

Ellen G. White 1877 Signs of The Times

August 9, 1877

Missionary Work at Home

Many are ever restless and disappointed, seeking for some greater work than that which now occupies them. Some mothers long to engage in missionary labor, while they neglect the simplest duties lying directly in their path. The children are neglected, the home is not made cheerful and happy for the family, scolding and complaining are of frequent occurrence, and the young people grow up feeling that home is the most uninviting of all places. As a consequence, they impatiently look forward to the time when they shall leave it, and it is with little reluctance that they launch out into the great world, unrestrained by home influence, and the tender counsel of the hearth-stone.

The parents, whose aim should have been to bind these young hearts to themselves, and guide them aright, squander their God-given opportunities, are blind to the most important duties of their lives, and vainly aspire to work in the broad missionary field.

As I have marked these unhappy, restless spirits, and deplored their power to shadow the lives of others, the thought would arise: What a fearful deception is upon them! How terrible a mistake they are making!

Some of this class pronounce the faithful Christian mother worldly, as they mark how attentive she is to the wants of her husband and children, how zealous in performing the sweet home duties. They sigh because of her lack of spirituality, thinking the labor wasted that goes to make home a place of comfort and happy rest. Their minds fail to understand how the performance of these humble tasks can satisfy the heart.

Jesus made the lowly paths of human life sacred by his example. For thirty years he was an inhabitant of Nazareth. His life was one of diligent industry. He, the Majesty of Heaven, walked the streets, clad in the simple garb of a common laborer. He toiled up and down the mountain steeps, going to and from his humble work. Angels were not sent to bear him on their pinions up the tiresome ascent, or to lend their strength in performing his lowly task. Yet when he went forth to contribute to the support of the family by his daily toil, he possessed the same power as when he wrought the miracle of feeding the five thousand hungry souls on the shore of Galilee.

But he did not employ his divine power to lessen his burdens or lighten his toil. He had taken upon himself the form of humanity with all its attendant ills, and he flinched not from its severest trials. He lived in a peasant's home, he was clothed in coarse garments, he mingled with the lowly, he toiled daily with patient hands. His example shows us that it is man's duty to be industrious, that labor is honorable.

His life, written upon the pages of history, should encourage the poor and the lowly to perform contentedly the humble duties of their lot. Honorable work has received the sanction of Heaven, and men and women may hold the closest connection with God, yet occupy the humblest position in life. Jesus was as faithfully fulfilling his mission when hiding his divinity with the humble occupation of a

carpenter, as when employed in healing the sick, or walking upon the white-capped billows to the aid of his terrified disciples. Christ dignified the humble employments of life, by occupying a menial condition, that he might be able to reach the mass of mankind and exalt the race to become fit inmates for the paradise of God.

For a long time, Jesus dwelt at Nazareth, unhonored and unknown, that he might teach men how to live near God while discharging the humble duties of life. It was a mystery to angels that Christ, the Majesty of Heaven, should condescend, not only to take upon himself humanity, but to assume its heaviest burdens and most humiliating offices. This he did in order to become like one of us, that he might be acquainted with the toil, the sorrows, and fatigue of the children of men, that he might be better able to sympathize with their distresses and understand their trials.

Those who divorce religion from their business are reproved by the example of Jesus. Hidden away among the hills of Nazareth, yet having such claims upon heaven that he could command the entire angel host, he was a simple carpenter, working for wages, and living a godly life in the face of all discouragements.

It requires much more grace and stern discipline of character to work for God in the capacity of mechanic, merchant, lawyer, or farmer, carrying the precepts of Christianity into the ordinary business of life, than to labor as an acknowledged missionary in the open field, where one's position is understood, and half its difficulties obviated by that very fact. It requires strong spiritual nerve and muscle to carry religion into the work-shop and business office, sanctifying the details of every-day life, and ordering every worldly transaction according to the standard of a Bible Christian.

Jesus, in his thirty years of seclusion at Nazareth, toiled and rested, ate and slept, from week to week and from year to year, the same as his humble contemporaries. He called no attention to himself as a marked personage, yet he was the world's Redeemer, the adored of angels, doing, all the time, his Father's work, living out a lesson that should remain for humanity to copy to the end of time.

This essential lesson of contented industry in the necessary duties of life, however humble, is yet to be learned by the greater portion of Christ's followers. If there is no human eye to criticise our work, nor voice to praise or blame, it should be done just as well as if the Infinite One himself were personally to inspect it. We should be as faithful in the minor details of our business, as we would in the larger affairs of life.

God is testing and proving us by our daily lives, watching the development of our characters, weighing our moral worth. Those who slight the spirit of the word of God in their business life, as carpenters, lawyers, and merchants, are unfaithful in matters of eternal interest, since it is the life that indicates the spiritual advancement, and registers upon the Book of God the unchangeable figures of the future. The angels are mournfully inscribing a fearful record of slighted duties and neglected opportunities against many who make exalted professions. Those who are unfaithful in little things, cannot be entrusted with the true riches of the kingdom.

Mrs. E. G. White, in Health Reformer.

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Home Adornment

Many are unhappy in their home life, because they are trying so hard to keep up appearances. They expend largely of means, and labor unremittingly to gain the praise of their associates—those who really care nothing for them or their prosperity. One article after another is considered indispensable to the household appointments, until many expensive additions are made that, while giving a momentary satisfaction to the eye, do not increase the comfort of the family one whit. At the same time, all these things have taxed the strength and patience, and consumed valuable time which might be expended in the service of the Lord.

The precious grace of God is made secondary to matters of no real importance, and while collecting material for enjoyment, they lose the capacity for happiness. They find that their possessions fail to give the satisfaction they had hoped to derive from them. This endless round of labor, and unceasing anxiety to embellish the home for visitors and strangers to admire, never pays for the time and means thus expended. It is hanging about the neck a yoke of bondage grievous to be borne.

In many households, there are four walls and costly furniture, velvet carpets and plate glass mirrors; and this place is wrongly named Home. That sacred work does not belong to the glittering mansion, where the joys of domestic life are unknown. There are spacious parlors, closed from the sweet sunshine and the life-giving air, for fear those choicest gifts of Heaven might tarnish the furniture and fade the carpets. Sunless and damp, these rooms are unlighted and unheated save when visitors are to be entertained. Then the doors are thrown open, and the treasures, too precious for the use and comfort of the family, are devoted to unsympathizing acquaintances.

These rooms are altogether too fine for every-day use, and above all, the children must be strictly excluded from their precincts, for fear of soiling the furniture or curtains. In fact, the children are the last thought of in such a home. They are utterly neglected by the mother, whose whole time is devoted to keeping up appearances. Their minds are untrained, they acquire bad habits, and become restless and dissatisfied. Finding no pleasure in their own homes, but only uncomfortable restrictions, they choose to break away from the household as soon as possible. It does not require expensive furniture and costly tapestry to make children contented and happy in their homes; but it is necessary that the parents give them tender love and careful attention. It is for the parents to take the lead in habits of simplicity, drawing their children from the artificial to the natural life, and binding them to their hearts by the silken cords of affection. Gentle manners, cheerful conversation and loving words, will make home more attractive than any ornaments that can be bought or sold.

There are but few true fathers and mothers in this age of the world, and this is on account of the artificial lives we lead more than from any other cause. We should not be so anxious for external appearances, but labor more for practical comfort throughout every room in the house. Less parade in the parlor, and more time devoted to the training of the children, and to the preparation of simple, wholesome food, and to the general economy and comfort of the household, would make happy hearts and pleasant faces in the home. We should live less for the outside world, and more for members of our

own family circle. There should be less display of superficial politeness and affectation toward strangers and visitors, and more of the courtesy that springs from genuine love and sympathy toward the dear ones of our own firesides.

