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Major Contextual Dimensions and Dynamic Factors in the Transmission of the Judeo-Christian Religious Heritage According to Selected Writings of Ellen G. White

Juan Navarro
Andrews University

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MAJOR CONTEXTUAL DIMENSIONS AND DYNAMIC FACTORS IN THE TRANSMISSION OF THE JUDEO-CHRISTIAN RELIGIOUS HERITAGE ACCORDING TO SELECTED WRITINGS OF ELLEN G. WHITE

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IN THE TRANSMISSION OF THE JUDEO-CHRISTIAN
RELIGIOUS HERITAGE: ACCORDING TO SELECTED
WRITINGS OF ELLEN G. WHITE

A Dissertation
Presented in Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Doctor of Education

by
Juan Navarro

August 1979
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ABSTRACT

MAJOR CONTEXTUAL DIMENSIONS AND DYNAMIC FACTORS IN THE TRANSMISSION OF THE JUDEO-CHRISTIAN RELIGIOUS HERITAGE ACCORDING TO SELECTED WRITINGS OF ELLEN G. WHITE

by

Juan Navarro

Chairperson: John B. Youngberg
ABSTRACT OF GRADUATE STUDENT RESEARCH

Dissertation

Andrews University
Department of Education

Title: MAJOR CONTEXTUAL DIMENSIONS AND DYNAMIC FACTORS IN THE TRANSMISSION OF THE JUDEO-CHRISTIAN RELIGIOUS HERITAGE ACCORDING TO SELECTED WRITINGS OF ELLEN G. WHITE

Name of researcher: Juan Navarro
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Date completed: August 1979

Purpose

Christianity claims to have directly received by revelation from God a body of knowledge which has been preserved, developed, and handed down through generations. The purpose of this study was to determine what, according to Ellen White, are the major contextual dimensions in the transmission of this religious heritage and the dynamic factors involved in the process.

Method

The approach to this documentary study consisted of

(1) carefully reading selected writings of White and collecting,
every statement related to the investigation; (2) logically arranging the information gathered; and (3) analyzing, interpreting, synthesizing, and presenting the findings in an expository style.

Summary and Conclusions

The investigation concluded that White expresses a definite concept of the nature of the Judeo-Christian religious heritage and its transmission. She maintains that the Judeo-Christian religious heritage is the depositary of truth, which, coming down from the patriarchs, prophets, and the teachings of Christ and the apostles has been accumulating through the ages. Its essentials came directly from God by revelation and are contained in the Scriptures. The plan of salvation is the ground and pillar of the truth around which all other themes cluster. Religious heritage partakes of the divine regenerating force. Under its influence, the believer becomes a transformed person ready for service and salvation. The inherent potential of religious heritage for development is measureless. Truth remains changeless, but the church constantly discerns additional facets of truth in the Scriptures which fill the needs of every generation.

The major contextual dimensions are as follows:

1. The transmission of religious heritage takes place in the framework of the cosmic conflict between good and evil. The responsibility for its communication rests upon the believers. Divine and angelical powers, however, are also at work. Their participation is indispensable for the success of the task.

2. Personal and dimensional elements such as heredity,
environment, physical and mental health, the imminent return of Christ, and the shortness of time to accomplish a world-wide task, and Satan's hindrances affect the transmission of religious heritage.

3. Education is a character-building process similar to the work of redemption. It is a lifelong experience which takes place anywhere. Because of its nature, objective, foundation, and process, Christian education is the most significant activity in the transmission of the sacred legacy of Christianity.

Three major dynamic factors were found: conscious teaching, celebration, and modeling.

1. Conscious teaching in the family situation is the most powerful, pervasive, and enduring influence in the transmission of parents' beliefs, values, and attitudes to their children. The Christian school offers the properly structured learning situation needed to continue the task initiated in the home. Conscious teaching in the school situation represents an intentional, systematic, and constant effort for the transmission of religious heritage. The church was organized for service and its mission consists in carrying the message of salvation to the world. The conscious teaching church, with harmony and cooperation among all its members and institutions, worships, studies, serves, and proclaims.

2. When celebration of any event or day is an occasion in which God is honored and religious lessons are taught, it becomes a powerful factor in the reinforcement and transmission of Christian beliefs and values.
3. The modeling influence of a holy life is the most convincing "sermon" given in favor of Christianity. When parents, teachers, and ministers exemplify in their lives the principles of truth, the home, the school, and the church become centers where religious heritage is transmitted to younger generations and all peoples.

It is within the interaction of the Christian home, school, and church that the dynamic factors of conscious teaching, celebration, and modeling find their fullest development and greatest influence.
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PART I

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It is my hope that this study will provide a challenge and a blessing to all who read it. May their service in the transmission of the Judeo-Christian religious heritage be encouraged and enriched.
CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Christianity claims to have received a body of special knowledge directly from God by revelation.¹ This knowledge has been transmitted through past millennia as a sacred heritage. Its content, accepted and preserved by Christendom, includes beliefs, ideals, and values.

The prophetic gift had the specific task of increasing new knowledge and explaining the religious legacy of old. God, after revealing His messages to the prophets, entrusted the transmission of these messages to other peoples and generations. The family, the school, and the temple or church were responsible for the preservation, unfolding, adaptation, and spreading of this body of sacred knowledge. This is one way in which God has been working in all times through the believers.² Thus, divine beliefs have reached from the creation of the human race to the present generation.

This Judeo-Christian religious legacy is not simply a static body of knowledge. It is a dynamic corpus of truth in continuous development and with a power to deeply affect people's lives in

²See Deut 4:10; 6:1-10; Isa 54:3; Joel 1:3; Matt 28:18-20.
every generation. The believers of the past delivered the sacred heritage to the people of their generation, adapting it to the particular circumstances of their time. Every new generation has to find ways to successfully approach situations which former generations did not face.

The Seventh-day Adventist church understands itself to be the recipient of a corpus of doctrines and teachings whose origin goes back to the beginning of man’s history. Through many centuries, this divine knowledge has been received, accepted, and handed down from generation to generation by Jewish and Christian believers. New beliefs were added to those already existing. Streams of new light illuminated knowledge received from the past, in a continued accumulative process, to the present time.

Purpose of the Study

Christendom, in general, and the Seventh-day Adventist church, in particular, have received from the past, an accumulated religious heritage containing the riches of the Christian faith. What is the nature and object of this sacred legacy? How did the transmission of this body of knowledge progress from one generation to the next? What were the dynamic factors involved in the process?

No comprehensive and systematic study of Ellen G. White’s writings has been done concerning the Judeo-Christian religious heritage and its transmission. The purpose of this study was to

determine what are, according to White, the major contextual dimensions in the transmission of this religious legacy and the major dynamic factors affecting the process.

**Significance of the Study**

The position held by Ellen G. White (1827-1915) in the Seventh-day Adventist church is exceptional. Her role and her writings represent a contribution of great significance and value. The uniqueness of her influence and leadership were decisive factors in the formation and development of the church and its institutions. She is considered as "Co-founder of the S.D.A. [Seventh-day Adventist] Church, writer, lecturer, and counselor to the church, who possessed what S.D.A.'s have accepted as the prophetic gift described in the Bible."¹

White's literary production encompasses a great variety of matters. Besides Biblical themes, religious history and education, she wrote about health, nutrition, medicine, and church affairs.

At the time of her death her literary productions consisted of well over 100,000 pages: 24 books in current circulation; 2 book manuscripts ready for publication; 4,600 periodical articles in the journals of the church; 200 or more out-of-print tracts and pamphlets; 6,000 typewritten manuscript documents consisting of letters and general manuscripts aggregating approximately 40,000 typewritten pages, 2,000 handwritten letters and documents and diaries, journals, et cetera, when copied comprising 20,000 typewritten pages.²

At the present time there are over sixty-four books authored by Ellen White in circulation. In addition, there is a comprehensive


2 Ibid.
index to the published books in three volumes with three thousand pages, listing thousands of topics.

Ellen G. White never assumed the title of prophet. She maintained that she was the Lord's messenger, hearing His message to the people. At the same time she recognized that her work was much like that of a prophet. White was convinced that what she wrote was of divine origin. In 1903 she stated: "Sister White is not the originator of these books. They contain the instruction that during her lifework God has been giving her. They contain the precious, comforting light that God has graciously given His servant to be given to the world."

Robert H. Pierson, president of the General Conference of the Seventh-day Adventist church (1966-1979) has written:

For Seventh-day Adventists, Ellen G. White is more than a tradition. For those who have read her works, tested her counsel, trusted her judgments, she has been the messenger of the Lord for these modern times. No excuses are made for her contributions, not only to the Seventh-day Adventist Church, but to the world in general. Her writings have been an invaluable asset to Seventh-day Adventists. Much of the success the Adventist Church has experienced in its worldwide program, whatever advance perception it has enjoyed in such fields as education and medicine, the open secret is usually found in her writings.

The Seventh-day Adventist church's official statement of fundamental beliefs contained in the Church Manual (1971), includes


an article of faith in which the acceptance of the divine origin of
the writings of Ellen G. White is stated:

That God has placed in His church the gifts of the Holy
Spirit, as enumerated in 1 Corinthians 12 and Ephesians 4.
That these gifts operate in harmony with the divine principles
of the Bible, and are given "for the perfecting of the saints,
for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of
Christ" (Eph. 4:12). That the gift of the Spirit of prophecy
is one of the identifying marks of the remnant church... They recognize that this gift was manifested in the life and
ministry of Ellen G. White.¹

Moreover, the Seventh-day Adventist church, repeatedly, in official
actions in General Conference session and unofficially at all times,
has recognized White as having been called in a special manner as
the messenger of the Lord.²

White’s contribution is not limited to the boundaries of the
church in which she served for more than seven decades. The rich­
ness of her literary production and her task as a leader have been
acknowledged in such diverse fields as psychology, education, health.
and religion. In the domain of education, for instance, her contrib­
ution is largely responsible for the establishment of more than
4,260 institutions,³ from primary to university level, around the
world. The educational principles upon which these institutions are
founded are taken from White’s thinking and teachings. The same can
be said regarding the increasing number of health and medical insti­
tutions. Furthermore, several master’s theses and doctoral

¹General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, Seventh-day
²Neufeld, s.v. "Ellen Gould (Harmon) White."
³Ibid., s.v. "Schools, SDA."

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dissertations have been written analyzing specific areas of her thinking, and comparing them with such recognized thinkers as Aquinas, Luther, Wesley, Brunner, Piaget, Kohlberg, and Bandura.

All these considerations lead to the conclusion that an investigation of White's writings, looking for major contextual dimensions and dynamic factors in the transmission of religious heritage, should be of significance to the church, the family, and the school.

Ellen G. White wrote no book dealing specifically with the transmission of religious heritage. This matter, however, is present throughout her writings. In addition, the importance that the adequate transmission of religious heritage bears is plainly revealed by the fact that the vitality of the Christian faith through the centuries depended, in great measure, on such a process. It is, therefore, evident that a study of these writings brings additional light, as well as a better understanding of the subject. Such a study can achieve the following: (1) be considered a contribution to the advancement of knowledge on the nature, content, process, and results of the transmission of religious heritage; (2) assist parents, teachers, and preachers in developing educational goals and objectives and in building curriculum plans for the application of the most effective methods in the transmission of religious heritage; and (3) serve as a basis for a possible formulation of a philosophy of the transmission of the Judeo-Christian religious heritage, with practical application.

1See for example: J. N. Barnes; J. M. Fowler; F. E. J. Harder; W. R. Lesher; and M. S. Tumangday.
Delimitations of the Study

At the time of Ellen G. White's death, her literary production consisted of over 100,000 pages. This investigation, when it relates to the dynamic factors in the transmission of religious heritage, is limited to the Review and Herald articles and the five volumes of the "Conflict of the Ages."

The articles of the Review and Herald were written in the context of the church with which White was identified. They are closely tied to the development and circumstances of Seventh-day Adventist history during her lifetime. In the articles she gave full expression to her ideas. All areas of her interest are found in them. They provide a representative cross-section of her literary work.

The five volumes of the "Conflict of the Ages" are Patriarchs and Prophets, Prophets and Kings, The Desire of Ages, The Acts of the Apostles, and The Great Controversy. These books trace the great controversy between good and evil from the fall of Lucifer to the closing events of earth's history and the second advent of Christ. They present a helpful historical perspective of the transmission of religious heritage. In reality, the chief concern of this study is not to analyze the fact of the transmission process in past time, nor is it to discover through whom it took place. In some instances, however, when the matter is relevant to the point under consideration, the historical or biographical perspective has proved very helpful. It serves to illustrate some

1 Neufeld, s.v. "Ellen Gould (Harmon) White."
of White's concepts, as well as to emphasize specific points.

The sources of data for the contextual area of this study are not limited to the articles of the *Review and Herald* and the "Conflict of the Ages" series. In order to obtain a comprehensive contextual picture the researcher has used as additional sources those writings in which White deals extensively, directly or indirectly, with the fundamental matters which provide context for the transmission of religious heritage. Among other works consulted are *Education*, *The Ministry of Healing*, *Steps to Christ*, and *Christ's Object Lessons*.

The research does not intend to prove or disprove the authenticity of Ellen G. White's visions, nor the faith of those Seventh-day Adventist believers who have accepted her prophetic gift. Neither does this research aim to establish either the truthfulness or falsity of any declaration dealing with the matter under research from the pen of Ellen G. White. The researcher's task is limited to identifying and describing her position on major contextual dimensions and dynamic factors in the transmission of the Judeo-Christian religious heritage.

The study required further delimitation regarding the range of dynamic factors functioning within the sphere of the individual life and the society or institutional agencies. The present research, however, is limited to the consideration of those dynamic factors specifically involved in the transmission of religious heritage. The consideration of such Christian institutions as the home, the school, and the church is unavoidable and incidental at
the same time. The treatment of the relationship between the individual and these institutional agencies is considered as it relates to the dynamic factors involved in the transmission of the Judeo-Christian religious heritage.

**Related Studies**

Several doctoral dissertations and master theses based on White's writings have been helpful in regard to the development of this study. They are not expressly concerned with the main thought of this research, but they provide valuable information, ideas, and insights for its structure and enrichment. Their contribution is, therefore, mentioned here.

Joseph W. Barnes wrote a dissertation at the University of Nebraska dealing with White's concept of the mind-body relationship and its importance to her religious beliefs and educational philosophy.¹ His findings, pertaining to the nature of the student and teacher, as well as the objectives, process, and content of education, are rich in insights related to this research. His considerations regarding White's thinking on the matter and its implications to the student's integral development were also helpful.

"Principles of Education in the Writings of Ellen G. White," a dissertation written by Edward M. Cadwallader, offers an easily accessible systematic classification of education-related topics.² The study

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of this source has proved helpful due to the fact that much of its information is related to religious heritage and/or its transmission.

A comprehensive research on character development based on the writings of Ellen White was carried out by John M. Fowler.\(^1\) Since a goal of the transmission of religious heritage is the development of character, Fowler's investigation represents an important contribution to the understanding of the matter of the study. Its content, organization, and methodology were useful.

Frederick E. J. Harder's analytical study regarding White's concept of revelation as a source of knowledge is concerned with defining her thinking in relation to those concepts on the matter held by other Christian leaders.\(^2\) Thus, it is not concerned with the transmission of the revealed knowledge from one person to another. However, the study itself, epistemological in nature, is related to this research. The source and nature of revelation and its purpose and implications for education are aspects of Harder's thesis which have a direct bearing on the transmission of religious heritage. It also provided helpful material and hermeneutical guidance for this investigation.

The purpose of William R. Lesher's investigation was to discover White's concept of sanctification and its relationship to her views on education.\(^3\) This study was also valuable for this research.

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\(^2\) Frederick E. J. Harder, "Revelation, A Source of Knowledge, as Conceived by Ellen G. White" (Ph.D. dissertation, New York University, 1960).

because sanctification by its nature, means, and results, is an implicit element of the transmission of religious heritage and education.

Miriam S. Tumangday's dissertation consists of a comparison of the modeling concepts of Albert Bandura and Ellen White. The modeling concept employed here refers to the techniques or their symbols to perform the desired responses to transmit or modify behavior.

Since the modeling factor is of vital importance for the transmission of religious heritage, Tumangday's dissertation was very helpful. The master's thesis research carried out by F. W. Bieler deals with that phase of Christian doctrine which has to do with the 'end result' of the Gospel upon the lives of human beings.

He says it "is important to understand how the process of Christian maturation takes place which prepares the believer for that more abundant life in the here and now and the eternal life in the earth made new." Bieler's study is by no means comprehensive, but it offers insightful points of interest regarding specific areas of the matter under research.

Fritz Guy also wrote a thesis interpreting Ellen White's concept of conversion. He states that "the internal results of

2 Ibid., p. 4.
4 Ibid., p. 3.
5 Ibid.
conversion are its most important results, for it is in the mind—in cognition, in emotion, in volition—which is the seat of the personality and inner springs of all action. Conversion is an experience which is integrated into the religious heritage transmission.

A. Leroy Moore, in his study concerning White's views on the nature of man and its relation to Bible teaching objectives, says that before the teacher is capable of determining his objectives, he "must have a clear and comprehensive concept of the nature of man as it relates to the learning and redemptive processes." Moore concludes that clear objectives and an adequate concept of man's nature are essential to the proper selection of Bible teaching methods. This thesis was useful as far as the object and method of transmitting religious heritage are concerned.

As already noted, these dissertations and theses are connected in a contributory sense to the main thought of the present study, but only in an incomplete and indirect way. Thus, this study attempts to deal comprehensively and directly with the subject matter under investigation.

Definition of Terms

Religious heritage. Religious heritage is the increasing and accumulative body of sacred knowledge which has been received, preserved, developed, and handed down by believers from generation to

1 Ibid., p. 103.


3 Ibid., p. 3.

4 Ibid., p. 4.
generation to the present time. As used in this study, the term includes both the central core of truth revealed by God and that body of beliefs, teachings, values, attitudes, and hopes built by succeeding generations of Judeo-Christian believers.

Dynamic factors. Factors themselves are principles, elements, circumstances, and influences which contribute, as determinants, to the transmission of religious heritage, leading to a constituent result. Dynamic factors are those in which the divine-human action is the essential energetic element. They are operative powers tending to produce continuous progress, new discoveries, and adaptations of the religious heritage and its transmission. They play an important role, since by positively influencing people's lives, they determine the strength and speed of the process, the purity of the content, and the final results of the transmission of religious heritage.

Transmission. The process--series of actions, functions, or changes--by which the content and circumstances of religious heritage are handed down from one individual to another, and from one generation to the next.

Research Procedure

The starting point of this research was the recognition of the transmission of the Judeo-Christian religious heritage through past generations up to the present time. The main question which the present writer wanted to answer was this: How did the transmission of religious heritage take place?

In order to consider and answer this question, a set of other basic matters derived from it had to be analyzed. These
matters concerned the concept of religious heritage and its transmission, with the factors involved in its transmission, and with the hindrances affecting negatively such a process.

To situate the problem in its right perspective, the researcher had to consider the nature, significance, and objective of the transmission of religious legacy. Answers must be found to such questions as these: Whose is the responsibility for the transmission of religious heritage? What is the role of the family, the school, and the church in such a process? What are the end results of the transmission of religious heritage in the individual life and in the life of the Christian institutions?

As a result of a preliminary survey of related literature and of Ellen White's writings, a number of specific factors and contextual dimensions were found regarding the transmission of religious heritage. That survey showed also that much written work had been devoted to the study of such institutional agencies as the home, the school, and the church as means of passing on a religious legacy. Consequently, the dynamic factors and contextual dimensions were taken as a partial and hypothetical basis for the investigation and subsequent classification of the findings. A tentative general outline was developed which included the essential points of the findings.

Then the selected writings from White's pen were carefully and systematically read looking for any statement directly or indirectly related to the topic under consideration and not necessarily included in the preliminary general outline. The analysis of those statements collected showed the necessity to emphasize the
contextual dimensions of the religious heritage and its transmission. That analysis pointed out also the way in which the dynamic factors had to be studied.

The dynamic factors were classified by groups. Those which were in some way or other emphasized in White's writings because of the role they play in the transmission of religious heritage were considered as major dynamic factors. They stand out because of the amount of information dealing with them and because of their faculty to cluster or assimilate other dynamic factors involved in the transmission of religious beliefs and values.

Finally, a new outline was developed based on all the findings duly organized. Based on that outline the researcher began the writing of the paper.

The massive amounts of White materials involved in this study presented an unusual problem in citation. While a classifying of ideas having theological affinity into commonly accepted categories is seen as useful for theological purposes, the purpose and intent of the present writer has been to let White speak for herself on the subject of the transmission of the Judeo-Christian religious heritage. Thus a minimum of external categories have been used. Rather the categories have arisen from the weight of White's writings themselves. In order to preserve the spiritual flavor and meaning of the passages, frequently White's words have been used, oftentimes condensing her thoughts. The present writer acknowledges intellectual indebtedness to White for the thoughts she presents and gives the footnote references after each thought. If
the words cited are verbatim from White and form more than a line in the present work, quotation marks will be used. If the verbatim words are from one to less than a line, quotation marks may not always be inserted. This procedure was adopted, not because the present writer claimed intellectual ownership of a particular grouping of words, but in order to facilitate the flow of ideas. However, in each case citation numbers indicate the source and location of the material used.

