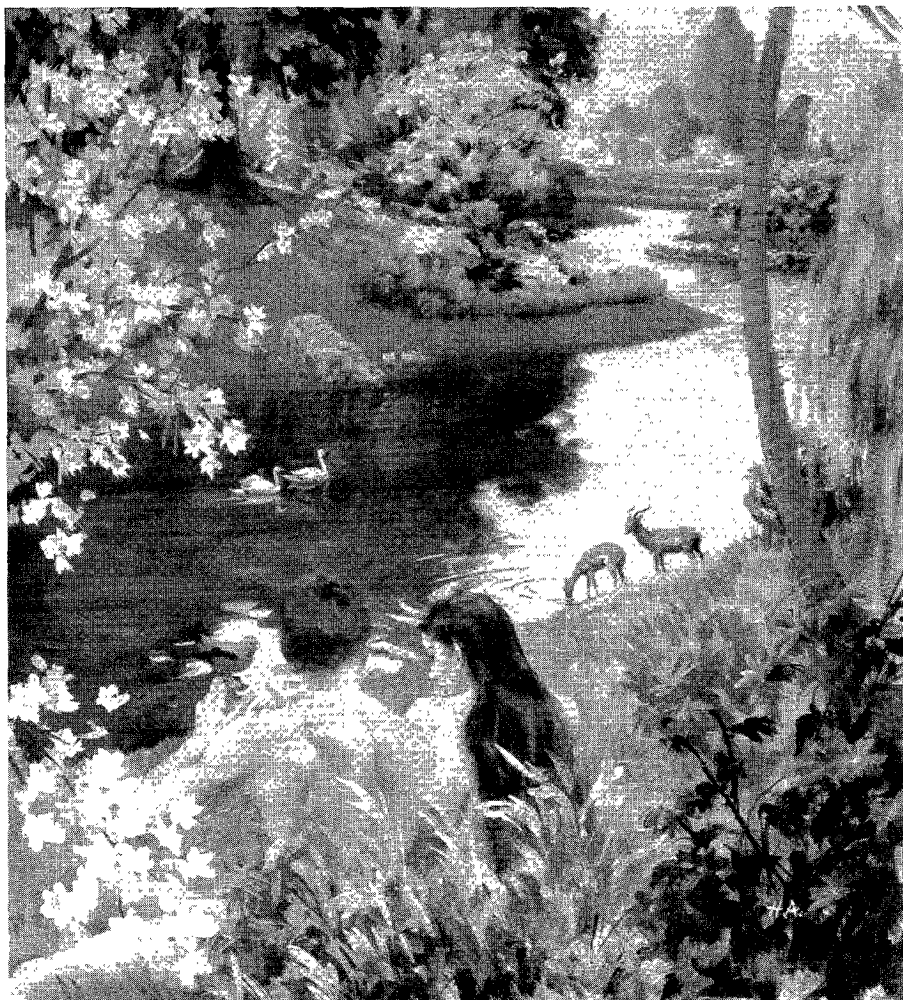
In this sinless environment, life will receive its fullest meaning. The education begun in this life will continue throughout eternity. "There, immortal minds will contemplate with never-failing delight the wonders of creative power, the mysteries of redeeming love. There will be no cruel, deceiving foe to tempt to forgetfulness of God. Every faculty will be developed, every capacity increased. The acquirement of knowledge will not weary the mind or exhaust the energies. There the grandest enterprises may be carried forward, the loftiest aspirations reached, the highest ambitions realized; and still there will arise new heights to surmount, new wonders to admire, new truths to comprehend, fresh objects to call forth the powers of mind and soul and body."—*Ibid.*, p. 677.

Jesus' invitation to be there is extended to everyone. Men and women from every nation, tongue, and tribe will be there. Describing the fulfillment of the promise, Ellen White says, "The great controversy is ended. Sin and sinners are no more. The entire universe is

clean. One pulse of harmony and gladness beats through the vast creation. From Him who created all, flow life and light and gladness, throughout the realms of illimitable space. From the minutest atom to the greatest world, all things, animate and inanimate, in their unshadowed beauty and perfect joy, declare that God is love."—*Ibid.*, p. 678.

Questions for discussion

1. For what purpose did God create the heavens and the earth?
2. Why did Eve listen to the serpent? Why did Adam take the fruit from Eve's hand?
3. When was the plan of salvation conceived?
4. How fully are we able to understand the love of God toward us? How fully will we understand it in heaven?
5. What can separate us from the love of God?
6. How would you describe the new heaven and the new earth? What does it mean to see "face to face"?
7. How can we have heaven in our hearts now? How can we reflect God's love before our fellow men?
8. How can we strengthen our longing for heaven?



God filled His perfect world with perfect creatures, but sin marred that perfection. One day God will restore His world to perfection, and all things will declare that He is love.

Greater love has no man



What counts with God is
the earnest purpose, the deep
piety, the love of truth,
and the fear of God.

By ROBERT H. PIERSON

If God instructs us to read a particular chapter in the Bible every day, that chapter must contain an important message. Ellen White says, "The Lord desires me to call the attention of His people to the thirteenth chapter of First Corinthians. Read this chapter every day, and from it obtain comfort and strength. Learn from it the value that God places on sanctified, heaven-born love, and let the lesson that it teaches come home to your hearts. Learn that Christlike love is of heavenly birth, and that without it all other qualifications are worthless."—*The SDA Bible Commentary*, vol. 6, p. 1091.

In 1 Corinthians 12 the apostle Paul speaks of the blessing and diversity of the gifts of the Spirit—faith, healing, miracles, prophecy, discerning of spirits, tongues, and interpretation of tongues, and others. The gifts of the Spirit had been especially evident in the Corinthian church. Paul counseled the believers, "Covet earnestly the best gifts" (1 Cor. 12:31).

However, as important as these gifts of the Spirit are, Paul declares there is a more excellent way, something more to be rightly coveted. The more excellent way the apostle desires us to know and practice is the way of love. Love goes the second mile; it goes "beyond the limit."

"I may speak in tongues of men or of angels, but if I am without love, I am a sounding gong or a clanging cymbal. I may have the gift of prophecy, and know every hidden truth; I may have faith strong enough to move mountains; but if

I have no love, I am nothing. I may dole out all I possess, or even give my body to be burnt, but if I have no love, I am none the better" (chap. 13:1-3, N.E.B.).

In the sight of God there is something greater than the gifts listed in 1 Corinthians 12. There is a "more excellent way." It is the way of love.

"It is not the ready speaker, the sharp intellect, that counts with God. It is the earnest purpose, the deep piety, the love of truth, the fear of God, that has a telling influence."—*Ibid.*

Love goes also beyond the natural gifts, beyond the talents with which the Lord has endowed us. It is possible that those who possess special gifts may differ or use them wrongly. But love is the great binding agency that holds the people of God together.

The thirteenth chapter of 1 Corinthians, called by one writer "the hymn of love," is a portion of Scripture that a lifetime of study will never exhaust. Where could anyone find a chapter so suited to self-examination as this chapter? Even "good" people need frequently to plumb its depths.

Five items that Paul subordinates to love in this chapter can be applied to Seventh-day Adventists:

1. "If I speak in the tongues of men and of angels" (verse 1, R.S.V.). Seventh-day Adventists may have a surfeit of eloquent preaching, an admirable worldwide program of evangelism. Our evangelists may be preaching beyond their strength. Our pastors may be feverishly following up Bible-study interests. Our other church workers and lay members may be totally committed to a strong witness for our Saviour and His last-day message. But if we do not love

others we are noisy gongs or clanging cymbals.

2. "Though I have the gift of prophecy" (verse 2). Here is an item with which Seventh-day Adventists can particularly identify. Though we have the gift of prophecy among us, if we are harsh or legalistic, if the love of Christ be missing, Paul declares we are "nothing." With the gift of prophecy there must be an unselfish love that motivates God's people.