The very best part of the house, and the most comfortable furniture, should be for the use of the family, for the comfort of those who really live in the house. Such a home would be most attractive to that class of friends who really care for us, whom we could benefit, and by whom we could be benefited. But those guests who are attracted to us by the prospect of sumptuous dinners, and an extravagant luxury of style, are not the ones whose companionship will improve our minds or hearts. We have no moral right to lavish time and bounty upon such visitors, while our precious God-given children are suffering gross neglect.

But it is so flattering to the pride of some persons to exhibit a certain style of living for the benefit of occasional guests that they are willing to sacrifice the daily peace and comfort of life for this empty gratification. The gorgeously embellished mansions, costly furniture and carpets, the toil in serving up dishes for epicurean appetites, the extravagant entertainments which swallow up thousands of dollars, and pompous equipages more for show than comfort, bring no peaceful contentment, because they have no connection with the real joys of life.

As these extravagances fail to satisfy their possessors, they blindly seek to remedy the failure by adding new luxuries, with greater dissatisfaction, and an increase of care and anxiety as a result. Decorations of dress and of houses do not make happy people; but the lowliest dwelling may be beautified, and the poorest family be made rich, by the possession of meekness, kindness, and love. Pleasant voices, gentle manners, and sincere affection that finds expression in all the actions, make even a hovel the happiest of homes, upon which the Creator looks with approbation, unto which angels are attracted, the inmates of which, though they have not "that outward adorning of plaiting the hair, and of wearing of gold, or of putting on of apparel," have that which is far better, "the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit which is in the sight of God of great price."

Mrs. E. G. White, in Health Reformer.

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Home Thoughts

Life is a disappointment and a weariness to many persons because of the unnecessary labor with which they burden themselves in meeting the claims of custom. Their minds are continually harassed with anxiety as to supplying wants which are the offspring of pride and fashion. Jesus, in his sermon on the mount, strikes a direct blow at this engrossing care for the things of this world. He says, "take no thought, saying, What shall we eat? or, What shall we drink? or, Wherewithal shall we be clothed?" 'Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow, they toil not, neither do they spin, and yet I say unto you that Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these.'" All the efforts of humanity cannot approach the beauty of Nature. The simple flowers of the field put to shame the robes of royalty. And Fashion, with her endless changes and eccentricities, presents the very opposite of that simple

loveliness with which the lilies of the field are clothed, and which Jesus declared exceeds the glory with which Solomon was arrayed.

The expense, the care, and labor, lavished on that which, if not positively injurious, is unnecessary, would go far toward advancing the cause of God if applied to a worthier object. People crave what are called the luxuries of life, and sacrifice health, strength, and means to obtain them. A lamentable spirit of rivalry is manifested among persons of the same class as to who shall make the greatest display in matters of dress and of household expenditure. The sweet word, Home is perverted to mean something with four walls, filled with elegant furniture and adornments, while its inmates are on a continual strain to meet the requirements of custom in the different departments of life.

It is necessary to give due regard to the clothing, to the table, and to the pursuits by which we gain a livelihood; but there is danger of carrying this zeal to an extreme. In the days of Noah they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, buying, selling, and building, till the flood came and destroyed the people who had been so overzealous in the things of this world that they forgot God, and became abominable in his eyes. It was lawful for men to eat and drink, plant and build, marry and give in marriage, in the days of Noah; but the sin was in carrying these lawful things to extremes, to utterly fill their mind with them to the exclusion of all noble thoughts. Depravity, violence, and all manner of sin was the result. The great danger of these days is in devoting too much time to merely temporal matters, and making it the great aim of life to provide for the temporal wants, many of which are perverted and unnatural. In order to gratify a weak and sinful pride, people sacrifice comfort, peace, and the love of God.

Happiness is not found in empty show. The more simple the order of a well-regulated household, the happier will that home be. The courtesies of every-day life, and the affection that should exist between members of the same family, do not depend upon outward circumstances. Much of the restless longing and seeking for "that which profiteth not" is due to wrong training in youth. Each child in the family should have a part of the home burden to bear, and should be taught to perform his task faithfully and cheerfully. If the work is portioned out in this way, and the children grow up accustomed to bearing suitable responsibilities, no member of the household will be overburdened, and everything will move off pleasantly and smoothly in the home. A proper economy will be maintained, for each one will be acquainted with, and interested in, the details of the home.

In some families there is too much done. Neatness and order are essential to comfort, but these virtues should not be carried to such an extreme as to make life a period of unceasing drudgery, and to render the inmates of the home miserable. In the houses of some whom we highly esteem, there is a stiff precision about the arrangement of the furniture and belongings that is quite as disagreeable as a lack of order would be. The painful propriety which invests the whole house makes it impossible to find there that rest which one expects in the true home. It is not pleasant, when making a brief visit to dear friends, to see the broom and the duster in constant requisition, and the time which you had anticipated enjoying with your friends in social converse, spent by them in a general tidying-up, and peering into corners in search of a concealed speck of dust or a cob-web. Although this may be done out of respect

to your presence in the house, yet you feel a painful conviction that your company is of less consequence to your friends than their ideas of excessive neatness.

In direct contrast to such homes was one that we visited during the last summer. Here the few hours of our stay were not spent in useless labor, nor in doing that which could be done as well at some other time; but were occupied in a pleasant and profitable manner, restful alike to mind and body. The house was a model of comfort, although not extravagantly furnished. The rooms were all well lighted and ventilated and every one, including the bed-rooms, was furnished with an open grate that the occupants might enjoy the healthful warmth and glow of an open fire, which is of more real value than the most costly adornments. The parlors were not furnished with that precision which is so tiresome to the eye, but there was a pleasing variety in the articles of furniture. The chairs were mostly rockers or easy-chairs; not all of the same fashion, but adapted to the comfort of the different members of the family. There were low, cushioned rocking-chairs, and high, straight-backed ones; wide, capacious lounging-chairs, and snug little ones; there were also comfortable sofas; and all seemed to say, Try me, Rest in me. There were tables strewn with books and papers. All was neat and attractive, but without that precise arrangement that seems to warn all beholders not to touch anything for fear of getting it out of place.

The proprietors of this pleasant home were in such circumstances that they might have furnished and embellished their residence expensively, but they had wisely chosen comfort rather than display. There was nothing in the house considered too good for general use, and the curtains and blinds were not kept closed to keep the carpets from fading and the furniture from tarnishing. The God-given sunlight and air had free ingress, with the fragrance of the flowers in the garden. The family were, of course, in keeping with the home; they were cheerful and entertaining, doing everything needful for our comfort, without oppressing us with so much attention as to make us fear that we were causing extra trouble. We felt that here was a place of rest. This was a Home in the fullest sense of the word.

The rigid precision which we have mentioned as being a disagreeable feature of so many homes is not in accordance with the great plan of Nature. God has not caused the flowers of the fields to grow in regular beds, with set borders, but he has scattered them like gems over the greensward, and they beautify the earth with their variety of form and color. The trees of the forest are not in regular order. It is restful to eye and mind to range over the scenes of nature, over forest, hill and valley, plain and river, enjoying the endless diversity of form and color, and the beauty with which trees, shrubs, and flowers, are grouped in nature's garden, making it a picture of loveliness. Childhood, youth, and age can alike find rest and gratification there.

This law of variety can be in a measure carried out in the home. There should be a proper harmony of colors, and a general fitness of things in the furnishing of a house; but it is not necessary to good taste that every article of furniture in a room should be of the same pattern in design, material, or upholstery; but, on the contrary, it is more pleasing to the eye that there should be a harmonious variety.

But whether the home be humble or elegant, its appointments costly or the reverse, there will be no happiness within its walls unless the spirit of its inmates is in harmony with the Divine will. Contentment should reign within the household.

Mrs. E. G. White, in *Health Reformer*.

