

Ellen G. White 1911 Sign Of The Times

September 12, 1911

Hope for the Penitent

Christ came to manifest the love of God to the world to draw the hearts of all men to Himself. He said, "And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto Me." The first step toward salvation is to respond to the drawing of the love of Christ. God sends message after message to men, entreating them to repentance, that He may forgive, and write pardon against their names. Shall there be no repentance? Shall His appeals be unheeded? Shall His overtures of mercy be ignored, and His love utterly rejected? O, then man will cut himself off from the medium through which he may gain life eternal; for God only pardons the penitent. By the manifestation of His love, by the entreating of His Spirit, He woos men to repentance; for repentance is the gift of God, and whom He pardons He first makes penitent. The sweetest joy comes to man through his sincere repentance toward God for the transgression of His law, and through faith in Christ as the sinner's Redeemer and Advocate. It is that men may understand the joy of forgiveness, the peace of God, that Christ draws them through the manifestation of His love. If they respond to His drawing, yielding their hearts to His grace, He will lead them on step by step, to a full knowledge of Himself; and this is life eternal.

Christ came to reveal to the sinner the justice and love of God, that He might give repentance to Israel, and remission of sins. When the sinner beholds Jesus lifted up upon the cross, suffering the guilt of the transgressor, bearing the penalty of sin; when he beholds God's abhorrence of evil in the fearful manifestation of the death of the cross, and His love for fallen man, he is led to repentance toward God because of his transgression of the law which is holy, and just, and good. He exercises faith in Christ, because the divine Saviour has become his Substitute, his Surety, and Advocate, the One in whom his very life is centered. To the repenting sinner God can show His mercy and truth, and bestow upon him His forgiveness and love.

But Satan will not permit a soul to escape from the captivity of sin if by any means he can prevent it. Tho all heaven has been poured out in one rich gift—for when God gave His Son, He gave the choicest gift of heaven, and the treasures of heaven are at our command—yet to the repenting soul the enemy will seek to represent God as stern and inexorable, unwilling to pardon the transgressor. At different times letters have come to me from persons who were in despair over their sins. One and another have written: "I fear I am past all help. Is there any hope for me?" To these poor souls the message has been given: "Hope in God. The Father has bread enough and to spare. Arise, and go to your Father. He will meet you a great way off. He will give you His love and compassion."

When the enemy comes in like a flood, and seeks to overwhelm you with the thought of your sin, tell him: "I know I am a sinner. If I were not, I could not go to the Saviour; for He says, 'I came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance.' And because I am a sinner I am entitled to come to Christ. I am sinful and polluted, but He suffered humiliation and death, and exhausted the curse that belongs to me. I come. I believe. I claim His sure promise, 'Whosoever believeth in Him, should not perish, but have everlasting life.'"

Will such a plea, made in contrition of soul, be turned away?—No, never. By the suffering and death of Christ is proved His boundless love to man. He is willing and able to save to the uttermost all that come to God by Him.

Then as a little child come to God, presenting yourself as suppliant at His feet; for we need not ascend into the heavens to bring Jesus down, nor descend into the earth to bring Him up; for He is ever near us. He says, "Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear My voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with Me." How willing is Christ to take possession of the soul temple if we will let Him! He is represented as waiting and knocking at the door of the heart. Then why does He not enter? It is because the love of sin has closed the door of the heart. As soon as we consent to give sin up, to acknowledge our guilt, the barrier is removed between the soul and the Saviour.

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Conditions Existing in Our Large Cities

The intense passion for money-getting, the thirst for display, the luxury and extravagance,—all are forces that, with the great mass of mankind, are turning the mind from life's true purpose. They are opening the door to a thousand evils. Many, absorbed in their interest in worldly treasures, become insensible to the claims of God and the needs of their fellow men. They regard their wealth as a means of glorifying self. They add house to house, and land to land; they fill their homes with luxury, while all about them are human beings in misery and crime, in disease and death.

By every species of oppression and extortion, men are piling up colossal fortunes, while the cries of starving humanity are coming up before God. There are multitudes struggling with poverty, compelled to labor hard for small wages, unable to secure the barest necessities of life. Toil and deprivation, with no hope of better things, make their burden heavy. When pain and sickness are added, the burden is almost unbearable. Careworn and oppressed, they know not where to turn for relief.