3. "Though I . . . understand all mysteries" (verse 2). Seventh-day Adventists may apply this to their understanding of prophetic mysteries such as those in Daniel, which were sealed until the "time of the end," and in the Revelation, and in related messages from other Biblical prophecies. To our understanding of these portions of Inspiration we owe much of our existence as a movement. But the apostle reminds us, we count for nothing if we do not reflect God's love.

4. "Though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor" (verse 3). These words remind us of our welfare programs, such as Meals on Wheels, SAWS, Disaster Relief, which distribute food and clothing to the needy. Who is proportionately more active in this work for the down-trodden than Seventh-day Adventists? Service for others is one of the identifying marks of the Seventh-day Adventist worldwide program. It is a must! We dare not slacken our pace nor dull our thrust in our desire and determination to help those in need. But this Christian help must be love inspired, otherwise it will profit us nothing in the light of eternity.

5. "Though I give my body to be burned" (verse 3). Here Paul brings to light the martyrs' zeal—a willingness to die for truth. For decades Seventh-day Adventists have been known for their zeal, for their full commitment to inspired truth. The history of our church is replete with instances of men and women, boys and girls, who loved the Lord more than they loved their lives. They have given up jobs, friends, loved ones, and even life itself for the truth of God.

Love must be the catalyst

Unless these acts of devotion are love motivated, the apostle declares they will profit us nothing. Of the Christian, Ellen White says, "In his zeal he might even meet a martyr's death, yet if destitute of the gold of love he would be regarded by God as a deluded enthusiast or an ambitious hypocrite."—*Testimonies*, vol. 5, p. 168.

There were good traits of character and good deeds among the members of the Corinthian church during the first century. There is much to be com-

Robert H. Pierson is president of the General Conference.

mended in the lives and service of Seventh-day Adventists today, but love, the unselfish love of Christ, must be the motivating power of our every work and act.

It must be love that draws us close to God and sends us out to undertake great things for Him. It must be love that breaks down barriers and walls of separation between brethren, that inspires us to see the best in those with whom we come in contact. Without that Christlike love "I achieve precisely nothing" (Phillips). "No matter how high the profession, he whose heart is not filled with love for God and his fellow men is not a true disciple of Christ."—*The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 318.

What is love?

What is this love that God declares is so important, so absolutely indispensable? Let us turn to the Word of God for our answer to this question.

In his first Corinthian letter, the apostle uses the Greek word *agapē* (ä gä' pay). Only recently was this word found in other than Christian literature, though it appears a number of times in the Septuagint, the Greek Bible used by the early Christians. As used in the New Testament, *agapē* describes love as a principle. *Agapē* love grows out of respect for the admirable qualities of its object. *Agapē* love is a special quality of affection demonstrated in the fellowship of Christians one with another. Thus *agapē*, as used in the New Testament, is a Godlike experience that finds its way into the heart of a born-again Christian.

One Greek scholar has this to say about New Testament *agapē* love. It is "not an impulse from the feelings, it does not always run with the natural inclinations, nor does it spend itself only upon those for whom some affinity is discovered."—W. E. Vine, *Expository Dictionary*, vol. 3, p. 21.

When we read Paul's words in his letter to the Corinthian believers closely, and in different versions of the Scriptures, we discover anew the broader meaning of what the love of God does for a committed Christian. This love will make us gracious and kind. Envy and jealousy will never share a heart overflowing with God's true love.

Love—the love Paul speaks of—does not make us proud or boastful. It does not inspire inflated ideas of our own competency or importance. It does not make us arrogant, nor will it impel us to put on airs and pretend we are something that truly we are not.

Rudeness, unseemly behavior, selfishness, never spring from hearts filled with the kind of love we are speaking about this morning. It does not make us touchy—easy to take offense. It will never lead us to make lists of our

brothers' shortcomings. Rather, the love God longs to see in your heart and mine will fill our lives with acts of patience, sympathy, compassion, and tenderheartedness.

Yes, all this and more is compassed in the love God places within the heart of His people if we will only give Him a chance.

How full of sound, down-to-earth, practical instruction are the first two verses of 1 Corinthians 13! Every word or phrase is a sermon crying to be preached; yea, it is a life crying to be lived by every child of God in the Seventh-day Adventist Church. Jesus Christ exhibited these beautiful traits of character in His life here upon earth. "Since you are God's dear children, you must try to be like him" (Eph. 5:1, T.E.V.).

Love

Love is not sentiment, passion, or greed;
Love is eternally serving a need.
Love is sharing and caring, a life
Born for adversity, born for the strife.

Love is the fragrance from every crushed rose;
Love is the sweetest thing man or God knows.
Love is so patient, so thoughtful, so kind;
Love is the greatest thing you'll ever find.

"Love seeketh not her own"; strongest in loss;
Love shines the brightest when seen on a cross!—ADLAI A. ESTEB

Every Seventh-day Adventist longs for and prays for a "finished work"—that God's last message may be hastened

on wings to earth's remotest bounds. For this day we live, we pray, we sacrifice, we work.

Says Ellen White, "Nothing will so build up the Redeemer's kingdom, as will the love of Christ manifested by the members of the church."—*Testimonies*, vol. 5, p. 168.

It is not more money, bigger budgets, more equipment, improved methods, or dynamic plans that the remnant church needs today to finish the work. It is love—Christlike love—in the heart!

This Sabbath morning closes another Week of Prayer, a precious week of spiritual emphasis. It is my prayer that God's people around the world will find this wonderful love filling your hearts and motivating your lives. May the love of which we have studied today govern your relationships. May it so fill your heart that it will impel and compel you to go out and share your experience with others until the whole world will hear the good news of a returning Saviour.

Questions for discussion

1. 1 Corinthians 12:31 speaks of the "best gifts." Which of God's gifts are better than others?
2. How important is bestowing our goods to feed the poor in the light of 1 Corinthians 13:3-7?
3. In what different ways do you think that love becomes a cohesive quality in the church?
4. How important is love in carrying out a program within the church, and how important is it in its outreach in the neighborhood?

Annual Sacrifice Offering to be taken at this time

God is love

To leaders: A week of prayer can well be a turning point in the lives of boys and girls, an experience that will influence all their future.

The theme "God Is Love" should be emphasized this week. Make the application to the children as practical as possible. The more you can help the boys and girls understand the relationship they can have with God, the more they will appreciate and value their religious experience.

Include time each day for prayer bands, but be sure no child is ever made to feel embarrassed if he chooses not to pray.

On one day have a testimony meeting. Let it be spontaneous; do not force it or let it drag on. Many of the children are timid and unused to public testimony.

For your encouragement, remember this: "It is still true that children are the most susceptible to the teachings of the gospel; their hearts are open to divine influences, and strong to retain the lessons received. The little children may be Christians, having an experience in accordance with their years. They need to be educated in spiritual things, and parents should give them every advantage, that they may form characters after the si-

militude of the character of Christ."—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 515.

Arrange your program so that the boys and girls participate whenever possible. Let a junior read an appropriate passage of scripture each morning or lead out in a brief song service.

It is hoped that these readings will provide ideas for you to prepare an interesting program for the children. Come to the group well prepared. This will give you confidence. Let the animation in your voice be second only to the sparkle in your eyes.

Suggested songs to be used during the week

"That's Why I Love Him," *Songs of Praise*, No. 104.

"My Jesus, I Love Thee," *Church Hymnal*, No. 276.

"Love Divine," *Church Hymnal*, No. 142.

"More About Jesus," *Happy Songs*, No. 30.

"What a Friend We Have in Jesus," *Church Hymnal*, No. 320.

"O Jesus, I Have Promised," *Church Hymnal*, No. 288.

"O Let Me Walk With Thee," *Church Hymnal*, No. 395.

"I Just Love Him!" (music included on page 23).

"Yield Not to Temptation," *Church Hymnal*, No. 498.

"Jesus Is the Strongest Friend" (illustrated primary song, available from Adventist Book Centers, Child Evangelism Centers, or Sabbath School Productions, Box 969, Glendale, California 91209).

First day

Love solves a problem

By J. BRUCE ASHTON

Leader's resource material:
1 Corinthians 13.