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The Duties of a Mother

The Christian mother, to a very great extent, has it within her power to secure to her children good constitutions, sound morals, and correct views of the duties and responsibilities of life. Thousands of mothers are today ignorant of the laws of health and morality, and utterly reckless in the management of their children. Thousands are ruined for life and rendered worthless to society through neglect of proper training in early youth. A failure of health prevents the cultivation and development of the mental faculties, the talents lie dormant in consequence, and the world loses the benefit of them. A knowledge of, and obedience to, the laws of nature would have preserved the healthful action of body and mind and given to humanity the blessing of many a life now wasted in uselessness. Through the inefficiency of parents, much good is lost, to the world, and God is robbed of the glory he should receive through the proper direction of youthful talent and energy.

Mothers are not thoroughly qualified to discipline and educate the minds of the young, unless they have that knowledge of God by which they can conscientiously train their children for the highest usefulness in this life and for the future immortal life. In the education of her children, the mother needs the wisdom which God alone can give her. She also needs health and its accompaniment of calm nerves, clear judgment, and sound reasoning powers. She will then have decision as well as gentleness, firmness as well as love, and will be able to hold the reins of guidance with a firm yet patient hand. She should cultivate that quiet dignity and independence of character which is necessary to her sacred life-work, and the proper conducting of her household. The customs and habits of the world in regard to the training of children should not turn a Christian mother from her course. In no case should she sacrifice her ideas of right because she sees many mothers yielding their scruples in order to gratify the inclinations of their children for questionable amusements, idleness, or a style of dress calculated to foster vanity and injure the health.

Indulgence of wrong desires and gratification of the animal passions are the order of the day in this age of the world. Youth is surrounded with the fascinations of pleasure and the seductive temptations of sin. For these reasons a great and important responsibility rests upon the Christian mother. It is hers, in a measure, to rectify the growing evils of the world by rearing her children in such a manner that they will take a firm stand for the right and cast their influence on the side of virtue. But the mother who submits her God-given womanhood to the slavery of fashion wastes, in useless labor and frivolity, time and energy which should be devoted to her sacred calling. She cannot feel a sense of her solemn responsibility to God and humanity. Satan has invented manifold temptations to divert the minds of mothers from their most important work. The matter of dress holds the larger share of women in the vilest bondage. The study of fashion-plates is pursued with untiring zeal, and is followed up by an

endless round of cutting, fitting, stitching, ruffling, pointing, and plaiting, to arrange for vain display. All this costs time, money, and concentration of mind, for which no equivalent is returned. The mental powers are dwarfed for want of proper cultivation, and wretchedly abused by being almost wholly bent upon the object of preparing raiment for the body, while their children are on the way to ruin.

Many mothers are much more concerned as to the dress and adornment of their children than they are for their behavior and the proper direction of their minds. They will spend precious time in ruffling and trimming the garments of their little ones, while those who are to wear them are running in the streets, subject to the influence of vile associates and breathing in the atmosphere of vice. The hours that should be devoted to prayerful communion with them and a careful superintendence of their employments and amusements are worse than wasted in ornamenting the little suits which will serve to add the evil of vanity to the faults already acquired. A mother who prizes the approval of God and who is controlled by heavenly influences will not dare to waste her precious time, strength, and money, in arranging her own and her children's dress to meet the claims of custom. Fashion-loving mothers are daily giving their children lessons in devotion to dress, which they will never unlearn in after life. They are sowing seeds in those tender minds which will ere long bear fruit. "Sad will the harvest be!" "Whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap."

It is the mother's duty constantly to educate her mind and heart for the grave duties devolving upon her, that she may successfully meet her increasing family cares. She should study the peculiarities in the temperaments of her children, and vary her discipline to suit their different dispositions; thus she will be able to mold their minds in the right shape. The usual management of children at the present time tends to weaken their moral power. They are allowed to be idle, and their active young minds, seeking employment, stumble into evil ways. They are not taught self-denial and prompt obedience, therefore they grow up selfish and incapable of taking of the earnest work of life. The example of most parents is demoralizing to the children, who naturally look to them for a pattern. If the parents are swept into the strong current of the world and follow its practices regardless of right or wrong, time or expense, certainly no better can be expected of their children. The lessons of precept and example given by parents to their children should tend to fit their characters for the higher, immortal life. They are thus qualified also for the greatest usefulness in this world. God has placed us here not to live for our own amusement, but to do good, to bless humanity, to prepare for heaven. Every violation of moral obligation, with its burden of result, must be met and accounted for hereafter.

Especially are the mother's moments priceless; her work will be tested in the solemn day of accounts. Then it will be found that many of the failures and crimes of men and women have resulted from the ignorance and gross neglect of those whose duty it was to guide their childish feet in the right way. Then it will be found that many who have blessed the world with the light of genius and truth and holiness, owe the staunch principles and integrity that were the mainspring of their usefulness and success to the careful religious training of a praying Christian mother.

Mrs. E. G. White, in *Health Reformer*.

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Proper Education

The importance of early educating the young to the practical duties of life cannot be over estimated. Many parents who are wealthy do not feel the importance of giving their children an education in practical duties, as well as in the sciences. They do not feel the necessity, for the good of their children's minds and morals, and for their future usefulness, of giving them a thorough understanding in useful labor. This is due their children, that, if misfortune should come, they could maintain noble independence, having a knowledge how to use their hands. If they have a capital of strength, they cannot be poor, even if they have not a dollar. Many, who in youth are in affluent circumstances, may be robbed of all their riches, with parents and brothers and sisters dependent upon them for sustenance. Then how important that the youth be educated to labor, that they may be prepared for any emergency. Riches are indeed a curse when the possessors let them stand in the way of their sons and daughters obtaining a knowledge of useful labor, that they may be qualified for practical life.

Those who are not compelled to labor, frequently do not have active exercise sufficient for physical health. Young men, for want of having their minds and hands employed in active labor, will acquire habits of indolence, and will frequently be obtaining, what is to be more dreaded, a street education, lounging about stores, smoking, drinking, and playing cards.

The young ladies will read and excuse themselves from active labor, because they are in delicate health. Their feebleness is generally the result of their lack of exercising the muscles. They may think they are too feeble to do housework, but will work at crochet and tatting, and preserve the delicate paleness of their hands and faces, while their care-burdened mothers toil hard in washing and ironing their garments. These daughters transgress the fifth commandment. They do not honor their parents. But the mother is most to blame. She has indulged and excused her daughters from bearing their share of household duties, until work becomes distasteful to them, and they love, and enjoy, delicate idleness. They will eat, and sleep, and read novels, and talk of the fashions. Their lives are useless.

Poverty, in many cases, is a blessing; for it prevents youth and children from being ruined by inaction. The physical should be cultivated and properly developed, as well as the mental. The first and constant care of parents should be that their children may have firm constitutions that they may be sound men and women. It is impossible to attain this object without physical exercise. Children, for their own physical health and moral good, should be taught to work, even if there is no necessity as far as want is concerned. If they would have virtuous and pure characters, they must have the discipline of well-regulated labor, which will bring into exercise all the muscles. The satisfaction children will have in being useful, of denying themselves to help others, will be the most healthful pleasure they ever enjoyed. Why should the wealthy rob themselves and their dear children of this great blessing?

Parents, inaction is the greatest curse that ever came upon you. Your daughters should not be allowed to lie in bed late in the morning, sleeping away the precious hours lent them of God to be used for the best purpose, and for which they will have to give an account to God. The mother is doing her daughters great injury in bearing the burdens the daughters should share with her for their own present good and future benefit. The course many parents have pursued in allowing their children to be indolent, and to

gratify a desire for reading romance, is unfitting them for real life. Novel and story-book reading are the greatest evils that youth can indulge in. Novel and love-story readers always fail to make good, practical mothers. They live in an unreal world. They are air castle builders, living in an imaginary world. They become sentimental, and have sick fancies. Their artificial life spoils them for anything useful. They are dwarfed in intellect, although they may flatter themselves that they are superior in mind and manners. Exercise in household labor will be of the greatest advantage to young girls.