**Design of the Study**

Basically, this study falls into the category of documentary research. In order to reach defensible conclusions, the concepts from the documents under study were systematically collected, analyzed, synthesized, and developed in a logical order. In this way, the researcher was able to deal with White's concepts on the Judeo-Christian religious heritage and its transmission.

The study is divided into an introduction, two main parts, and a summary-conclusion. The introductory chapter presents the rationale for the study. It includes the purpose, significance, and delimitations of the study, definition of terms, research procedures, and the design of the study.

Part one deals with the major contextual dimensions of the Judeo-Christian religious heritage according to Ellen G. White. It is composed of five chapters. Chapter II deals with the basic considerations concerning (1) the nature of man, the fall and its results, and God's plan for man's restoration; and (2) the character of the Christian religion. Chapter III analyzes the Christian
religious heritage, including (1) its origin, written record, and content; (2) its nature and object; and (3) its development. Chapter IV presents the transmission of religious heritage and examines various elements affecting this process. Chapter V studies the supernatural provisions for the transmission of religious heritage; that is, the ministry of the Holy Spirit. And chapter VI considers the dynamic factors affecting religious heritage. It analyzes the dynamic factors transmitting the dynamic context.

This dynamic context, with major religious dimensions, is represented in the transmission of religious heritage through communal and personal days. This dynamic context also includes the power of example through modeling in the transmission of religious heritage. Chapter X presents conclusions of (1) the contextual dimensions, (2) the dynamic factors, and (3) a concluding statement regarding the interactions between the home, school, and church, and the dynamic factors involved in the transmission of religious heritage.
PART I

MAJOR CONTEXTUAL DIMENSIONS IN THE TRANSMISSION OF
THE JUDEO-CHRISTIAN RELIGIOUS HERITAGE
ACCORDING TO ELLEN G. WHITE

In order to analyze White's thinking on the Judeo-Christian religious heritage and the circumstances in which its transmission operates, this first part of the study deals with those contextual dimensions which are fundamental to the transmission of religious heritage. The main points considered are: (1) basic considerations regarding the nature and fall of man, and God's plan for man's restoration; (2) the nature of religious heritage; (3) the transmission of religious heritage; (4) supernatural provisions for this process; and (5) education and the transmission of religious heritage.
religious heritage, including (1) its origin, written record, and content; (2) its nature and object; and (3) its development. Chapter IV presents the transmission of religious heritage and examines various elements affecting this process. Chapter V studies the supernatural provisions for the transmission of religious heritage; that is, the ministries of angels and the Holy Spirit. And chapter VI considers education and the transmission of religious heritage. It analyzes the role of education in the process of transmitting the Christian sacred legacy.

Part two is composed of three chapters dealing with major dynamic factors in the transmission of the Judeo-Christian religious heritage. Chapter VII discusses conscious teaching and learning processes in the home, the school, and the church for the transmission of religious heritage. Chapter VIII examines the role of celebration in transmitting religious heritage. It deals with the commemoration of sacred events and the observance of special days. This part concludes with chapter IX, which discusses modeling in the transmission of religious legacy. The chapter analyzes the dynamic power of example in the transmission process.

Chapter X presents a summary and conclusions of (1) the contextual dimensions, (2) the dynamic factors, and (3) a concluding statement regarding the interactions between the home, school, and church, and the dynamic factors involved in the transmission of religious heritage.
PART I

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CHAPTER II

BASIC CONSIDERATIONS

In order to better understand Ellen G. White's thinking on the nature of both the content and the transmission of religious heritage, it is necessary to make a preliminary study of her concept regarding (1) the nature of man, the fall and its results, and God's plan for man's restoration; and (2) the character of the Christian religion.¹

Basic Considerations Concerning the Nature of Man, the Fall and Its Results, and God's Plan for Man's Restoration

The Nature of Man

Accepting God as the originator of man, according to the biblical account of creation, White says man was created "a superior being,"² "a new and distinct order,"³ "the crowning act of the creation of God, made in the image of God, and designed to be a counterpart of God; ..."⁴ She further states "Adam was in the perfection of manhood, 

¹All the works cited in this and the following chapters are written by Ellen G. White; therefore in footnotes, the author's name will be omitted.

²"Praise Due to the Creator," Review and Herald 62 (April 21, 1885):241. (Hereafter cited as RH.)

³"Purpose of Man's Creation," RH 79 (Feb. 11, 1902):81.

⁴"Go Ye Into All the World," RH 72 (June 18, 1895):385.
the noblest of the Creator's work."\(^1\) He was "but a little lower than the angels."\(^2\)

White rejects the idea that man is a product of natural evolution.\(^3\) She describes God's creation of man in rich detail:

In the creation of man was manifest the agency of a personal God. When God had made man in His image, the human form was perfect in all its arrangements, but it was without life. Then a personal, self-existing God breathed into that form the breath of life, and man became a living, intelligent being. All parts of the human organism were set in action. The heart, the arteries, the veins, the tongue, the hands, the feet, the senses, the faculties of the mind, all began their work, and all were placed under law. Man became a living soul.\(^4\)

At their creation, "Adam and Eve came forth from the hand of their Creator in the perfection of every physical, mental, and spiritual endowment."\(^5\) In his original state, man was upright, and possessed "a perfectly balanced mind. The size and strength of the organs of the mind were perfectly developed. Adam was a perfect type of man."\(^6\) "God gave [man] noble qualities . . . and made every power of his being harmonious"; his powers "were high" and his aims "holy; all in perfect harmony with the divine mind."\(^7\)

The concept of man in the image of God, mentioned in the

\(^1\)"The Temptation of Christ," RH 44 (July 28, 1874):51.
\(^2\)Ibid.
\(^5\)"Redemption," RH 43 (Feb. 24, 1874):82.
\(^7\)"Partakers of the Divine Nature," RH 64 (March 1, 1887):129.
account of man's creation, is essential to an understanding of White's idea of the nature of man. At the outset "man was created in the image of God. He was in perfect harmony with the nature and the law of God; the principles of righteousness were written upon his heart." Consequently, "Adam could reflect that he was created in the image of God, to be like him in righteousness and holiness." But, White's understanding of "image" includes man's bearing of the likeness of God not only in all his moral actions and character but also in his external resemblance. She explains:

Man was to bear God's image, both in outward resemblance and in character... His nature was in harmony with the will of God. His mind was capable of comprehending divine things. His affections were pure; his appetites and passions were under the control of reason. He was holy and happy in bearing the image of God and in perfect obedience to His will.

One of the characteristics of man's "image of God" is his power of decision, the freedom of choice. White recognizes that "man was created a free moral agent." God gave our first parents "the power of choice—the power to yield or to withhold obedience."

The Fall and Its Results

Man was capable of "continual cultivation, expansion, refinement and noble elevation;" for "God was his teacher, and angels were..."

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2 "Redemption," RH 43 (Feb. 24, 1874): 82.
4 Ministry of Healing, p. 176.
5 Patriarchs and Prophets, p. 331.
6 Education, p. 23.

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his companions.\textsuperscript{1} In order for man to be able to reach his maximum potential, God decided to place him on probation. White puts it this way: "And before they could receive in fullness the blessings He desired to impart, their love and loyalty must be tested."\textsuperscript{2} It was not an arbitrary or capricious divine decision. "The Lord placed man upon probation that he might form a character of steadfast integrity for his own happiness and for the glory of his Creator."\textsuperscript{3} The test, however, would be temporary and "if he should bear the test of God, and remain loyal and true after the first trial, he was not to be beset with continual temptations; but was to be exalted equal with the angels, and henceforth immortal."\textsuperscript{4}

Adam and Eve received counsel and instruction from the holy angels,\textsuperscript{5} and "face to face held communion with the eternal."\textsuperscript{6} They could contemplate and appreciate the glorious works of God in nature. God gave each of them "hands for labor, as well as a mind and heart for contemplation. . . . In labor, man was to find happiness as well as in meditation."\textsuperscript{7} When consideration is given to the blessings the first human beings enjoyed, it is hard to understand why man used his freedom to disobey God's order. No one could coerce man to choose against his will.\textsuperscript{8}

\begin{thebibliography}{9}
\bibitem{1}\textit{Redemption}, RH 43 (Feb. 24, 1874):82.
\bibitem{2}\textit{Education}, p. 23.
\bibitem{3}\textit{Redemption}, RH 43 (Feb. 24, 1874):82.
\bibitem{4}Ibid.
\bibitem{5}\textit{Education}, p. 21.
\bibitem{6}Ibid.
\bibitem{7}\textit{Redemption}, RH 43 (Feb. 24, 1874):82.
\bibitem{8}\textit{Patriarchs and Prophets}, p. 421.
\end{thebibliography}

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But there was a power acting against the holy pair to induce them to sin. White writes that "Satan had determined to obliterate that image [God’s in man] and deface from the soul the impress of the character of God. He determined to make man wholly like himself."¹ So, by every device at his disposition, Satan tempted man to speculate in regard to God. White, analyzing the description of man’s fall in the book of Genesis, reaches this conclusion:

There was nothing poisonous in the fruit itself, and the sin was not merely in yielding to appetite. It was distrust of God’s goodness, disbelief of His word, and rejection of His authority, that made our first parents transgressors, and that brought into the world a knowledge of evil.²

The sin of man resulted in a deplorable state of things. A train of fatal consequences followed in the wake of man’s willful disobedience. First, "sin alienated him from his Maker."³ By his transgression, man placed a barrier between the holy God and the transgressor. Furthermore, man no longer reflected the divine image. Due to his sin, he lost the "resemblance to the Creator."⁴

The fall did not create in man new faculties, energies, and passions; for this would have been a reflection upon God. It was through disobedience to God’s requirements that these powers were perverted; the affections were misplaced, and turned from the high and holy purpose to a lower aim and to meet a lower standard.⁵

Man’s perversion, nevertheless, was not only moral.

"Through sin the divine likeness was marred, and well-nigh

⁵"Partakers of the Divine Nature," RH 64 (March 1, 1887):129.
obliterated. Man's physical powers were weakened, his mental capacity was lessened, his spiritual vision dimmed. He had become subject to death.\textsuperscript{1}

White believes man has been degenerating throughout the centuries. If man had ceased his decline "when Adam was driven from Eden," he "should now be in a far more elevated condition physically, mentally, and morally."\textsuperscript{2} "Separated from the presence of God, the human family had been departing every successive generation, farther from the original purity, wisdom, and knowledge which Adam possessed in Eden."\textsuperscript{3} Elsewhere, White further explains that man, from the beginning of time, has been undergoing "a succession of falls, each greater than the last."\textsuperscript{4}

All the satanic "agencies for depraving the souls of men" have been successfully employed.\textsuperscript{5} But, although White recognizes man alienated himself from God, and that he stands helpless and condemned to eternal death, the race was not left without hope.\textsuperscript{6}

\textbf{God's Plan for Man's Restoration}

White emphasizes the fact that God has the solution to man's problem of sin. Man "was not abandoned to the results of the evil he had chosen. In the sentence pronounced upon Satan was given an intimation

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{1}Education, p. 15.
\item \textsuperscript{2}"The Temptation of Christ," RH 45 (March 4, 1875):74.
\item \textsuperscript{3}"The Temptation of Christ," RH 44 (July 28, 1874):51.
\item \textsuperscript{4}"The Temptation of Christ," RH 45 (March 4, 1875):74.
\item \textsuperscript{5}The Desire of Ages (Mountain View, Calif.: Pacific Press Publishing Assn., 1898, 1940), p. 36.
\item \textsuperscript{6}"Redemption," RH 43 (Feb. 24, 1874):83.
\end{itemize}
of redemption. . . . All that had been lost by yielding to Satan would be regained through Christ."\(^1\) Sin was "so fearful" that "it could be pardoned only by the sacrifice of the Son of the infinite God."\(^2\) Thus, the Son of God, undertaking to become the Redeemer of the race, placed Adam in a new relation to his Creator.

Across the gulf that lay between, there could be no communion. But through Christ, earth is again linked with heaven. With His own merits, Christ has bridged the gulf which sin had made. . . . Christ connects fallen man in his weakness and helplessness with the source of infinite power.\(^3\)

Accordingly, White maintains that Christ's sacrifice constitutes the divine means for man's restoration. "Jesus proposes to take man's deformity and sin, and to give him, in return, beauty and excellence in his own character."\(^4\) She repeats in many instances throughout her writings that "the moral image of God may be restored in our fallen natures,"\(^5\) and that man can "recover from that fall and regain, through Christ, the image of the divine, which he lost by sin and continued transgression."\(^6\) God's plan of salvation has been devised for man's complete restoration. She indicates:

To restore in man the image of his Maker, to bring him back to the perfection in which he was created, to promote the development of body, mind, and soul, that the divine purpose in his

\(^1\) *Education*, p. 27.

\(^2\) "The True, or the False," *RH* 75 (Aug. 9, 1898):502.


creation might be realized,—this was to be the work of redemption.  

A total understanding of God's idea for his children is out of man's reach. White acknowledges such an impossibility when she confesses it is "higher than the highest human thought can reach." Therefore, God's ultimate goal for man is also beyond description. However, she thinks "the price paid for our redemption, the infinite sacrifice of our heavenly Father in giving His Son to die for us, should give us exalted conceptions of what we may become through Christ." Yet, White's most exalted notion of what man can become is expressed as follows: "Man has the assurance that he can become a partaker of the divine nature, even as Christ became a partaker of human nature." But, who is able to grasp the real meaning of such a hope? "Eternity alone can reveal the glorious destiny to which man, restored to God's image, may attain."

The restoration of man to his original status is, however, dependent upon the fulfillment of some conditions. "In Christ, God pledges himself to come under obligation to mankind, if man will comply with the conditions." The conditions are those specified in

1 Education, pp. 15-16.
3 Steps to Christ, p. 15.
the Bible, and it is through Biblical truth that Jesus "engages to renovate the soul."\(^1\) To White, the truth, in general, is the revealed corpus of knowledge necessary for salvation\(^2\) which has been handed down from past generations and received and preserved by the church as its sacred heritage.\(^3\) In particular, the truth is personified in Christ. He is "the Truth."\(^4\) The truth of the Scriptures is at the foundation of the Christian religion.\(^5\) But, what is White's conception of the character of the religion of Christ?

Basic Considerations Concerning the Character of the Christian Religion

White wrote extensively on a wide spectrum of themes of human interest. Her writings may be considered as a comprehensive religious philosophy of life. All her works are but an explanation of the Christian religion. Anything related to religion is the object of her careful and often repeated attention throughout her

\(^1\)"The Heavenly Guest," RH 62 (Nov. 24, 1885):721.

\(^2\)Steps to Christ, p. 94.


\(^4\)Christ's Object Lessons, p. 105. In addition, White states that the truth is "the mystery of God's love in giving His Son to be the propitiation for our sins," and that not "in this life shall we comprehend" (ibid., p. 128). She also says: "The truth as it is in Jesus can be experienced but never explained" (ibid., p. 129). Therefore, the truth can be grasped in part, and only through the life and teachings of Christ. But, it can be a living and dynamic personal experience.

\(^5\)In order to avoid, as much as possible, a constant repetition of the word "truth" throughout this research, various terms are used as synonyms. Among others they are: Word, Scripture, Bible truth, Bible message, Bible teachings, Gospel, Gospel truth, light, the light of the truth.
long ministry as a writer. And yet White does not offer a technical definition of religion. Her efforts are directed toward the exposition of the many aspects of the religious experience. Only those references through which White deals directly with the religious concept are considered in this section.

Practical Piety, Knowledge of the Scriptures and Faith

In White's view "true religion is intensely practical." In almost every place she refers specifically to the Christian religion, she emphasizes its experiential aspect. "The religion of the Bible is not to be confined between the covers of a book, nor within the walls of a church." It is of an "experimental character," and not a "mere profession of faith in Christ, a boastful knowledge of the truth, [that] does not make a man a Christian." The religion of Christ is "not a mere form," emotion, or "sentiment, but the doing of works of mercy and love." She adds:

Religion is not mere doctrine and dry theory. It regulates the life as well as the faith. The Bible, on one page, tells us

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3 "We Shall Reap as We Sow," RH 71 (Aug. 21, 1894):529.
6 "Whatsoever a Man Soweth, That Shall He Also Reap," RH 68 (May 5, 1891):273.
what the doctrine of Christ is, while on another page, it specifies our duty toward God and our brethren. Piety and devotion are united.\(^1\)

In referring to the story of the good Samaritan as an illustration of "the nature of true religion," White states that through this parable Christ shows that true religion "consists not in systems, creeds, or rites, but in the performance of loving deeds, in bringing the greatest good to others, in genuine goodness."\(^2\) However, White does not mean that true religion is practice or action without any theoretical foundation. In fact, she thinks "true religion is embodied in the Word of God."\(^3\) She also acknowledges the great value of the right knowledge of God as revealed in Christ. Without it "humanity would be eternally lost."\(^4\) This is the knowledge "all who are saved must have."\(^5\) It is, therefore, evident that, in White's views, the Christian religion is founded upon the truth of the Scriptures, a knowledge of which "is the only key that will give entrance into heaven."\(^6\) When she emphasizes the practical aspect of religion, she is simply presenting a balanced and authentic Christian experience.

Faith is the indispensable, dynamic link which unites the

\(^1\)"Order in the Church," RH 55 (April 15, 1880):241.
\(^2\)Desire of Ages, p. 497.
\(^5\)Ministry of Healing, p. 425.
\(^6\)"Denouncing the Pharisees," RH 75 (Feb. 22, 1898):117.
knowledge of God's truth with action. "The sum and substance of the whole matter of Christian . . . experience is contained in believing on Christ, in knowing God and His Son whom He hath sent." Religion is to be "founded on intelligent faith," and love. "Faith in Christ is an active, living principle" in the life of the believer.

Communion with God and Communication with Man

"Religion brings man into personal relation with God," into "daily communion" with Him. Thus the "heart is emptied of self and filled with the presence of Christ." White writes regarding this thought:

Jesus says, "Without me ye can do nothing." Living in Christ, . . . supported by Christ, drawing nourishment from Christ, we bear fruit after the similitude of Christ. We live and move in him; we are one with him and one with the Father. The name of Christ is glorified in the believing child of God. This is Bible religion.

To put it another way, true "religion consists in being under the guidance of the Holy One in thought, word, and deed." On the other side of the Christian religious experience,


3"Unity and Love among Believers," RH 64 (Jan. 18, 1887):33.


9"The Truth as It is in Jesus," RH 76 (Feb. 28, 1899):129.
White believes there is nothing selfish or narrow in the religion of Christ. It "is not to be held as a precious treasure, jealously hoarded, and enjoyed only by the possessor."¹ "True religion cannot be thus held, for such a spirit is contrary to the principles of the gospel."² "Its principles are diffusive and aggressive."³ "True religion is the light of the world, the salt of the earth."⁴ She further explains:

True religion is the work of grace upon the heart, that causes the life to flow out in good works, like a fountain fed from living streams. Religion does not consist merely in meditation and prayer. The Christian's light is displayed in good works, and is thus recognized by others. Religion is not to be divorced from the business life. It is to pervade and sanctify its engagements and enterprises. If a man is truly connected with God and heaven, the spirit that dwells in heaven will influence all his words and actions. He will glorify God in his works, and will lead others to honor Him.⁵

White views religion as an integrating element which "must be brought into the large and the little affairs of life."⁶ Moreover, "Christianity and business, rightly understood, are not two separate things; they are one. Bible religion is to be brought into all that we do and say."⁷

² Patriarchs and Prophets, p. 134.
³ "Till We All Come to the Unity of the Faith," RH 85 (Nov. 12, 1908):7.
⁵ "A Lesson of Faith," RH 65 (Sept. 18, 1888):593.
⁶ "Have You Oil in Your Vessels with Your Lamps?" RH 72 (Sept. 17, 1895):593.
A Power for Good

When religion is made nothing short of conformity to the will of God and obedience to all things He has commanded, when religion means practical godliness, then it reveals itself as a working spiritual and redemptive energy, as a vitalizing "principle wholly from God, a personal experience of God's renewing power upon the soul." It "ennobles the mind, refines the taste, sanctifies the judgment," and prepares man for the society of pure and holy angels.

In White's thought, true religion

... gives us spiritual life, imputes to us the righteousness of Christ, and promotes the healthful and happy exercise of the best faculties of the mind and heart. Infinite riches, the glory and blessedness of eternal life, are bestowed upon us on conditions so simple as to bring the priceless gift within the reach of the poorest and most sinful. We have only to obey and believe.

It is evident that, in White's thinking, the power inherent in the Christian religion is none other than the power of the Holy Spirit working through the truth. She often treats such terms as gospel, Christianity, truth, and religion as synonymous, giving all of them identical value.

White believes religion is a source of blessings for man.

"Religion tends directly to promote health, to lengthen life, and,

1 Acts of the Apostles, p. 451; see also Prophets and Kings, p. 234.


3 "God's Willingness to Save," RH 61 (May 27, 1884):337.