Can you imagine what it would be like to do whatever you wanted to do—free? How would it feel to have no laws, no rules, no orders; free to do anything (or nothing) at all?

Since none of us has ever been completely free in this sense, we can only guess what sort of problems might come from it. For a while it would be exciting beyond anything we have ever thought of. Let us assume also that we are free to fly, free to change size or shape (yet still be ourselves), free to live underwater—free to do even more than we can imagine.

At first you will have to suppose that you are alone in the universe. If any other creature lived there, you might lose part of

your freedom. You both might want to eat the same piece of food or climb to the peak of the same mountain at the same time. Maybe both of you would even decide to become a dragon, both planning to eat the other up! No, for such absolute freedom you had better be alone.

With no one else in the universe, though, you might be a bit lonely, don't you think? After all, what fun is there in winning a race when you're the only one running? What fun is there when no one can see the dainty spring violets with you, or share a fresh peach with you, or sing a song with you? Maybe it would be worth giving up a little of that freedom just to have a friend.

Even God chose to create a friend. Adam, He called him. He was tall and handsome, and God enjoyed spending time with him.

God shared His freedom

God could have programmed Adam so that every time he heard God's voice, he would come running to shake hands, or to hug Him, or to bow at His feet. But then Adam wouldn't have been free to choose; he would have been like a big wind-up doll.

So God decided to give Adam the power of choice. He wanted Adam freely to choose to believe God. He would not interfere if

Adam should question whether God was really telling him the truth. God had said, "If you eat the fruit of that one tree, you will die." Was it so? Adam did not have to try it to find out. He could have accepted God's word as being true.

You know what happened, don't you? Adam and Eve forced God to prove that what He had said was true. They ate of the tree, and they died. And in the years that God let them live before they died, they learned about sin and evil, which God did not want them ever to have to know.

Would it have been easy for God to sit back and murmur, "What a pity! They chose not to believe and now just see what they've done"? Oh, no! It would not have been easy for God to rest quietly while Adam and Eve died, for God is love, and they were His children. All the love that all the fathers and mothers of all time have ever felt for their children is as nothing compared to the greatness of God's love for His children on this earth.

But what could God do for them? He could not trust them to obey Him. They had shown that they were not willing to trust Him. How could He help them? What a dilemma for love to solve! What could God do?

You and I might think of sev-

eral things. Perhaps God could send an angel to earth to teach people how to be good. Teaching is good, but we don't need teaching as much as we need forgiveness, and an angel would not have the right to forgive us.

We also need the assurance that God's way is best, that He can be trusted. So why not have an angel live on earth to show us how to believe and obey God? No, that's not the answer, either, for people would say to the angel, "You are not like us. You are pure and strong and holy. You don't even want to do the things that Satan tempts us to do."

Well, then, let God transform an angel into a man, and let him live a model life for us to see. Even if he succeeded, even if an angel, as a man, lived a life of victory over sin through trusting God, he could not save man. He could not take away the guilt of our past sins.

What God did is something you and I would never have thought of, nor dared to suggest if we had. God Himself chose to become a man. He set out to show that He can be trusted, by living a life of trust Himself. In every aspect of life He would choose to believe that God meant what He said, whether His word was a warning or a promise.

How would He begin? Just as

J. Bruce Ashton, D.M.A., is a professor of music at Southern Missionary College, Collegedale, Tennessee.

you and I began—as a baby. He was born to a humble Jewish woman. He grew up in a poor workingman's house, so that you and I can't complain that we don't have enough money to be saved. He lived in a wicked city, so that you and I can know that we can be good wherever we are. He depended on the promises of God for His food, His clothes, His home, His friends, His victory, His power—for everything. He allowed Satan to tempt Him to doubt, and He overcame Satan with the plain commands and promises of God's Word. He was a channel of healing and hope and happiness to all who would accept it.

Then He died—because He chose to die. You and I deserve to die as the proper punishment for our lack of faith in God. Once we died, though, we would be in Satan's kingdom of death, and we could not be raised to life again. But Jesus' love was so great that He said to Himself, "If Billy, or Edna, or Walter, or Susie, cannot share My heaven with Me because of their sins, then I will gather up all their sins Myself and die for them, to let Billy, and Edna, and Walter, and Susie enjoy the beauties of heaven even without Me."

You see, when Jesus was led to the cross to die, He had no proof that He would ever live again, for He was dying as a sinner—in your place and mine. But He did know that His Father would accept His death in place of our death, so that we could be friends with His Father again and forever.

Don't you love Jesus for being willing to give up the glories of

heaven forever so that you and I might share them? I do, and so did His Father. In fact, our Father loves Jesus more than ever because He made it possible for you and me to be saved from sin. You can imagine, then, that God was not about to leave Jesus in the tomb when He chose to die for us.

Now we have a living Savior who has proved by His own life that it is safe and wise to trust God completely. By accepting His power to overcome sin—power that He sends to us through the promises in His Word, we can become more like Him every day, enjoying the happiness that comes from trusting Him completely.

Second day

Getting to know God

By ALICE LOWE

Leader's resource material: Basic conditions

Some basic conditions for answered prayer are that we:

1. Genuinely need what we are praying for (*Steps to Christ*, p. 95).
2. Believe that God hears prayers and will respond in the way that is best for us (Heb. 11:6).
3. Put away sin and live a life

Alice Lowe is an assistant director of the General Conference Sabbath School Department.

of obedience to God (Ps. 66:18; 1 John 3:22).

4. Pray unselfishly (James 4:5; *Christ's Object Lessons*, p. 142).

5. Let God choose how and when He will answer (*Steps to Christ*, p. 96).

6. Ask in Jesus' name (John 16:23; *Steps to Christ*, pp. 100, 101).

7. Thank God for the answer at the time we ask for the gift (*Education*, p. 258).

Jesus has promised to help us fulfill all conditions to answered prayer (*Christ's Object Lessons*, p. 333).

The privileges of prayer are discussed in *Messages to Young People* in the chapter entitled "The Power of Prayer" and in *Steps to Christ*, "The Privilege of Prayer."

We are to pray for

Ourselves—Ps. 54:1

Friends—James 5:16

All men—1 Tim. 2:1

Workers—2 Thess. 3:1

Church members—Eph. 6:18

Enemies—Luke 6:28

Forgiveness—Ps. 51:1

Things we need to make our lives more like Christ's

Reasons for unanswered prayers

Sins—Isa. 59:1, 2

Regarding iniquity in the heart—Ps. 66:18

Insensitivity and selfishness—Prov. 21:13

Unforgiving spirit—Mark 11:25

Wrong motive for asking—James 4:3

"If we regard iniquity in our hearts, if we cling to any known sin, the Lord will not hear us; but the prayer of the penitent, contrite soul is always accepted. When all known wrongs are

righted, we may believe that God will answer our petitions."—*Steps to Christ*, p. 95.

Why do friends like to talk with each other, sit together, and play together? For the simple reason that they love each other and enjoy talking to each other. It's like that in our friendship with God, too. We should talk to God often, and we should also let Him talk to us, for Jesus says, "Ye are my friends" (John 15:14). How wonderful to have a Friend such as Jesus, one we can trust with all our secrets and know that He will understand and will never let us down. This is real love from a true friend.

How we talk to our Friend

Back in the beginning of this world, before Adam and Eve sinned, God came often and visited with them. He must have told them many thrilling things about the great worlds out in space, and about heaven. When Adam and Eve disobeyed God and had to leave the Garden, they no longer could talk with God face to face. This must have made them very sad. God will not talk with us face to face again until He comes to take us to heaven. Then we will look at His kind face and listen to the wonderful things He has to say to us.

But God knows that people want to be His friends, so He made it even easier to talk to Him than it is to talk to our earthly friends.

The Bible tells us we can talk to God by the words of our mouths and the meditations (or thoughts) of our hearts. We do not even have to say anything out loud, for He can even read our thoughts. We do not always have to be on our knees to pray, but we can lift our thoughts to God anytime, anywhere. We might call this kind of prayer a thought prayer because it is not spoken out loud.

