



YOUTH Messenger®

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Video Rampage

BY PETER D. LAUSEVIC

Many years ago I witnessed a dramatic experience that has never left my memory. A person in our congregation decided to sever his relationship with our church. Amazingly enough, his actions led me to reexamine my own life, which led me to the feet of the Saviour. This person had been a spiritual man. He had suffered for Christ and spent a number of years in prison for the truth's sake.

After his decision to leave the church, he managed to maintain his outward walk with the Lord for several months. Then a fatal event happened from which he has not, even today, recovered—a television set was introduced into his home. For years this man was an avid opposer of the TV. Now, he gave in and wanted to watch it only for the sake of the news and weather broadcasts. Needless to say, this box soon controlled his whole life and his spirituality disintegrated together with it.

Since that time, by the grace and only the grace of Jesus, I

have no sympathy for the regular type of television programs. It has even been nice for the last several years to live in areas where television antennas have no signal. But some years back I began to rationalize. . . . Since those days when I experienced the deadly use of the TV, the video has been introduced into society with remarkable success. Today we have DVD (digital video disc), HDVD (high-definition digital video disc), high-speed internet service, video games, and the PDA (personal digital assistant). All around me I saw these new machines which could be used at our discretion—for educational purposes, for “safe” entertainment, and even good religious movies. But are these real benefits? Is there a real difference between a fictitious video and a television?

Hypocrisy

“Ye hypocrites, well did Esaias prophesy of you, saying, This people draweth nigh unto me with their

mouth, and honoureth me with their lips; but their heart is far from me. But in vain they do worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men” (Matthew 15:7–9).

The word used to describe these pretenders literally means: “an actor under an assumed character (stage-player)” (*Strong's Exhaustive Concordance*, No. 5273). A theatrical performance is nothing less than hypocrisy. And what is the “reward of a hypocrite”? “The lord of that servant shall come in a day when he looketh not for him, and in an hour that he is not aware of, and shall cut him asunder, and appoint him his portion with the hypocrites: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth” (Matthew 24:50, 51).

Since the Bible condemns hypocrisy (actors), what about those that take delight in seeing hypocrites perform—spending their precious hours of probation watching hypocrites?

Theater, TV, VCR, and DVD

The warning came in 1882: “The blessing of God would not be



invoked upon the hour spent at the theater or in the dance. No Christian would wish to meet death in such a place. No one would wish to be found there when Christ shall come” (*The Adventist Home*, p. 516).

In those days, there was no movie theater to go to. Actors (hypocrites) only held live performances. The difference today is: (1) the actors are on a movie film, (2) the process is less expensive for the viewer, and (3) it is convenient. But the principle is the same whether in a live performance or on a film. The actors are pretending to be what they are not, and God cannot bless those who spend even an hour looking at such a performance. Therefore, is there a difference between the live performance, the large screen theaters, the television, or the video? The unequivocal answer must be YES! The equipment is brought directly into one’s home and therefore more deadly due to its convenience. The smaller PDA’s actually go with us in our travels.

Idolatry

“Wherefore, my dearly beloved, flee from idolatry” (1 Corinthians 10:14). Did you ever consider a film as idolatry? “Never can the proper education be given to the youth in this country, or any other country, unless they are separated a wide distance from the cities.

The customs and practices in the cities unfit the minds of the youth for the entrance of truth. The liquor drinking, the smoking and gambling, the horse racing, the theater going, the great importance placed upon holidays—all are a species of idolatry, a sacrifice upon idol altars” (*Like Sketches*, p. 351). Today we need not go to a city to find a theater. If you wish, you may find it in your very own living room or on your own computer. With the price of technology becoming cheaper every year, plasma TV’s are beginning to enter every home. I can understand why some of our spiritual forefathers called television an idol.

“[Satan] seeks to engross and absorb the mind so completely that God will find no place in the thoughts. He does not wish people to have a knowledge of their Maker, and he is well pleased if he can set in operation games and theatrical performances that will so confuse the senses of the youth that God and heaven will be forgotten” (*Counsels to Parents, Teachers, and Students*, p. 275).

How does Satan confuse the senses? “I was shown the state of the world, that it is fast filling up its cup of iniquity. Violence and crime of every description are filling our world, and Satan is using every means to make crime and debasing vice popular” (*Testimonies*, vol. 3, p. 471).