4 This idea will receive fuller treatment in the section dealing with "The Ministry of the Holy Spirit."

5 Great Controversy, p. 47.
to heighten our enjoyment of all its blessings. It opens to the soul a never-failing fountain of happiness.\(^1\) Even more, when religion is brought within the reach of others, it exerts a "regenerating power upon the world"\(^2\) and "will unite in close brotherhood all who accept its teachings."\(^3\)

**Summary**

According to White, man was created in the image of God, both in his external resemblance and in character. His nature was in full harmony with the will of God. But, because of man's willful disobedience, he was alienated from his Maker, and lost the resemblance to the Creator. Man became subject to death. Yet he was not left without hope. By the plan of salvation, God's image can be restored in man through Christ's merits. This is the foundation of the truth believed and handed down through past generations, and received by the church as the essence of its sacred heritage. To extend this divine plan to every individual in every age has been the mission of the Christian religion.

Religion, for White, is primarily practical piety born from an experimental knowledge of the truth and empowered by a dynamic, living faith in Christ. It is communion with God and an integrating element in the manifestations of life. True religion pervades and

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\(^1\) *Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 600.


\(^3\) *Great Controversy*, p. 47.
sanctifies all activities. It is a power for good which cannot be selfishly kept. It has to be communicated to others, exerting a regenerating influence upon the individual and upon the world.
CHAPTER III

THE CHRISTIAN RELIGIOUS HERITAGE

Having covered a preliminary study of Ellen G. White's thinking regarding the nature of man, the fall and its results, the basis has been established for the consideration of her views on the Christian religious heritage. The matter is approached here under three sections: (1) the Christian religious heritage: its origin, written record, and content; (2) the nature and object of religious heritage; and (3) the development of the Judeo-Christian religious heritage.

The Christian Religious Heritage: Its Origin, Written Record, and Content

The writings of White abound in references to the Christian religious heritage. However, as was the case with the concept of religion, she does not offer an exhaustive or technical definition of the term. But she gives enough information to make plain her thinking on the matter.

The Christian Religious Heritage

White refers to religious heritage as the "infinite treasures of truth which have been accumulating from age to age," and she believes that no "representation could adequately impress us with the extent, the richness of these vast resources." She repeatedly alludes to

religious heritage as "the accumulated light of centuries" of "God's dealing with His people." The Christian religious heritage is "the accumulated light which shines" from the patriarchs and prophets, "from the prophecies and from the lessons of Christ and the apostles," the "truth which God's messengers have presented by pen and by voice, the treasures of the Word of God" which are able to penetrate "the chambers of the mind."

The Christian religious heritage contains not only the "treasures of wisdom, which, through the manifestation of His Spirit, and through the testimony and example of His children from generation to generation, have come down along the lines to our time," but also the additional light which is continually accumulating. White adds: "We have all the light which they had, and additional light is continually shining, and will shine more and more unto the perfect day."

Origin and Source of Religious Heritage

From the writings of White, it appears evident that the foundation of religious heritage and revealed knowledge are identical concepts. Both partake of the same characteristics. When she refers to the accumulated treasures of truth and to the revealed light, she is but referring to identical sources. Both the Bible

1 Prophets and Kings, p. 626.
4 Ibid.
5 Ibid.
and religious heritage are understood as originating with God.

Therefore, in order to understand her position it is necessary to identify God's origin for both. It could not be otherwise, because, in White's thinking, "Jehovah is the fountain of all wisdom, of all truth, of all knowledge."1 This is not to be taken merely as the basis and ultimate cause of all things. To her, God is the direct source of all knowledge.

Whatever line of investigation we pursue, with a sincere purpose to arrive at truth, we are brought in touch with the unseen, mighty intelligence that is working in and through all. The mind of man is brought into communion with the mind of God, the finite with the Infinite.2

White also says: "He [God] is the originator of every ray of light that has pierced the darkness of the world. All that is of value comes from God, and belongs to him."3 Furthermore, any "high attainments that man can reach in this life" is "through the wisdom that God imparts."4 She considers Christ the "originator and author of all truth."5 "Every brilliant conception, every thought of wisdom, every capacity and talent of man, is the gift of Christ."6

Alluding to the divine action to convey religious knowledge to men, White says that "God has been pleased to communicate His truth to the world by human agencies, and He Himself, by His Holy

3"Books in Our Schools," RH 68 (Nov. 12, 1891):689.
religious heritage as "the accumulated light of centuries"\(^1\) of "God's dealing with His people."\(^2\) The Christian religious heritage is "the accumulated light which shines" from the patriarchs and prophets, "from the prophecies and from the lessons of Christ and the apostles," the "truth which God's messengers have presented by pen and by voice, the treasures of the Word of God" which are able to penetrate "the chambers of the mind."\(^3\)

The Christian religious heritage contains not only the "treasures of wisdom, which, through the manifestation of His Spirit, and through the testimony and example of His children from generation to generation, have come down along the lines to our time,"\(^4\) but also the additional light which is continually accumulating. White adds: "We have all the light which they had, and additional light is continually shining, and will shine more and more unto the perfect day."\(^5\)

Origin and Source of Religious Heritage

From the writings of White, it appears evident that the foundation of religious heritage and revealed knowledge are identical concepts. Both partake of the same characteristics. When she refers to the accumulated treasures of truth and to the revealed light, she is but referring to identical sources. Both the Bible

\(^1\) *Prophets and Kings*, p. 626.


\(^3\) "Rejection of Light," *RH* 63 (Jan. 5, 1886):1.

\(^4\) Ibid.

\(^5\) Ibid.
and religious heritage are understood as originating with God.

Therefore, in order to understand her position it is necessary to identify God's origin for both. It could not be otherwise, because, in White's thinking, "Jehovah is the fountain of all wisdom, of all truth, of all knowledge."\(^1\) This is not to be taken merely as the basis and ultimate cause of all things. To her, God is the direct source of all knowledge.

Whatever line of investigation we pursue, with a sincere purpose to arrive at truth, we must come in touch with the unseen, mighty Author of it all, the Origin of all knowledge. White also says that a ray of light that pierces the mist of value can help us to see through the thick veil of wisdom. The mind and heart must be receptive to the Author of knowledge. He speaks of truth being revealed by Him. His Holy

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\(^1\)"True Worth," RH 68 (Nov. 12, 1891):689.

\(^2\)"Books in Our Schools," RH 68 (Nov. 12, 1891):689.

\(^3\)"Compassion for the Erring," RH 66 (July 16, 1889):449.


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Spirit, qualified men and enabled them to do this work.\textsuperscript{1} So, "patriarchs, prophets, and apostles spoke as they were moved upon by the Holy Ghost."\textsuperscript{2} God has also spoken to the world through "nature," and through "types and symbols."\textsuperscript{3} But the greatest of all the revealers of God's knowledge is the Son. "He who had stood in the councils of the Most High, who had dwelt in the innermost sanctuary of the Eternal, was the One chosen to reveal in person to humanity the knowledge of God."\textsuperscript{4}

The Christian religious heritage, the revealed knowledge accumulated from past ages, "came fresh from the fountain of eternal truth,"\textsuperscript{5} "from the throne of the living God."\textsuperscript{6}

The Written Record of Religious Heritage

"True Christianity receives the word of God as the great treasure-house of inspired truth."\textsuperscript{7} White explains that "during the first twenty-five hundred years of human history, there was no written revelation. Those who had been taught of God, communicated their knowledge to others, and it was handed down from father to son, through successive generations." Then she adds:

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{1}Great Controversy, p. vi.
\item \textsuperscript{2}"Christ Revealed the Father," RH 67 (Jan. 7, 1890):1.
\item \textsuperscript{3}Desire of Ages, p. 34. \textsuperscript{4}Education, p. 73.
\item \textsuperscript{5}Patriarchs and Prophets, p. 596.
\item \textsuperscript{6}"Christ May Dwell in Your Hearts by Faith," RH 66 (Oct. 1, 1889):609.
\item \textsuperscript{7}Great Controversy, p. 193; see also "Opinion and Practice to be Conformed to God's Word," RH 79 (March 25, 1902):177; "No Other Gods before Me," RH 84 (June 6, 1907):8.
\end{itemize}
The preparation of the written word began in the time of Moses. Inspired revelations were then embodied in an inspired book. This work continued during the long period of sixteen hundred years—from Moses, the historian of creation and the law, to John, the recorder of the most sublime truths of the gospel.

Although the Bible was written "by human hands," and "in the varied style of its different books," the characteristics of the several writers are evident, yet it "points to God as its author."  

The Infinite One by His Holy Spirit has shed light into the minds and hearts of His servants. He has given dreams and visions, symbols and figures; and those to whom the truth was thus revealed have themselves embodied the thought in human language.

For this reason White believes that the "Bible is the voice of God to His people." She further says: "Every chapter and every verse of the Bible is a communication from God to man."

In harmony with the Pauline declaration in Rom 3:2, White states that to the Jewish "people were committed the oracles of God." They were made "the depositaries of sacred truth." In reality the Scriptures were "Israel's richest heritage."

White also observes that the "church has been made the

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1 Great Controversy, p. v.
2 Ibid.
3 Ibid.
5 Patriarchs and Prophets, p. 504.
6 Prophets and Kings, p. 18; see also Desire of Ages, p. 198.
7 Desire of Ages, p. 820; see also "A Personal Appeal to Every Believer," RH 80 (Nov. 12, 1903):8.
depositary of truth";¹ it is the "depositary of the wealth of the riches of the grace of Christ,"² "the repository in which heaven's wealth is stored."³ Since "the truth of God is found in His Word,"⁴ it may be concluded that the church is the depositary of the Scriptures which are the essential constituent of the religious heritage. She assures us that "a Divine hand" has preserved the purity of the Bible "through all the ages."⁵

In accordance with the Word, God's Spirit was to continue its work "throughout the period of the gospel dispensation. During the ages while the Scriptures of both the Old and the New Testament were being given, the Holy Spirit did not cease to communicate light to individual minds, apart from the revelation to be embodied in the Sacred Canon."⁶ Likewise, White believes that after the close of the canon of the Scriptures, "the Holy Spirit was still to continue its work, to enlighten, warn, and comfort the children of God."⁷

The believer is not dependent exclusively upon the writings of revelation for his knowledge of God. Indeed, spiritual illumination has God as its source, and the possibility for divine

¹"Let Your Light Shine," RH 71 (Feb. 27, 1894):129.
⁶Great Controversy, p. viii.⁷Ibid.
revelation today is as great as it was in the past. "God can com- municate with His people today, and give them wisdom to do His will, just as He communicated with His people of old."  

White considers herself to be the recipient of direct revelation from God. She states that God called her "to reveal to others by pen and voice what He had revealed" to her. Her work covers so many lines she feels she cannot call herself other than "a messenger." On the other hand, she never claims the title of "prophetess." Concerning her writings, White states:

In these letters which I write, in the testimonies I bear, I am presenting to you that which the Lord has presented to me. I do not write one article in the paper, expressing merely my own ideas. They are what God has opened before me in vision--the precious rays of light shining from the throne.

She holds the same position regarding her books, and insists: "I know that the light contained in these books is the light of heaven."  

Is this a new light to increase the already existing storage of truth received from the past? White believes that the Bible

7"Notes of Travel--No. 1: Journey to Southern California," RH 83 (June 14, 1906):8.
contains all the knowledge "necessary for salvation." On every possible subject that might have any bearing on the salvation of the soul, "God has spoken in the plainest language." Therefore, to her no additional truth is necessary.

The Lord deigns to warn you, to reprove, to counsel, through the testimonies given, and to impress your minds with the importance of the truth of His Word. The written Testimonies are not to give new light, but to impress vividly upon the heart the truths of inspiration already revealed. Man's duty to God and to his fellow man has been distinctly specified in God's Word; yet but few of you are obedient to the light given. Additional truth is not brought out; but God has through the Testimonies simplified the great truths already given, and in His own chosen way brought them before the people, to awaken and impress the mind with them, that all may be left without excuse.

In referring to the Seventh-day Adventist church of her time, White says the Lord had precious truth to reveal to the members. "It is not new truth, but old, old truth, although to the receiver it is new, grand, inspiring, and glorious truth. It has been rescued from the companionship of error, and has been placed in the framework of truth." But in her mind it is not only a matter of rescuing truth from error; it is also a matter of proclaiming the "forgotten truths of the Bible." The "messages given in the past are to be revived."

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1Great Controversy, p. vii.

2"A Warning for This Time," RH 78 (Feb. 5, 1901):81.


5"Sowing beside All Waters," RH 80 (July 14, 1903):9.

This task of rediscovery of many old truths of the Bible was accomplished by the Adventist pioneers "by prayerful study of the Word and by revelation."¹ Those truths, she believes, became the foundation of the Adventist faith.

In short, for White, the Scriptures are the richest heritage of Israel and the great storehouse of inspired truth for Christianity. In her view, the Bible is the standard of all doctrine and precept,² "the standard by which all teaching and experience must be tested."³ It is to be "our creed" and "our rule of faith and discipline."⁴ The essential content of the Christian religious heritage is to be found in the Bible.

The Content of Religious Heritage

It has been noted, thus far, that White identified the Bible as the written record of religious heritage. Despite the fact that it is the result of an accumulating process throughout the centuries, she saw in the Bible "a simple and complete system of theology and philosophy."⁵ Its sacred teachings are not uncertain, nor its doctrines "disconnected."⁶ But, in order to obtain a harmonious and whole understanding of the treasures of truth which lie far beneath

²Great Controversy, p. 595.
³Ibid., p. vii.
⁵What the Word of God Is to Us," RH 85 (June 11, 1908):8.
⁶"Have You Oil in Your Vessels with Your Lamps?" RH 72 (Sept. 17, 1895):594.
the surface, a diligent and continuous effort is necessary. White suggests that the "truths that go to make up the great whole must be searched out and gathered up, 'here a little, and there a little'" (Isa 28:10). She adds:

When thus searched out and brought together, they will be found to be perfectly fitted to one another. Each Gospel is a supplement to the others, every prophecy an explanation of another, every truth a development of some other truth. The types of the Jewish economy are made plain by the gospel. Every principle in the word of God has its place, every fact its bearing. And the complete structure, in design and execution, bears testimony to its Author. Such a structure, no mind but that of the Infinite could conceive or fashion.

The great central theme of the Bible is the story of the Saviour's crucifixion and resurrection. This is "the theme about which every other in the whole book clusters"; it is the "redemption plan, the restoration in the human soul of the image of God." This plan of salvation is "plainly delineated," and constitutes "the science of salvation;" "it is the ground and pillar of the truth."

When the student gazes deep into the Scriptures, "into a fountain that deepens and broadens as he gazes into its depths," he realizes the "truth in Christ and through Christ is measureless."
Further, White says the "truth as it is in Jesus can be experienced, but never explained."^1

The revelation of the plan of salvation involves first of all the manifestation of God's love to mankind.^2 The "mystery of God's love in giving His Son to be the propitiation" for man's sins shall not be comprehended in this world.^3 The great concern of Christ was to reveal the love of God to man and to inspire His followers to continue to reveal this same love in their own lives.^4 White refers to Moses, when he specifically requested to see the glory of God, and as an answer, he was given a view of the goodness of God. She adds, "This is His Glory."^5 "The word of God reveals His character."^6 It is a revelation of God's love.^7 Alluding to the love of the Father, she comments:

All the paternal love which has come down from generation to generation through the channel of human hearts, all the springs of tenderness which have opened in the souls of men, are but as a tiny rill to the infinite, exhaustless love of God. Tongue can not utter it; pen can not portray it. You may meditate upon it every day of your life; you may search the Scriptures diligently in order to understand it; you may summon every power and capability that God has given you, in the endeavor to comprehend the love and compassion of the Heavenly Father; and yet there is an infinity beyond. You may study that love for ages; yet you can never fully comprehend the length and the breadth, the depth and the height, of the

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^1Ibid., p. 129.

^2"What the Word of God Is to Us," RH 85 (June 11, 1908):8.

^3Christ's Object Lessons, pp. 128-29.


^5Steps to Christ, p. 10.

^6Ibid.

love of God in giving His Son to die for the world. Eternity itself can never fully reveal it.¹

The "gift of Christ reveals the Father's heart."² And the expression of such a great love is contained in the Scriptures.

The sinful condition and value of man are also discussed with the Saviour dying for the sin of the world. "In dying for sinners," White says, "Christ manifested a love that is incomprehensible; and as the sinner beholds this love, it softens the heart, impresses the mind, and inspires contrition in the soul."³ Man recognizes his sinfulness as a result of the view of the cross where both the extreme tragedy of sin and the plenitude of the goodness, mercy, and grace of God are revealed altogether.⁴ The Christian sacred legacy contained in the Scripture shows man in the right perspective, with his sinful fallen nature and his infinite possibilities.

Disobedience is extremely offensive to God, and it should not be "lightly regarded by man."⁵ In the severe treatment of sin as recorded in the Bible God has revealed how seriously He regards it, and how sacred is His law.

It was to atone for man's transgression of the law that Christ laid down His life. Could the law have been changed or set aside, then Christ need not have died. . . . He gave His life as a sacrifice, not to destroy God's law, not to create a

²Desire of Ages, p. 57. ³Steps to Christ, p. 27.
⁴"No Union between the Church and the World," RH 72 (Feb. 26, 1895):129.
⁵"The Laodicean Church," RH 42 (Sept. 23, 1873):117.
lower standard, but that justice might be maintained, that the
law might be shown to be immutable, that it might stand fast
forever.1

It could not be otherwise, because "the law of God is as sacred as
God Himself. It is a revelation of His will, a transcript of His
character, the expression of divine love and wisdom."2

The revelation of the plan of salvation involves also the
disclosure in the written heritage of "principles of truth and duty
which should govern our lives."3 There "are rules to meet every
case. A complete system of faith has been revealed, and correct
rules for practice in our daily life have been made known."4 It is
revealed as "a perfect guide under all circumstances of life,"5
even to "point out the path to heaven."6

"The Word of God is the mine of truth"7 inherited from the
past in which is outlined the conflict between good and evil. It
presents this earth as "the scene of the conflict, the field of the

1Christ's Object Lessons, p. 314; see also "Let the Trumpet

2Patriarchs and Prophets, p. 52.


4"Go and Tell Him His Fault between Thee and Him Alone," RH
67 (July 22, 1890):449.


6"No Others before Me," RH 78 (May 14, 1901):305; see also
Great Controversy, p. vi.

7Imperative Necessity of Searching for Truth," RH 69
Nov. 8, 1872):690.
battle between the forces of Satan and the forces of Christ.\textsuperscript{1} The Bible, "the living oracles of God,"\textsuperscript{2} is the report of God's dealings with His people and "the most instructive history men possess."\textsuperscript{3} Its climax takes place with the coming of Christ which has been "in all ages the hope of His true followers."\textsuperscript{4}

White thinks the "jewels of truth which lie scattered over the field of revelation . . . have been buried beneath human traditions, beneath the sayings and commandments of men, and the wisdom from them has been practically ignored."\textsuperscript{5} But, in the commission to the disciples to preserve and transmit the sacred heritage, there is no place for man-made theories.

In the commission to His disciples, Christ not only outlined their work, but gave them their message. Teach the people, he said, "to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you." The disciples were to teach what Christ had taught. That which He had spoken, not only in person, but through all the prophets and teachers of the Old Testament, is here included. Human teaching is shut out. There is no place for tradition, for man's theories and conclusions, or for church legislation. No laws ordained by ecclesiastical authority are included in the commission. None of these are Christ's servants to teach. "The law and the prophets," with the record of His own words and deeds, are the treasure committed to the disciples to be given to the world.

In sum, White views the content of religious heritage which

\begin{enumerate}
\item \textit{"The Great Controversy," RH 83 (May 3, 1906):7.}
\item \textit{"The Influence of the Truth," RH 78 (Feb. 26, 1901):129.}
\item \textit{Patriarchs and Prophets,} p. 596; see also \textit{"The Power of the Word of God," RH 81 (Nov. 10, 1904):7.}
\item \textit{Great Controversy,} p. 302.
\item \textit{"The Science of Salvation the First of Sciences," RH 68 (Dec. 1, 1891):737.}
\item \textit{"Go Teach All Nations," RH 90 (Oct. 9, 1913):20.}
\end{enumerate}
is embodied in the Scriptures as including all the knowledge necessary for man. She puts it this way: "The Bible contains all the principles that men need to understand in order to be fitted either for this life or for the life to come."\(^1\) The plan of salvation, the character of God, the condition of man, and the perfection and perpetuity of the law are some of the essential elements that, according to White, belong to the sacred legacy the believers have inherited from the past.

The Nature and Object of Religious Heritage

It is difficult to consider the object apart from the nature of religious heritage. They are so closely connected that one cannot be adequately understood without the other. A simple study of White's writings reveals that the origin, source, and content of the religious legacy of Christianity establishes at once both its supernatural character and its very object. This is so essential that their separation here—for reasons of analysis and sequence—is somehow artificial. Hence, although kept to a minimum, some repetition is unavoidable.