Physical labor will not prevent the cultivation of the intellect. Far from this. The advantages gained by physical labor will balance them, that the mind shall not be overworked. The toil will then come upon the muscles, and relieve the wearied brain. There are many listless, useless girls who consider it unladylike to engage in active labor. But their characters are too transparent to deceive sensible persons in regard to their real worthlessness. They will simper and giggle, and are all affectation. They appear as though they could not speak their words fairly and squarely, but torture all they say with lisping and simpering. Are these ladies? They were not born fools, but were educated such. It does not require a frail, helpless, overdressed, simpering thing to make a lady. A sound body is required for a sound intellect. Physical soundness and a practical knowledge in all the necessary household duties, are never a hindrance to a well-developed intellect, but highly important for a lady.

All the powers of the mind should be called into use, and developed, in order for men and women to have well-balanced minds. The world is full of one-sided men and women, because one set of the faculties are cultivated, while others are dwarfed from inaction. The education of most youth is a failure. They over-study, while they neglect that which pertains to practical business life. Men and women become parents without considering their responsibilities, and their offspring sinks lower in the scale of human deficiency than they themselves. Thus we are fast degenerating. The constant application to study, as the schools are now conducted, is unfitting youth for practical life. The human mind will have action. If it is not active in the right direction, it will be active in the wrong. And in order to preserve the balance of the mind, labor and study should be united.

A portion of the time each day should be devoted to labor, that the physical and mental may be equally exercised.

Mrs. E. G. White, in Health Reformer.

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The Mother's Work

No work can equal that of the Christian mother. She takes up her work with a sense of what it is to bring up her children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. How often will she feel her burden's weight heavier than she can bear; and then how precious the privilege of taking it all to her sympathizing Saviour in prayer. She may lay her burden at his feet, and find in his presence a strength that will sustain her, and give her cheerfulness, hope, courage, and wisdom in the most trying hours. How sweet to the care-worn mother is the consciousness of such a friend in all her difficulties. If mothers would go to

Christ more frequently, and trust him more fully, their burdens would be easier, and they would find rest to their souls.

Jesus is a lover of children. The important responsibility of training her children should not rest alone upon the mother. The father should act his part, uniting his efforts with those of the mother. As her children, in their tender years, are mostly under her guidance, the father should encourage and sustain the mother in her work of care by his cheerful looks and kind words. The faithful mother's labor is seldom appreciated. It is frequently the case that the father returns from his business to his home, bringing his cares and perplexities with him. He has no cheerful smile for home, and if he does not find everything for his accommodation, and to meet his ideas, he expresses his disappointment in a clouded brow and censuring words. He does not take into the account the care the mother must have had with the restless children, to keep everything moving smoothly. Her children must have her time and attention, if they are brought up, as the apostle directs, "in the nurture and admonition of the Lord."

The word of God should be judiciously brought to bear upon the youthful minds, and be their standard of rectitude, correcting their errors, enlightening and guiding their minds, which will be far more effectual in restraining and controlling the impulsive temperament than harsh words, which will provoke to wrath. This training of children to meet the Bible standard will require time, perseverance, and prayer. This should be attended to if some things about the house are neglected.

Many times in the day is the cry of, Mother, mother, heard, first from one little troubled voice and then another. In answer to the cry, mother must turn here and there to attend to their demands. One is in trouble, and needs the wise head of the mother to free him from his perplexity. Another is so pleased with some of his devices he must have his mother see them, thinking she will be as pleased as he is. A word of approval will bring sunshine to the heart for hours. Many precious beams of light and gladness can the mother shed here and there among her precious little ones. How closely can she bind these dear ones to her heart, that her presence will be to them the sunniest place in the world. But frequently the patience of the mother is taxed with these numerous little trials, that seem scarcely worth attention. Mischievous hands and restless feet create a great amount of labor and perplexity for the mother. She has to hold fast the reins of self-control, or impatient words will slip from her tongue. She almost forgets herself time and again, but a silent prayer to her pitying Redeemer calms her nerves, and she is enabled to hold the reins of self-control with quiet dignity. She speaks with calm voice, but it has cost her an effort to restrain harsh words and subdue angry feelings, which, if expressed, would have destroyed her influence, which it would have taken time to regain.

The perception of children is quick, and they discern patient, loving tones from the impatient, passionate command, which dries up the moisture of love and affection in the hearts of children. The true Christian mother will not drive her children from her presence by her fretfulness and lack of sympathizing love. As the parents wish God to deal with them, so should they deal with their children. Our children are only the younger members of the Lord's family, intrusted to us to educate wisely, to patiently discipline, that they may form Christian characters, and be qualified to bless others in this life, and enjoy the life to come.

Many parents do not strive to make a happy home for their children. The pleasantest rooms are closed for visitors. The pleasant face is put on to entertain visitors. Smiles are lavished upon those who do not prize them, while the dear members of the family are pining for smiles and affectionate words. A sunny countenance and cheerful, encouraging words will brighten the poorest home, and be as a talisman to guard the father and the children from the many temptations that allure them from the love of home to the dram-shop, or scenes of amusement which lead away from purity and morality.

But the work of making home happy does not rest upon the mother alone. Fathers have an important part to act. The husband is the house-band of the home treasures, binding by his strong, earnest, devoted affection the members of the household, mother and children, together in the strongest bonds of union. It is for him to encourage, with cheerful words, the efforts of the mother in rearing her children. The mother seldom appreciates her own work, and frequently sets so low an estimate upon her labor that she regards it as domestic drudgery. She goes through the same round day after day, week after week, with no special marked results. She cannot tell, at the close of the day, the many little things she has accomplished. Placed beside her husband's achievement, she feels that she has done nothing worth mentioning. The father frequently comes in with a self-satisfied air, and proudly recounts what he has accomplished through the day. His remarks show that now he must be waited upon by the mother, for she has not done much except take care of the children, cook the meals, and keep the house in order. She has not acted the merchant, bought nor sold; she has not acted the farmer, in tilling the soil; she has not acted the mechanic;—therefore she has done nothing to make her weary. He criticises and censures and dictates as though he was the lord of creation. And this is all the more trying to the wife and mother, because she has become very weary at her post of duty during the day, and yet she cannot see what she has done, and is really disheartened. Could the veil be withdrawn, and father and mother see as God sees the work of the day, and see how his infinite eye compares the work of the one with that of the other, they would be astonished at the heavenly revelation. The father would view his labors in a more modest light, while the mother would have new courage and energy to pursue her labor with wisdom, perseverance and patience. Now she knows its value. While the father has been dealing with the things which must perish and pass away, the mother has been dealing with developing minds and character, working, not only for time, but for eternity. Her work, if done faithfully in God, will be immortalized.

The votaries of fashion will never see or understand the immortal beauty of that Christian mother's work, and will sneer at her old fashioned notions, and her plain, unadorned dress; while the Majesty of heaven will write the name of that faithful mother in the book of immortal fame.

Mrs. E. G. White, in Health Reformer.

November 29, 1877

The Mother's Duty—Christ her Strength

He who said, "Suffer little children to come unto me, and forbid them not," still invites the mothers to lead up their little ones to be blessed of him. Even the babe in its mother's arms may dwell as under the shadow of the Almighty through the earnest faith of that praying mother. The first and most urgent duty

which the mother owes to the Creator is to train the children which he has given her for the Saviour. "Even a child is known by his doings, whether his work be pure and whether it be right."

Infant children are a mirror for the mother, in which she may see reflected her own habits and deportment, and may trace even the tones of her own voice. How careful then should be her language and behavior in the presence of these little learners who take her for an example. If she wishes them to be gentle in manners and tractable, she must cultivate those traits in herself.

When children love and repose confidence in their mother, and have become obedient to her, they have been taught the first lessons in becoming Christians. They must be obedient to, and love and trust Jesus as they are obedient to, and love and trust their parents. The love which the parent manifests for the child in right training and in kindness faintly mirrors the love of Jesus for his children.