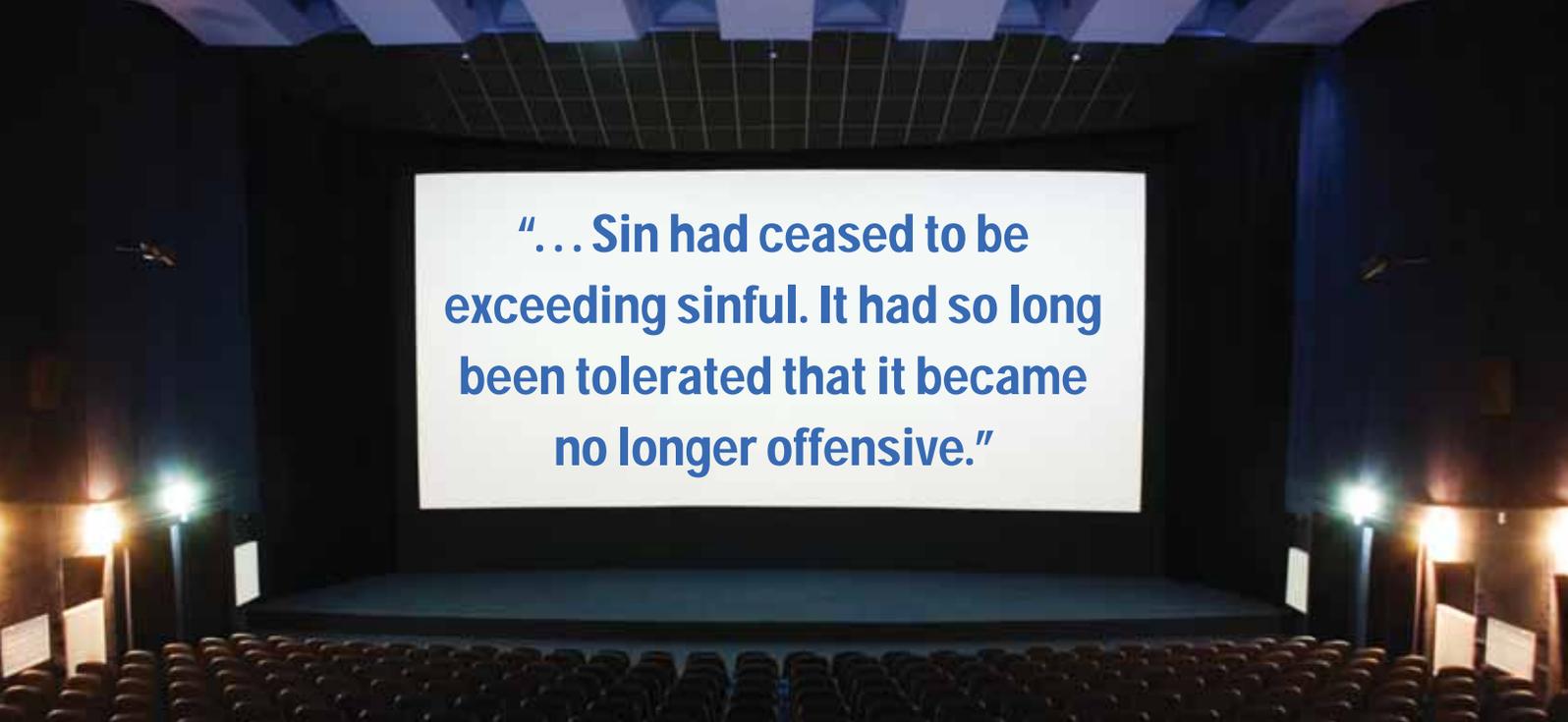
The senses confused

What is Satan’s real purpose in these motion pictures? “Satan is playing the game of life for [the youth’s] souls, taking from them the talents that God has given them, and placing in their stead his own evil attributes. It is his effort to lead men to ignore God” (*Counsels to Parents, Teachers, and Students*, p. 275).

“The youth who walk streets are surrounded with handbills and notices of crime and sin, presented in some novel or to be acted at some theater. Their minds are educated into familiarity with sin. The course pursued by the base and vile is kept before them in the periodicals of the day, and everything which can excite curiosity and arouse the animal passions is brought before them in thrilling and exciting stories.

“The literature that proceeds from corrupted intellects poisons the minds of thousands in our world. Sin does not appear exceeding sinful. They hear and read so much of debasing crime and vileness that the once tender conscience which would have recoiled with horror becomes so blunted that it can dwell upon the low and vile sayings and actions of men with greedy interest” (*Testimonies*, vol. 3, pp. 471, 472).

I witnessed a person who was viewing a movie that was supposed to be “family oriented.” In the process of the program, a scene was presented that clearly portrayed

A photograph of a movie theater with a large screen displaying a quote. The theater is dimly lit, with rows of seats visible in the foreground. The screen is the central focus, showing the text in blue font.

“... Sin had ceased to be exceeding sinful. It had so long been tolerated that it became no longer offensive.”

that an adulterous relationship was going on. At that moment I walked past and said: “That is adultery!” The person responded: “It’s better than a murder or violence!” I was stunned to realize how sin had ceased to be exceeding sinful. It had so long been tolerated that it became no longer offensive. But the word of the Lord says: “Flee fornication. Every sin that a man doeth is without the body; but he that committeth fornication sinneth against his own body” (1 Corinthians 6:18). Yet this sin is considered tolerable in today’s society. And we wonder why this sin is beginning to be looked upon so lightly in the church.

As I look back now, I can see how Satan worked on me. I remember the first few times I heard such wickedness as swearing. It would strike my ears as filth. Later on, after several so called “good” movies, it ceased to be as big of a problem. One of the last I saw (over 20 years ago) was a film depicting the sorrowful experience of Lindi Chamberlain of Australia, *A Cry in the Dark*. The film was polluted with filthy language. Is

this following the instruction in Philippians 4:8: “Whatsoever things are pure, . . . if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things?” Are we to behold the “thoughts of the wicked” which “are an abomination to the Lord”? NO! It is “the words of the pure” that “are pleasant words” (Proverbs 15:26).

Can we receive the seal of God if we are watching movies that accustom our senses to sin? “The Lord said unto him, Go through the midst of the city, through the midst of Jerusalem, and set a mark upon the foreheads of the men that sigh and that cry for all the abominations that be done in the midst thereof” (Ezekiel 9:4). We need to be walking so close to the Saviour that the slightest deviation from the path of duty will immediately be detected. The following are examples of how our senses are being accustomed to sin.

Well, do we then watch “religious” movies?

As soon as I purchased a video machine, well-meaning “brethren” came to me saying, “You should see

the movie *The Ten Commandments*.” So I did. It was interesting and even moved me to shed a tear or two. After the excitement of the movie was over, I had a chance to think about this wonderful presentation of how Hollywood made the children of Israel cross the Red Sea. I then realized the entire fictitious basis of the film.

Moses’s life was a life of faith. “By faith Moses, when he was come to years, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh’s daughter; choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season. . . . By faith he forsook Egypt, not fearing the wrath of the king: for he endured, as seeing him who is invisible” (Hebrews 11:24–27). Moses did not flee from Pharaoh not knowing who God was. True, he had to learn more of God’s ways, but he was not an infidel. When Moses performed the miracles before Pharaoh, it was at the command of God that he did so and not as a result of his own actions.

I have not seen a single religious film that was scripturally accurate. One had Noah and his family

trapping animals to enter the ark. The other had John the Baptist sprinkling Jesus in the Jordan River. Another one had Miriam asking Moses why did he use natural occurrences such as residue falling from the trees in that part of the wilderness and calling it manna and the natural migration of quails to trick the Israelites into believing it was a miracle? These are Satan's direct attacks on the word of God, and we Reformers are taking it all in and excusing it with "The screen writer did not know any better." Let us remember all our reasoning for a necessity of separation in this matter. "Come [all the way] out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues" (Revelation 18:4).

Nature films

Do we believe in the biblical view of creation or are we also becoming influenced by evolution? The people at the National Geographic Society and the Smithsonian Institute are true evolutionists, and this system of belief is presented in most of their films. "As in the days of the apostles men tried by tradition and philosophy to destroy faith in the Scriptures, so today, by the pleasing sentiments of higher criticism, evolution . . . the enemy of righteousness is seeking to lead souls into forbidden paths" (*The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 474). Even a single sentiment of evolution may produce its baleful effect.