The Nature of Religious Heritage

In White's understanding, the Judeo-Christian religious heritage is "the voice of Christ that speaks through patriarchs and prophets, from the days of Adam even to the closing scenes of

\(^1\)Education, p. 123.
Commenting about the power of the word of Christ contained in the Bible, she writes:

The life of Christ that gives life to the world is in His word. It was by His word that Jesus healed disease and cast out demons; by His word He stilled the sea, and raised the dead; and the people bore witness that His word was with power. He spoke the word of God, as He had spoken through all the prophets and teachers of the Old Testament. The whole Bible is a manifestation of Christ, and the Saviour desired to fix the faith of His followers on the word. When His visible presence should be withdrawn, the word must be their source of power. Like their Master, they were to live "by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God." ^2 (Matt 4:4)

To White, the power of God manifested in Christ's redemptive work is the same "creative energy which called the worlds into existence," and it "is in the Word of God." ^3 She believes there is a "living force" in it. ^4 and "animating power." ^5 "Truth that is cherished in the heart is not a cold, dead letter, but a living power." ^6

It is clear that for White the sacred legacy is a divine power which is in the Word. But in order to receive this power there are some conditions to fulfill. "The truths of the Bible will do a mighty work for man if he will but follow what they teach." ^7 White thinks that if the life is put under the Bible's control, "the power of the truth is unlimited." ^8 So the truth must be obeyed, ^9 "received

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2 Ibid., p. 390.  
3 "Education," p. 126.  
7 "Perils of, and Provisions for, the Youth," RH 67 (May 13, 1890): 289.  
into the heart," and woven into the soul\textsuperscript{2} to obtain the power of the Word.

White points out that the truth is a power which "works inwardly to bless the soul of the receiver, and outwardly to bless the souls of others." This is possible because the "Holy Spirit works with the consecrated soul who searches the Scriptures."\textsuperscript{3}

As far as the inward blessing is concerned, White mentions several fruits which the power of Bible truth produces in the life of the believer. First of all, it is powerful to "turn men to Christ,"\textsuperscript{4} and changes the mind into the image of Jesus. "It quickens the conscience and transforms the mind"; for the Word "is accompanied to the heart by the holy Spirit."\textsuperscript{5} The truth of God improves\textsuperscript{6} and "sanctifies the judgment, and fashions the life according to the divine Pattern."\textsuperscript{7} The truth is "stronger and more powerful than anything else in the formation of character,"\textsuperscript{8} and it is a constant educator.

\begin{enumerate}
\item"Let the Trumpet Give a Certain Sound," RH 69 (Dec. 6, 1892):753.
\item"Christian Perfection," RH 77 (May 1, 1900):273.
\itemIbid.
\item"Let the Trumpet Give a Certain Sound," RH 69 (Dec. 13, 1892):769.
\item"The Perils and Privileges of the Last Days," RH 69 (Nov. 29, 1892):738.
\item"Notes of Travel--From Oakland, Cal., to Denver, Col.," RH 61 (Oct. 7, 1884):626.
\item"Purpose of Man's Creation," RH 79 (Feb. 11, 1902):82; see also Education, p. 124; "The Truth as It is in Jesus," RH 76 (Feb. 14, 1899):97.
\end{enumerate}
which molds, fashions and ennobles\textsuperscript{1} the character after the likeness of Christ, "fitting the believer for the courts above."\textsuperscript{2} The truth also "purifies the soul,"\textsuperscript{3} subdues and softens the heart.\textsuperscript{4} The truth when received spiritualizes men,\textsuperscript{5} and inspires "them with zeal, devotion, and love to God."\textsuperscript{6}

Finally, White says

\begin{quote}
\ldots the power of the truth should be sufficient to sustain and console in every adversity. It is in enabling its possessor to triumph over affliction that the religion of Christ reveals its true value. It brings the appetites, the passions, and the emotions under the control of reason and conscious, and disciplines the thoughts to flow in a healthful channel. And then the tongue will not be left to dishonor God by expressions of sinful repining.\textsuperscript{7}
\end{quote}

The work that the truth realizes inwardly is such that White thinks the "very essence of the gospel is restoration."\textsuperscript{8}

Regarding the blessings that the power of the truth brings in its outward work, White has much to write. The gospel which is "described as the salt of the earth, the transforming leaven, the

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{1}"Notes of Travel—From Oakland, Cal., to Denver, Col.,” RH 61 (Oct. 7, 1884):626.
\item \textsuperscript{2}"Personal Labor Required of the Ministers," RH 72 (March 5, 1895):145.
\item \textsuperscript{3}Ibid.; "To Our Missionary Workers," RH 62 (Dec. 8, 1885):753.
\item \textsuperscript{4}"Let the Trumpet Give a Certain Sound," RH 69 (Dec. 13, 1892):769.
\item \textsuperscript{5}"Let the Trumpet Give a Certain Sound," RH 69 (Dec. 6, 1892):753.
\item \textsuperscript{6}"Let the Trumpet Give a Certain Sound," RH 69 (Dec. 13, 1892):769.
\item \textsuperscript{7}"Praise Due to the Creator," RH 62 (April 21, 1885):241.
\item \textsuperscript{8}Desire of Ages, p. 824.
\end{itemize}
light which shineth in darkness" is, to her, "diffusive and aggressive."\(^1\) It "diffuses love,"\(^2\) the wealth of God's salvation,\(^3\) holiness and power, by means of human instrumentality.\(^4\) Every one who receives the spirit of truth in his heart "will exemplify in words and acts the sanctifying power of the truth."\(^5\)

White maintains that "the light shining from the throne of God upon the cross of Calvary forever puts an end to man-made separations between class and race. Men of every class become members of one family, children of the heavenly King" through the power of the love of God manifested in Jesus' death.\(^6\) "The gospel is a message of peace." When it is received and obeyed, it spreads "peace, harmony, and happiness throughout the earth. The religion of Christ will unite in close brotherhood all who accept its teachings."\(^7\) For the accomplishment of this mission, White says that:

We need faith in God, that under the sanctifying power of God's word, the principles of human brotherhood may be manifested. We need the Holy Spirit's guidance. Its power upon mind and heart will enable us to present the truths of God's holy word.\(^8\)

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1"At Willis, Mich.," RH 68 (July 21, 1891):449.
7Great Controversy, p. 47.
8"The Truth as It Is in Christ," RH 76 (Feb. 28, 189):129.
As already observed, White considers the Word of God, with its accumulated light of truth, "unchangeable, eternal." This light shining upon every believer, also shone upon the disciples; for it was through them that we received the messages, and "it is of the same value today as in the early days of Christianity." Its value is greater than appears on the surface. "All the sayings of Christ have a value beyond their unpretending appearance." Christ is the truth. His words are truth. The truth is a treasure which "is of more value than everything else in the world."^4

White believes at any age and in any situation, the Word of God is to be the believer's "spiritual food."^5 She also thinks there "is no position in life, no phase of human experience, for which the Bible does not contain valuable instruction."^6 Lastly, the "Bible is the only safe guide to the path of peace and happiness."^7 It guides man toward heaven.

The Object of Religious Heritage

As has been said, White's mission was to lead people to the Word of God to show them its value and object. So she expresses in

her writings in much detail what she understands to be not only the
nature, but also the purpose of the revealed truth, because, to her,
the "priceless knowledge of God which through His word has been
committed to us, has not been given to us to remain a useless pos-
session."1

The object of religious heritage springs from its very con-
tent and justifies it. The object aims at the solution to man's
greatest need. White maintains that "all heaven is interested in
man, and desires his salvation. This is the great aim in all God's
dealings with individuals."2 This aim of the divine action both
vindicates God's character3 and shows man's fallen condition. Con-
sequently, it manifests the kind of relationship to be established
between God and man, and between man and man.4

Referring to the object of the revealed religious legacy,
White states that the "word comes down along the lines to us from
patriarchs and prophets, from one generation to another, that we may
know the truth of God."5 Why is this knowledge so important? Be-
cause, in her opinion, it "is the only key that will give entrance
into heaven. . . . A right knowledge of God and Jesus Christ whom He
has sent is eternal life to all who believe."6

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1"Study the Bible for Yourselves," RH 71 (Sept. 17, 1894):593.
3Education, p. 76.
4"Duty of Man to His Fellow-men," RH 72 (Nov. 12, 1895):722.
6"Denouncing the Pharisees," RH 75 (Feb. 22, 1898):117.
This knowledge of God was revealed especially in the person of the Son.¹ White explains it this way: "Such is the character of Christ as revealed in His life. This is the character of God. It is from the Father's heart that the streams of divine compassion, manifest in Christ, flow out to the children of men."² In fact, the "Son of God came from heaven to make manifest the Father."³

Besides vindicating God's character, what is the full intent of such revelation of God in Christ? White says that it is "to bring the fallen race into oneness with divinity . . . that men may be partakers of the divine nature, and be complete in Him."⁴ Thus, the union between God and man is the ultimate object of the Christian religious heritage.

To reach such a high destiny, men need to experience a deep and complete transformation of character. Therefore, White believes this may be obtained through the knowledge of God's love. She insists: "The knowledge of God's love is the most effectual knowledge to obtain, that the character may be ennobled, refined, and elevated."⁵

This transformation of character is designed also with an aim to service. "We are here to become like God in character, and

¹*Education*, p. 73.
²*Steps to Christ*, p. 12.
³Ibid., p. 11.
⁵"Meetings at South Lancaster, Mass.," RH 66 (March 5, 1889):145.
by a life of service to reveal Him to the world." Indeed, the truth is given first for the "development of heart, mind, and affection" of God's people, and then "for the help and enlightenment of those in the darkness of unbelief."2

In order for souls to be led to discern Christ, to triumph over the power of darkness, and to enter into the kingdom of God, Bible religion is "to be revealed in this world."3 Thus the Lord seeks at the same time to establish order and harmony in the world. White explains this object of the truth among God's people on earth, as follows:

The object of the gospel is met when this great end is achieved. Its work from age to age is to unite the hearts of his followers in a spirit of universal brotherhood, through belief of the truth, and thus establish heaven's system of order and harmony in the family of God on earth, that they may be accounted worthy to become members of the royal family above.4

Finally, revelation shows God's work in history acting in behalf of man against the forces of evil. The diligent student of prophecy and history will be able to distinguish between the divine activity and that of the power of darkness.5 "In the word of God the curtain is drawn aside, and we behold, behind, above, and through all the play and counterplay of human interests and power and

1Ministry of Healing, p. 509.
4"At Willis, Mich.," RH 68 (July 21, 1891):450.
passions, the agencies of the all-merciful One, silently, patiently
working out the counsels of His own will."

White, in the introduction of her work The Great Contro-
versy, explains the object of the book which is the same object of
the truth of the Christian religious heritage accumulated in the
Bible. She writes:

To unfold the scenes of the great controversy between
truth and error; to reveal the wiles of Satan, and the means
by which he may be successfully resisted; to present a satis-
factory solution of the great problem of evil, shedding such
a light upon the original and the final disposition of sin
as to make fully manifest the justice and benevolence of God
in all His dealings with His creatures; and to show the holy,
unchanging nature of His law, is the object of this book. That
through its influence souls may be delivered from the power of
darkness, and become "partakers of the inheritance of the
saints in light," to the praise of Him who loved us, and gave
Himself for us, is the earnest prayer of the writer.

The Development of the Judeo-Christian
Religious Heritage

The intrinsic potential for development of the truth con-
tained in the religious legacy is an important aspect of White's
concept of the nature of the sacred legacy of Christianity. "The
truth of God is infinite," she says, "capable of measureless expan-
sion, and the more we contemplate it, the more will its glory
appear." The truth is susceptible to "constant expansion and new
development."

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1 Education, p. 173.
2 Great Controversy, p. xii.
3 "The World by Wisdom Knew Not God," RH 68
(Dec. 15, 1891):769.
4 "Treasure Hidden," RH 75 (July 12, 1898):437.
Development

The Word covers a period of history reaching from creation to the coming of Christ in triumph. It even carries the mind forward to the future life, and discloses before the reader the glorious paradise renewed. White writes thus:

God's work is the same in all time, although there are different degrees of development and different manifestations of His power, to meet the wants of men in the different ages. Beginning with the first gospel promise, and coming down through the patriarchal and Jewish ages, and even to the present time, there has been a gradual unfolding of the purposes of God in the plan of redemption. The Saviour typified in the rites and ceremonies of the Jewish Law is the very same that is revealed in the gospel. The clouds that enveloped His divine form have been rolled back; the mists and shades have disappeared; and Jesus, the world's Redeemer, stands revealed.

So, "through patriarchs and prophets, as well as through types and symbols, God spoke to the world concerning the coming of a Deliverer from sin." Christ was the foundation of "the Jewish system of sacrificial offerings, the great antitype of all their religious service. The blood shed as the sacrifices were offered pointed to the sacrifice of the Lamb of God." White adds: "The Christ typified in the former dispensation is the Christ revealed in the gospel dispensation."

White further explains: "Around the sanctuary and its solemn services mystically gathered the grand truths which were to be

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1 Patriarchs and Prophets, p. 373.
2 Prophets and Kings, p. 697.
3 Christ's Object Lessons, p. 126.
4 "The Two Dispensations," RH 63 (March 2, 1886):129.
developed through succeeding generations." Referring to "the statutes and judgments specifying the duty of man to his fellow-men," White points out that they were "full of important instruction, ... for the purpose of increasing religious knowledge."  

Old Truth with New Features

Through all past centuries the truth of God has remained the same. White comments that that "which was truth in the beginning is truth now." Every new truth understood does not contradict the truths of the past, but only makes the old more significant. She explains further:

In every age there is a new development of truth, a message of God to the people of that generation. The old truths are all essential; new truth is not independent of the old, but an unfolding of it. It is only as the old truths are understood that we can comprehend the new. When Christ desired to open to His disciples the truth of His resurrection, He began "at Moses and all the prophets" and "expounded unto them in all the scriptures the things concerning Himself." Luke 24:27. But it is the light which shines in the fresh unfolding of truth that glorifies the old. He who rejects or neglects the new does not really possess the old. For him it loses its vital power and becomes but a lifeless form.  

"The truth is constantly unfolding and presenting new features to different minds." This truth is adapted to the needs of men in different times. "But from age to age, through successive

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1Ibid.; see also Prophets and Kings, p. 687.
3"The Two Dispensations," RH 63 (March 2, 1886):129.
5"The Darkness Comprehended It Not," RH 67 (June 3, 1890):337; see also Great Controversy, p. 343.
generations, to the present time, the pure doctrines of the Bible have been unfolding" within the borders of the church. This is because Jesus has 'intrusted His goods to the church,' which age after age has been gathering it up as 'its hereditary trust.'

It can readily be seen that White views the development of religious legacy as being within the boundaries of God's church, in specific times, and to fill specific needs. But in order to accomplish the task of satisfying the wants of a given time, God is to rely on man's participation. For man to realize his definite part, he has to fill certain conditions. First, man is to be faithful in accepting and obeying the light that God sent to him. Then the truth has to be received into the heart. White explains:

When mind and heart are worked by the Spirit, when self is dead, truth is capable of constant expansion and new development. When the truth molds our characters, it will be seen to be truth indeed. As it is contemplated by the true believer, it will grow brighter, shining with its original beauty.

"Men must advance in the path of duty from light to a greater light," keeping pace with the truth received. And finally, "as the

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6 "Need of Earnestness in the Cause of God," RH 67 (Feb. 25, 1890):113; "The Darkness Comprehended It Not," RH 67 (June 3, 1890):337.
knowledge of truth is imparted, it will increase. Thus the truth is to be developed and expanded in lines little dreamed. White thinks every believer has the responsibility of developing the light which he has received. She says: "Upon every individual who has had the light of present truth devolves the duty of developing that truth on a higher scale than it has hitherto been developed." She further explains the same idea: "You have a treasure of knowledge to which you are constantly adding, and thus you are being raised to a higher plane of service. Impart that which you receive, and keep imparting, that you may continue to receive."4

Improvement of the Truth

When the faithful satisfy the conditions required by God, the light is constantly being developed, expanded, and enriched by the addition of new knowledge. White even points out the fact that "we have increased light to improve as in times past men and women of noble worth improved the light that God gave them."5 In this context, it is evident that when she refers to improving the light received, she is commenting about making good use of accumulated truth. But White means also something else when she advises: "Plant your feet firmly on the platform of eternal truth. Reject

1Christ's Object Lessons, p. 124.
2It is Not For You to Know the Times and the Seasons," RH 69 (March 22, 1892):177.
3"Ye Are the Light of the World," RH 74 (Sept. 21, 1897):593.
every phase of error."1 And further: "There are grand truths, long hidden under the rubbish of error, that are to be revealed to the people."2 Therefore, it is clear that for White the truth should be purified or refined from its "rubbish of errors." These errors have been invented by Satan "to counterfeit God's truth."3 She repeatedly says that Satan has always sought to "extinguish the light."4

White refers to the "Spirit of truth" as having an important and indispensable part in this specific task against error. The task is to "define and maintain the truth. . . . Through the Scriptures the Holy Spirit speaks to the mind, and impresses truth upon the heart."5

White believes "great light has been shining upon the church." It has been the object of the accumulated religious knowledge from the past.6 In addition to the light which God's servants had under the former dispensation, "we have all the increased light which has since been shining from God's word and from His dealings with His people."7 This light shining from God's dealings with His people may well be related to what she writes regarding the divine

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3"The True, or the False?" RH 75 (Aug. 9, 1898):501.
5Desire of Ages, p. 671.
providence in the beginning and development of the Adventism in her time. She writes: "We have nothing to fear for the future, except as we shall forget the way the Lord has led us, and His teaching in our past history." 1

The Present Truth

Alluding to the Seventh-day Adventist church, White states that the "most solemn truths ever entrusted to mortals have been given to us to proclaim to the world." 2 She insists no "such message has ever been given in past ages." 3 To her it is a special, 4 all-powerful, 5 solemn message, 6 precious, 7 sacred, and glorious. 8 She considers it "a wonderful, wonderful treasure." 9 It is "the gospel of present truth," 10 "a message for this time which is present truth." 11 As she explains it, it is the truth which is now

3 Great Controversy, p. 356.
especially applicable. "As Enoch, Noah, Abraham, and Moses each declared the truth for his time, so will Christ's servants now give the special warning for their generation."¹

It seems White refers to "present truth" as synonymous with the "three angels' messages of Rev 14:6-12, or more specifically, to the "third angel's message" which includes the threefold message. To her, this is "the last warning message of mercy, the closing invitation of the gospel"² "to be given before the coming of the Lord."³ It is an "advanced light."⁴ She comments further: "The message of salvation has been preached in all ages; but this message is a part of the gospel which could be proclaimed only in the last days, for only then would it be true that the hour of judgment had come."⁵

White believes and emphasizes that the "Third Angel's Message is not a theory of man's inventing, a speculation of the imagination, but it is the solemn truth of God for these last days. It is the final warning to the perishing souls of men."⁶ She says these messages "will establish Christianity upon an eternal basis," and all who believe the present truth must stand "and raise up the foundation of many generations."⁷

¹Desire of Ages, p. 634.
²"To Every Man His Work," RH 63 (June 15, 1886):369.
³Great Controversy, p. 454.
⁵Great Controversy, p. 356.
More Light to Be Added

Although the third angel's message is "the last warning message of mercy, the closing invitation of the gospel" and an advanced light, White contends "we must not for a moment think that there is no more light and truth to be given us."1 "We have only the glimmerings of the rays of the light that is yet to come to us."2 She states:

I have been shown that in both the Old and the New Testament are mines of truth that have scarcely been touched. The truths revealed in the Old Testament are the truths of the gospel of Christ. Heavenly veins of truth are lying beneath the surface of Old Testament history. Precious pearls of truth are to be gathered up, which will require not only laborious effort, but spiritual enlightenment.3

Moreover, White says there "are old, yet new truths still to be added to the treasures of our knowledge."4 This is especially true regarding the prophecies related to the last days of this world history.5 "Precious jewels of light are to be collected, and by the aid of the Holy Spirit they are to be fitted into the gospel system."6

Since the truth is limitless, White holds that in the future

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2 "The Darkness Comprehended It Not," RH 67 (June 3, 1890): 337.
world of the redeemed "the years of eternity, as they roll, will bring richer and still more glorious revelations of God and of Christ. As knowledge is progressive, so will love, reverence, and happiness increase."¹ "Forever and forever new views of the perfection and glory of Christ will appear. Through endless ages will the faithful householder bring forth from his treasure things new and old."²

Summary

The sacred heritage of Christianity is the truth accumulated from age to age. It is the light which shines from patriarchs and prophets, from the prophecies, and from the teachings of Christ and the apostles. In White's writings, revealed truth constitutes the foundation of religious heritage and the central core around which the various generations of Judeo-Christian believers formed their accumulating body of religious understanding and practice. This, in turn, they handed down as religious heritage. As revealed truth was gradually accumulated, it continued to show a unity worthy of its Source. However, the transmitted heritage was not always pristine in its purity. Interpretations, beliefs, and practices introduced by Satan to counterfeit the revealed truth became encrusted on the body of the Judeo-Christian religious heritage.

The Scriptures are the richest heritage of Israel and the storehouse of inspired Christian truth. So the origin is found in

¹Great Controversy, p. 678.
²Christ's Object Lessons, p. 134.
God Himself. The Holy Spirit is still enlightening, warning, and comforting God's children as it did in the past with the prophets. There is additional light constantly shining from the Bible unfolding in the church. Progressive revelation, however, does not contradict former revelation. Progressive revelation must be tested by former revelation. The plan of salvation is plainly delineated in the Scripture. It is the ground and pillar of the truth about which every other theme clusters. The character of God, the sanctity of the law, and the sinful condition of man are essential concepts which belong to the content of the sacred legacy inherited from the past.