In view of the individual responsibility of mothers, every woman should develop a well-balanced mind and pure character, reflecting only the true, the good, and the beautiful. The wife and mother may bind her husband and children to her heart by an unremitting love, shown in gentle words and courteous deportment, which, as a rule, will be copied by her children.

Politeness is cheap, but it has power to soften natures which would grow hard and rough without it. Christian politeness should reign in every household. The cultivation of a uniform courtesy, and a willingness to do by others as we would like them to do by us, would annihilate half the ills of life. The principle inculcated in the injunction, "Be ye kindly affectioned one to another," is the corner-stone of the Christian character.

God designed that we should be tolerant of one another, that those of varied temperaments should be associated together, so that by mutual forbearance and consideration of one another's peculiarities, prejudices should be softened, and rough points of character smoothed. Diversities of temperament and character are frequently marked in families; where this is the case there should be a mutual recognition of one another's rights. Thus all the members may be in harmony, and the blending of varied temperaments may be a benefit to all. Christian courtesy is the golden clasp which unites the members of the family in bonds of love, becoming closer and stronger every day.

Many a home is made very unhappy by the useless repining of its mistress, who turns with distaste from the simple, homely tasks of her unpretending domestic life. She looks upon the cares and duties of her lot as hardships, and that which, through cheerfulness, might be made not only pleasant and interesting, but profitable, becomes the merest drudgery. She looks upon the slavery of her life with repugnance, and imagines herself a martyr.

It is true that the wheels of domestic machinery will not always run smoothly; there is much to try the patience and tax the strength. But while mothers are not responsible for circumstances over which they have no control, it is useless to deny that circumstances make a great difference with mothers in their life-work. But their condemnation is when circumstances are allowed to rule, and to subvert their principle, when they grow tired and unfaithful to their high trust, and neglect their known duty.

The wife and mother who nobly overcomes difficulties, under which others sink for want of patience and fortitude to persevere, not only becomes strong herself in doing her duty, but her experience in overcoming temptations and obstacles qualifies her to be an efficient help to others, both by words and example. Many who do well under favorable circumstances seem to undergo a transformation of character under adversity and trial; they deteriorate in proportion to their troubles. God never designed that we should be the sport of circumstances.

Very many husbands and children who find nothing attractive at home, who are continually greeted by scolding and murmuring, seek comfort and amusement away from home, in the dram-shop, or in other forbidden scenes of pleasure. The wife and mother, occupied with her household cares, frequently becomes thoughtless of the little courtesies that make home pleasant to the husband and children, even if she avoids dwelling upon her peculiar vexations and difficulties in their presence. While she is absorbed in preparing something to eat or to wear, the husband and sons go in and come out as strangers.

While the mistress of the household may perform her outward duties with exactitude she may be continually crying out against the slavery to which she is doomed, and exaggerate her responsibilities and restrictions by comparing her lot with what she styles the higher life of woman, and cherishing unsanctified longings for an easier position, free from the petty cares and exactions that vex her spirit. She little dreams that in that widely different sphere of action to which she aspires trials full as vexatious, though perhaps of a different sort, would certainly beset her. While she is fruitlessly yearning for a different life she is nourishing a sinful discontent, and making her home very unpleasant for her husband and children.

The true wife and mother will pursue an entirely opposite course from this. She will perform her duties with dignity and cheerfulness, not considering that it is degrading to do with her own hands whatever is necessary for her to do in a well-ordered household. If she looks to God for her strength and comfort, and in his wisdom and fear seeks to do her daily duty, she will bind her husband to her heart, and see her children coming to maturity, honorable men and women, having moral stamina to follow the example of their mother.

There is no chance work in this life; the harvest will determine the character of the seed that has been sown. Mothers may neglect present opportunities, and let their duties and burdens fall upon others, but their responsibility remains the same, and they will reap in bitterness what they have sown in carelessness and neglect.

Mothers, you are developing character. Your compassionate Redeemer is watching you in love and sympathy, ready to hear your prayers, and render you the assistance which you need in your life-work. Love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, faith and charity are the elements of the Christian character. These precious graces are the fruits of the Spirit. They are the Christian's crown and shield. The highest day-dreaming and most exalted aspirations can aim at nothing higher. Nothing can give more perfect content and satisfaction. These heavenly attainments are not dependent upon circumstances, nor the will or imperfect judgment of man. The precious Saviour, who understands our heart-struggles and the

weakness of our natures, pities, and forgives us our errors, and bestows upon us the graces which we earnestly desire.

Jesus knows the burdens of every mother's heart. He is her best friend in every emergency. His everlasting arms support the God-fearing, faithful mother. That Saviour who, when upon earth, had a mother that struggled with poverty and privation, having many anxious cares and perplexities in rearing her children, sympathizes with every Christian mother in her labors, and hears her earnest prayers. That Saviour who went a long journey for the purpose of relieving the anxious heart of a Canaanite woman whose daughter was possessed by a devil, will do as much for the afflicted mother of today, in blessing her children, as he did for the supplicant in that case.

He who gave back to the widow her only son, as he was being carried to the burial, is touched today by the woe of the bereaved mother. He who gave back to Mary and Martha their buried brother, who wept tears of sympathy at the grave of Lazarus, who pardoned Mary Magdalene, who remembered his mother, when he was hanging in agony upon the cross, who appeared to the weeping women after his resurrection, and made them his messengers to preach a risen Saviour saying, "Go tell my disciples that I go to my Father and to your Father, to my God and to your God," is woman's best friend today, and ready to aid her in her need if she will trust him.

If Jesus is woman's friend and helper, the husband, and father of her children, should never feel it beneath his dignity to encourage and sympathize with the mother in her cares, and assist in bearing her burdens. He should feel the sin and littleness of adding to her trials by bitter words. He should be liberal-minded and generous toward her, not watching with a critic's eye every little neglect on her part, or failure to meet his peculiar ideas.

Christ respected and honored woman. There is not an instance in his entire life wherein by word or act he gave the least encouragement to speak or think disparagingly of woman, or gave the impression that she was not to be respected and honored equally with man. The Majesty of Heaven is not a stranger to the troubles that perplex the mother, or the burdens that weigh upon her aching heart.

In order to be a good wife and mother it is not necessary that the woman's nature should be utterly merged into that of her husband. Every individual being has a life distinct from all others, an experience differing essentially from theirs. God does not want our individuality lost in another's; he desires that we shall possess our own characters, softened and sanctified by his sweet grace.

He wants to hear our words fresh from our own hearts, and not another's. He wants our yearning desires and earnest cries to ascend to him, marked by our own individuality. All do not pass through the same exercises of mind, and God calls for no second-hand experience. Our compassionate Redeemer reaches his helping hand to us just where we are. Though Jesus has ascended to Heaven he has not lost his sympathy for you, mothers, but looks with tender love upon those whom he came to redeem.

Mrs. E. G. White, in *Health Reformer*.

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Home Duties of the Father

While we have dwelt upon the importance of the mother's work and mission, we would not lightly pass over the duty and responsibility of the husband and father in the training of his children. His efforts should be in harmony with those of the God-fearing mother. He should manifest his love and respect for her as the woman he has chosen and the mother of his children.

Many husbands do not sufficiently understand and appreciate the cares and perplexities which their wives endure, generally confined all day to an unceasing round of household duties. They frequently come to their homes with clouded brows, bringing no sunshine to the family circle. If the meals are not on time, the tired wife, who is frequently housekeeper, nurse, cook, and housemaid, all in one, is greeted with fault-finding. The exacting husband may condescend to take the worrying child from the weary arms of its mother that her arrangements for the family meal may be hastened; but if the child is restless, and frets in the arms of its father, he will seldom feel it his duty to act the nurse, and seek to quiet and soothe it. He does not pause to consider how many hours the mother has endured the little one's fretfulness, but calls out impatiently, "Here, mother, take your child." It is not his child as well as hers? Is he not under a natural obligation to patiently bear his part of the burden of rearing his children?