In order to be entirely fair in this matter, we must state that there are good nature films available today that are faithful to the goal of true science. Some Christian groups have introduced good quality programs in the last twenty or so years, relating on film true testimonies of God's power.

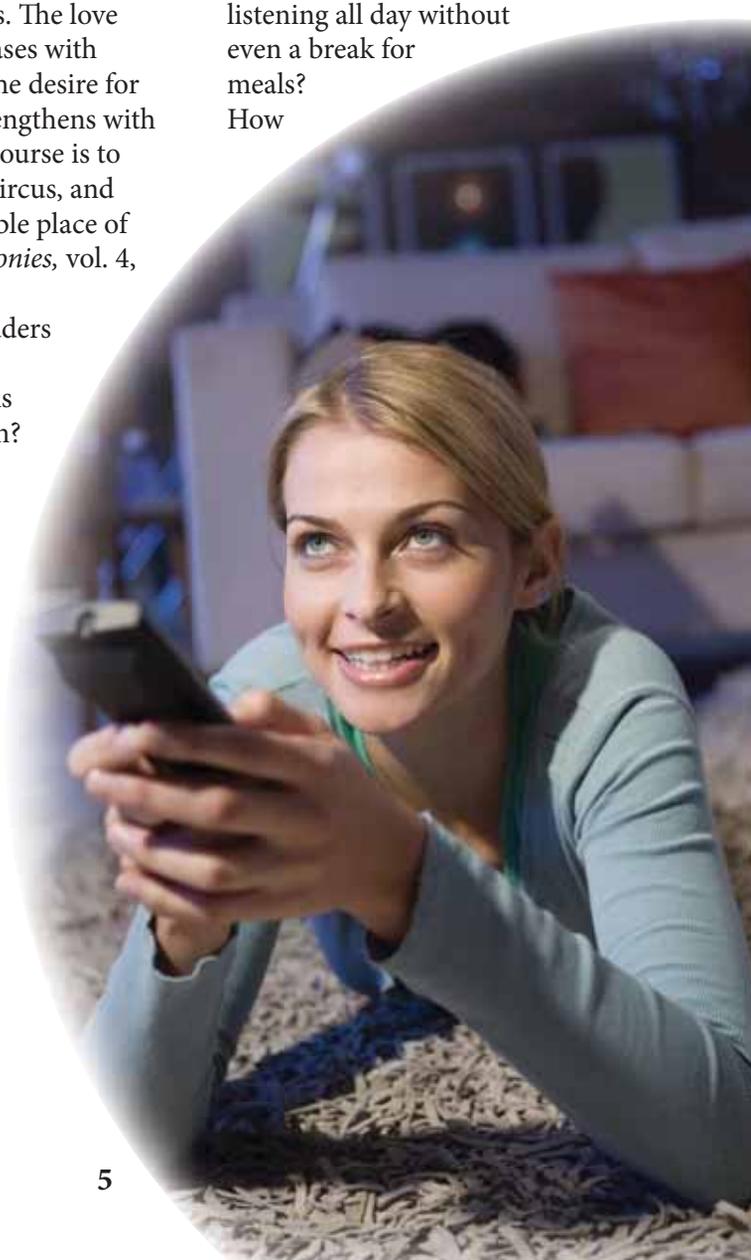
Most dangerous pleasure

"Among the most dangerous resorts for pleasure is the theater. Instead of being a school of morality and virtue, as is so often claimed, it is the very hotbed of immorality. Vicious habits and sinful propensities are strengthened and confirmed by these entertainments. Low songs, lewd gestures, expressions, and attitudes, deprave the imagination and debase the morals. Every youth who habitually attends such exhibitions will be corrupted in principle. There is no influence in our land more powerful to poison the imagination, to destroy religious impressions, and to blunt the relish for the tranquil pleasures and sober realities of life than theatrical amusements. The love for these scenes increases with every indulgence, as the desire for intoxicating drink strengthens with its use. The only safe course is to shun the theater, the circus, and every other questionable place of amusement."—*Testimonies*, vol. 4, pp. 652, 653.

Why are youth leaders having a difficult time finding innocent forms of appealing recreation? Because our minds have been polluted with the dreadful and cursed disease of the television and videos. In the days of our forefathers, it was much easier to control the theater than it is now to control this machine; and to the degree that this ease has increased, so has this pestilence.

"But I'm Going to Miss the Fun!"

Why is it that when a video is being shown we have no difficulty sitting up till two or three in the morning, but when a Bible study is presented, we keep an eye on our watch making sure we do not go even one minute past the hour mark? We then speak of health reform as an excuse because we cannot study so late? We should not sit all day studying, as it is unhealthy for the system. I have witnessed this attitude. How can it be that the same ones would then go to a home where there is a video player and stay up till the wee hours of the morning watching movies? Would we say the same things to Jesus who kept the multitude listening all day without even a break for meals? How



would we feel if we were listening to a sermon and then miss a meal or two so that we can hear the entire presentation? Would we say the same things to the apostle Paul preaching in an upper chamber all night till the break of day? Have you ever listened all night to a message from a preacher? (Granted, he had better have a good message.)

“When we come to the final hour, and stand face to face with the record of our lives, shall we regret that we have attended so few parties of pleasure? that we have participated in so few scenes of thoughtless mirth? Shall we not, rather, bitterly regret that so many precious hours have been wasted in self-gratification—so many opportunities neglected, which, rightly improved, would have secured for us immortal treasures?”—*Messages to Young People*, p. 398.

Appeal

“The thought to be kept before students is that time is short and that they must make speedy preparation for doing the work that is essential for this time. . . . I am bidden to say to you that you know not how soon the crisis will come. It is stealing gradually upon us, as a thief. The sun shines in the heavens . . . pleasure lovers are still attending theaters . . . but probation’s hour is fast closing, and every case is about to be eternally decided.”—

Counsels to Parents, Teachers, and Students, pp. 413, 414.

“He that walketh righteously, and speaketh uprightly; he that despiseth the gain of oppressions, that shaketh his hands from holding of bribes, that stoppeth his ears from hearing of blood, and shutteth his eyes from seeing evil; he shall dwell on high: his place of defence shall be the munitions of rocks: bread shall be given him; his waters shall be sure” (Isaiah 33:15, 16).