In addition to these thought prayers we need to set aside regular times each day to talk to God. This special talk with our special Friend should be a time when we talk over with Him our activities and problems and thank Him for the things He does for us. And we should read some verses from the Bible and talk out loud to God about how His Word affects our everyday lives.

Jesus our example

When Jesus was here on earth He spent much time in prayer. He would get up early in the morning to go out alone and pray. After that He would go out into the streets and homes to help the people in many wonderful ways. The men who began to follow



Jesus came to earth to show us His Father's love. He wants us to be His friends so we can enjoy heaven with Him.

Jesus noticed that He prayed a great deal, and when they noticed how good and kind He was, they began to think that His life of prayer was the reason for His life of helpful service for others.

The disciples wanted to learn to be good helpers, just like Jesus, so they asked Him to teach them to pray. When they learned to pray as He did, the disciples found that they also could help

the people as He did. We, too, want to be loving and kind like Jesus, so we need to learn how to pray as He and the disciples did.

The Bible tells many stories of people just like you and me who prayed and received wonderful answers to their prayers. Can you recall some of these stories? (*Call for an answer.*)

Jacob prayed when he feared Esau.

Moses prayed when the people were ready to stone him in the wilderness.

Joshua prayed after Israel's army was defeated by the men of Ai.

David prayed when he was in danger.

Hezekiah prayed when he received a threatening letter from Sennacherib, an Assyrian king.

Abraham prayed when the storm of fire was about to sweep Sodom from the earth.

Hannah prayed when consecrating her son Samuel to the Lord before he was born.

Joshua prayed and the sun stood still.

Daniel prayed and the mouths of the lions were closed.

Elisha prayed and a young boy was raised to life.

The church prayed and Peter was released from prison.

Elijah prayed and the heavens were closed up for three and a half years. When he prayed again, the heavens gave rain.

An answer will come

Parents and teachers sometimes say Yes to your requests, but sometimes they say wait awhile. Sometimes they must say No, because they know that what you want is not good for you. God responds in a similar way to our prayers. He gives us what is good for us, but not always what we think we need.

Ellen White says: "Jesus knows the needs of children, and He loves to listen to their prayers. . . . Then, children, ask God to do for you those things that you cannot do for yourselves. Tell Jesus everything. Lay open before Him the secrets of your heart; for His eye searches the inmost recesses of the soul, and He reads your thoughts as an open book. When you have asked for the things that are necessary for your soul's good, believe that you receive them, and you shall have them."—*The Adventist Home*, p. 299.

When Peter was in prison and Herod had sixteen soldiers guarding him, an angel freed Peter from prison. The angel came; the prison doors swung open; the chains fell off Peter; he was free. But the angel did not do for Peter what he could do for himself.

Peter put on his own coat and shoes, as the angel told him. After the angel took him out on the streets of Jerusalem, he vanished, and Peter had to find his own way to the home of his friends.

Some of us are praying that God will do things for us that we should do for ourselves. Is it proper to pray for food if we are unwilling to work, or pray for the needy if we are not helping them? No, we must do our part and cooperate with God. We must not be like the boy who prayed and asked God to give him the best grades in the class, but spent his time playing when he should have been doing homework.

Breath of the soul

We should tell God Thank You for supplying the air we breathe, the food we eat, and all the other good things He gives us. And we should talk to God often, not just when we need something from Him.

We should pray with our families, but also in a quiet place, where we can be alone with God and get to know Him.

We should pray unselfishly, and before we pray we should be sure that all known wrongs are made right, and that we have forgiven those who have wronged us. If we do this, we can believe that God will answer our prayers.

Did you know that praying is a lot like breathing? "Prayer is the breath of the soul," Ellen White says (*Messages to Young People*, p. 249). That makes prayer very important, for we can't live very long without breathing, can we? (*Have children hold breath to demonstrate.*) Breathing is a pleasure. Did you notice how wonderful that first breath of air was after you held your breath for a while? Praying is like that—necessary if we want to stay alive spiritually, yet enjoyable at the same time.

God wants to be such a good friend with us that every day we will ask Him to help us with our daily living. It saddens Him when we are like the little girl who asked God to help her walk through the woods, and when she reached the clearing said, "Thank You, God, now I can go the rest of the way alone."

We can trust God. We can talk to Him about things we would never share with other friends. Nothing is too big or too small for Him to hear. We can share with Him our joys, our secret fears, and our hopes for the future.

Have you decided what you want to do with your life when you have finished school? Talk to God about it. Give Him your life and ask Him to guide you. Learn to talk to God about your school



Author Felix A. Lorenz traces the development of the doctrine of Laodiceanism in the Seventh-day Adventist Church through the writings of Ellen G. White and other historical documents. He shows how the church has risen or faltered spiritually according to whether it has accepted or ignored the Laodicean teaching and the concept of righteousness by faith. But even more, he brings the reader to the realization that each one of us must apply the implications of these teachings to his own personal life if the church is to accomplish its divine goal. Pastor H. M. S. Richards calls it *"the most hopeful and stirring appeal for the reception and proclamation of the Lord's message to Laodicea that I have ever read or heard."*



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work, your secret temptations, your friends, your family.

Remember this: you can take to Him even the smallest detail of your life, for nothing that concerns you is too small for Him to notice. If you let Him, He will be your very best Friend.

(Conclude the meeting with prayer bands.)

Third day

Love in action

By J. BRUCE ASHTON

Leader's resource material:

Choices:

Moses—to suffer—Heb. 11:25

Lot—to possess—Gen. 13:11

Mary—to listen to Jesus—Luke 10:39

Bad choices—Gen. 13:11

Good choices—Heb. 11:25

Better choices—Joshua 24:15

Best choices—Luke 10:42

It is fun to play games with words. Suppose someone says the word “fast.” What do you think of first? Is it “run,” or “train,” or “rocket”? These words all have to do with travel, but “fast” has other meanings, as well. You might think of “hunger,” since “fast” can also mean to go without food. Or you might pair it up with another word we often use with it, such as “fast asleep.”*

“Love” is a good word for such a game, since there are many ways to think about love. Perhaps you think of love as the way you feel when someone loves you. If so, you might wonder, Who loved first? Who started loving so that others could love in return? You already know the answer to that one, don't you? It was God, of course.

Maybe you think of love as a good, happy feeling toward someone. You might think a little deeper and see love as something you would be willing to do for someone else, giving up your own way for the other person. Real love should be unselfish, shouldn't it? We should not do something that appears loving just to get something we want for ourselves.

There is another side to love that you might not have thought of. Mrs. White says that love is a decision (*The SDA Bible Com-*

* If time allows, play this game with the students for a few moments. “Table” is a word with several meanings; other suitable words will probably come to mind. It might be instructive to see what responses come from words such as “faith,” “grace,” “church,” or even “God.”

mentary, vol. 6, p. 1101), a choice that we make. Now, making decisions is hard for some people, while others seem to know just what they want.

I watched two brothers, ages 8 and 7, choosing frames for their new eyeglasses. One boy looked over the rack for a few moments, then said, “I like these, but I want them in blue.” And that was that. The other boy studied and studied the frames that were there, tried on several of them, looked at himself in the mirror, laid aside one pair and picked up another. After a long time he settled on one pair, which his parents ordered, but he still did not seem quite sure that he had made the right choice.

You must make many choices in your life, and many of them do not make any serious difference. Neither of the boys in our little story would be able to see any better because of the frames he chose, and blue frames did not make the one boy a better boy or a worse one. Whether you put on a blue shirt or a red one this morning, whether you are wearing a dress with stripes or polka dots does not affect your character.

But you must think through some choices carefully. You may

I JUST LOVE HIM!

Words and Music by R. Curtis Barger

When I think how Je - sus loves me, How He cares for me each
When I read what Je - sus tells me In His Word, and as I

day — I just love Him! When I think how He is com - ing,
pray, I'll o - bey Him. Then I'll share His love with oth - ers

And will take me home some - day — I just love Him!
And I'll help some - one each day, So they'll love Him.