White maintains that the religious heritage contained in the Bible participates of that power which belongs to God. It is a transforming energy which regenerates the soul and prepares the believer to be a light in the world, and salt on the earth. Its object is to offer to man a right knowledge of God and of Christ. Through this knowledge, he may partake of the divine nature.

The inherent potential of the truth for a "measureless" development of itself is a characteristic emphasized in White's writings. Although the truth has always remained the same, it is constantly unfolding and expanding to fill specific needs. While growing, the truth has to be improved, purified, or refined from its "rubbish of errors" invented by Satan to counterfeit it. Despite Satan's efforts to extinguish the divine light, the church has been entrusted with the last message for mankind, "the present truth." Furthermore, White believes there are old and yet new truths still to be added to the treasures of religious legacy.
CHAPTER IV

THE TRANSMISSION OF RELIGIOUS HERITAGE

An analysis of the writings of Ellen G. White reveals that the origin, content, nature, and object of the Christian religious heritage are closely related to its potential for development. She sees man not only as the direct beneficiary of divine revelation, but also as an active participant in its development throughout the centuries.

At this point, it is pertinent to consider White's concept of the transmission of religious heritage. Her views are analyzed under three sections: (1) the responsibility for the transmission of religious heritage, (2) the transmission of religious heritage through Old Testament times, and (3) elements affecting the transmission of religious heritage.

The Responsibility for the Transmission of Religious Heritage

White maintains that the primary responsibility for the transmission of religious heritage rests upon man. This position is consistent with the thinking that in God's dealing with man's salvation, there is always a divine-human combined action. As "the Bible, with its God-given truths expressed in the language of men, presents a union of the divine and the human,"¹ so it is with the

¹Great Controversy, p. vi.

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transmission of the Judeo-Christian sacred legacy. The same principle applies in the religious life which "is wholly dependent upon the blending of both human and divine forces."

Men—Divine Instrumentalities

To men is given the task of transmitting the truth. "The priceless treasure is placed in earthen vessels." "God could have proclaimed his truth by sinless angels, but this was not His plan." "He has ordained that men should be His instruments." "Through all ages God has spoken and worked by human instrumentalities.... Truth is to be communicated from one human agent to another.""In this work, however, man does not operate alone. "There must be the cooperation of the divine with the human, or the ministry of the word will be powerless." Since "there is a great work to be done," God uses man as an instrument in his hands. This is a work of partnership, a "joint operation" of man laboring with God.

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"The Lord has graciously honored man, employing him as the human agent to cooperate with heavenly intelligences, that the light of truth may shine in all parts of the earth." ¹ White specifies that "human agencies are the hands of heavenly instrumentalities; for heavenly angels employ human hands in practical ministry." ²

Men--Endowed for Service

Although God is not dependent upon human means to carry on his work, ³ White maintains "the Lord has endowed man with noble powers to be employed in his service, and he means that all his intrusted gifts shall be used unselfishly to bless humanity, to build up his kingdom by bringing souls to the knowledge of the truth." ⁴ "Under the sanctifying influence of the Holy Spirit," ⁵ "every faculty, every attribute . . . is to be employed for His [God's] glory and for the uplifting" of men. ⁶ This emphasizes the point that in the "Lord's plan human beings have been made necessary to one another." ⁷ Consequently, God needs men and women "to bring the knowledge of truth before those who need its converting power." ⁸

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¹ "Let Your Light Shine," RH 71 (Feb. 27, 1894):129.
² "Help for Our Scandinavian Institutions," RH 78 (March 19, 1901):177.
³ "God Loveth the Cheerful Giver," RH 77 (May 15, 1900):305.
⁵ "Lessons for Christians," RH 77 (Dec. 11, 1900):785.
⁶ Patriarchs and Prophets, p. 595.
God cannot display the knowledge of His will and the 
worries of His grace among the unbelieving world, unless He 
has witnesses scattered all over the earth. It is His plan 
that men and women who are partakers of His great salvation 
through Jesus Christ should be His missionaries, bodies of 
light throughout the world to be as signs to the people, 
living epistles, known and read of all men; their faith and 
works testifying to the near approach of the coming Saviour, 
and that they have not received the grace of God in vain.¹

These men and women are "ambassadors," co-laborers with Christ,² 
"agencies for the salvation of souls," God's "chosen representatives, 
in an apostate world,"³ and it should be regarded "as the highest 
honor to be enlisted in Christ's army." "They should look upon no 
privilege as more precious than that of imparting to others the 
knowledge they have received."⁴

White contends that this privilege springs from one's 
experience of knowing Jesus.

No sooner does one come to Christ than there is born in his 
heart a desire to make known to others what a precious friend 
he has found in Jesus; the saving and sanctifying truth cannot 
be shut up in his heart. If we are clothed with the righteousness 
of Christ, and are filled with the joy of His indwelling 
Spirit, we shall not be able to hold our peace. If we have 
tasted and seen that the Lord is good we shall have something 
to tell.⁵

Moreover, when "the love of Christ is enshrined in the heart, . . . 
it cannot be hidden."⁶ "All who receive the gospel message into the 
heart will long to proclaim it."⁷

⁵Steps to Christ, p. 78. 
⁶Ibid., p. 77. 
⁷Christ's Object Lessons, p. 125.
As it has already been stated, White emphasizes the fact that "God is not dependent upon men for the advancement of His cause. He might have made angels the ambassadors of His truth. He might have made known His will, as He proclaimed the law from Sinai with His own voice." White gives other reasons why God chooses men instead of angels. She says that "God does not choose angels who have never fallen, but human beings, men of like passions with those they seek to save. Christ took humanity that He might reach humanity." She offers further arguments:

This is why the preaching of the gospel was committed to erring men rather than to the angels. It is manifest that the power which works through the weakness of humanity, is the power of God; and thus we are encouraged to believe that the power which can help others as weak as ourselves, can help us.

God's purpose in giving men a part to act in the plan of redemption was to "cultivate a spirit of benevolence" in them and to

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1 "Workers with God," RH 63 (Dec. 7, 1886):753.

2 Steps to Christ, p. 79.


4 Desire of Ages, p. 297.

5 "Workers with God," RH 63 (Dec. 7, 1886):753.
"improve and increase [their] talents." 1 "The effort to bless others will result in blessing" upon themselves. 2

Men's Responsibility

It is evident that, in White's views, God has chosen men to become light bearers to make them recipients of His blessings. But He is not dependent upon human means, nor is He "restricted" by the human agents. "He can carry His own work though we act no part in it." 3

On the other hand, the "gospel is dependent on the personal piety of its believers for its aggressive power." 4 Once man accepts the divine commission, he becomes responsible for the progress of God's work. White maintains that the "upbuilding of the kingdom of God is retarded or urged forward according to the unfaithfulness or fidelity of human agencies. The work is hindered by the failure of the human to co-operate with the divine." 5

White insists that "those who know the truth are responsible for those who know it not...[;] we are to build up the kingdom of God." 6 She adds that "every individual who has received light from God is responsible for that light... . Christians must stand on

2 Steps to Christ, p. 79.
3 "God Loveth the Cheerful Giver," RH 77 (May 14, 1900):305.
the elevated and holy ground which, through the progress of truth has been for ages preparing for them."\(^1\) Otherwise, the "time will come when men will be called to give an account for the souls to whom they should have communicated light, but who have not received it."\(^2\)

The responsibility for the transmission of the light to mankind rests upon the individual, in particular, as well as upon the church as an institution, in general. White appeals "to all who claim to believe the truth, to realize the importance of the message God has given [to them] to bear to the world."\(^3\)

To us as a people God has given great light, and he calls upon us to let it shine forth to those in darkness. By us the light, the power, of a living truth is to be given to the world. From us there is to shine forth to those in darkness a clear, steady light, kept alive by the power of God. . . . For us to refuse to let our light shine to those in darkness is to contract guilt, the magnitude of which can not be computed.\(^4\)

Of course, the obligation of the church to carry the gospel to the world rests upon all Christians. "Everyone, to the extent of his talent and opportunity, is to fulfill the Saviour's commission. . . . God has given us light, not for ourselves alone, but to shed upon them."\(^5\) Consequently, as a church, "our responsibility and accountability are in proportion to the light that we have had--in


\(^5\) Steps to Christ, p. 81.
proportion to the privileges and opportunities that have been given to us."\(^1\)

For White, the responsibility for the transmission of the truth also rests upon the Christian family as a unit. Religion reaches beyond the "walls of home . . . Its light flashes" everywhere on the earth.\(^2\) A faithful family "will extend a knowledge of correct ideas and Biblical principles to all with whom they associate. Such a family will have a powerful influence in favor of Christianity."\(^3\) According to White, "God calls for Christian families to go into the dark places of the earth, and work . . . for those who are . . . in spiritual gloom."\(^4\)

What has man's effort accomplished in transmitting religious legacy through past generations? This will be considered next.

**The Transmission of Religious Heritage through Old Testament Times**

The main interest of this investigation is not centered upon the fact of the transmission of religious heritage itself. Its concern is, rather, to study some of the dynamic factors which play a determinate role in the process of passing on the sacred legacy from one generation to the following. In this section, however, consideration is given to the transmission of religious heritage

\(^1\)"Camp-meeting at Williamsport, Pa.," RH 66 (Aug. 13, 1889): 514.

\(^2\)"Co-laborers with Christ," RH 64 (March 8, 1887): 145.


especially from a historical perspective, and viewed in the context of the Jewish people.

Although White mentions some aspects of the process which took place during the Christian era, her description and explanation of the transmission through Old Testament times are rich in details and corresponds with Jewish experience in history. The purpose of this section is to build a necessary contextual and historical background to better understand White's concept on the subject under consideration.

The Antediluvian Period

In referring to the beginning of the history of mankind, White believes "Adam and Eve at their creation had knowledge of the original law of God." She thinks "it was imprinted upon their hearts, and they were acquainted with the claims of the law upon them." They had also learned from the Creator the history of creation. Besides, "they were visited by . . . the holy angels, and from them received counsel and instruction."

After the fall, and for nearly a thousand years, Adam lived among men, and he imparted his knowledge to his descendants.

He had been commanded to instruct his posterity in the way of the Lord and he carefully treasured what God had revealed to

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1 In chapter VII, in the sections dealing with the teaching task and learning process in the Christian home, and with the mission of the church respectively, references are made regarding some aspects of the transmission of religious heritage during the Christian era. See below, pp. 172-73; 188-92.


3 Patriarchs and Prophets, p. 83.

4 Education, p. 21.
him, and repeated it to succeeding generations. To his children and children's children, to the ninth generation, he described man's holy and happy estate in Paradise, and repeated the history of his fall, telling them of sufferings by which God had taught him the necessity of strict adherence to His law, and explaining to them the merciful provisions for their salvation.

White holds that "all the world had opportunity to receive instruction from Adam," and the believers "had also Christ and angels for their teachers. And they had a silent witness to the truth, in the garden of God, which for so many centuries remained among men."^2

So, "those who lived before the flood were favored in having a knowledge of God's will communicated to them by the teachings, example, and humble obedience of Adam."^3 The antediluvians, because of the purity of the race, could enjoy other advantages.

The antediluvians were without books, they had no written records; but with their great physical and mental vigor, they had strong memories, able to grasp and to retain that which was communicated to them, and in turn to transmit it unimpaired to their posterity. And for hundreds of years there were seven generations living upon the earth contemporaneously, having the opportunity of consulting together and profiting each by the knowledge and experience of all.^4

Enoch was "one of the holy line," of "the preservers of the true faith." "From the lips of Adam," White says, "he had learned the dark story of the fall, and the cheering one of God's grace as seen in the promise; and he relied upon the Redeemer to come."^5 He was honored with special revelations from God."^6 and he "became a preacher

1"Patriarchs and Prophets," p. 82. 2Ibid., p. 83.
4"Patriarchs and Prophets," p. 83. 5Ibid., p. 84.
6Ibid., p. 85.
of righteousness," making known to the men of his generation what
God had revealed to him.1 "From the days of Enoch the promise [of
a coming Saviour] was repeated through patriarchs and prophets,
keeping alive the hope of His appearing."2

White maintains that among the prevailing corruption of the
antediluvian epoch, "Methuselah, Noah, and many others labored to
keep alive the knowledge of the true God." One "hundred and twenty
years before the flood, the Lord by a holy angel declared to Noah
His purpose." "Enoch had repeated to his children what God had
shown him in regard to the flood, and Methuselah and his sons, who
lived to hear the preaching of Noah, assisted in building the
ark."3

The Postdiluvian Period

After the flood God placed the rainbow in the clouds "as a
token of His covenant with men." What was God's design for it?

White explains:

It was God's purpose that as the children of after generations
should ask the meaning of the glorious arch which spans the
heavens, their parents should repeat the story of the flood,
and tell them that the Most High had bended the bow and placed
it in the clouds as an assurance that the waters should never
again overflow the earth. Thus from generation to generation
it would testify of divine love to man and would strengthen
his confidence in God.4

She maintains that the divine design was that when men would
disperse, founding nations in different places of the earth, they
had to take with them their knowledge of God's will. Thus the truth

1 Ibid., p. 86.
2 Desire of Ages, p. 31.
3 Patriarchs and Prophets, p. 92.
they had would be carried on undimmed to future generations. Since Noah and Shem both lived for many years, "their descendants had an opportunity to become acquainted with the requirements of God and with the history of His dealings with their fathers." And so, in unbroken line, Adam, Seth, Enoch, Methuselah, Noah, and Shem "preserved from age to age" the knowledge of God's will.

After the dispersion from Babel's idolatry, God's covenant and statutes were rejected by the world. The Lord then chose Abraham, and entered into covenant with him, and "made him the keeper of His law for future generations." The seductive influences of superstition and heathenism were surrounding and invading Abraham's father's household. Yet, "the true faith was not to become extinct. God has ever preserved a remnant to serve Him." The Lord revealed his intention to Abraham through visions. "Abraham had to leave his country and his father's house, and sojourn in a strange land in order to successfully introduce a new order of things in his household." White adds this comment:

The providence of God was ever to open up new methods, and progress was to be made from generation to generation, in order to preserve in the world a knowledge of the true God, of His laws and commandments. This could be done only by cultivating home religion.

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1 Ibid., p. 120.
2 Ibid., p. 125.
3 Ibid., p. 332.
4 Ibid., p. 125.
5 Ibid.
7 "To the Students at Battle Creek College," RH 71 (Jan. 9, 1894):17.
8 Ibid.
In those times, "the father was the ruler and priest of his own family," exercising "authority over his children even after they had families of their own." He was the leader "in both religious and secular matters." Abraham endeavored to perpetuate this patriarchal system, "since it tended to preserve the knowledge of God." Thus, "Abraham's affection for his children and his household led him to guard their religious faith, to impart to them a knowledge of the divine statutes, as the most precious legacy he could transmit to them, and through them to the world." One of Abraham's most effective means of imparting his religious legacy to his children and household was his life of prayer and worship. In this respect, White says:

Abraham, "the friend of God," set us a worthy example. His was a life of prayer. Wherever he pitched his tent, close beside it was set up his altar, calling all within his encampment to the morning and evening sacrifice. When his tent was removed, the altar remained. In following years, there were those among the roving Canaanites who received instruction from Abraham; and whenever one of these came to that altar, he knew who had been there before him; and when he had pitched his tent, he repaired the altar, and there worshiped the living God.

Years later, Jacob, "like Abraham, set up beside his tent an altar unto the Lord," and also called the "members of his household to the morning and evening sacrifice."

The People of Israel--Depositaries of God's Trust

In the call of Abraham God had said: "I will bless thee, ... and thou shalt be a blessing; ... and in thee shall all

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1Patriarchs and Prophets, p. 141.
3Patriarchs and Prophets, p. 128. 4Ibid., p. 204.
families of the earth be blessed."¹ "The all-embracing terms of this covenant," White writes, "were familiar to Abraham's children and to his children's children. It was in order that the Israelites might be a blessing to the nations, and that God's name might be known 'through all the earth' [Ex 9:16], that they were delivered from Egyptian bondage."² Therefore, to Israel "were committed the oracles of heaven, the revelation of God's will."³ "He made them the depositaries of His law, and He purposed, through them," not only to make His name known, but "to preserve among men the knowledge of Himself,"⁴ "and of the symbols and prophecies that pointed to the Saviour, as well."⁵

Regarding the divine wisdom in providing for the preservation of the knowledge of God among man, White states:

How wise was the arrangement of God to preserve a knowledge of Himself in the earth by giving man His holy law, which was the foundation of His government in heaven and in earth, and by connecting with it a system of worship that would be a continual reminder of a coming Saviour. While darkness covered the earth, and gross darkness the people, the Lord had a humble few who acknowledged His sovereignty by respecting and obeying the constitution of His kingdom, the ten commandments. Through the ages of idolatry and apostasy, the promise of a Messiah kept the star of hope shining in the darkened moral heavens until the time came for Christ to make His first advent.⁶

The Israelites had to "keep themselves distinct from

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¹ Gen 12:2, 3.
² Prophets and Kings, pp. 368-69.
⁴ Prophets and Kings, p. 16; Patriarchs and Prophets, p. 314.
⁵ Desire of Ages, p. 27.
⁶ "The Two Dispensations," RH 63 (March 2, 1886):129.
idolatrous nations around them,"¹ and sustain their public worship "as an expression of their loyalty and their love" to God.² At the same time, the significance of God's law and of "its precepts and the importance of obedience were especially to be impressed upon them, and through them, upon their children and children's children."³

Thus, from the beginning, and through patriarchs before and after the flood, and later other worthies, the Lord has preserved the revelation of His will. And it was thus that God imparted to the children of Israel a knowledge of the requirements of His law and His plan of salvation.⁴

Unfaithfulness of Israel—Captivity and Return

White points out that "the Lord through Moses had set before His people the result of unfaithfulness. . . . At times [God's] warnings were heeded, and rich blessings were bestowed upon the Jewish nation and through them upon surrounding peoples. But more often in their history they forgot God and lost sight of their high privilege as His representatives."⁵ "They forgot God and failed to fulfill their mission." All their blessings and advantages "they appropriated for their own glorification."⁶ White, commenting concerning Israel's negative attitude, says:

¹Patriarchs and Prophets, p. 369.
³Patriarchs and Prophets, p. 468.
⁴Prophets and Kings, pp. 682-683.
⁵Ibid., pp. 20-21.
Had Israel been true to her trust, all the nations of earth would have shared in her blessings. But the hearts of those to whom had been intrusted a knowledge of saving truth, were untouched by the needs of those around them. God's purpose was lost sight of, and the heathen came to be looked upon as beyond the pale of His mercy. The light of truth was withheld, and darkness prevailed. The nations were overspread with a veil of ignorance; the love of God was little known; error and superstition flourished.  

The treasures of truth which God had committed to the Israelites were not given to the world. The pride and self-sufficiency of the chosen people eclipsed their love to God and man. Thus, White claims, "by refusing to minister to others," "they brought ruin upon themselves."  

It was because Israel had "persisted in turning aside" from the messages of the prophets and His law that "God was compelled" to let the ten tribes go into captivity. In Assyria, "not only were they themselves to learn the lesson of obedience and trust; in their places of exile they were also to impart to others a knowledge of the living God."  

Years later the experience was repeated with Judah. Because the people disobeyed God and refused to carry out His purpose, the temple built by Solomon was destroyed and the captivity to Babylon became necessary. White explains their experience in the land of their captivity:  

1"Hope for the Heathen," RH 92 (June 17, 1915): 3; Prophets and Kings, p. 371.  
2Desire of Ages, p. 583.  
3Prophets and Kings, p. 297.  
5Prophets and Kings, p. 564.
They were brought into subjection to Babylon, and scattered through the lands of the heathen. In affliction many renewed their faithfulness to His covenant. While they hung their harps upon the willows, and mourned for the holy temple that was laid waste, the light of truth shone out through them, and knowledge of God was spread among the nations. The heathen systems of sacrifice were a perversion of the system that God had appointed; and many a sincere observer of heathen rites learned from the Hebrews the meaning of the service divinely ordained, and in faith grasped the promise of a Redeemer.

White notes that during the captivity and afterward, Israel enjoyed "liberty to minister to the spiritual needs of their brethren in exile. Synagogues were built, in which the priests conducted the worship of God and instructed the people." Synagogues played an important role in the preservation and transmission of the Jewish religious heritage. They were erected all over the country. Also "schools were established, which, together with the arts and sciences, professed to teach the principles of righteousness." However, those "agencies became corrupted."