Missionary Tools

We cannot forbear to add that the DVD machine itself is not wicked. I use the best video resolution on the market while I am working on this article—the one found on a computer system. These tools are a result of prophecy: “But thou, O Daniel, shut up the words, and seal the book, even to **the time of the end: many shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall be increased**” (Daniel 12:4, emphasis added).

We often remark that these words are literally fulfilled in this technological age. The printing press was invented to give the Bible into the hands of the common people. The use of trains, automobiles, and airplanes are a fulfillment of this prophecy so that the things once sealed to the prophet Daniel can be carried by God’s people to the ends of the earth with rapid speed. But just because the world at large abuses these gifts from our Father in heaven and focus only upon themselves does not mean that

we should discard them while using them for the sole purpose of glorifying our Saviour.

“God entrusts men with talents and inventive genius, in order that

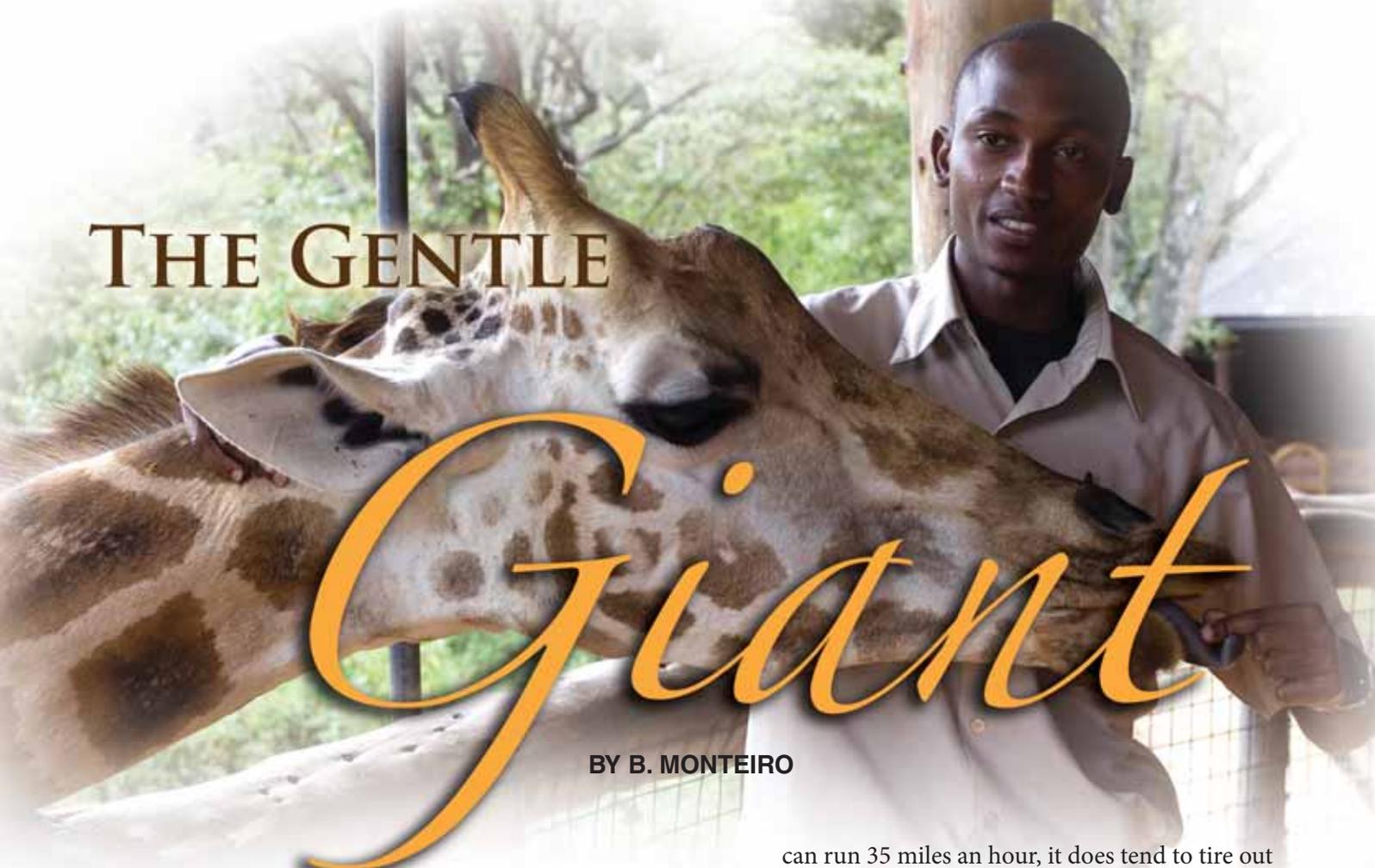
His great work in our world may be accomplished. The inventions of human minds are supposed to spring from humanity, but God is behind all. He has caused that the means of rapid traveling shall have been invented, for the great day of His preparation.

“The use which men have made of their capabilities, by misusing and abusing their God-given talents, has brought confusion into the world. . . . Man alone is accountable for the strange fire which has been mingled with the sacred.”—*Fundamentals of Christian Education*, p. 409.

If we would like to use this technology, let us use it for the honor and glory of our Creator. Let us record the studies that impress us with divine truth and share it with others in DVD’s and even on the internet. Let us hold series of meetings explaining our distinctive views of prophecy, on the plan of salvation and the steps leading a soul to accept Christ in his or her personal life and record the meetings. Then, those who are not gifted to preach can still speak. They can let the stones cry out by the use of the modern technology God has given us.

We recently held a youth convention in Sibiu, Romania. Although we had a large attendance at the meetings, there were people on the other side of the world that would have liked to attend but were not able to go. The brethren organized recording mechanisms and used live video streaming on the internet so that my wife in Australia could view the meetings as they were going on. She could participate with us and receive an instant blessing.

Remember that God has given us technology but Satan has hijacked its use. It is time we use these things to hasten the coming of Jesus. 

A young man with a friendly expression is holding the head of a giraffe. The giraffe's head is the central focus, showing its characteristic spotted pattern and ossicones. The man is wearing a light-colored, short-sleeved button-down shirt. The background is a soft-focus outdoor setting with trees and a fence.