The Scriptures describe the condition of the world just before Christ's second coming: "Ye have lived in pleasure on the earth, and been wanton; ye have nourished your hearts, as in a day of slaughter. Ye have condemned and killed the just; and he doth not resist you." James 5:5, 6.

The spiritual darkness that covers the whole earth today is intensified in the crowded centers of population. It is in the cities of the nations that the Gospel worker finds the greatest impenitence and the greatest need. In these same wicked cities there are presented to soul-winners some of the greatest opportunities. Mingled with the multitudes who have no thought of God and heaven, are many who long for light and for purity of heart. Even among the careless and indifferent, there are not a few whose attention may be arrested by a revelation of God's love for the human soul.

The cities everywhere are calling for earnest, whole-hearted labor from the servants of God.

The conditions that face Christian workers in the great cities, constitute a solemn appeal for untiring effort in behalf of the millions living within the shadow of impending doom.

With heart and soul and voice they must respond to the summons of the Master of the vineyard to enter the cities, and work as laborers together with God for the winning of precious souls.

Mrs. E. G. White

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Patience and Forbearance in the Home

The home is a place where every heavenly grace may be developed. The Lord delights to dwell with those families who cultivate home religion, and with whom the spirit of praise and cheerfulness reigns. His people need to understand the principles that underlie the religion of Christ, and study how to make these principles the ruling element in the life. This will fill the home with sunshine. The fruit of faith will be seen in true service for Christ.

As those who profess to follow the meek and lowly Jesus, Christian parents should never permit temper to gain the mastery over them. Never should they strike their children in haste or anger. When they have done wrong, and you feel that they need correcting, take the matter to God in prayer. Kneeling before the Lord, tell your Father your grief because the Spirit of the Lord has been grieved. Seek for God's blessing and guidance in the training of your children. The Lord recognizes such service as this. Christ gave His life that children and youth might learn the way of salvation. When through the aid of the divine Spirit parents succeed in turning their young hearts to Him, God and angels rejoice.

Let parents remember that the example they set in the daily deportment, their children will follow. Many lead their children into disorderly ways by their own harsh methods and injudicious words. By scolding and fretting they close the hearts of their children against them. By words of faultfinding and by hasty punishment they raise barriers between themselves and their children that often are never broken down. No truth does the Bible set forth in clearer light than the peril of even one departure from right,—peril both to the wrong-doer and to all whom his influence shall reach. Example has wonderful power; and when cast on the side of evil tendencies, it becomes well-nigh irresistible.

To a large degree parents are responsible for the tendencies to wrong that appear in their children. Let them consider this as they endeavor to correct the evils in their dispositions; and let them remember that scolding will accomplish nothing in the formation of Christian character. It will never bring about reformations, nor lead the youth to desire to become Christ's chosen ones.

By gentleness and patience, seek to win your children from wrong. Seek God for wisdom to train them so that they will love you and love God. When it is necessary to refuse them their desires, show them kindly that in doing this you are seeking their highest good. Love and cherish your children; but do not allow them to follow their own way, for this is the curse of the age in which we live. Show them where they make mistakes, and teach them that if they do not correct these wrongs, they can never be given a place in the mansions that Jesus is preparing for those who love Him. In this way you will retain their love and confidence. All too seldom is loving, Christlike instruction given in the homes of our people. Our children are the property of Christ. They are entrusted to our care that they may be guided in right ways and strengthened in every right principle.

When you are tempted to scold and fret, put a guard on your lips, refusing to speak words that will throw a dark shadow on the family circle. Children and youth need the influence of a cheerful example. They need pleasant instruction, not fretting and scolding, sour looks and censure. By an example of patience and forbearance, the Christian parent is to teach that evil temper and harshness have no place in the life of the believer in Christ, that these qualities are displeasing to God. As your children see you bringing into your lives the principles of truth, they too will be led to fight against wrong habits and practises, and with you will reflect the goodness and love of God.

Bring the sunshine of heaven into your conversation. By speaking words that encourage and cheer, you will reveal that the sunshine of Christ's righteousness dwells in your soul. Children need pleasant words. It is essential to their happiness to feel approval resting upon them. Strive to overcome harshness of expression, and cultivate soft tones. Catch the beauty contained in the lessons of God's Word, and cherish this as essential to the happiness and success of your home life. In a happy environment the children will develop dispositions that are sweet and sunny.