In most families there are children of various ages, some of whom need not only the attention and wise discipline of the mother, but also the sterner, yet affectionate, influence of the father. Few fathers consider this matter in its due importance. They fall into neglect of their own duty, and thus heap grievous burdens upon the mother, at the same time feeling at liberty to criticise and condemn her actions according to their judgment. Under this heavy sense of responsibility and censure, the poor wife and mother often feels guilty and remorseful for that which she has done innocently or ignorantly, and frequently when she has done the very best thing possible under the circumstances. Yet when her wearisome efforts should be appreciated and approved, and her heart made glad, she is obliged to walk under a cloud of sorrow and condemnation, because her husband, while ignoring his own duty, expects her to fulfill both her own and his to his satisfaction, regardless of preventing circumstances.

He feels that his wife belongs to him, and is subject to his order and dictation, and liable to fall under his disapprobation. Who gives him this right of dictation and condemnation? Does the law of God, which commands him to love God with all his heart and his neighbor as himself? Does he find it among the injunctions of the apostles, who exhort: "Husbands, love your wives, and be not bitter against them"? No, there is no moral or religious defense for such an unjust authority.

Domestic duties are sacred and important, yet they are often attended by a weary monotony. The countless cares and perplexities become irritating, without the variety of change and cheerful relaxation, which the husband and father frequently has it in his power to grant her if he chose, or rather if he thought it necessary or desirable to do so. The life of a mother in the humbler walks of life is one of unceasing self-sacrifice, made harder if the husband fails to appreciate the difficulties of her position, and to give her his support.

But to return to the father who has so unconcernedly resigned the fretful child to its mother. How is his time employed while she is doing the double duty of preparing the meal and quieting the child?

Frequently he may be seen, his feet elevated to a level with his head, reading a newspaper and smoking a cigar. Tobacco, then, is his solace. There are his children, of various ages, and of restless, nervous temperament, transmitted to them by the tobacco or liquor-using father. But, after giving those children their stamp of character by his own morbid appetite and selfish indulgence, he shirks the responsibility of training them, and of correcting the faults which they have received as a legacy from him.

Fathers should unbend from their false dignity, deny themselves, some slight self-gratification in time and leisure, in order to mingle with the children, sympathizing with them in their little troubles, binding them to their hearts by the strong bonds of love, and establishing such an influence over their expanding minds that their counsel will be regarded as sacred.

The average father wastes many golden opportunities to attract and bind his children to him. Upon returning home from his business he should find it a pleasant change to spend some time with his children. He may take them into the garden, and show them the opening buds, and the varied tints of the blooming flowers. Through such mediums he may give them the most important lessons concerning the Creator, by opening before them the great book of nature, where the love of God is expressed in every tree, and flower, and blade of grass. He may impress upon their minds the fact that if God cares so much for the trees and flowers, he will care much more for the creatures formed in his image. He may lead them early to understand that God wants children to be lovely, not with artificial adornment, but with beauty of character, the charms of kindness and affection, which will make their hearts bound with joy and happiness.

Parents may do much to connect their children with God by encouraging them to love the things of nature which he has given them, and to recognize the hand of the Giver in all they receive. The soil of the heart may thus early be prepared for casting in the precious seeds of truth, which in due time will spring up and bear a rich harvest. Fathers, the golden hours which you might spend in getting a thorough knowledge of the temperament and character of your children, and the best method of dealing with their young minds, are too precious to be squandered in the pernicious habit of smoking, or in lounging about the dram-shop.

The indulgence of this poisonous stimulant disqualifies the father to bring up his children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. The directions given by God to the children of Israel were that the fathers should teach their children the statutes and precepts of his law, when they rose up, and when they sat down, when they went out, and when they came in.

This commandment of God is too little heeded; for Satan, through his temptations, has chained many fathers in the slavery of gross habits, and hurtful appetites. Their physical, mental, and moral powers are so paralyzed by these means that it is impossible for them to do their duty toward their families. Their minds are so besotted by the stupefying influences of tobacco or liquor that they do not realize their responsibility to train their children so that they may have moral power to resist temptation, to control appetite, to stand for the right, not to be influenced to evil, but to wield a strong influence for good.

Parents by a sinful indulgence of perverted appetite often place themselves in a condition of nervous excitability or exhaustion, where they are unable to discriminate between right and wrong, to manage

their children wisely, and to judge correctly their motives and actions. They are in danger of magnifying little matters to mountains in their minds, while they pass lightly over grave sins. The father who has become a slave to abnormal appetite, who has sacrificed his God-given manhood to become a tobacco inebriate, cannot teach his children to control appetite and passion. It is impossible for him to thus educate them either by precept or example. How can the father whose mouth is filled with tobacco, whose breath poisons the atmosphere of home, teach his sons lessons of temperance and self-control? With what dignity can he exhort them to shun the wine-cup, when he himself has fallen beneath the tempter's power, and is bound by an appetite that has no foundation in nature? He is in no condition to rouse moral courage and independence in the young.

When we approach the youth who are acquiring the habit of using tobacco, and tell them of its pernicious influence upon the system, they frequently fortify themselves by citing the example of their fathers, or that of certain Christian ministers, or good and pious members of the church. They say, "If it does them no harm, it certainly cannot injure me." What an account will professed Christian men have to render to God for their intemperance! Their example strengthens the temptations of Satan to pervert the senses of the young by the use of artificial stimulants; it seems to them not a very bad thing to do what respectable church-members are in the habit of doing. But it is only a step from tobacco using to liquor-drinking; in fact the two vices usually go together.

Thousands learn to be drunkards from such influences as these. Too often the lesson has been unconsciously taught them by their own fathers. A radical change must be made in the heads of families before much progress can be made in ridding society of the monster of intemperance.

If tobacco is what it is often claimed to be, a nerve-quieter, instead of a nerve-paralyzer; if it is such a solace to men that they require it just before eating, just after eating, and most of the time between; if it is so great a comforter that large amounts should be expended upon it, and many hours of precious time devoted to indulging in its use,—then why should not women use it? Would it not be as beneficial to them as to their fathers, husbands and brothers? Women have cares and perplexities to soothe, and, viewed from the standpoint of the tobacco inebriate, they are sustaining great loss, and practicing a useless self-denial, in refraining from the luxury which affords their husbands and sons so much comfort and strength.

If men cannot maintain their energy and spirits without this stimulus, what martyrdom do women constantly practice in letting it alone! The very fact that women do live and bear the heaviest burdens of mind and body without its aid, and that the best men conscientiously refrain from using it, is evidence that tobacco-using is a necessity to no one, but simply a habit which enslaves its victim in a terrible bondage.

God forbid that woman should degrade herself to the use of a filthy and besotting narcotic. How disgusting is the picture which one may draw in the mind, of a woman whose breath is poisoned by tobacco. One shudders to think of little children twining their arms about her neck, and pressing their fresh, pure lips to that mother's lips, stained and polluted by the offensive fluid and odor of tobacco. Yet the picture is only more revolting because the reality is more rare than that of the father, the lord of the

household, defiling himself with the disgusting weed. No wonder we see children turn from the kiss of the father whom they love, and if they kiss him seek not his lips, but his cheek or forehead, where their pure lips will not be contaminated.

Mrs. E. G. White, in Health Reformer.

December 20, 1877

Noah's Time and Ours

“And as it was in the days of Noah, so shall it be also in the days of the Son of man. They did eat, they drank, they married wives, they were given in marriage, until the day that Noah entered into the ark, and the flood came, and destroyed them all. Likewise also as it was in the days of Lot; they did eat, they drank, they bought, they sold, they planted, they builded; But the same day that Lot went out of Sodom it rained fire and brimstone from heaven, and destroyed them all. Even thus shall it be in the day when the Son of man is revealed.”