THE GENTLE

Giant

BY B. MONTEIRO

What is the tallest animal in the world? None other than the giraffe. This gentle giant is so tall that even a newborn calf can be 6 feet in height and grow 9 inches in a single week.

The giraffe may seem awkward-looking, but to see it in motion is to behold a certain imperial grace. It is generally mild-mannered but has the power to render a deadly kick with its 6-foot legs, usually aimed only at predators seeking to snatch its young. Its cloven hoof may be as large as 12 inches in length and width; giraffes can walk only on hard, firm surfaces.

There are 12 subspecies of giraffes, each distinguishable by their particular colorings and markings. In equatorial regions where sunlight is direct and shadows are dark, their spots and lines stand out strongly. In cooler regions with softer light and diffused shadows, the markings are paler and gradually fade into white.

Even with its long neck, the giraffe has the same number of cervical vertebrae as humans—7. The giraffe grows to be 14 feet tall and can weigh 2,500 to 3,000 pounds. Though this swift creature

can run 35 miles an hour, it does tend to tire out quickly due to its heavy bone structure.

The favorite food of giraffes consists of the twig tips and leaves of the acacia tree. The giraffe is equipped with long, hairy lips to protect against the stab of thorns. They also have an 18-inch tongue to pluck the juicy leaves; acacia leaves can consist of up to 74% water. God specially designed this animal with oversize lungs to compensate for the extra volume of dead air in the long trachea. Without this extra air-pumping capacity, a giraffe would breathe the same used air over and over again. There's also another amazing feature: The giraffe's heart is exceptionally large and strong, with blood pressure 2 or 3 times that of humans—probably the highest of any animal. There are special control valves and blood vessels in the head that work as a circulatory buffer to keep the blood pressure from hemorrhaging when the giraffe lowers its long neck to drink. This also prevents draining when the head is rapidly raised.

Giraffes are well adapted for reaching up, but awkward in reaching down. In order to feed on a bush, drink from a pool, or lick salt in the dirt, they have to spread their front legs wide apart. This can make them an easy prey for lions—hungry predators that also like to attack them when-



While giraffes possess powerful weapons of offense and defense, they rarely hurt one another.

ever they sleep lying down. Therefore, the giraffes usually prefer to sleep in a standing position.

A herd of giraffes that has spotted a lion may actually walk toward it to get a better view. This makes the enemy hesitate to attack prey that is stalking him. Few adult giraffes are captured as prey, but 75% of giraffe babies die

in their first year to lions, leopards, cheetahs, crocodiles, and hyenas, as well as to disease. This keeps the giraffe numbers from exhausting the available food supply, but it also has a spiritual lesson for all youth. The young need to be especially on guard against enemy attacks. Often when we overestimate our strength and maturity, the enemy of our soul can readily pounce on us with his deceptions.

While giraffes possess powerful weapons of offense and defense, they rarely hurt one another. Competition for females is done by the males' hammering one another with their heads. They eventually stop when they get tired.

The giraffe is a quiet creature, rarely making a sound except when a mother beckons her calf with a low moo. There is a certain dignity about these animals which should make us pause to ponder. Of what character qualities might the Lord be seeking to remind us when we observe these natural skyscrapers?

What does God want to teach us through the giraffes?

The following thoughts come to mind: "The words of wise men are heard in quiet more than the cry of him that ruleth among fools" (Ecclesiastes 9:17).

"God, who created everything lovely and beautiful that the eye rests upon, is a lover of the beautiful. He shows you how He estimates true beauty. The ornament of a meek and quiet spirit is in His sight of *great price*. Shall we not seek earnestly to gain that which God estimates as more valuable than costly dress or pearls or gold? The inward adorning, the grace of meekness, a spirit in harmony with the heavenly angels, will not lessen true dignity of character or make us less lovely here in this world."—*Testimonies*, vol. 3, pp. 376, 377.

"We have in our ranks many who are restless, talkative, self-commending, and who take the liberty to put themselves forward, having no reverence for age, experience, or office. The church is suffering today for help of an opposite character—modest, quiet, God-fearing men, who will bear disagreeable burdens when laid upon them, not for the name, but to render service to their Master, who died for them."—*Ibid.*, vol. 4, p. 340.

"Christ never murmured, never uttered discontent, displeasure, or resentment. He was never disheartened, discouraged, ruffled, or fretted. He was patient, calm, and self-possessed under the most exciting and trying circumstances. All His works were performed with a quiet dignity and ease, whatever commotion was around Him. Applause did not elate Him. He feared not the threats of His enemies. He moved amid the world of excitement, of violence and crime, as the sun moves above the clouds. Human passions and commotions and trials were beneath Him. He sailed like the sun above them all. Yet He was not indifferent to the woes of men. His heart was ever touched with the sufferings and necessities of His brethren, as though He Himself was the one afflicted. He had a calm inward joy, a peace which was serene. His will was ever swallowed up in the will of His Father. Not My will but Thine be done, was heard from His pale and quivering lips."—*This Day With God*, p. 263. 



Turning the Other Cheek

BY HAROLD MONTROSE

In the days when Jesus lived on this earth, the power of pagan Rome was a constant irritation to all Judea. Troops were stationed at various points throughout the nation, reminding the conquered people of their own humiliating status. Often a Roman official would interrupt some Jewish peasants quietly doing their own work and impose upon them to perform some menial task, such as carrying heavy burdens up a mountainside. No sign of appreciation or word of thanks were expressed for this effort—it was just a routine naturally expected of a conquered people. It was freely

permitted under Roman law and might understandably trigger frustration in the heart of many among those originally called by God to be part of His chosen nation.

The Jews suffered greatly under the nasty mockery of the Romans and many looked eagerly to Christ—mainly in the hope that He might humble the arrogant pride of Rome and reverse the state of things. Much to their surprise, however, in the great sermon the Master Teacher gave to the multitude, He bid the oppressed people to do an amazing thing: “Resist not him that is evil: but whosoever smiteth thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also” (Matthew 5:39; RV).

Where did Christ get such an idea? It was really nothing new. He Himself had actually declared it already in the Old Testament: “Say not thou, I will recompense evil.” “Say not, I will do so to him as he hath done to me.” “Rejoice not when thine enemy falleth.” “If he that hateth thee be hungry, give him bread to eat; and if he be thirsty, give him water to drink” (Proverbs 20:22; 24:29, 17; 25:21, 22, RV, margin).