This song, by a GC associate Sabbath school director, is one of those recommended to be used this week.

not have to choose whether or not you want to eat, but you must decide when you will eat. It makes a great difference in your health whether you eat at only the proper times, and in turn your health affects the way you make other important decisions. You must also choose what you will eat, for if you eat junk foods, you will not be as strong physically as you ought to be. You will also find it harder to think clearly, and it will be more difficult for Jesus to speak to you through your conscience.

Some choices are a direct part of your spiritual life. How much time will you spend today reading your Bible? What sort of thoughts will you let the television put into your mind? What will you do to help your parents or neighbors? Are you going to Sabbath school and church this week? When you get there, will you listen for God's voice speaking through your teacher? When you are given a job to do, will you do it quickly and well?

Every choice of this kind has its effect on your character, and character is the only thing you can take with you from this world to heaven.

But what has all this to do with

love? Let us see if we can find any connection. To begin with, God is love. Does that mean that He, too, has had to make decisions? Well, He decided to make this world that we live on; He chose to fill it with color and fragrance and beautiful sounds; and He made people to live here. Then He decided to give us the right to choose for ourselves. He wants us to be free to make our own decisions, rather than being forced into certain ways of behaving. This is one evidence of His great love for us.

God also chose to arrange His human friends into families, with two age groups, or generations, as part of each family. We call them parents and children. The most obvious reason for families is to fill the earth with new life, new people, new friends. But God also planned that parents should take care of their little ones. Parents are not only to feed and clothe their children but also to guide and teach them. Whenever you must make an important decision, your parents can see more clearly than you can what the result of that decision will be. God requires parents to help their children, His young friends, learn to make wise choices.

It is no wonder, then, that when God speaks directly to children in His word, He uses these words: "Children, obey your parents in the Lord: for this is right" (Eph. 6:1). He even put this law right in

the middle of His Ten Commandments: "Honour thy father and thy mother: that thy days may be long upon the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee" (Ex. 20:12). But the most wonderful part is

yet to come. God never commands us to do anything without promising to help us do it. Every command of God is a promise. If we choose to accept the promise, it brings with it the very life of God. It changes us so that we become like God (see *Education*, p. 126). If God tells us to follow our parents' will instead of our own, He also gives us His own strength so that we will be able to make that decision.

Why does God ask us to obey? To spoil our plans for fun? To upset our playtime and make us frustrated? Of course not. God knows that the only way you can be happy is to be good! Your parents know that too, and so do your teachers. Their guidance is only to help you learn right habits.

Habits, you see, can be helpful. If you make it a habit to cut and handle your food properly at every meal, you needn't worry about how to use your knife and fork when you are invited out for dinner. If you make it a habit to make your bed every morning, you will not have to be embarrassed if a guest looks into your room. If you make it a habit to memorize three or four verses from the Bible each day, you will find it easy to store much of His Word in your mind.

So if your parents take you to church every Sabbath, thank them for the habit. It will make it much easier when you leave home, for you will not have to decide whether to go to church. Of course you will go, and your mind will be free to hear God speaking through the pastor.

If your teacher asks you to let a younger child swing first, be glad that you can develop a habit of self-forgetfulness. That way you can enjoy other people's pleasure along with them.

Good habits cut down on the number of choices you must make all through your life. The habit of obedience is especially helpful for a special reason. Choosing to obey is one of the best ways you can show someone that you love and trust him or her.

One thing more. Do you remember that Jesus said you should love your neighbor as yourself? What do you suppose it means to love yourself? Does it mean to get all the fun for yourself?

No. Real love for yourself is only possible when you know you have done the right thing and made the right choice, even if it wasn't easy. When you have peace with yourself, when you know that God has helped you with a difficult decision, then you can know the love of God in your own heart, and others will be able to see the love of God in your life.

Fourth day

Love is giving to others

By MOLLY K. RANKIN

Leader's resource material:

"Freely ye have received, freely give" (Matt. 10:8).

When I got out of my nice, warm bed this morning I began to shiver. A glance out the kitchen window told me the reason. Everywhere there was a heavy, white frost. I hunched my shoulders and pulled my warm, woolly robe closer around me, and then I turned up the heat, went to the kitchen stove, and began preparing breakfast.

I'm so fortunate, I said to myself, to have a warm house and warm clothes and plenty of food.

Have you ever felt like that? Have you ever said to yourself, I am glad for all the wonderful things I have. God surely knows how to bless, doesn't He? And yet, sometimes we get so used to having all these things around us that we forget how blessed we really are.

Think of our blessings

For just a few minutes I want you to help me list some of the blessings we have in our lives.

(Get suggestions from the children, listing them on the blackboard as nearly as possible in groups of A. *Essential*; B. *Luxuries*; C. *Spiritual*. The children may have inaccurate ideas of what is a "need" and a "want," but this does not concern us now. The exercise is to make them recognize what they have.)

Well, now, that is a big list, isn't it? Now I want you to think what it would be like if you did not have all these things. Think hard now. What if you lived in a village where there was no electrical power—none at all. Tell me the things you would not have in your houses.

(Cross off the items from the lists on the blackboard.)

The list seems endless.

Now, let us suppose that you had no water coming into the house—no faucet—not even a well outside. To get water you had to walk down a very steep hill to the river, fill a long piece of bamboo pipe, stuff the opening of the pipe with some banana leaves, and carry it all the way back up

Molly K. Rankin lives in Christchurch, New Zealand, where her husband is a pastor.

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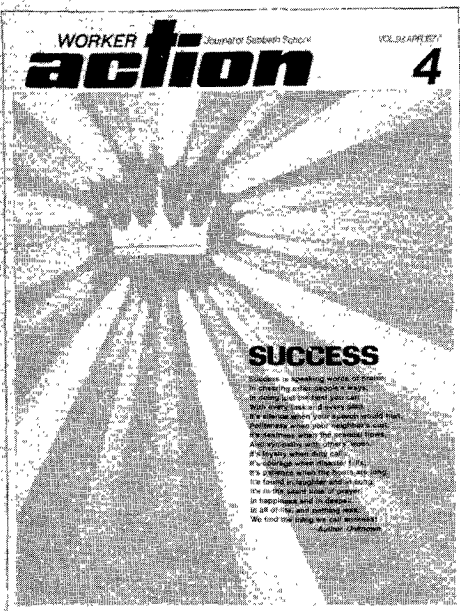
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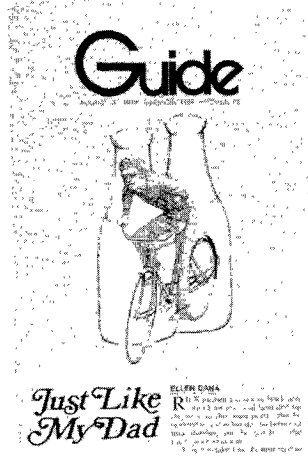


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When we give our hearts to Jesus, we want to share ourselves with those in need, because the love of Jesus binds us all together as a family. Do you ask Jesus each day to show you how you can help other people?

the hill to your house. Just suppose that the only place to take a bath and the only way to wash your clothes was in that river too. Would you keep yourselves as clean as you do now? Would you be washing your hands every time before you ate a meal? Would you be laundering your clothes each day? No, I don't think you would be.

But if you didn't keep so clean and you didn't wash so often, how would this affect you? Right. Very soon you would be breaking out in sores; perhaps you would develop scabies or yaws or ulcers.

Now let us suppose too that your dad didn't have a job and he didn't bring home a paycheck each week or month. What would happen?

That's right. No cars or swimming pools or bikes, no more new clothes, no shoes, probably not even enough food. And, of course, this would mean that you could no longer go to school, because your whole family, mother and all the children, would have to work in the garden to grow enough food for your family to eat.