In how short a time from the first sin of Adam did sin increase and spread like the leprosy. It is the nature of sin to increase. From generation to generation sin has spread like a contagious disease. Hatred of God's law, and as the sure result hatred of all goodness became universal. The world was in its infancy, yet after sin was first introduced it soon became fearful in its proportions until it deluged the world. God who created man and gave him with an unsparing hand the bounties of his providence was slighted and despised by the recipients of his gifts. He was dishonored by the beings he had created. But notwithstanding sinful man forgot his benevolent Benefactor, God did not slight and turn away from him and leave him to perish in his violence and crime without setting before him his wickedness and the result of the transgression of his law. He sent him messages of warning and entreaty. He pointed out definitely his danger if he continued in his rebellion.

God, whom men had slighted and dishonored and whose gracious love and benevolence they had abused, still pitied the race and in his love provided a refuge for all who would accept it. He directed Noah to build an ark and at the same time preach to the inhabitants of the world that God would bring a flood of waters upon the earth to destroy the wicked. If they would believe the message and prepare for that event by repentance and reformation they should find pardon and be saved. God did not remove his spirit from man without warning him of the sure result of his course in transgressing his law. He gave the message to Noah to be given to the people. “My spirit shall not always strive with man.” A continual resistance and contempt of the entreaties and warnings from God through his servant Noah, would separate them from God, and the result would be infinite mercy and love would cease its pleadings. The Spirit of God continued to strive with rebellious man until the time of God had specified had nearly expired, when Noah and his family entered the ark and the hand of God closed the door of the ark. Mercy had stepped from the golden throne no longer to intercede for man.

Notwithstanding God was working to draw man to himself by the conviction of his Holy Spirit, man in his rebellion was drawing away from God, and continually resisting the pleadings of infinite love.

Noah stood up nobly in the midst of a world who were disregarding God and were indulging in all manner of extravagant dissipation which led to crimes and violence of every kind. Noah the faithful preacher of righteousness unflinchingly and courageously preached to that generation that a flood of water was to deluge the world because of the unsurpassed wickedness of its inhabitants. He warned that generation to repent, to believe the warning message and find refuge in the ark. What a spectacle to the world as Noah stands forth connected with God, by his obedience in contrast to the world. Numbers was not on the side of right. The world was arrayed against God's justice and his laws. Men of science and of philosophy used their talents and abilities to oppose the message of God. Satan, when tempting Eve to disobey God, said to her, "Ye shall not surely die." Great men, worldly, honored, and wise men, repeat the same story. "Ye shall not surely die," and that God's threatenings are for the purpose of intimidating and will never be verified. You need not be alarmed, such an event as the world's being destroyed by God who made it, and punishing the beings he has made will never take place for this is not in accordance with science and philosophy. Be at peace, fear not, Noah is crazy, he is the wildest fanatic.

How simple and childlike amid the unbelief of the world, was the faith of Noah. His faith was the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things unseen. His faith was perfected by his works. He gave to the world an example in believing just what God had said. He commenced under the directions of God to construct the ark, an immense boat, on dry ground. Multitudes came from every direction to see this strange sight, the ark, and to hear the earnest, fervent words of this singular man who seemed to believe every word he uttered. His message was to him a reality. A power attended the words of Noah, for it was the voice of God to man through his servant. Some were deeply convicted and would have heeded the words of warning, but there were so many to jest and ridicule the message of entreaty and warning to repentance that they partook of the same spirit, resisted the invitations of mercy, refused to reform, and were soon among the boldest and most defiant scoffers; for none are as reckless, and will go to such lengths in sin as those who have once had light, who have been convicted and resisted the Spirit of God. Amid popular contempt and ridicule, amid universal wickedness and disobedience, Noah distinguishes himself by his holy integrity and unwavering obedience. He is singular indeed. He was one in the world, but not one of the world. Noah made himself the object of contempt and ridicule by his steadfast adherence to the words of God. He obeyed God without a questioning doubt. What a marked contrast to the prevailing unbelief and universal disregard of God's law. While the voice of God, through Noah, is making itself heard in entreaties and warnings in condemnation of sin and iniquity, Satan was not asleep, he was mustering his forces. He engages his host with gigantic energies to make through his sophistry, cruelties and oppression the words of warning from the servant of God of none effect. Evil seems to gain the day. Noah was tested and proved, opposition met him from the great men of the world, from philosophers and men of science, so-called, who tried to show him that his message could not be true; but his voice was not silenced, one hundred and twenty years the words of warning continued to be heard in earnest tones, and were sustained by his energetic work upon the ark. The world might have believed if they would. Had they believed the message of warning, and repented of their evil deeds and submitted to be obedient to God, the Lord would have turned aside his wrath as he did from Nineveh. God's Spirit was striving with the people to lead them to accept and believe the truth, but Satan's suggestions were also heeded, their own wicked hearts were more

inclined to harmonize with the sophistry of the father of lies than with the pleadings of infinite love. They manifested their indifference and contempt of the solemn warnings of God in doing the same as they had done before the warning had been given. They continued their gluttonous feasts, their festivities, eating and drinking, planting and building, in reference to the advantage to be gained by them in the far future and they went to greater lengths in wickedness and defiant disregard of God's requirements to testify to one another that they had no fear of God and his commands.

In Noah's day all men were not in the fullest sense heathen idolaters. Many had a knowledge of God and of his law, but in their grand works of sculpture, in their works of art, they professed to be honoring God by representing him in the works of their own hands in the similitudes which they had made of God. These works of art were worshiped as God and the Creator was forgotten. The class who professed a knowledge of God were the ones who had the greatest influence and took the lead in making of none effect his word spoken to them by Noah. They not only rejected the message of the faithful preacher of righteousness themselves, but like their master the devil they sought every means in their power to prevent others from believing and being obedient to God. To every one comes their day of trial and of trust. While Noah was sounding the note of warning of the coming destruction of that generation was their day of opportunity and privilege to become wise unto salvation. But they gave their minds to the control of Satan rather than God, and he deceived them as he did our first parents. He set before them darkness and falsehood in the place of light and truth. They accepted the sophistry and lies of Satan because the most acceptable to them, and the most in harmony with their corrupt lives, while truth, which would have saved them, was rejected as a delusion. Noah to them was regarded as a fanatic, and they did not humble their hearts before God, but continued their disobedience and wickedness the same as if God had not spoken to them through Noah. But Noah stood like a rock amidst the tempest. He was surrounded with every species of wickedness and moral corruption; yet his faith wavered not. Undaunted he stood, the faithful messenger of God amid the scoffs and jeers of the world, an unbending witness of God. His meekness and his righteousness was shining brightly in contrast to the revolting crimes, intrigue and violence continually practiced. Connection with God made him strong in the strength of infinite power, while his solemn warning voice for one hundred and twenty years fell upon the ears of the inhabitants of that generation in regard to events, which, as far as human wisdom was concerned, would be impossible to transpire. The world before the flood reasoned that for centuries the laws of nature had been fixed. The recurring seasons had come in their order. The rivers and brooks had never yet passed their boundaries, but had borne their waters safely to the proud sea. Fixed decrees had kept the waters from overflowing their banks. But these reasons did not recognize the Hand that had stayed the waters, saying, thus far shalt thou go and no farther. As time passed on without any apparent change in nature men began to be reassured whose hearts had trembled at times with fear. They felt secure in their unbelief. They reasoned then as men reason now, as though nature was above the God of nature, and her ways were so fixed that God himself could not change them, thus making in the minds of the world God's messages of warning a delusion, a grand deception, reasoning that if the message of Noah was correct nature would be turned out of her course of order.

The days of Noah, Christ tells us, were as the days prior to his appearing in the clouds of heaven. Noah's day prefigures the present age. The world's Redeemer, who knew best the history of the past, is the true

prophet of the characters of the future. Human nature in Noah's day uninfluenced by the Spirit of God is the same in our age. Jesus in his assertions and representations recognizes Genesis as the words of inspiration. Many admit the New Testament to be divine, while they show no special regard for the Old Testament scriptures; but these two grand books cannot be divorced. Inspired apostles who wrote the New Testament are continually carrying back the minds of the searchers of Scriptures to the Old. Christ carries the minds of all generations, present and future, to the Old Testament. He refers to Noah as a literal person who lived; he refers to the flood as a fact in history; he shows the specification of that generation, as characteristics of this age. The Truth and Life has anticipated the questioning and doubts of men in regard to the Old Testament by pronouncing it divine.