Did Jesus live the way He is describing?

It can certainly be said that Jesus practiced what He preached. He indeed “turned the other cheek” in His earthly life. As the God of heaven, He humbled Himself to become a baby and live as a human on this dark planet that was against Him. His ultimate goal and purpose was to offer Himself up to suffer a cruel, disgraceful death at the hands of His enemies. During His entire earthly life, Jesus had to face the bitterest, most unjust slander and persecution. How did He respond? Only with forgiving love. Through the prophet Isaiah He says, “I gave my back to the smiters, and my cheeks to them that plucked off the hair: I hid not my face from shame and spitting” (Isaiah 50:6). He never grumbled nor complained. He only served others. In summary, He declared: “I am among you as he that serveth” (Luke 22:27).

The blow aimed at you falls upon Christ, who surrounds you with His presence.

What protection did Christ have in all the persecution heaped upon Him?

“The Father’s presence encircled Christ, and nothing befell Him but that which infinite love permitted for the blessing of the world.”—*Thoughts From the Mount of Blessing*, p. 71.

Is it not wonderful that Christ had such protection? Wasn’t that nice? Perhaps for Him, you might think. But the benefit does not stop there. This presence of the Father was Christ’s “source of comfort, **and it is for us**. He who is imbued with the Spirit of Christ abides in Christ” (Ibid., emphasis added).

Notice now, this benefit was not only for the spotless, perfectly innocent Son of God. It is also for us—those that are sincerely seeking to walk in His footsteps!

Realize, then, “the blow that is aimed at him [who is imbued with the Spirit of Christ] falls upon the Saviour, who surrounds him with His presence. Whatever comes to him comes from Christ. He has no need to resist evil, for Christ is his defense. Nothing can touch him except by our Lord’s permission, and ‘all things’ that are permitted ‘work together for good to them that love God’ (Romans 8:28)” (Ibid.).

What does this mean for you and me?

No harm, insult, or mockery can be hurled against you without Christ’s permission. Per-

haps you already knew that in theory, but in your mind you may have pictured the whole scene as depicting an enemy throwing darts at you and Christ standing behind you, cheering you on, in order to strengthen you in the bitter process. But it is not exactly like that! In reality, the love of God is actually **surrounding** you as a shield. Nothing can even penetrate that circle except by exclusive permission of the Master authority of the universe. Christ accepts the blow, and filters it for your sake.

And how do these “filtered” blows help us? They refine and purify us so that we may grow and shine with beautiful luster. “The eyes of the Lord are over the righteous, and his ears are open unto their prayers: but the face of the Lord is against them that do evil. And who is he that will harm you, if ye be followers of that which is good? But **and if ye suffer for righteousness’ sake, happy are ye:** and be not afraid of their terror, neither be troubled” (1 Peter 3:12–14, emphasis added).

“Jesus taught His followers that they should exercise a Christian courtesy toward all who came within their influence, that they should not be forgetful in deeds of mercy, and that when solicited for favors, they should show a benevolence superior to that of the worldling. The children of God should represent the spirit that rules in Heaven. Their principles of action should not be of the same character with the narrow, selfish spirit of the world.”—*Redemption: or the Teachings of Christ, the Anointed One*, pp. 76, 77.

So why not just “turn the other cheek” next time? No matter what anyone may say against this plain teaching of Christ, to follow His instruction in this will not lower your dignity or make you a doormat. It will actually uplift you to higher ground in the sight of Heaven. 

To “turn the other cheek” like your Master did, will actually uplift you.



Getting Our Priorities Straight

BY HOMERO PAREDES

The latest discovery of the global warming investigation on Planet Earth is becoming the greatest concern for the people of the world. The report of earth's becoming warmer than acceptable norms is creating fretfulness in the majority of the nations. Besides all these things, the persistent deterioration of the world's largest economies is causing great panic among both business people and consumers. The constant increase in fuel prices is resulting in the increase of food prices and sometimes there is a shortage of food in most of the countries of the world. In addition to these negative reports, natural calamities in different parts of the globe have multiplied in the past few years. These natural disasters are causing devastation to the infrastructures in many cities of the world and are responsible for the loss of hundreds of thousands of human lives.

When we look at the picture of the world's condition, we also may be tempted to fill our heart with perplexity like anyone else. But it is not God's plan that His children—the ones He has called to be the light of the world—be also alarmed at the movements that indicate that the end is near. Instead of filling our heart with the concerns over a lack of food, shelter, and clothing, the Lord Jesus said: "Therefore I say unto you, Take no thought for your life, what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink; nor yet for your body, what ye shall put on. Is not the life more than meat, and the body than raiment? Behold the fowls of the air: for they sow not, neither do they reap, nor

gather into barns; yet your heavenly Father feedeth them. Are ye not much better than they? Which of you by taking thought can add one cubit unto his stature? And why take ye thought for raiment? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow; they toil not, neither do they spin: and yet I say unto you, That even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. Wherefore, if God so clothe the grass of the field, which to day is, and to morrow is cast into the oven, shall he not much more clothe you, O ye of little faith? Therefore take no thought, saying, What shall we eat? or, What shall we drink? or, Wherewithal shall we be clothed? (For after all these things do the Gentiles seek:) for your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things. But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you" (Matthew 6:25–33).

The first of all matters

We are told to seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness and leave aside the worries of life, trusting that God will take care of us. There is no reason to worry, because He has ample provision to supply our needs. The part left with us is to put God first and last in every aspect of our life. We must do the first thing first. When we keep these priorities in our daily life, we will learn to live one day at the time. As soon as we get up in the morning, we should speak to the Lord in prayer and listen to His voice through the study of His word. The psalmist said: "My voice shalt thou hear in the morn-

A young heart is a precious offering, the most valuable gift that can be presented to God.

ing, O Lord; in the morning will I direct my prayer unto thee, and will look up” (Psalm 5:3). The first hour of morning devotion is intended to be the spiritual preparation for a day full of trials and uncertainties. The problem is that in many professedly Christian homes there is no time to do this first part. Whenever this is neglected during the first hour of the day, the soul becomes an easy prey for Satan.