And then, finally, let's think of the house itself, and instead of weatherboard and glass or brick or stone, let's imagine a bamboo house with a grass roof. Now that doesn't leave us with much at all, does it? Just a grass hut to live in—a hut with no windows and perhaps a fire burning on the earth floor inside. You might have a pair of pants or a dress to wear on special occasions. Your mother

might have a plate for you to eat from and maybe a spoon and cup. But if not, you would eat with your fingers. You might have a blanket to wrap yourself in at night, but probably not. Probably there would be only one in the house and that would belong to dad.

No opportunities

Would you like to live that way? No, I wouldn't either. And yet many people do. More people live that way, in fact, than live like you and I. And the worst thing is that they have no hope that the situation will improve. They know nothing of heavenly mansions and wedding garments, of vineyards and golden streets, because they know nothing of Jesus. They have never had an opportunity to hear about Him. And that really worries me. Imagine never having heard of Jesus!

Amos was like that. He came from one of the most primitive tribes in Papua New Guinea. He was very poor because the men in his village had no way of earning money. His house was old and full of lice and cockroaches. He was cold because he had no clothes, and his body was dirty and covered with sores.

Far from being able to read and write, he had never seen a book and didn't even know anything about school. He knew nothing about what kind of food was good for him. He left the pawpaws and bananas to rot because he was told that they were baby food. He

was old enough to eat snakes and pigs and frogs and lizards and rats.

Amos lived in fear—fear of spirits, fear of being killed and eaten by warring tribes, and fear of the anger of his elders.

And then one day his whole life changed. One day the Adventist missionaries came to his village. He saw a white man for the first time; he heard of Jesus for the first time; he learned to sing, to wash, to eat potatoes; and he discovered there were such things as books. After some weeks the missionary took Amos and several other boys away to school and Amos began a brand-new life. He attended the mission primary school, then the high school, then the training college, and today Amos is a mission teacher training other boys and girls to serve Jesus.

But I keep thinking of all the other boys and girls who have not had the opportunities that Amos has had; those who still live back in their villages in fear, hungry and dirty, uneducated, knowing nothing of Jesus. Shouldn't we do something to help them?

We should love our neighbors

Of course we should. Jesus makes it very clear that we should love our neighbors as ourselves.

"But, surely," you say, "our neighbors are the children next door or the child on the next street." Not at all. Our neighbor is every person who needs our help. And those boys and girls in the mission field truly need our help. We have so many things. They have nothing. Jesus says, "Freely ye have received, freely give."

But how can we do that?

Shall we send them our washing machine? No. Washing machines need power to make them work and, anyway, grass skirts cannot be washed.

Shall we send them our inner-spring mattress? No. They would not know what to do with it, and besides, they prefer to sleep on the ground by the fire.

Our car would be no use. They couldn't drive and they would never have enough money to buy gas. And where Amos lives there aren't even any roads.

What about money? We could give our money in the offering. That's a good way to begin. There is never enough money for missions, so let's keep on giving our offerings. But is money enough? When your parents give you money for missions and you put it in the offering, do you feel that you have done enough to help all the little Amoses in the world? Or do you feel you would like to do something more? Something spe-

cial, give something just from you, something that only you can give? But what is there that you have that will be of use to those boys and girls so far away? The answer is simple. *Yourselves*. Those boys and girls want your money, but more than your money they want *you*.

What do you plan to be when you leave school?

A doctor, dentist, or nurse? Those boys and girls need your help to heal their sicknesses and to show them a better and more healthful way to live.

An architect, electrician, or plumber? Why, you are the ones they need to build the schools and hospitals and churches and to teach the boys and girls to be tradesmen, too.

A farmer or dressmaker? You could teach them the best way to grow their gardens and how to sew their own clothes.

A teacher or minister? By sharing yourselves you can teach them many things, but most of all you can introduce them to Jesus.

Jesus says "My son, give me thine heart, and let thine eyes observe my ways" (Prov. 23:26). When we give our hearts to Jesus we want to share ourselves with those in need, because the love of Jesus binds us all together as one family. It makes us brothers and sisters in Him.

It is fun to share. And who do you think gets the most fun, the giver or the receiver? Jesus says that it is more blessed to give than to receive, and everyone who has given or shared knows that is true.

Fifth day

Waiting in love—God's heroes

By MOLLY K. RANKIN

Leader's resource material:

"Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me" (Matt. 25:40).

Here's a word.

(Write *H E R O* on the board.)

What does that word mean? I looked it up in the dictionary and this is what it says. (Write *definition on the board*.)

"Famous warrior, man of great bravery, courage, or greatness of soul." There is no problem with words like (check the words as you say them) warrior, great bravery, or courage, is there? But what about these? (Draw a ring around "greatness of soul.")

What does "greatness of soul" mean? It's tucked away right at the end of the dictionary definition, almost as if it doesn't matter. But it does. It's important. Is there someone we know who had greatness of soul?

Moses is a name that flashes into my mind—Moses, when he was leading the Israelites in the wilderness. I don't think of him as a warrior with a sword or someone who did brave and courageous deeds. But I think of him as (write words on the board): patient, self-forgetful, forgiving, humble, loving, helpful, meek, kind, thoughtful of others.

That is what it means to have greatness of soul. Moses was a hero. He was a hero for God.

Now, here is a story.*

At last it was spring. The children had been playing hide-and-go-seek in the long grass, but now they were resting in the warm sunshine.

"A snake! A snake!" screamed Mavis.

Immediately Gervis was on his feet. He grabbed a stick from the ground and slammed it down on the snake's back. A moment later he swaggered back to the group holding the stick at arm's length with the dead body of the snake draped over it.

"There, now. Who's afraid of a little bit of a green snake? See? I killed it with one blow. They don't worry me at all. How about you, Frank? You afraid of snakes?"

"No," said Frank. "I'm not scared of them but I don't like them. I prefer to let them be."

"I'm not afraid of anything," Gervis put his hands on his hips and threw out his chest. "When I grow up I'm going to travel—visit Africa and hunt lions and leopards and do real big things."

The little girls looked at Gervis with wide-open eyes. He sounded so very brave.

"How about you, Frank?"

"I don't want to travel. And besides, I'm afraid of wild animals."

Gervis looked at Frank as if he pitied him.

"Oh, come on now," he said and laughed in a superior way. The girls laughed with him.

Next they decided to go down to the creek to paddle. That was fun. They counted fish, they skimmed stones on the surface of the water, and played till late afternoon.

"Come on, it's time we were getting home," said Frank, and so they scrambled up the winding path of the creek bank to the high ground on top. As they pressed

through the long grass once more, they heard a strange noise.

They looked back. The girls screamed.

"Look out!" gasped Gervis. "It's a bull!" His face was white and he seemed unable to move.

Suddenly Frank grabbed Nellie's red sweater from her shoulders and yelled, "Run for the fence! Run for your lives!"

Gervis did not need to be told twice. He ran as fast as he could, dropped to the ground, and rolled under the fence to safety. The three little girls were close behind him.

Frank, the hero

Frank waved the red cardigan and shouted as loud as he could. He achieved his purpose. The infuriated bull turned toward him. Frank ran as quickly as he could, backward, still waving the red cardigan. The bull was almost on top of him. In an instant, Frank flung the cardigan over a nearby bush, glanced over his shoulder, and then did the only thing possible—he jumped over the cliff that dropped to the creek. Fortunately, a small shrub broke his fall a little, but he landed beside the water, unconscious.

When he woke up, he was in the hospital. His mother and dad were sitting nearby him telling him that they were proud of him, but he was too tired to ask why.

Later he woke again. This time the nurse was beside him.

"My, you've slept a long time. Look at all the presents and flowers people have sent you."

"What did they do that for?"

"Why, you're a hero."

"A what?"

"A hero. Here it all is." And then she showed him the newspaper. In big headlines it read, "Frank Harland, Village Hero. Saves lives of four friends by heroic act."

"But I had to do it. The bull would have killed them," said Frank. Then, more to himself than to anyone else, he said, "A hero! But I thought I was a coward."