White has much to say concerning the work of reformation accomplished by Ezra. The task was not easy. Although "there were many who had remained true to God as long as they lived . . . a considerable number of the children and the children's children, lost sight of the sacredness of God's law," which neutralized Ezra's efforts. Regarding the work realized in Jerusalem, she states:

The efforts of Ezra to revive an interest in the study of the Scriptures were given permanency by his painstaking, life-long work of preserving and multiplying the Sacred Writings. He gathered all the copies of the law that he could find and

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1 *Desire of Ages*, p. 28; *Prophets and Kings*, p. 479.  
2 *Prophets and Kings*, p. 613.  
3 *Desire of Ages*, p. 29.  
had these transcribed and distributed. The pure word, thus multiplied and placed in the hands of many people, gave knowledge that was of inestimable value.¹

During the Feast of Tabernacles, the whole congregation "acknowledged the justice of God's dealings with them" and entered into a covenant to keep His law. "And that this might be 'a sure covenant,' and be preserved in permanent form, as a memorial of the obligation they had taken upon themselves, it was written out, and the priests, Levites, and princes signed it."²

As the years went by, the Jews departed once more from God. Their "religion was perverted from its original nature and purpose."³ To a great degree they "lost sight of the teaching of the ritual service." Priests and rulers were satisfied with a legal religion. "They measured their holiness by the multitude of their ceremonies, while their hearts were filled with pride and hypocrisy."⁴ And so, "it was impossible for them to give to others the living truths of heaven."⁵

The Pharisees were absorbed in questions of no value. "They passed by the precious truths of God's word to discuss the traditionary lore handed down from generation to generation, which in no

¹Ibid., p. 609; "The Return of the Exiles"—No. 12: "Ezra the Priest, the Scribe," RH 85 (Feb. 6, 1908):8.
⁴Desire of Ages, p. 29.
way concerned their salvation."\(^1\) And yet, that "was regarded as truth by their disciples."\(^2\)

To further complicate the situation, White points out, the Jews, willing to maintain "the separation between themselves and other nations," did not want "to impart the knowledge they still possessed."\(^3\) Even Jesus recognized their possession of the truth when, "while He set aside their false interpretations of the law, He carefully guarded His disciples against yielding up the vital truths committed to the Hebrews."\(^4\) But "they did not become the light of the world."\(^5\)

Because of that situation, Christ did not choose the established teachers to carry on His work. He "chose humble, unlearned men to proclaim the truths that were to move the world."\(^6\) White explains and justifies Jesus' decision in the following words:

The Jewish leaders thought themselves too wise to need instruction, too righteous to need salvation, too highly honored to need the honor that comes from Christ. The Saviour turned from them to entrust to others the privileges they had abused and the work they had slighted. God's glory must be revealed, His word established, Christ's kingdom must be set up in the world. The salvation of God must be made known in the cities of the wilderness; and the disciples were called to do the work that the Jewish leaders failed to do.\(^7\)

In summary, after many centuries of labor transmitting the

\(^1\)"To my Brothers and Sisters in the Faith, Nigh and Afar Off," RH 78 (Aug. 13, 1901):517.
\(^3\)Desire of Ages, p. 33. \(^4\)Ibid., p. 307.
\(^7\)Ibid., p. 16.
sacred legacy from generation to generation, the Hebrew people, because of their infidelity, were to be replaced by the Christian church to accomplish their unfinished task. The church became the recipient of the corpus of revealed knowledge. It was to communicate to all nations the Judeo-Christian religious heritage.

Elements Affecting the Transmission of Religious Heritage

Ellen G. White views man as responsible for the transmission of religious legacy. She contends that although God could find other means to accomplish His plan, He chose men to do the task in order to make him the beneficiary of many blessings. God relies on man.

Since man is influenced and even conditioned by stimuli from many sources, the process of passing on a sacred heritage can also be altered. Therefore, it is necessary to consider several factors which White regards as affecting the transmission of religious legacy. For convenience of discussion, they are grouped under (1) personal elements, (2) dimensional elements, and (3) Satan's hindrances.

Personal Elements

Heredity

White urges consideration of the power of heredity to understand why many are "so slow to respond to [the] efforts for their uplifting."¹ She thinks parents "transmit their irreligious,

¹Ministry of Healing, p. 168.
insubordinate spirit to their children, and their children's children."¹ Obviously, this negatively affects the transmission of the gospel truth, not only from parents to children, but also between individuals.

"The physical condition of the parents, their dispositions and appetites, their mental and moral tendencies, are, to a greater or less degree, reproduced in their children."² Therefore, preparation should begin, even before the birth of the child. Both parents are involved in this responsibility, for "both transmit their own characteristics . . . to their children."³ So the effect of prenatal influences is a matter of great importance.⁴

White illustrates the importance of this factor with the experiences of Noah's sons. She states:

. . . the vileness and irreverence of Ham were reproduced in his posterity, bringing a curse upon them from generation to generation. . . . On the other hand, how richly rewarded was Shem's respect for his father; and what an illustrious line of holy men appears in his posterity!⁵

White points out the conclusion to be derived from these considerations when she says:

The nobler the aims, the higher the mental and spiritual endowments, and the better developed the physical powers of the parents, the better will be the life equipment they give their children. In cultivating that which is best in


²Ministry of Healing, p. 371.

³Patriarchs and Prophets, p. 561.

⁴Ministry of Healing, p. 372.

⁵Patriarchs and Prophets, p. 118.
themselves, parents are exerting an influence to mold society and to uplift future generations.¹

In sum, man may inherit not only disease, but also "wrong habits," "perverted appetites," "corrupt passions,"² "mental deficiencies,"³ and "evil tendencies."⁴ As a result, man cannot discern eternal realities⁵ unless he unites his life with the divine power.⁶ Then "hereditary and cultivated tendencies" to evil "are cut away from the character,"⁷ and the possibilities for progress in the truth are endless.⁸

Environment

In White's writings, heredity and environment very often appear together. In considering "the power of heredity, the influence of evil association and surroundings," she asks the rhetorical question, "Can we wonder that under such influences many become degraded?"⁹ She further states that "as a rule," children not only "inherit the dispositions and tendencies of their parents," but also imitate their example, "so that the sins of the parents are

¹Ministry of Healing, p. 371.
³Ministry of Healing, p. 371.
⁵"The Temptation of Christ," RH 44 (Sept. 8, 1874):90.
⁶Ministry of Healing, p. 176; Christ's Object Lessons, p. 311.
⁸Christ's Object Lessons, pp. 130, 132.
⁹Ministry of Healing, p. 168.

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practiced by the children from generation to generation.1

Although in White's view the Christian believer "may stand uncontaminated in any surroundings,"2 she also acknowledges the "danger of being drawn away from the simplicity of the gospel" as in the Colossians' experience.3 To prove her point, White uses Abraham's story. "In order that God might qualify him for his great work as the keeper of the sacred oracles," Abraham must separate from his kindred and friends whose influence would interfere with God's purpose for His servant.4

White refers to Lot, who entered Sodom fully intending to keep himself free from iniquity but failed. "The corrupting influences about him had an effect upon his own faith, and his children's connection with the inhabitants of Sodom bound up his interest in a measure with theirs."5 She also argues that "the atmosphere of lax morality, of unbelief, or indifference to religious things, has a tendency to counteract the influence of the parents,"6 and "the value of eternal treasure cannot be discerned."7 The moral corruption of Sodom became so interwoven with the character of Lot's daughters "that they could not distinguish between good and evil."8

White repeatedly advises that the location of a home and

1Patriarchs and Prophets, p. 118.
4Patriarchs and Prophets, p. 126.
5Ibid., p. 168. 6Ibid., p. 169.
8Patriarchs and Prophets, pp. 167-68.
school should be out of the cities. "Life in the cities is false and artificial. The intense passion for money getting, the whirl of excitement and pleasure seeking, the thirst for display, the luxury and extravagance, all are forces that, with the great masses of mankind, are turning the mind from life's true purpose." Therefore,

Instead of dwelling where only the works of men can be seen, where the sights and sounds frequently suggest thoughts of evil, where turmoil and confusion bring weariness and disquietude, go where you can look upon the works of God. Find rest of spirit in the beauty and quietude and peace of nature. Let the eye rest on the green fields, the groves, and the hills. Look up to the blue sky, unobscured by the city's dust and smoke, and breathe the invigorating air of heaven. Go where, apart from the distractions and dissipations of city life, you can give your children your companionship, where you can teach them to learn of God through His works, and train them for lives of integrity and usefulness.

Mind and health

To White, "the brain is the capital of the body," and the means by which man can appreciate sacred truths. "The brain nerves . . . are the medium through which heaven communicates with man." It is also by the mind that man is brought into communion with the mind of God and that physical, mental, and spiritual knowledge is revealed to him.

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1 Education, pp. 211-12; see also Prophets and Kings, p. 275.
2 Ministry of Healing, p. 364.
3 Ibid., p. 367.
6 Education, p. 209.
7 Ibid., p. 14.
Moreover, "there is an intimate relation between the mind and the body; they react upon each other."

1 When one is affected, the other sympathizes." 2 Because of such inner relation between mind and body, White reasons this way:

Since the mind and the soul find expression through the body, both mental and spiritual vigor are in a great degree dependent upon physical strength and activity; whatever promotes physical health, promotes the development of a strong mind and a well-balanced character. Without health no one can as distinctly understand or as completely fulfill his obligations to himself, to his fellow beings, or to his Creator.

Hence, "the adversary of souls directs his temptations to the enfeebbling and degrading of the physical powers," 4 for "whatever injures the health not only lessens physical vigor, but tends to weaken the mental and moral powers." 5

For White, the key principle is "true temperance"—dispensing entirely with everything harmful and using "judiciously that which is healthful." 6 The Christian should be temperate in every phase of life. "We have no right," says she, "to indulge in anything that will result in a condition of mind that hinders the spirit of God from impressing us with the sense of duty." 7

Such a "true temperance" to be exerted "in every phase of

2 Ministry of Healing, p. 241.
5 Ministry of Healing, p. 128.
6 Patriarchs and Prophets, p. 562.
7 "Notes of Travel—No. 5: Visit to San Pasqual and Escondido," RH 84 (Aug. 29, 1907):8.

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life," includes, for instance, the reading of exciting, sensational stories. White argues that when an appetite for such reading is cultivated, "the moral taste is perverted, and the mind is unsatisfied unless fed upon this trashy unwholesome food." The effect of such reading "is not merely to intoxicate and ruin the mind, but to corrupt and destroy the soul."^2

Since the believers are "under obligation to God to make an unreserved consecration" of themselves to His service,^3 how, according to White, can they cope with "Satan's snares"^4 in order to preserve body and mind in the best condition of health? First, "the body is to be brought into subjection to the higher powers of the being. The passions are to be controlled by the will, which is itself to be under the control of God. The kingly power of reason, sanctified by divine grace, is to bear sway in the life."^5 "This self-discipline is essential to that mental strength and spiritual insight which will enable [us] to understand and to practice the sacred truths of God's word."^6

Second, Christ's followers should live in harmony with the principles of health. White refers to them also as "true remedies." These are "pure air, sunlight, abstemiousness, rest, exercise, proper

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^1"Mental Inebriates," RH 63 (Nov. 9, 1886):689.
^2Education, p. 190.
^4Desire of Ages, p. 101.  ^5Prophets and Kings, p. 489.
diet, the use of water, [and] trust in divine power."¹ A balanced use of these "remedies" expands the mind, strengthens the body, and develops the faculties.²

Finally, considering that the mind is "built up by that upon which it feeds,"³ the believers should combine the study of books with useful manual labor, and "by faithful endeavor, watchfulness, and prayer, secure the wisdom that is from above. . . . Let the mind be trained and disciplined to wrestle with hard problems in the search for divine truth."⁴

Thus, physical health is essential to both the cognitive and the spiritual functions of man. In their turn, these functions are indispensable for the accomplishment of man's task in cooperation with heaven. In White's views, the powers of mind and body are to be preserved in the most healthful condition to serve mankind and to bring them to the knowledge of God's truth.

Dimensional Elements--Time and Space

In White's works, the imminent return of Christ and the end of the world are concepts which have significant bearing upon her position concerning the transmission of religious heritage. This appears constantly in her writings, with its implications upon all circumstances of the believer's life. But in a special way, it is

¹Ministry of Healing, p. 127.
²Patriarchs and Prophets, p. 50; see also Ministry of Healing, p. 238.
³Education, p. 126.
⁴Christ's Object Lessons, p. 334.
relevant to the task of communicating the present truth to the world, so it deserves some treatment here. Its extent, however, will be limited to what is necessary for a fuller understanding of her concept on the matter under consideration in this research.

The imminent return of Christ

Christ's second coming to complete the work of redemption is, in White's view, "one of the most solemn and yet most glorious truths revealed in the Bible." It has been in all ages the hope of true believers.

White believes "we have reached the period foretold" in the Scriptures regarding the return of Christ. "The time of the end is come, the visions of the prophets are unsealed, and their solemn warnings point us to our Lord's coming in glory as near at hand." Impressed by this personal conviction, she refers to the present time as "the last days of this earth's history," the short time before Christ's coming, the fast-closing period of our probation, "the end of the world," the time "when the end of all things is at

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1 *Great Controversy*, p. 299.
2 Ibid., p. 302.
3 *Desire of Ages*, p. 235. For a full exposition of White's understanding of the fulfillment of the prophecies regarding the second coming of Christ, see *Desire of Ages*, pp. 234-35, 627-36, and *Great Controversy*, pp. 299-316.
hand,"1 and "these last days."2 However, she makes clear that "the day and the hour of His coming Christ has not revealed."3 The time is short, but "we know not the exact measure of it."4 "Because we know not the exact time of His coming we are commanded to watch," not "in idle expectancy" but in "earnest working."5

**Universality of the task**

Close in importance and solemnity to White's belief in the nearness of the Lord's coming is her view of the universality of the task to be accomplished by the believers. She emphasizes the fact that when Christ gave the commission to His disciples, He said to them: "Go ye therefore, and teach all nations." "Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature."6 She insists that "upon all the inhabitants of the earth, high and low, rich and poor, was the light of heaven to shine in clear, strong rays."7 Since then, "in every age, . . . the gospel commission has impelled men and women to go to the ends of the earth as missionaries for God."8

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3 Desire of Ages, p. 632.


5 Desire of Ages, p. 634.

6 Ibid., p. 818; Matt 28:19; Mark 16:15.

7 Desire of Ages, p. 818.

According to White, this responsibility lies today upon the church. She acknowledges that "the great work which Jesus announced that He came to do was intrusted to His followers. ... He has given us a world-wide message." "The field of our labor is the world. Every nation, tongue, and people can be reached by the saving truth for this time." And then, when the truth of the gospel will be carried to every kingdom under heaven, "shall the end come."

**Shortness of time—urgency of the task**

When White relates the task to be accomplished among all nations to the shortness of time before the end comes, she emphasizes (1) the solemnity of this time, (2) the responsibility for the finishing of the work, (3) the importance of the message to be proclaimed, and (4) the attitude and the way to accomplish the task. She states:

A great work is before us,—the closing work of this world's history. Solemn indeed is the time in which we are living, and heavy are the responsibilities resting upon us as a people. The third angel's message is now to be proclaimed, not only in far-off lands, but in neglected places close by, where multitudes dwell unwarned and unsaved. Our cities everywhere are calling for earnest, whole-hearted labor from the servants of God. The message for this time is now to be proclaimed earnestly in the great business world.

White furthermore thinks the believer is to be conscious of

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4"Words of Warning,—No. 3," RH 75 (Dec. 27, 1898):825.
the solemnity of the time in which he lives. "We have but a little
time in which to work."\(^1\) "Soon [the] opportunity to give the last
message . . . to the lost will be forever past."\(^2\) "The end is near!
We have not a moment to lose!"\(^3\)

Regarding the responsibility for the finishing of the work,
White repeats: "There is a great work to be accomplished, and
little time in which to do it."\(^4\) She deprecates the fact that "thou­
sands are perishing in sin, and the . . . message" of salvation "is
yet to be proclaimed in the power of the Spirit. How little is be­
ing done in comparison with what must be done!"\(^5\) "Let men tremble
with the sense of responsibility of knowing the truth."\(^6\)

The message to be proclaimed before the end comes is, accord­
ing to White, composed of the "old truths."\(^7\) It is the present
truth,\(^8\) the third angel's message,\(^9\) the last message of warning\(^10\)
and mercy, the "last invitation given to the children of men."\(^11\) "The

\(^{1}\)"Laborers Together with God," RH 79 (March 18, 1902):162.
\(^{10}\)"Notes of Travel—No. 3: Chicago to St. Helena," RH 82
(Feb. 9, 1905):8.
world must be warned of the soon coming of the Lord."¹ "The Lord is coming soon. Let us repeat it over and over."² Finally, she says the "message is to be as direct as was the message of John the Bap­
tist." God's followers have a message to bear: "'Prepare to meet thy God.'³

Concerning the way to accomplish the task and the correct attitude to have, White emphasizes: "If ever there was a time in our history when we needed to humble our individual souls before God, it is to-day."⁴ "Self must be out of sight, and Christ must appear" to reflect the light to others.⁵ "At any cost [the believers] must practise the truth."⁶ Then, "stirred with compassion for those who are in darkness," and zeal for God's glory,⁷ they must present earnestly the truth,⁸ in love,⁹ and with skill.¹⁰ Finally, she pleads for "much aggressive work to be done in the cities, and in all neglected, unworked fields."¹¹

¹"Laborers Together with God," RH 79 (March 17, 1902):162.
²"Notes of Travel--No. 6: Loma Linda and Los Angeles," RH 84 (Sept. 5, 1907):9.
³"A Lesson from the Ministry of John the Baptist," RH 84 (Nov. 28, 1907):8.
In order to face the challenge of the worldwide task to be accomplished prior to the second coming of Christ, White sees a great need of "men and women who will consecrate themselves to God, willing to spend and be spent in His service." She affirms: "Never was a time in the history of the world when there was a more urgent demand for workers than at present." Men and women are needed "who are imbued with the Spirit," who can speak of the sacredness and importance of the truth for this time.

In short, the tension between the shortness of time before the end of the world and the magnitude of the task set before the believers generates a sense of urgency which impregnates and characterizes White's conception of the transmission of sacred legacy. It is a factor which, in White's thought, should affect the speed and quality of the process.

Satan's Hindrances

Throughout the writings of White, Satan is depicted as a fallen, heavenly being who, assisted by angels under his command, exercises an antagonistic action against the full realization of God's plan of salvation. Since the knowledge of the truth and its communication are basic for man's redemption, Satan is trying to hinder by all means this divine provision. It is, therefore, necessary to give some consideration to this matter to have a more

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complete picture of White's conception of the transmission of the inspired sacred legacy.

Satan's spirit and intentions

Because of White's acceptance of the plain declarations of the Bible, she believes in a vital connection of the visible with the invisible world. The agency of evil spirits is "inseparably interwoven" with human history.\(^1\) Those evil spirits, created sinless in the beginning, fell through sin. "United with Satan in his rebellion, and with him cast out from heaven, they have, through all succeeding ages, cooperated with him in his warfare against the divine authority." "They are leagued together for the dishonor of God and the destruction of men."\(^2\) In "bitter revolt" against God, "they are filled with hatred against those who serve Him."\(^3\)

Having accomplished the fall of man, Satan claims supremacy for himself over his subjects. Because "he cannot expel God from His throne," he attempts to place his own throne "between God and the human worshiper." "He intercepts every ray of light that comes from God to man, and appropriates the worship that is due to God."\(^4\) For six thousand years," White says, "that master-mind that once was highest among the angels of God has been wholly bent to the work of deception and ruin."\(^5\)

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\(^1\)Great Controversy, p. 511.  \(^2\)Ibid., pp. 513.


\(^5\)Great Controversy, p. x.
Satan's methodology

Satan's goal is the control and manipulation of man's mind. Since White views the health of the body as vitally connected to the health of the mind, she logically sees the body as a primary target in the attack of the devil upon mankind. Describing this satanic strategy, she writes:

The body is the only medium through which the mind and the soul are developed for the upbuilding of character. Hence it is that the adversary of souls directs his temptations to the enfeebling and degrading of the physical powers. His success here means the surrender to evil of the whole being. The tendencies of our physical nature, unless under the dominion of a higher power, will surely work ruin and death.

White thinks Satan's major assaults are against man's physical nature in order for him to take full control of body, mind, and soul. This method of Satan's is especially apparent in White's beliefs concerning the fall of man. It was through Satan's temptation to indulge their appetites that Adam and Eve were seen to fall from their holy and happy condition. Through this type of temptation, and other similar temptations which appeal to the abuse of man's physical strength, Satan has been enfeebling mankind by dethroning God from the mind. Consequently, men become "incapable of appreciating the great truths of the plan of redemption."

In White's understanding, Satan mainly assails "men where he

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1 Ministry of Healing, pp. 242-43.
2 Ibid., p. 130.
3 Ibid., p. 142.
4 Desire of Ages, p. 117.
5 Ibid., p. 36.
6 Patriarchs and Prophets, p. 68.
can have the greatest success." He also "adapts his temptations to the peculiar temperament of each" individual. First of all, "from age to age Satan has sought to keep men in ignorance of the beneficent [divine] designs." To reach this goal he has been using different means, such as intemperance in all its forms, "false theories and traditions," the influence of "infidel authors" and his personal action through spiritualism.

Satan's action against the truth

It has been shown that in White's view concerning the development of religious heritage, the truth at times has needed to be purified from error. Here it is pertinent to point out that she sees Satan as directly responsible for the mixing of error with the truth.

White states that Satan and his "confederacy of human agents have misrepresented the doctrines of truth." "The great deceiver

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1Ibid., p. 378.
2"Be Zealous and Repent," RH 60 (Sept. 4, 1883):561.
3Prophets and Kings, p. 275.
8"Study the Bible for Yourselves," RH 71 (Sept. 11, 1894):577.
has many agents ready to present any and every kind of error to ensnare souls—heresies prepared to suit the varied tastes and capacities of those whom he would ruin."\(^1\) She explains how error can obscure the truth, stand in its place, and, at least for some time, acquire a power over the human mind.