On the other hand we are told that the greatest duty of each one of us individually is to fear God and keep His commandments. Those who are truly converted to Christ will render willing obedience to all His precepts. But what is the first and greatest of all the commandments? A scribe once asked Jesus this question. “And Jesus answered him, The first of all the commandments is, Hear, O Israel; The Lord our God is one Lord: and thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength: this is the first commandment” (Mark 12:29, 30). This first and greatest commandment is precisely the one that calls to honor God above all other things. Faithfulness in the fulfillment of this precept shall render an undivided devotion to Him that bought humanity with His own precious blood.

First the heart

The heart is the most important organ of the cardiovascular system. It is the organ responsible for sending the blood with the essential nutrients to all parts of the body. If we want to enjoy a healthy physical life, this is the organ that we need to care for the most. The wise man Solomon said: “Keep thy

heart with all diligence; for out of it are the issues of life” (Proverbs 4:23). He does not refer to the anatomical heart but to the mind. The Lord Jesus said: “For out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies” (Matthew 15:19). By this declaration we understand that if we want to have a pure heart, our first priority is to keep our mind from the defilement of sin.

But the question is, How can someone—and especially a young person—keep his or her mind pure in this degenerate age of history? It is God alone that brings into the sinner’s life that purity of mind. Christ paid an infinite price to free the soul from the things of this life and deliver us from sin.

Some personal questions that arise are: “Who has the heart? With whom are our thoughts? Upon whom do we love to converse? Who has our warmest affections and our best energies? If we are on the Lord’s side, our thoughts are with Him, and our sweetest thoughts are of Him. We have no friendship with the world; we have consecrated all that we have and are to Him. We long to bear His image, breathe His Spirit, do His will, and please Him in all things” (*Testimonies*, vol. 2, p. 262).

Human nature has always been inclined to neglect the real priorities of life and to task the mind with the unimportant things of this world. The Creator of the human heart understands our limitations; therefore He offers us that care that we are totally unable to provide for our own heart. He says “My son, give me thine heart, and let thine eyes observe my ways” (Proverbs 23:26).

“The heart belongs to Jesus. He has paid an infinite price for the soul; and He intercedes before the Father as our Mediator, pleading not as a petitioner, but as conqueror who would claim that which is His own. He is able to save to the uttermost, for He ever lives to make intercession for us. A young heart is a precious offering, the most valuable gift that can be presented to God. All that you are, all the ability you possess, comes from God a sacred trust, to be rendered back to Him again in a willing, holy offering. You cannot give to God anything that He has not first given you. Therefore when the heart is given to God, it is giving to Him a gift which he has purchased and is His own.”—*Messages to Young People*, p. 407.

The first years of life

The very foundation of the development of a child is found in the obedience to the Law that teaches our duty to God and to our neighbor. Christ’s teaching reveals the main object of the Ten Commandments. The one object that teaches our duty to God and the other that teaches duty to our fellow men and women. The first commandment with promise is the one that says: “Children, obey your parents in the Lord: for this is right. Honour thy father and mother; (which is the first commandment with promise;) that it may be well with thee, and thou mayest live long on the earth” (Ephesians 6:1–3).

Faithful obedience to the fifth commandment will establish in a young person a firm foundation that will prepare him or her to render proper obedience to the authority of God. “Parents are entitled to a degree of love and respect which is due to no other person. God

Himself, who has placed upon them a responsibility for the souls committed to their charge, has ordained that during the earlier years of life, parents shall stand in the place of God to their children. And he who rejects the rightful authority of his parents is rejecting the authority of God. The fifth commandment requires children not only to yield respect, submission, and obedience to their parents, but also to give them love and tenderness, to lighten their cares, to guard their reputation, and to succor and comfort them in old age. It also enjoins respect for ministers and rulers and for all others to whom God has delegated authority” (*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 308).

“God wants the youth to become men of earnest mind, to be prepared for action in His noble work, and fitted to bear responsibilities. God calls for young men with hearts uncorrupted, strong and brave, and determined to fight manfully in the struggle before them, that they may glorify God, and bless humanity. If the youth would but make the Bible their study, would but calm their impetuous desires, and listen to the voice of their Creator and Redeemer, they would not only be at peace with God, but would find themselves ennobled and elevated.”—*Messages to Young People*, p. 21.

If children and youth want to develop good character traits in their life they must first put on Christ. He must be the first and last in everything. The Word of God must abide in the heart until it becomes the ruling principle of the whole being. It is only when God’s Word is made the priority in the life of children and youth that they can develop a character that would be a blessing in their homes, in the church, and in society. The Word of God as pronounced by the holy prophets is designed “to give subtilty to the simple, to the young

man knowledge and discretion” (Proverbs 1:4). And the “young men likewise exhort to be sober minded” (Titus 2:6). These are the first qualities that should be seen in the youth of today. However, the failure to follow on these priorities in the development of the children will bring negative results. The wise man was saddened when he said, “Among the simple ones, I discerned among the youths, a young man void of understanding” (Proverbs 7:7).

Heaven’s first law

One of the first important lesson that parents should teach their children is the Law that takes priority in heaven. The first lesson to be taught is the lesson of order and discipline. “Order is heaven’s first law, and the Lord desires His people to give in their homes a representation of the order and harmony that pervade the heavenly courts. Truth never places her delicate feet in a path of uncleanness or impurity” (*Counsels on Health*, p. 101).

If this is the priority of heaven, it must be ours, too. When the children learn these important lessons in the small details of their life they become part of their own character. There is no better time to teach these principles than when they are at a young age. True education will not succeed without these things in place. If these are faithfully done, the child can be trusted with larger responsibilities and more complicated tasks. Order in our life is simply the result of routine and disci-

pline. We can still be students in the school of Christ. Teach yourself and your children to be careful in all the little details of life. This we can easily do when they see that we have an established schedule and routine in our day-to-day life. The Bible should be the rule of which every principle is implemented. If these first concepts are inculcated on children at a young age, once they mature, these principles will not be forgotten. “He that is faithful in that which is least is faithful also in much; and he that is unjust in the least is unjust also in much” (Luke 16:10).

These small details of our life considered unimportant by many will produce such effect in the life of others that only eternity shall tell. “One well-ordered, well-disciplined family is a greater power in demonstrating the efficiency of Christianity than all the sermons in the world” (*The SDA Bible Commentary* [E. G. White Comments], vol. 6, p. 1118).