Now, why do you suppose Frank thought he was a coward? I guess he had been listening too much to Gervis, and like lots of other boys and girls I know, he thought that to be a hero you had to go to a foreign land and hunt lions and leopards, or climb the highest mountain in the world, or become famous as a sports star. He did not know about greatness of soul. I admit, he did a very brave thing to face that bull, but what really made him a hero was that he forgot himself and thought only of his friends and their safety. It is thinking of others that makes a person God's hero.

Although sometimes God's heroes are called to be great leaders or to go to foreign mission fields, most of them are called just to stay and witness for Him right where they are—at home and at school. They may never get their names in the local newspaper, as Frank Harland did, but their kindly acts will be entered in the records in heaven (see *Testimonies*, vol. 2, p. 26).

Every time you run to pick up the small child who has fallen; every time you take some flowers to the old woman who is alone and bedridden; every time you help mother or father without being asked; every time you say a kindly word to your classmate who is being laughed at because he is not quite as clean or well dressed or clever as the rest of the class; every time you run errands for the woman who is so busy with lots of children, or mow the lawn for the old man with arthritis; every time you do any kindly act, it is as if you are doing it for Jesus.

Two groups of people

The Bible tells us that Jesus will divide His people into two groups—those who really love Him and those who think only of themselves. To those who really love Him He will say, "Come, you that are blessed by my Father! Come and possess the kingdom which has been prepared for you ever since the creation of the world. I was hungry and you fed me, thirsty and you gave me a drink; I was a stranger and you received me in your homes, naked and you clothed me; I was sick and you took care of me, in prison and you visited me" (Matt. 25:34-36, T.E.V.). The people will be surprised when Jesus says this.

"When did we do all these things?" they will ask. And Jesus will reply, "Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me" (Matt. 25:40).

Some boys and girls like to do good deeds just so people will notice them and praise them, and maybe reward them with money. Those are not the ones Jesus is talking about. Jesus means the boys and girls who love Him so much that they want to be helpful just for the sheer joy of giving. And when boys and girls give like that, all kinds of things happen. Heaven smiles upon their work (see *Testimonies*, vol. 2, p. 24; *The Desire of Ages*, p. 637), and angels give praise that ascends to heaven and makes beautiful music there (see *Testimonies*, vol. 2, p. 25). Boys and girls who work for others grow closer to Jesus and improve in health. They are so pleased to be doing good to

others that a warm glow flashes through their nerves, quickens the circulation of the blood, and gives them mental and physical health (see *Testimonies*, vol. 4, p. 56). (Note: *The Spirit of Prophecy references have been adapted to suit the understanding of the primary age group.*)

Do you think that it is only the children who help the needy who have "greatness of soul"? No, I don't think so. God has other kinds of heroes too. There is the boy who finds that his small sister has broken his model airplane but, instead of shouting and losing his temper, he quietly makes things right with her and then goes and repairs the damage. There is the girl who shares her special treasures with the girl who has said spiteful things about her. There is the boy who prays for the boy who has, because of prejudice, beaten him up at school that day.

There is the boy who refuses to fight when really provoked. There is Reuben, from Papua New Guinea, who, when he was persecuted for his beliefs at government school, simply hung up a picture roll by his bunk in the boys' dormitory, and as a result of the boys' questions brought five of his heathen friends into the church. All these kinds of boys and girls are God's heroes.

It is not always easy to be God's hero, but unseen angels are waiting to help you as you shine out the love of Jesus (see *Testimonies*, vol. 9, p. 31). And if you want to be a hero, the best kind you can be is one of God's heroes.

Sixth day

Love is being comfortable forever

By J. BRUCE ASHTON

Leader's resource material:

Spiritual Gifts, vol. 3, pp. 128, 129, 235; vol. 4, pp. 60, 61; *Education*, pp. 304, 305; *The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*, vol. 7, p. 987.

There is a song that says, "When I get to heaven, goin' to put on my shoes, I'm goin' to walk all over God's heaven."

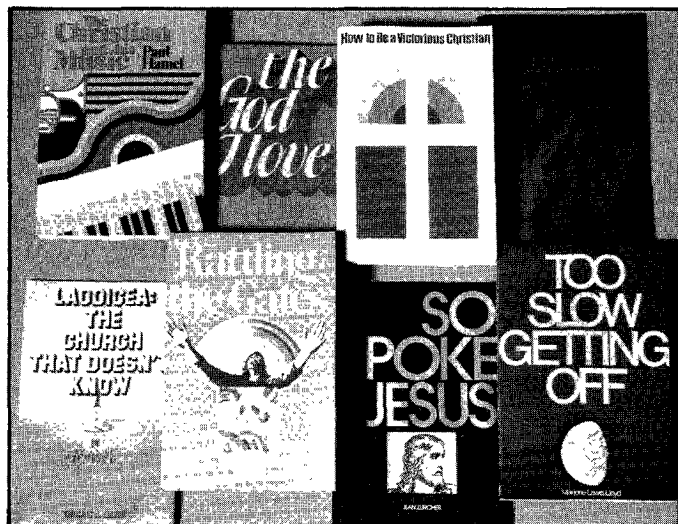
How long do you suppose it would take to walk all over God's heaven? A week? Ten days? A couple of months? Surely a year would be more than enough, wouldn't it?

What will you see when you

* Adapted from a story by Margaret Locke entitled "Frank Harland, Village Hero" in *Our Little Friend*, April 22, 1966.

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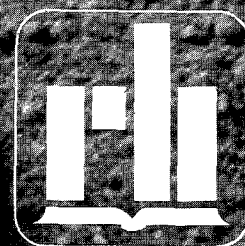
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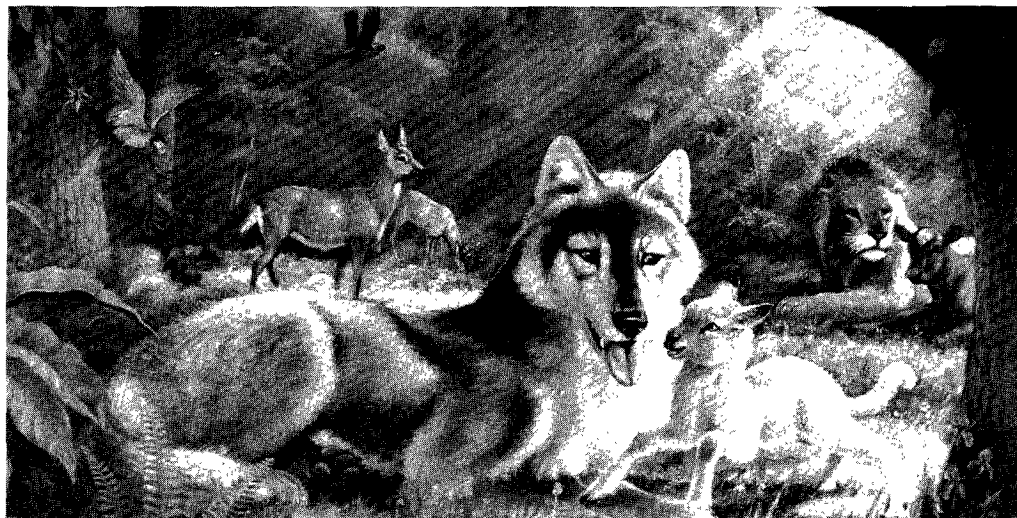
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review publications



What will you see when you walk all over God's heaven? Animals, plus many other things to make you happy.

walk all over God's heaven? Palaces? Mansions? Homes for the saved? Certainly, although God's idea of a house may not be the same as ours. Trees and flowers and evergreen shrubs? Of course, for God still loves the beautiful things of nature as much as when He made them all for the Garden of Eden. Birds and fish and animals of all sorts? Yes, God is eager to give you back these beautiful, lovable, cuddly playmates.

Heaven is sometimes called "Eden restored." That can help us understand that God will take us to a place that is ideal for our happiness. The Garden of Eden had everything in it that Adam and Eve (and all their children) would need to be perfectly happy.