Through false doctrines, Satan gains a foothold, and captivates the minds of men, causing them to hold theories that have not foundation in truth. Men boldly teach for doctrines the commandments of men; and as traditions pass on from age to age, they acquire a power over the human mind. But age does not make error truth, neither does its burdensome weight cause the plant of truth to become a parasite. The tree of truth bears its own genuine fruit, showing its true origin and nature.\(^2\)

In light of this statement, it is evident that in the end truth will triumph over error. But it is also clear that while truth and error are mixed, Satan accomplishes his destructive task against God's plan. This makes plain why Satan "is ever at work endeavoring to pervert what God has spoken." Thus, the devil is continuously attempting "to blind the mind and darken the understanding, and thus lead men into sin."\(^3\)

Likewise, White acknowledges that Satan won a great victory "in perverting the faith of Israel." And so they became "more and more corrupt."\(^4\) As it was in the past, so today Satan uses the same method expecting identical results. "He seeks to obliterate the truth and abolish the true pattern of goodness and righteousness, in

\(^1\) *Great Controversy*, p. 520.


\(^3\) *Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 503.

\(^4\) *Desire of Ages*, p. 35.
order that the professed Christian world may be swept to perdition
through separation from God."¹

Satan's hindrances of
God's people

"Because Israel had been chosen to preserve the knowledge of
God on the earth," White maintains "they had ever been the special
object of Satan's enmity." In reality, "he was determined to cause
their destruction."² Speaking of the conflict between good and evil,
she refers to the church as being the "church militant." From
generation to generation Satan's followers have been enemies of
those who not only have moral courage to depart from evil, but also
bear witness to the truth.³

It is precisely in this specific task of bearing witness to
the truth or communicating it to others that White recognizes the
evil has been permitted to "gain a march" upon the church. "He will
throw hindrances in our path," she adds.⁴ She explains his work
this way:

Satan is constantly working through his agents to dis-
hearten and destroy those whom God has chosen to accomplish
a great and good work. They may be ready to sacrifice even
life itself for the advancement of the cause of Christ, yet
the great deceiver will suggest to their brethren doubts con-
cerning them which, if entertained, would undermine confidence
in their integrity of character, and thus cripple their use-
fulness.⁵

²Prophets and Kings, p. 582.
³"Go, Preach the Gospel"—No. 2, RH 75 (July 26, 1898):469.
⁴"A Remarkable Dream," RH 46 (Nov. 4, 1875):139.
In this statement she is suggesting that Satan aims to destroy those who have "a great and good work" to accomplish. In what way does Satan operate against them? "It is his plan to bring into the church insincere, unregenerate elements that will encourage doubt and unbelief, and hinder all who desire to see the work of God advance and to advance with it."\(^1\) Among these insincere, unregenerate elements, she refers specifically to the youth. Satan seeks to enlist the young among his followers and "he uses them as his agents to suggest doubts about the Bible."\(^2\) She also includes those who are not suspected of being under Satan's control. They may possess talents and be educated.

Many a man of cultured intellect and pleasant manners, who would not stoop to what is commonly regarded as an immoral act, is but a polished instrument in the hands of Satan. The insidious, deceptive character of his influence and example renders him a more dangerous enemy to the cause of Christ than are those who are ignorant and uncultured.\(^3\)

Furthermore, White holds that "Satan employs every means which he can devise to overthrow the followers of Christ."\(^4\) "It is Satan's constant effort to keep the attention diverted from the Saviour,"\(^5\) from "meditation and prayer,"\(^6\) "by bringing in side-issues concerning distortions, misrepresentation of their words and

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\(^1\)Great Controversy, p. 520.


\(^3\)Great Controversy, p. 509.

\(^4\)"Be Zealous and Repent," RH 60 (Sept. 4, 1883):561.

\(^5\)Steps to Christ, p. 71.

deeds, and "by breaking down the barriers which separate them from the world."2

Finally, it is pertinent to mention the spirit of debate, of controversy, which White calls a device of Satan to stir up combative ness, and thus eclipse the truth. "Many have thus been repulsed instead of being won to Christ."3 The soul is not enlightened "through controversy and discussion."4 Such a spirit is, in White's views, but a satanic hindrance against the progress of the truth.

Satan's action against those who listen to the truth

White not only points out satanic hindrances against those who have the task of transmitting the truth, but also against those who have the opportunity to know and accept the truth. Satan may apply the same sort of temptations to both kinds of people. However, she mentions some tactics Satan uses with individuals, according to the particular circumstances, in order to hinder spreading the saving truth.

For instance, White considers Satan's ability "to place men where they can [only] with difficulty be reached with the gospel," a masterpiece of satanic skill."5 Then if they are reached with it

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2Great Controversy, p. 508.
3"On the Way to Australia," RH 69 (Feb. 9, 1892):81.
4Desire of Ages, p. 175.
5"Notes of Travel--No. 5: Visit to San Pasqual and Escondido," RH 84 (Aug. 29, 1907):8.
in spite of his efforts, he watches to snatch away every impression of the truth that would make them "wise unto salvation."\(^1\)

White affirms that "vanity is one of the strongest principles of our fallen nature, and Satan is constantly appealing to it with success." So there are souls who for the flattery of men turn from the approval of the Lord and refuse "to unite their interests with those of a people of humble faith."\(^2\) In the same vein, she thinks the tempter presents before people "many objections to an acceptance of the truth, telling them that their lives will be made unpleasant, that their reputation will suffer."\(^3\)

Although Christ's followers are supposed to work against the forces of evil and to extend the gospel to every corner of the world, White states there is far more to fear from "within than from without" the church. She describes this in some detail as follows:

> We have far more to fear from within than from without. The hindrances to strength and success are far greater from the church itself than from the world. Unbelievers have a right to expect that those who profess to be keeping the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus, will do more than any other class to promote and honor, by their consistent lives, by their godly example and their active influence, the cause which they represent. But how often have the professed advocates of the truth proved the greatest obstacle to its advancement.\(^4\)

Thus, the results are real hindrances to those who could know and accept the truth. It is because of this fact that White thinks "the

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\(^1\)Great Controversy, p. 594.


\(^3\)"Walk in the Light," RH 77 (Nov. 13, 1900):722.

\(^4\)"The Church's Great Need," RH 64 (March 22, 1887):177.

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great sin of God's people at the present time is that we do not appreciate the value of the blessings God has bestowed upon us. We serve Him with a divided heart. 1 She even includes the ministers, who, under Satan's influence, may hinder the progress of the truth by expending their energies in matters of no vital importance. 2 Consequently, those who need to know the truth are deprived from it.

As already observed, White sees Satan and his agencies as responsible for the hindrances impeding the progress of the transmission of truth. This does not mean, of course, that, in her view, Satan is the only one responsible. Men, as free agents, are also responsible as far as they willingly follow his suggestions. She acknowledges that even believers, by their behavior, may "open the way for the accomplishment of Satan's devices," 3 or prepare the way for Satan's action. 4 This was precisely what happened with Judas whose "mind was open to receive the temptations of the prince of darkness, and fell into the snare prepared for him." 5

How should Christians face Satan's actions? First, White recognizes that it is the power Christ imparts which enables man to resist Satan. Without this power man would continue to be captive of the devil. 6 She further says:

3 "The Church's Great Need," RH 64 (March 22, 1887): 177.
Christ will give strength to all who seek it. No man without his own consent can be overcome by Satan. The tempter has no power to control the will or to force the soul to sin. He may distress, but he cannot contaminate. He can cause agony, but not defilement. The fact that Christ has conquered should inspire His followers with courage to fight manfully the battle against sin and Satan.¹

Elsewhere, White assures the believer that Satan cannot abide near the soul which draws nigh unto God. "When it becomes the habit of the soul to converse with God, the power of the evil one is broken."² And so, the communication of the truth received from the believers of past centuries can follow its way throughout all people, all lands, and toward future generations to its ultimate destiny.

Summary

Although God could find other means to accomplish His plan, He charged men with the responsibility of transmitting the Christian religious heritage. Men are God's instrumentalities. So truth is to be communicated from one human agent to another in cooperation with heavenly intelligences. Men are endowed for this service which, in turn, is a source of blessing for them. But it is clear that for White, those who know truth are responsible for those who do not know it. This responsibility has been carried through many centuries by God's faithful followers. And the task is to go ahead, reaching the entire world to the closing of time.

God relies on man for the transmission of religious heritage. So he must be aware of the elements which affect the process

¹Ibid., p. 510.
of passing truth from one individual to another and from parents to children. White comments about such elements as heredity and environment. They are to be taken into careful consideration to understand why, in many instances, God's message does not go ahead in its process. Yet the power of truth is able to overcome inherited and cultivated tendencies. In view of this, she advises parents that their task begins even before the birth of children, extending this counsel even to the location of their homes and schools. Since there is an intimate relation between the body and the mind, and since the mind is the means through which truth is understood and received, White has sound advice to give to preserve or restore a healthy body. Strict temperance in all things is a necessity—in eating, drinking, dress, and reading. The powers of mind and body are also to be presented in the best condition possible for the accomplishment of man's responsibility in cooperation with heaven.

In White's writings there is a tension between the shortness of time before the end of the world comes and the extent of the work to be accomplished. This tension generates a sense of urgency which pervades and characterizes her thinking concerning the communication of the truth to every creature. This element, in her view, should positively affect the quality and the speed of the process.

Furthermore, the existence of Satan as a powerful, fallen, heavenly intelligence is, in White's views, a real antagonistic force against God's plan of salvation. Helped by the angels under his command, Satan is trying to hinder the progress of the gospel
among people and generations. In revolt against God, Satan is filled with hatred for His followers. His goal is the control and manipulation of the human mind. So he uses many means to reach that goal, adapting them to the peculiar temperament of every individual. He is also responsible for the misrepresentation of truth and the mixing of error and truth. He works against the church "militant," against those who have "a great and good work" to do. Satan seeks to enlist insincere, unregenerate elements who cast doubt on the Bible. To divert the attention from the Saviour by many devices, to arouse a spirit of controversy and debate, these are also Satan's strategies to eclipse the truth and stir up combativeness in the church. He acts also against those who have the opportunity to know truth. Satan places them where they can with difficulty be reached by it.
CHAPTER V

SUPERNATURAL PROVISIONS

Man has a responsibility for the transmission of religious heritage in his generation. But, as it has been noted, in White's belief, he is not left alone to accomplish the task. Man is to cooperate with heavenly agencies. It is now necessary to consider some aspects of her views concerning God's supernatural provisions both to help man, and to counteract Satan's efforts against the proclamation of the truth. These include the ministry of the angels and the Holy Spirit.

The Ministry of the Angels

God's Messengers

White maintains that "the Bible shows us God in His high and holy place, not in a state of inactivity, not in silence and solitude," but surrounded by millions "of holy beings, all waiting to do His will. Through these messengers He is in active communication with every part of His dominion." However, she thinks, because of man's apostasy, "earth was cut off from heaven." There could be no communion across the gulf that lay between. "But through Christ, earth is again linked with heaven. With His own merits, Christ has

\[1\text{Ministry of Healing, p. 417.}\]
bridged the gulf which sin had made, so that the ministering angels can hold communion with man."^1

White also believes that today "heaven and earth are no wider apart . . . than when shepherds listened [in Bethlehem] to the angels' song."^2 Celestial beings, as in the past, are taking an active part "in the affairs of men."^3 "Under God [they] are all-powerful."^4 So "in all ages, God has wrought through holy angels for His people."^5 He even provides to every redeemed an angel who is his guardian "from his earliest moment" of life.^6

Angels' Participation in the Transmission of Religious Legacy

Speaking about the work of preaching, White plainly states it "has not been committed to angels, but has been entrusted to men." She specifies: "Holy angels have been employed in directing this work, they have in charge the great movements for the salvation of men; but the actual proclamation of the gospel is performed by the servants of Christ upon the earth."^7 Therefore, for White, angels are the directors of the communication of the gospel. This means they are, in reality, accomplishing the work through human action. She explains this relationship as follows:

All who engage in ministry are God's helping hand. They are co-workers with angels; rather, they are the human agencies through whom the angels accomplish their mission. Angels

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^1Steps to Christ, p. 20.  
^2Desire of Ages, p. 48.  
^3Education, p. 304.  
^4Desire of Ages, p. 700.  
^5Great Controversy, p. 631.  
^6Education, p. 305.  
^7Great Controversy, p. 312.
speak through their voices, and work by their hands. And the human workers, cooperating with heavenly agencies, have the benefit of their education and experience.  

In this statement, White is saying heavenly intelligences work with human instrumentalities to carry out the Lord's work. Elsewhere, she writes that angels have even "their places assigned them in connection with the human agents on earth."  

Regarding the communication of the truth, in what activities are the angels involved? According to White, they counseled and instructed our first parents while in Eden.  

Also, through their instrumentality, "God revealed to Enoch His purpose to destroy the world by a flood;" and "communicated His will to Abraham." Angels appeared with specific missions to Hagar, Lot, Balaam, Joshua, Gideon, David, and others. Concerning the encounter reported in the book of Acts between an Ethiopian and Philip, White writes that angels worked with both of them. On one hand, they "were attending this seeker for light, and he was being drawn to the Saviour."  

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1"Training the Youth to Be Workers," RH 89 (May 16, 1912): 5.
2"The Duty of the Minister and People," RH 72 (July 9, 1895): 134.
3Education, p. 21.
4Patriarchs and Prophets, p. 85.
6Patriarchs and Prophets, p. 145.
7Ibid., p. 158.
8Ibid., p. 439.
9Ibid., p. 487.
10Ibid., p. 546.
11Ibid., p. 562.
On the other hand, an angel guided Philip to the Ethiopian, "who was ready to receive the gospel."\(^1\)

White points out that angels are God's instruments for instructing, revealing, and guiding. She mentions, for instance, that heavenly messengers go before the united disciples "opening the way" and preparing hearts "for the reception of truth."\(^2\) Further, she believes angels stand beside each searcher of the Scriptures, to impress and illuminate the mind. Commenting upon this, she writes:

Energy is imparted to the soul by searching the pages of the Bible. Angels from the world of light stand by the side of the earnest seeker for truth, to impress and illuminate his mind. He who is dark of understanding may find light through an acquaintance with the Scriptures.\(^3\)

In yet another reference, she expresses her idea that "to those who in humility of heart seek for guidance to know the truth, angels of God draw near."\(^4\) Also, in the time of necessity, angels will bring to remembrance "the very truths which are needed."\(^5\)

All these tasks carried on by angels are important factors for the understanding and transmission of truth to the world. Satan knows it, and so, for example, "while angels endeavor to impress hearts with the word of God, the enemy is on the alert to make the word of no effect."\(^6\) Consequently, "they guard [the believers]

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\(^1\)Ibid., p. 109.  \(^2\)Ibid., p. 91.

\(^3\)"Perils of, and Provisions for, the Youth," RH 67 (May 13, 1890):289; see also Great Controversy, p. 594.

\(^4\)Christ's Object Lessons, p. 59.

\(^5\)Great Controversy, p. 600.

\(^6\)Christ's Object Lessons, p. 44.
against evil, and press back the powers of darkness." 1

Conditions in Which Angels Operate
with the Believers

Although angels are powerful, in White's thought, their action can be limited by inconsistent human behavior. Thus, she comments:

It is important to believe God's word and act upon it promptly, while His angels are waiting to work for us. Evil angels are ready to contest every step of advance. And when God's providence bids His children go forward, when He is ready to do great things for them, Satan tempts them to displease the Lord by hesitation and delay; he seeks to kindle a spirit of strife or to arouse murmuring or unbelief, and thus deprive them of the blessings that God desired to bestow. God's servants should be minutemen, ever ready to move as fast as His providence opens the way. Any delay on their part gives time for Satan to work to defeat them. 2

She holds that angels are ready "to impart grace and power to those who feel their need of divine aid. But these heavenly messengers will not bestow blessings unless solicited." 3

The conclusions to be obtained are evident. While the heavenly intelligences are waiting, men are to "consecrate themselves fully" to God, that He "may use them as channels of light." White adds that they need to "realize their responsibility, to cooperate with the heavenly agencies." 4 Angels will work through every person who

1"Praising the Lord," RH 85 (May 7, 1908):8.

2Patriarchs and Prophets, p. 423.

3"Cooperation with Ministers," RH 60 (July 24, 1883):466.

will "walk humbly with God,"¹ and who will "submit himself to labor in Heaven's ways."² Moreover, they will strengthen the weak hands and confirm the feeble knees of all who will "call upon God for help."³

Thus, in White’s understanding, angels find their joy in giving "love and tireless watchcare" to fallen and unholy souls; these "heavenly beings woo the hearts of men; they bring to this dark world light from the courts above; by gentle and patient ministry they move upon the human spirit, to bring the lost into a fellowship with Christ."⁴ Also, they "bring a sacred atmosphere of joy and peace."⁵

Can there be a better climate for the transmission of God’s truth than that created by the presence and the action of the angels? Can there be a better help? And yet, White maintains that "not until the providences of God are seen in the light of eternity shall we understand what we owe to the care and interposition of His angels."⁶ Then every redeemed one will learn the history "of heavenly cooperation in every work for humanity!"⁷

²"The Duty of the Minister and People," RH 72 (July 9, 1895):434.
³"God’s Design for His People," RH 76 (July 4, 1899):421.
⁴Desire of Ages, p. 21.
⁵Ibid., p. 639.
⁶Education, p. 304.
⁷Ibid., p. 305.
The Ministry of the Holy Spirit

The Identity of the Holy Spirit

As already noted, White states that God "is in active communication with every part of His dominion" through angels. But then she adds: "By His Spirit He is everywhere." To her, the "mighty power that works through all nature and sustains all things is not, as some men of science represent, merely an all-pervading principle, an actuating energy. God is a Spirit, yet He is a personal Being; for so He has revealed Himself."^2

The Holy Spirit is the "Third Person of the Godhead,"^3 whose nature is a mystery man cannot explain. But, White thinks that, in fact, "it is not essential for us to be able to define just what the Holy Spirit is."^5

It is evident throughout White's writings that God communicates with man, speaking through the influence of the agency of His Holy Spirit. With such communication, the "Holy Spirit puts forth its highest energies to work in heart and mind."^7 But what is its object? To "purify the heart and renew the mind, giving us a new capacity for knowing and loving God."^8 Just how the Holy Spirit operates in the human mind cannot be explained by learned reasoning.

^1 Ministry of Healing, p. 417.
^2 Ibid., p. 413.
^3 Desire of Ages, p. 671.
^5 Ibid., p. 51.
^6 Patriarchs and Prophets, p. 405; Steps to Christ, p. 87.
^7 Desire of Ages, p. 827.
^8 Ibid., p. 189.
However, His "effects upon the life and action" are evident.  

Always God works by His Holy Spirit to accomplish His purpose in behalf of men. Although in past ages the influence of the Holy Spirit has not been revealed in His fullness, His operation is not peculiar to any age or race, and is to continue until the end of time.

The Holy Spirit: Christ's Representative

White believes the Holy Spirit is Christ's personal representative to every man. The Spirit is so closely related, even identified with Christ, that she refers to them both with identical terms. She even calls Him the "Spirit of Christ." "Through the Spirit, Christ" is "to abide continually in the hearts of His children." Unfolding this idea, White writes:

So, the very Christ who so loved, taught, and worked to show the

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3Ibid., p. 37.  
4Ibid., p. 49.
6Desire of Ages, p. 494.  
7Steps to Christ, p. 75.
8Desire of Ages, p. 669.
character and the plan of the Father during His ministry on earth is constantly working upon minds and hearts. But what is the Spirit's specific work in man?