How do we implement order in our home?



As soon as a soul joins the army of Christ, his or her first work is to share the message of salvation with others.

Each family needs to establish a schedule. Eating, sleeping, studying, exercising, cleaning, all need their regular times and the blessings will be noticed by all.

The first goal of life

When a young man is contemplating marriage, the first thing he needs to do is to choose an occupation that will provide means for his future family. But what should be the first priority to decide what type of vocation he should choose? Should he consider an occupation that will provide for the temporal need or personal gain only? “Every man’s work shall be made manifest: for the day shall declare it, because it shall be revealed by fire; and the fire shall try every man’s work of what sort it is” (1 Corinthians 3:13). We should keep the words of Christ ever before us. “Ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God’s” (1 Corinthians 6:20). What vocation is suited for heaven? A vocation suited for heaven is the one that will implement the principles of heaven, where we will be perfectly satisfied. We must understand that many occupations have the potential to corrupt Bible principles. “We need to follow more closely God’s plan of life. To do our best in the work that lies nearest, to commit our ways to God, and to watch for the indications of His providence—these are rules that ensure safe guidance in the choice of an occupation” (*Education*, p. 267).

“God has given to every man his work, and in his vocation he is so to relate himself to his fellowmen that he can work with and for them, ever contributing of his power through the grace given unto him, to enlighten those who sit in darkness.

‘Let your light so shine before men [not merely before believers, but before unbelievers, in all vocations in life, in every branch of business, in all commerce, in merchandise, in all practical works and professions], that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven.’—*The Review and Herald*, January 2, 1894.

The first work

As soon as a soul joins the army of Christ, his or her first work is to share the message of salvation with others. “Every true disciple is born into the kingdom of God as a missionary. He who drinks of the living water becomes a fountain of life. The receiver becomes a giver. The grace of Christ in the soul is like a spring in the desert, welling up to refresh all, and making those who are ready to perish eager to drink of the water of life” (*The Desire of Ages*, p. 195).

There is a great work to be done for the world. There are many longing for someone to knock at their door with the good news of salvation. The Lord is calling to His service consecrated youth with wholehearted devotion—young men and women who fear nothing but God, and who understand the first thing required from them, who are willing to work in behalf of those that are dying without the knowledge of the truth. Then we will make a difference in this world.

“With such an army of workers as our youth, rightly trained, might furnish, how soon the message of a crucified, risen, and soon-coming Saviour might be carried to the whole world! How soon might the end come—the end of suffering and sorrow and sin! How soon, in place of a possession here, with its blight

of sin and pain, our children might receive their inheritance where ‘the righteous shall inherit the land, and dwell therein forever;’ where ‘the inhabitant shall not say, I am sick,’ and ‘the voice of weeping shall be no more heard’ (Psalm 37:29; Isaiah 33:24; 65:19).”—*Education*, p. 271.

Sadly, there are many even with a great desire to do the Lord’s service who fail to place first things first. Many say: “Lord, I will follow thee; but let me first go bid them farewell, which are at home at my house. And Jesus said unto him, No man, having put his hand to the plough, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God” (Luke 9:61, 62). Many feel themselves excused due to their many occupations and think that the work of saving souls has been entrusted to those employed by the church and the ministers and elders. Many make the same mistake as did the disciple that “said unto him, Lord, suffer me first to go and bury my father. But Jesus said unto him, Follow me; and let the dead bury their dead” (Matthew 8:21, 22). “And the gospel must first be published among all nations” (Mark 13:10).

Conclusion

There are many things that take priority in our life that are not necessarily the most important for our temporal and eternal welfare.

Let us then get our priorities straight! Only then can we enjoy the rich spiritual blessings the Lord has in store for us. 

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He Is Looking at YOU

From
the Editor

We were driving from Toronto (Ontario, Canada) to Roanoke (Virginia, U.S.A.) when, just a few miles before reaching our destination, a deer jumped in front of our car and hit the windshield right in front of me. The creature almost came inside the car! When the brother who was driving the car stopped, we got out, and saw the poor deer almost dead. Feeling very sorry for the animal I started thinking that I could be in the same situation if the Lord had not spared my life.

Once again I realized the fragility of life here in this world, so I believe it is very opportune that in this edition of the *Youth Messenger* we are encouraged to review our priorities. We are also reminded that it is worth to have an attitude like Christ's even when we are treated unfairly. The articles "Evolution and the Eye" and "The Gentle Giant" remind us that we live in a dangerous world, full of deceit. "Satan is working with great diligence to compass the ruin of the souls of men" (*Our High Calling*, p. 16). Therefore we need a Guide who knows the way and watches over us.

"All who are traveling the road to heaven need a safe guide. We must not walk in human wisdom. It is our privilege to listen to the voice of Christ speaking to us as we walk the journey of life."—*Ibid.*

There was once a great king who visited a certain city. Thousands of children were there to greet him and sing for him. After the ceremony, the king passed by a group of children of the local school and one of the teachers noticed that a little girl there was crying.

Coming close to the little girl, the teacher asked: "Why are you crying? Were you not able to see the king?" "I saw him," said the little girl while sobbing, "But the king did not see me."

So, dear brothers, sisters, and friends: Through this issue of the *Youth Messenger* we also want to remind you that our King and Guide, Jesus Christ in His love, is "looking at you."

Referring to the famous rich young ruler who came to the Master, the gospel writer states: "Jesus beholding him loved him" (Mark 10:21).

May this assurance of His love increase our desire to be with Him forever!

Your friend and brother in Jesus,
Eli Tenorio da Silva

The Higher Life

We speak of the soul that has freedom within;
Of hopes untarnished by pain;
We speak of a land where there's nevermore sin,
A home which the humblest may gain.

We speak of a faith that is leading the way
From earth to mansions above;
And we joy in the hope of that endless day,
That comes with the blessings of love.

We speak of a life that is hidden in Him;
Of peace as a river that flows.
We speak of the light that will never grow dim,
Of the grace which masters our foes.

Our Lord's life the pattern is, life without sin,
Triumphant o'er death and the grave;
From every temptation without and within
His strong arm is able to save.

Dear Lord, we will trust Thee forever, amen,
And wait Thy sweet presence to come.
We will sing to Thy praise, for Thy promise to men
Of a sinless, a heavenly home.

—L.D.W.