But Ellen White says that heaven will not be precisely like Eden. Something that was in the Garden of Eden will not be in heaven. Can you think what it might be? It is a tree, one of the two trees that we know by name. The tree of life was in Eden. It will also be in heaven, standing beside the river of life. But the tree of knowledge of good and evil will not be there. Why?

The answer is really quite simple. God placed that tree in Adam's garden home as a test. He wanted to see whether Adam would trust and obey Him.

But why should God need to test Adam? Hadn't God just created him perfect and holy? Yes, He had, but let's look at it this way: perhaps mother says "Peter, I need you to promise that you will come quickly whenever I call you today."

"Yes, Mother, I'll be glad to," answers Peter. Suppose, then, that all day long Mother never calls Peter for any reason. Will she know, when the day is over, whether Peter would really mind?

No, because she never gave him a chance.

Adam had every reason to love God. God had never done anything but good for Adam, and all the joy that Adam knew came from God. But God needed to know that Adam would always obey Him before He could trust him with eternal life. The tree of knowledge gave Adam a chance to prove either that he loved and trusted God, or that he didn't really.

In heaven God will not need a test tree anymore, for He is testing us now. Every day He is watching to see whether we will obey Him. But He is doing more than watching—He is offering us all the help we need to overcome Satan and sin.

He has put the same power into His Word, the Bible, that He used to make this world. And in the Bible He has promised us an even greater gift. Jesus put it this way: if human parents, who are themselves sinful and imperfect, still like to give their children good things, "how much more will your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him?" (Luke 11:13).

How marvelous God is! In the beginning, He gave us His own life. He gave us freedom to choose; He gave us His friendship. When we chose to disobey Him, He gave us His own Son, Jesus Christ, to live on earth, to become a man. Now that Jesus has returned to heaven, He has sent the Holy Spirit, the part of God who can live inside us even now.

What do you suppose we will talk about in heaven? Maybe you can guess from some of the things that children talk about now. Every year, for instance, we have a big celebration for some special day in our country. Most

towns set off a display of fireworks; sometimes there is also a parade, or a watermelon feed, or a horse show. Every year, for several weeks afterward, I hear children talking about those exciting events. Surely in heaven we will not forget all the pleasant things that happened to us here, and we will enjoy talking them over with God and with the angels.

You know, don't you, that each of you has a special angel assigned just to take care of you? Yes, your angel has shared all your special moments with you, and he knows far more about what actually happened than you do. What might he tell you?

Imagine sitting with your angel under a big tree, its leaves seeming to sparkle with silver and gold, the grass under you more lush than any you have ever seen.

"Tammy," he begins, "do you remember the day you and a couple of your friends were standing outside the drugstore after school? They said they were planning to steal a couple of candy bars, and they told you to come along and help them. Immediately Satan sent his angels to work on you. They spoke to your mind about the delicious flavor of the candy bars, and your mouth started to water, didn't it? They told you that you could prove how much smarter you were than the storekeeper, and suggested that this would be your only chance *all day* to do something *really* exciting."

Your angel stops a moment. You had almost forgotten that day, but as he speaks, the memory of it comes back.

"I knew that you needed help," he continues. "I knew, of course, that your parents had helped you develop habits of honesty. But I also knew that it was often hard

for young people to remember the importance of doing right all the time. So I called up to your Father—and mine—for some of my friends to join me."

God has unlimited power. If one needs more help, your angel has access to Heaven. God loves you so much that He would empty all heaven to save only you.

Your angel goes on: "I reminded you of texts that you had learned once, texts with the power of God in them—I can do all things through Christ who strengtheneth me"; "What shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?" "He that saith he abideth in Him ought himself also so to walk, even as he walked." We prompted you to think of Sabbath school lessons and chapters from your Bible lessons at school. We pointed out the importance of your influence on your friends, on the storekeeper, and on anyone who might ever learn of your actions. And I pleaded earnestly with you to honor your parents by being the wholesome kind of youth they were praying for."

Again your angel waits, as you realize even more how very, very much it mattered to God whether you could be trusted.

Now his voice is low: "But we couldn't make your decision for you. It was a—helpless sort of feeling. Finally you spoke, telling your companions that you would not do such a mean thing; that your peace of mind was worth more to you than candy, or money, or even friends. They laughed at you, but you turned and went home with a heavenly contentment in your heart. Tammy, I was never so proud of you as then. I only wish you could have seen the looks on the evil angels' faces and then heard the song of rejoicing the other angels and I sang, echoing to the very throne of God."

A new happiness floods over you, and you, too, sing a new song of thankfulness and praise to your Father. When you realize that you might have traded the thrill of this moment for a stolen candy bar, you know more surely than ever that God never asks us to give up anything without replacing it with something of far greater value.

Young friend, you will never walk all over God's heaven unless you have learned to walk with Him through every experience of life here on earth. Just remember that God will do everything He can do to cultivate your friendship in this life, so that you and He may enjoy heaven forever. Give yourself to Him now, and know that in Christ Jesus you are His for eternity.

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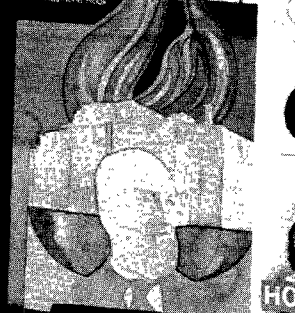
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George W. Amason, Review and Herald printer, who shared in the early successes and tragedies of the SDA Church

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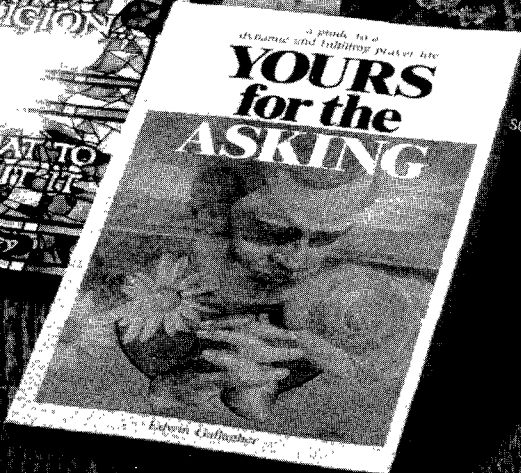


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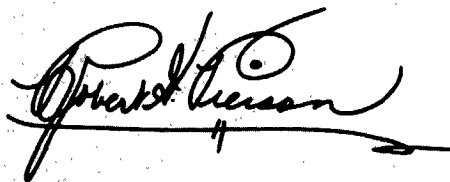


A voice of certainty

More than a decade before there was an organized Seventh-day Adventist Church, Sabbathkeeping Adventists began to publish a paper—*The Advent Review and Sabbath Herald*. Its name indicated that it was meant to review the Advent truths and experience of the 1844 movement and to herald the rediscovered Sabbath doctrine. It also announced that the Lord was calling out a people who would proclaim the three angels' messages. Under the name of the magazine appeared the text "Here is the patience of the saints: here are they that keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus" (Rev. 14:12).

An early editorial explained that the paper was designed "to lay before the people momentous and solemn truths. . . . It is to cheer and comfort the believing, to arouse the slumbering, reclaim the backsliding, and awaken the sinner."—*Review and Herald*, April 10, 1856. The growth of the Seventh-day Adventist Church indicates that the paper succeeded in this mission. In the days before automobiles made it possible to attend church many miles away, or radio brought preachers' voices into isolated homes, the REVIEW was indispensable in winning and holding Adventists to the faith of Jesus.

Though in many ways we live in a different world today, our church paper is as important as ever in the life of every Seventh-day Adventist. Instead of a lack of communication, as in pioneer days, today we suffer from a continual bombardment by the media that is even more threatening to spiritual life. In such a time a voice of certainty is needed saying, "This is the way, walk ye in it" (Isa. 30:21). We believe the Lord still uses the ADVENTIST REVIEW to speak to hearts and minds as it reviews the way He has led us in the past and heralds His soon coming. It is my prayer that you will welcome into your home our church paper, not only during this Week of Prayer, but every week until the last page is printed, our presses stop, and Jesus invites the commandment-keeping saints into the Holy City.



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