True beauty of character is not something that shines out only on special occasions; the grace of Christ dwelling in the soul is revealed under all circumstances. He who cherishes this grace as an abiding presence in the life, will reveal beauty of character under trying as well as under easy circumstances. In the home, in the world, in the church, we are to live the life of Christ. There are souls all around in need of conversion. When the law of God is written upon the heart, and is witnessed to in a holy character, those who know not the power of the grace of Christ, will be led to desire it, and will be converted.

A solemn review is now taking place in the courts above. The thought of the decisions now being made in heaven should urge parents to diligence in training their children in the fear and love of God. Not by severe words and punishment for wrong-doing will the most be accomplished, but by watchfulness and prayer, lest they be taken by the snares of the enemy.

There are many parents among us who, tho professing to believe the truths of the third angel's message, have not the grace of Christ in their hearts. In the home they speak hastily and harshly, giving way to evil temper. They do not bring the principles of the truth into the life; and the children receive a wrong mold of character. When the judgment shall set, and these parents stand before the bar of God, what answer will they make for allowing the lives of their children to be spoiled? Then every uncorrected mistake, every unpardoned transgression, will be seen in its true light, and it will then be understood how each individual character was spoiled or beautified.

Parents are giving to their children an example either of obedience or of disobedience. By the course they follow, the eternal destiny of their households will in many cases be decided. If parents could see the results of their actions, if they could see how, by their example and teaching, they perpetuate and increase the power of sin or the power of righteousness, a change would certainly be made.

God is willing to communicate every needful blessing to parents, that they may be enabled to bring up their children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. But let them remember that their admonition must be the admonition of the Lord. A great deal of the admonition given does no good, but serves only to arouse the worst feelings of the heart. Parents need to labor in such a way that the children will recognize the Spirit of God in their efforts. By constant strife against the evils that

beset from within and without, by the exercise of a Christlike Spirit, teach them what it is their privilege to shun, and what it is their privilege to become in Christ. With interest the heavenly intelligences are watching to see the characters these children and youth develop. They are waiting to receive them as heirs of immortality. To parents has been given the privilege to lead them to God, to receive from Him the inestimable treasures of eternity.

The lessons given to the children regarding the common duties of the home, may be presented in such a way that through them the Lord can make lasting impressions on their hearts. Make these common things of life texts on which to hang the lessons of the Word of God. Show your children that in all their work in mechanical lines they must learn to work perfectly. By bringing exactness and skill into their every-day duties, they will learn spiritual lessons that will remain with them through all their days. God requires that good judgment and skill shall be exercised in our planning and labors. In giving instruction for the building of the earthly sanctuary, the great Teacher laid down principles that were to be for the spiritual help of Israel through all their future experience. The wisdom and perfection brought into that work was typical of the work to be done in their lives in preparing their hearts for the indwelling of the Spirit of God.

Parents, do you ask what your work is? It is to take up your home responsibilities, doing the best you can, and seeking daily, hourly, to set before your children an example worthy of imitation. God's purpose for your children is that they shall be sanctified through the truth, and to reach this condition, all the help that you and heavenly agencies can supply will be needed. Let your lessons be such as will bring joy and happiness into their lives, and will lead them to desire the service of Christ. Teach them to use their God-given powers in His service. Thus they will be following the example of the child Jesus.

The Lord has a work for all to do. Every family that has a knowledge of the truth for this time, is to make it known to others. The Lord's people are to get ready for the doing of a special work. The children as well as the older members of the family are to act their part in seeking to save those who are perishing. From His youth Christ was, to all with whom He associated, an influence that drew them toward higher things. So the youth today may exert a power for good that will draw souls to God.

Parents need to appreciate more fully the responsibility and honor that God has placed upon them, in making them, to the child, the representative of Himself. The character revealed in the contact of daily life, will interpret to the child, for good or for evil, those words of God:

"Like as a father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth them that fear Him." "As one whom his mother comforteth, so will I comfort you."

Happy the child in whom such words as these awaken love and gratitude and trust; the child to whom the tenderness and justice and long-suffering of father and mother interpret the love and justice and long-suffering of God; the child who, by trust and submission and reverence toward his earthly protectors, learns to trust and obey and reverence his God. He who imparts such a gift, has bestowed a treasure more precious than the wealth of all the ages,—a treasure as enduring as eternity.