December 20, 1877

Home Duties of the Father

Few fathers are fitted for the responsibility of training their children. They, themselves need strict discipline that they may learn self-control, forbearance, and sympathy. Until they possess these attributes they are not capable of properly teaching their children. What can we say to awaken the moral sensibilities of fathers, that they may understand and undertake their duty to their offspring? The subject is of intense interest and importance, having a bearing upon the future welfare of our country. We would solemnly impress upon fathers, as well as mothers, the grave responsibility they have assumed in bringing children into the world. It is a responsibility from which nothing but death can free them. True the chief care and burden rests upon the mother during the first years of her children's lives, yet even then the father should be her stay and counsel, encouraging her to lean upon his large affections, and assisting her as much as possible.

The father's duty to his children should be one of his first interests. It should not be, set aside for the sake of acquiring a fortune, or of gaining a high position in the world. In fact, those very conditions of affluence and honor frequently separate a man from his family, and cut off his influence from them more than anything else. If the father would have his children develop harmonious characters, and be an honor to him and a blessing to the world, he has a special work to do. God holds him responsible for that work. In the great day of reckoning it will be asked him: Where are the children that I intrusted to your care to educate for me, that their lips might speak my praise, and their lives be as a diadem of beauty in the world, and they live to honor me through all eternity?

In some children the moral powers strongly predominate. They have power of will to control their minds and actions. In others the animal passions are almost irresistible. To meet these diverse temperaments, which frequently appear in the same family, fathers, as well as mothers, need patience and wisdom from the divine Helper. There is not so much to be gained by punishing children for their transgressions, as by teaching them the folly and heinousness of their sin, understanding their secret inclinations, and laboring to bend them toward the right.

The hours which many fathers spend in smoking should be improved in studying God's plan of government, and gathering lessons from those divine methods. The teachings of Jesus unfold to the father modes of reaching the human heart, and impressing upon it important lessons of truth and right.

Jesus used the familiar objects of nature to illustrate and intensify his meaning. He drew lessons from every-day life, the occupations of men, and their dealing with one another.

The father should frequently gather his children around him, and lead their minds into channels of moral and religious light. He should study their different tendencies and susceptibilities, and reach them through the plainest avenues. Some may be best influenced through veneration and the fear of God; others through the manifestation of his benevolence and wise providence, calling forth their deep gratitude; others may be more deeply impressed by opening before them the wonders and mysteries of the natural world, with all its delicate harmony and beauty, which speak to their souls of Him who is the Creator of the heavens and the earth, and all the beautiful things therein.

Children who are gifted with the talent or love of music many receive impressions that will be life-long, by the judicious use of those susceptibilities as the medium for religious instruction. They may be taught that if they are not right with God they are like a discord in the divine harmony of creation, like an instrument out of tune, giving forth discordant strains more grievous to God than harsh, inharmonious notes are to their own fine musical ear.

Many may be reached best through sacred pictures, illustrating scenes in the life and mission of Christ. By this means truths may be vividly imprinted upon their minds, never to be effaced. The Roman Catholic church understands this fact, and appeals to the senses of the people through the charm of sculpture and paintings. While we have no sympathy for image worship, which is condemned by the law of God, we hold that it is proper to take advantage of that almost universal love of pictures in the young, to fasten in their minds valuable moral truths, to bind the gospel to their hearts by beautiful imagery illustrating the great moral principles of the Bible. Even so our Saviour illustrated his sacred lessons by the imagery found in God's created works.

It will not do to lay down an iron rule by which every member of the family is forced into the same discipline. It is better to exert a milder sway, and when any special lesson is required, to reach the consciences of the youth through their individual tastes, and marked points of character. While there should be a uniformity in the family discipline, it should be varied to meet the wants of different members of the family. It should be the parents' study not to arouse the combativeness of their children, not to excite them to anger and rebellion, but to interest them, and inspire them with a desire to attend to the highest intelligence and perfection of character. This can be done in a spirit of Christian sympathy and forbearance, the parents realizing the peculiar dangers of their children, and firmly, yet kindly, restraining their propensities to sin.

The parents, especially the father, should guard against the danger of their children learning to look upon him as a detective, peering into all their actions, watching and criticising them, ready to seize upon and punish them for every misdemeanor. The father's conduct upon all occasions should be such that the children will understand that his efforts to correct them spring from a heart full of love for them. When this point is gained, a great victory is accomplished. Fathers should have a sense of their children's human want and weakness, and his sympathy and sorrow for the erring ones should be greater than any

sorrow they can feel for their own misdeeds. This will be perceived by the corrected child, and will soften the most stubborn heart.

The father, as priest and house-band of the family circle, should stand to them as nearly in the place of Christ as possible—a sufferer for those who sin, one who, though guiltless, endures the pains and penalty of his children's wrongs, and, while he inflicts punishment upon them, suffers more deeply under it than they do.

But if the father exhibits a want of self-control before his children, how can he teach them to govern their wrong propensities? If he displays anger or injustice, or evidence that he is the slave of any evil habit, he loses half his influence over them. Children have keen perceptions, and draw sharp conclusions; precept must be followed by example to have much weight with them. If the father indulges in the use of any hurtful stimulant, or falls into any other degrading habit, how can he maintain his moral dignity before the watchful eyes of his children? If indulgence in the use of tobacco must be made an exception in his case, the sons may feel justified in taking the same license. And they may not only use tobacco because father does, but may gradually glide into the habit of taking intoxicating liquor on the plea that it is no worse to use wine or beer than tobacco. Thus, through the influence of the father's example, the son sets his feet in the path of the drunkard.

The dangers of youth are many. There are innumerable temptations to gratify appetite in this land of plenty. Young men in our cities are brought face to face with this sort of temptation every day. They fall under deceptive allurements to gratify appetite, without the thought that they are endangering health. The young frequently receive the impression that happiness is to be found in freedom from restraint, and in the enjoyment of forbidden pleasures and self-gratification. This enjoyment is purchased at the expense of the physical, mental, and moral health, and turns to bitterness at last.

How important, then, that fathers look well after the habits of their sons, and their associates. And first of all he should see that no perverted appetite holds him in bondage, lessening his influence with his sons, and sealing his lips on the subject of self-indulgence in regard to hurtful stimulants.

Man can do much more for God and his fellow-man if he is in the vigor of health than if he is suffering from disease and pain. Tobacco-using, liquor-drinking, and wrong habits of diet, induce disease and pain which incapacitate man for the use he might be in the world. Nature, being outraged, makes her voice heard, sometimes in no gentle tones of remonstrance, in fierce pains and extreme debility. For every indulgence of unnatural appetite the physical health suffers, the brain loses its clearness to act and discriminate. The father, above all others, should have a clear, active mind, quick perceptions, calm judgment, physical strength to support him in his arduous duties, and most of all the help of God to order his acts aright. He should therefore be entirely temperate, walking in the fear of God, and the admonition of his law, mindful of all the small courtesies and kindnesses of life, the support and strength of his wife, a perfect pattern for his sons to follow, a counselor and authority for his daughters. He should stand forth in the moral dignity of a man free from the slavery of evil habits and appetites, qualified for the sacred responsibilities of educating his children for the higher life.

Mrs. E. G. White, in *Health Reformer*.

[Note.—Thirty-four Ellen G. White articles appearing in the Signs in 1878 were materials published the same year in The Spirit of Prophecy, Volume III, hence have not been included in these facsimile reprints. Information on titles and dates of publication is given in the Table of Contents of this reprint volume.]

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