The Holy Spirit: The Only Effectual Teacher

White holds that the work of the Spirit is to define and maintain the truth. Consequently, "through the Scriptures the Holy Spirit speaks to the mind, and impresses truth upon the heart."¹ Thus, men can "perceive the beauty of truth."² In order to reach this objective, the "Spirit is constantly seeking to draw the attention of men to the great offering that was made on the cross of Calvary, to unfold to the world the love of God, and to open to the convicted soul the precious things of the Scriptures."³

Commenting upon this, White further states:

The Holy Spirit exalts and glorifies the Saviour. It is His office to present Christ, the purity of His righteousness, and the great salvation that we have through Him. Jesus says, "He shall receive of Mine, and shall show it unto you." John 16:14. The Spirit of truth is the only effectual teacher of divine truth.⁴

Therefore, White sees the Spirit as the teacher without whose illumination "humanity cannot discern the glory of Christ,"⁵ neither "appreciate the things of the heavenly world,"⁶ nor the

⁴Steps to Christ, p. 91. ⁵Desire of Ages, p. 508.
"significance of the plan of redemption."¹ One of the reasons why she thinks the Bible cannot be rightly comprehended unless the reader is taught by the Holy Spirit is because "it is a sealed book even to the learned, who are wise in their own conceit."² So the presence and guidance of "the Spirit was promised by the Saviour to open the word to His servants, to illuminate and apply its teachings."³ There was and still is a real need of the ministry of the Spirit for "enlightening the understanding and opening to the mind the deep things of God's word."⁴

The Holy Spirit: A Transforming Power

The Spirit is not only the effectual teacher of the Scriptures, He is also a transforming divine power. White explains that "by an agency as unseen as the wind, Christ is constantly working upon the heart."⁵ Little by little impressions are made through such means as meditation upon Christ, reading the Scriptures, or hearing the word from a living preacher. "Suddenly, as the Spirit comes with more direct appeal, the soul gladly surrenders itself to Jesus."⁶

In a further step, the Holy Spirit through the great agency

²"Constant Attainment Essential to Christian Life," RH 66 (June 4, 1889):353; see also Steps to Christ, p. 110.
³Great Controversy, p. vii.
⁴Ibid., p. ix.
⁵Desire of Ages, p. 172.
⁶Ibid.
of the Scriptures accomplishes the transformation of character. He "comes to convict of sin, and the faith that springs up in the heart works by love to Christ, conforming us, body, soul, and spirit, to His will." But this is not merely a modification or improvement of the old life. It is "a transformation of nature" by the active working of the Holy Spirit. This regenerating agent "conforms the renewed soul to the model, Jesus Christ." "Enmity against God is changed into faith and love and pride into humility," and "Christ is honored in excellence and perfection of character."4

The Spirit, when it has pervaded the soul, quickens its faculties, strengthens the hope and assurance of the believer, purifies his heart, and sanctifies his entire being. "Through the Spirit [he] becomes a partaker of the divine nature." The gift of the Holy Spirit, which is the gift of the life of Christ, "imbues the receiver with the attributes of Christ."5

The work brought about by the transforming power of the Spirit in the inner temple of the human soul regenerates the whole being and necessarily bears fruit. White acknowledges this fact

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2Desire of Ages, p. 172.  
3Ibid., p. 671.
6Prophets and Kings, p. 660.
8Desire of Ages, p. 671.  
9Ibid., p. 805.
when she writes: "Those who know the indwelling of this Spirit reveal its fruits,—love, joy, peace, long suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith."\(^1\) But, it would be self-contradictory to try to enjoy this fruit in the isolation of an unreasonable selfishness. All that the believers receive from Christ through the Holy Spirit is to be transmitted to mankind.

The Holy Spirit and the Transmission of Religious Heritage

In White's view, "it is to make men agents for God that divine truth is brought home to their understanding" under the action of the Holy Spirit. To her, knowledge of the truth and service cannot be separated. She states: "Receiving the truth, men become also recipients of the grace of Christ, and devote their sanctified human ability to the work in which Christ was engaged,—men become laborers together with God."\(^2\) Dealing with the same idea, she comments elsewhere that the Spirit is impressing the hearts of men, "and those who respond to its influence will become lights in the world." They are to communicate to others the light they have received.\(^3\)

In the same vein of thinking, White maintains that "God takes men as they are and [under the guidance of the Holy Spirit,] educates them for His service."\(^4\) Then the Spirit "provides opportunities and

\(^2\)"Ordained to Bring Forth Fruit," RH 72 (Feb. 12, 1895):97.
\(^4\)Desire of Ages, p. 251.
opens channels of working,"\(^1\) sanctifies their tongues,\(^2\) and implants zeal for God's glory as the motive to accomplish the task.\(^3\) Furthermore, to transmit the Word accurately, the Spirit brings all truths to remembrance.\(^4\) This specific function of the Spirit is vital to assure the purity of channels for the transmission of truth. Referring to the apostles' experience, she says: "Thus the truth would come down through pure channels commending itself to the hearts of the receivers."\(^5\)

To show what happens when the Spirit of God has made adequate preparation because He has been fully received, the experience of the apostolic Pentecost must be mentioned. White explains it thus: "They realized the greatness of their debt to heaven and responsibility of their work. Strengthened by the endowment of the Holy Spirit, they went forth filled with zeal to extend the triumphs of the cross. The Spirit animated them and spoke through them.\(^6\)

She adds:

The glad tidings of a risen Saviour were carried to the uttermost parts of the inhabited world. As the disciples proclaimed the message of redeeming grace, hearts yielded to the power of this message. The church beheld converts flocking to her from all directions. Backsliders were reconverted. Sinners united

\(^1\)Prophets and Kings, p. 660.

\(^2\)Ibid., p. 109.  

\(^3\)Desire of Ages, p. 409.


with believers in seeking the pearl of great price. Some who had been the bitterest opponents of the gospel became its champions.¹

In a certain place she summarizes the event with these words:

"Through the cooperation of the divine Spirit the labors of the humble men whom Christ had chosen stirred the world."²

The Need and Importance of the Holy Spirit

The experience of Pentecost belongs to the past. It remains as an illustration of what can be done when believers are willing to cooperate with the Holy Spirit to accomplish the task which is before them. But what are White's views concerning the work of the Spirit in carrying truth for this time to the whole world?

If this tremendous task is only related to the shortness of time before the end comes and the condition of the church, two ideas have to be noted from White's writings. First, she argues that every minister, teacher, medical worker, and church member is "in positive need of the Holy Spirit."³ Second, she maintains that the "ministry of the Holy Spirit is of vital importance to the church of Christ."⁴ Since there is a great work to do, "the Spirit of the living God must enter into the living messenger, that the truth may

¹Ibid., p. 48.

²"Till We All Come to the Unity of Faith," RH 85 (Nov. 12, 1908):7.


⁴Great Controversy, p. viii.
go with power. The people of God must be aroused from their moral
deadness.\(^1\)

But truth will go forward with power when the conditions
required are fulfilled. So, White's contention is that "a revival
and reformation must take place, under the ministration of the Holy
Spirit."\(^2\) She further thinks: "When we bring our hearts into unity
with Christ, and our lives into harmony with His work, the Spirit
that fell on the disciples on the day of Pentecost will fall on
us."\(^3\) In reality, she believes the "work of the gospel is not to
close with less manifestation of the power of God than [that which]
marked its opening."\(^4\) When "God's work is closing, the earnest ef-
forts put forth by consecrated believers under the guidance of the
Holy Spirit are to be accompanied by special tokens of divine
favor."\(^5\)

When that moment comes, the measure of the Spirit is granted
according to certain conditions. In White's thinking this is clear:

The measure of the Holy Spirit we receive will be proportioned
to the measure of our desire and the faith exercised for it,
and the use we shall make of the light and knowledge that
shall be given to us. We shall be entrusted with the Holy
Spirit according to our ability to impart it to others.\(^6\)

\(^{\text{1}}\)"The Church Must Be Quickened," RH 70 (Jan. 17, 1893):33.
\(^{\text{2}}\)"The Need of a Revival and Reformation," RH 79
(Feb. 25, 1902):113.
\(^{\text{3}}\)"Lay Members to Go Forth," RH 80 (June 30, 1903):7.
\(^{\text{4}}\)Great Controversy, p. 611.
\(^{\text{5}}\)Acts of the Apostles, p. 54.
\(^{\text{6}}\)"Operation of the Holy Spirit Made Manifest in the Life,"
For White, the fact is that there is no limit to the usefulness of those who make room for the working of the Holy Spirit upon their hearts and live a life consecrated to God. "The inexhaustible supplies of heaven are at their command."\(^1\) Furthermore, only "those who possess the inward working of the Spirit and in whose life the Christ-life is manifested, are to stand as representative men, to minister in behalf of the church."\(^2\)

Based on what has been studied so far, it is plain the Spirit is needed and is of vital importance not only in the preparation for, but also in the transmission of, the Christian beliefs. In this respect, White holds that the communication of the Word "will be of no avail, without the continual presence and aid of the Holy Spirit."\(^3\) In the absence of the Spirit the ministry of the gospel is rendered powerless.

White's insistence on the matter is derived from her stand that one might be familiar with all God's commands and promises and be able to present the letter of the Word, "but unless the Holy Spirit sets home the truth, no souls will fall on the Rock and be broken,"\(^5\) "no heart will be touched, no sinner won to Christ."\(^6\) She discusses her views further:

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\(^1\) *Ministry of Healing*, p. 159.
\(^2\) *Desire of Ages*, p. 805.  
\(^3\) Ibid., p. 671.

\(^4\) "The Promise of the Spirit," *RH* 85 (April 30, 1908):9; see also "Directions for Work," *RH* 80 (June 2, 1903):8.

\(^5\) *Desire of Ages*, p. 672.

It is not always the most learned presentation of God's truth that convicts and converts the soul. Not by eloquence or logic are men's hearts reached, but by the sweet influences of the Holy Spirit, which operate quietly yet surely in transforming and developing character. It is the still, small voice of the Spirit of God that has power to change the heart.

White's conclusions are, therefore, consequent to her thought: (1) the most powerful sermons may be preached, but the spoken Word will be valueless unless it is accompanied by the Spirit. "No one is safe in attempting to work without the Holy Spirit"; 2 (2) only cooperation with the Spirit of God can make one "a channel of light"; 3 (3) the message must be carried "not so much by argument as by the deep conviction of the Spirit"; 4 (4) the words "are to be an evidence that the Holy Spirit is speaking through" His messengers. 5

Moreover, since the necessity and importance of the Holy Spirit is so great, and since the Lord is willing to give it to those who serve Him, 6 White implies that, (1) as the disciples of the past, today's believers should claim the power that Christ has promised, 7 and (2) every worker should be "prepared to receive and use" this power "for the ripening of earth's harvest." 8

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1 Prophets and Kings, p. 169.
2 "Co-workers with Christ," RH 78 (July 30, 1901):484.
4 Great Controversy, p. 612.
5 "Notes of Travel—No. 7: The Merced Camp-meeting," RH 84 (Sept 12, 1907):10.
7 Ibid., p. 37.
8 Ibid., p. 56.
Summary

The ministry of the angels and of the Holy Spirit is the supernatural provision to help man in his responsibility in the transmission of the sacred legacy, and to resist Satan's work. Angels are God's messengers to link heaven with earth and to provide for the needs of the believers. They are the directors of the communication of the gospel. Man and heavenly beings are to work together. The angels counsel, instruct, and prepare hearts for the reception of truth by illuminating and impressing the mind, yet their action is limited by inconsistent human behavior. Men are to consecrate themselves fully to God that they may be used as channels of light. Angels create the ideal climate for the transmission of God's truth.

According to White, the Holy Spirit is everywhere, working in men's minds and hearts. He is Christ's representative and the only effectual teacher of the Word. The Spirit's task does not consist only in directing and helping to facilitate the transmission of the sacred heritage of the Word, as angels do. Furthermore, the very object of the process is reached by the Spirit's regenerating and transforming power. Through His action men and women are illuminated, purified, sanctified, and transformed into a new life. The Spirit imbues the believers with a sense of mission, and empowers them to be efficient messengers. Without the Spirit, White argues, the believers are totally incapable of accomplishing the task. So God works with human agencies in a supernatural way. It is only through the Holy Spirit's action that the religious heritage can
attain God's aim of reaching the entire world, and even the genera-
tions of the future, by offering salvation to every individual.
CHAPTER VI

EDUCATION AND THE TRANSMISSION
OF RELIGIOUS HERITAGE

In concluding this contextual study, some consideration must be given to White's concept of education in relation to the passing on of the Christian legacy. Her views on the subject are examined in the following order: the (1) nature, (2) objectives, (3) source and foundation, and (4) role of education in the transmission of religious heritage.

Christian Religious Education

It is White's contention that true education means more than the acquisition of "intellectual culture,"¹ or "the pursual of a certain course of study."² She does not see the highest work of education to be mere communication of knowledge.³ In explaining her position, she says:

Philosophy and history are important studies; but your sacrifice of time and money will avail nothing if you do not use your attainments for the honor of God and the good of humanity. Unless the knowledge of science is a stepping stone to the attainment of the highest purposes, it is worthless. Education that does not furnish knowledge as enduring as eternity is of

² Education, p. 13.
no purpose. Unless you keep heaven and the future, immortal life before you, your attainments are of no permanent value.  

Furthermore, because of White's belief that education "means more than a preparation for the life that now is," 2 she maintains that it is "a misconception of the true nature" and object of education to neglect the establishment of principles "in the effort to secure intellectual culture, or to overlook eternal interest in the eager desire for temporal advantage." 3

To White, education is Christian education, or rather, education which is wholly and plainly Christian. This is so important that she refuses to let religion and education be separated—"true education is religion." 4 Moreover, in her educational thinking, "in the highest sense the work of education and the work of redemption are one." 5

The Objectives of Education

Restoration of Man

Discussing the identity of the objectives of redemption and education, White writes:

To restore in man the image of His maker, to bring him back to the perfection in which he was created, to promote the development of body, mind, and soul, that the divine purpose in his

5 Education, p. 30.
creation might be realized—this was to be the work of redemption. This is the object of education, the great object of life.

She sees in the restoration of the image of God in man "the great object of life" which "underlies every other." This work of restoration is a character-building process which embodies the development of each portion of human nature—physical, mental, and moral.

As a consequence of these views, White believes a comprehensive education is needed. Education is incomplete unless the body, the mind, and the soul are symmetrically educated. All the faculties of the being must be developed and trained in order for education to fulfill its objective. But why must all the faculties be developed? Because, to her, education is preparation for service.

Preparation for Service

In her primary educational book, White summarizes her thoughts on the objective of education. She says "education is the harmonious development of the physical, mental, and the spiritual powers. It prepares the student for the joy of service in this world and for the higher joy of wider service in the world to come." In her thinking, education and service are inseparable.

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1 Ibid., pp. 15-16.
2 Patriarchs and Prophets, p. 595.
4 Ministry of Healing, p. 398.
5 Education, p. 13.
"All the varied capabilities that men possess" are to be employed "to reach the highest possible degree of excellence." This, as pointed out, is the work of education. "But," White argues, "this cannot be selfish and exclusive culture; for the character of God, whose likeness we are to receive, is benevolence and love." So in harmony with this idea, she believes that the "law of love calls for the devotion of body, mind, and soul to the service of God and our fellow men." This said, the way is opened to consider the source and foundation of education.

Source and Foundation of Education
God's Character

White places at the foundation of education the principles inherent in the character of God. She emphasizes them as "goodness, mercy, and love." Men must apply these principles to further their own development and the development of their fellowmen. The educator, in utilizing these principles, becomes analogous with God. "Help the child to see that parents and teachers are representatives of God, and that, as they act in harmony with Him their laws in the home and the school are also His." "As religious principle lies at the foundation of highest education," "the education should be such

1Patriarchs and Prophets, p. 595.
2Education, p. 16.
4Education, p. 287.
5"Notes of Travel," RH 60 (Nov. 6, 1883):690.

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that the students will make right principles the guide of every action."  

Although White also mentions the fear of the Lord as being at the basis of all true education, her main emphasis is laid upon the principle of love. In a relevant statement regarding this matter, she equates love with the realization of the restoration of God's image in man.

Love, the basis of creation and of redemption, is the basis of true education. . . . To love Him, the infinite, the omnipotent one, with the whole strength and mind and heart, means the highest development of every power. It means that in the whole being—the body, the mind, as well as the soul—the image of God is to be restored.

White points out also that "unselfishness underlies all true development. Through unselfish service we receive the highest culture of every faculty. More and more fully do we become partakers of the divine nature." Therefore, the methods by which education is to be accomplished must harmonize with love as it is found in the character of God.

Knowledge of God

In White's understanding, the restoration of man takes place as he learns to know God. As she puts it, in "a knowledge of God


4 Education, p. 16.

5 Prophets and Kings, p. 595.
all true knowledge and real development have their source."¹ This conviction causes her to place great emphasis upon the knowledge of God as the "foundation of all true education."² Because "God is the source of all true knowledge, it is . . . the first object of education to direct our minds to His own revelation of Himself . . . that God has given in His written word."³ In the sacred Word, not only God, the Creator, is revealed, but also Christ, the Redeemer, whose knowledge, together with that of God, is the "first and most precious knowledge."⁴

In the light of her basic position, White holds that the Scriptures "should be given the highest place in education."⁵ Furthermore, she believes that the "Bible must be made the groundwork and subject matter of education."⁶

White states at least two essential reasons to support her views: (1) as already noted, because the "great and essential knowledge is the knowledge of God and of His Word,"⁷ and "this knowledge is the essential preparation both for this life and for the life to

¹ Ministry of Healing, p. 409.
³ Education, pp. 16-17.

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to come"; and (2) because the Bible "is the most perfect educational book in our world," which, as an educating power, "is without a rival." Commenting about the educational power of the Bible, White explains that in "the Word of God the mind finds subject for the deepest thought, the loftiest aspiration." The science of Christianity to be mastered is, in her judgment, "a science as much deeper, broader, higher, than any human science as the heavens are higher than the earth." And yet, no scientific works are so "well adapted to develop the mind," nor more calculated to energize the mind, and "strengthen the intellect than the study of the Bible." Under this study, the mind also becomes "more evenly balanced" than in other studies disconnected from the Bible. Moreover, since the "mind gradually adapts itself to the subjects upon which it is allowed to dwell," it is impossible to prayerfully study the Bible without having "the intellect

1 Ministry of Healing, p. 409.
4 Patriarchs and Prophets, p. 596.
disciplined, ennobled, purified, and refined."¹ "If God's word were studied as it should be," White remarks, "men would have a breadth of mind, a nobility of character, and a stability of purpose, that is rarely seen in these times."² It seems, therefore, logical for her to say that "the highest education is found in the Word" of God.³

In White's thinking that knowledge which is the source of true education is an "experimental knowledge."⁴ This experimental knowledge results from the "entrance of the word into the heart" by "the power of the Holy Spirit," from the acceptance of truth not only in the intellect but in the conscience.⁵ The individual learns to recognize the voice of God as that of a daily companion and friend.⁶

The divine voice can be heard through the ministry of the Spirit by means of the Word. White explains how that voice is related to the Word:

God's holy, educating Spirit is in His word. A light, a new and precious light, shines forth from every page. Truth is there revealed, and words and sentences are made bright and appropriate for the occasion, as the voice of God speaking to the soul.⁷

So, with the Scriptures in his hands, every human being

¹ "Books in Our Schools," RH 68 (Nov. 10, 1891):690.
² "The Value of Bible Study," RH 65 (July 17, 1888):449.
⁵ "The Bible a Means of Both Mental and Moral Culture," RH 60 (Sept. 25, 1883):609.
⁶ Education, p. 127; Ministry of Healing, p. 460.
⁷ Christ's Object Lessons, p. 132.
should live "in fellowship with heaven"\(^1\) and obtain higher education. Because, as White says, "in the communion of the mind of man with the mind of God is found the highest education."\(^2\) In this communion and in all the process of education, the Spirit is the basic essential power. So basic is the Spirit to education that White considers that "the Holy Spirit is an educating power wherever it is found. To have the higher education ... is to have close friendship with God, to be in that place where we can have communion with Him, and work under the ministration of His Spirit."\(^3\)

Individuality

An important aspect yet to be noted is White's assertion that through education the individuality is to be developed. Individuality is "the power to think and to do."\(^4\) She stands for the education through which all students should "learn to think for themselves,"\(^5\) and not merely to reflect the thoughts of other men.\(^6\) Therefore, she opposes that "education [which] consists [merely] in the training of the memory," because it tends to "discourage independent thought" and the student becomes unable to discriminate between truth and error.\(^7\) The men in whom individuality is developed are the "men who bear responsibilities, who are leaders in enterprise, and who

\(^1\) _Education_, p. 127.  
\(^2\) Ibid., p. 15.  
\(^4\) _Education_, p. 17.  
\(^6\) _Education_, p. 17.  
\(^7\) Ibid., p. 230.
influence character." In fact, it is by exercising this power of thought and action that character develops.

Human Body

Finally, since White pleads for a harmonious integral education in her philosophy of education, she constantly presents the need for the development of the whole being. So, it is worthy to mention here once more what was already considered, namely, the need for the development of the physical faculties.

Both the moral and intellectual growth of man are related to the condition of the body. Accordingly White says that "in order to reach a high standard of moral and intellectual attainment the laws that control our physical being must be heeded. To secure a strong, well-balanced character, both the mental and the physical powers must be exercised and developed." Commenting further on this same subject, she writes:

All should have an intelligent knowledge of the human frame that they may keep their bodies in the condition necessary to do the work of the Lord. The physical life is to be carefully preserved and developed that through humanity the divine nature may be revealed in its fullness. The relation of the physical organism to the spiritual life is one of the most important branches of education.

White thinks "a knowledge of physiology and hygiene should be the basis of all educational effort." She mentions, for

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1Ibid., p. 17.
3Christ's Object Lessons, p. 348; Ministry of Healing, p. 402.
4Education, p. 195.
instance, specific health areas such as "outdoor exercise, especially in useful labor,"¹ good habits of diet,² adequate clothing,³ cleanliness,⁴ and "healthful cookery."⁵

The Role of Education in the Transmission of Religious Heritage

As already observed, while there is to be restoration with "the world to come" in view, White sees the aim of education to be relevant also to the present. Education prepares the student for service "in this world."⁶ Referring to the work of education, she says the Christian "must build up a character for usefulness,"⁷ to render a "faithful service" to the Creator⁸ "in advancing" His "glory."⁹

What kind of service does White refer to as the aim of education? "True education is missionary training. The sons and daughters of God are called to be missionaries; called to the service of God and their fellow men; and to fit us for this service should be the object of our education."¹⁰

This kind of education, White says, aims at youth becoming

missionaries for either home or foreign fields, "that they may be­come pillars in the church, champions for truth, rooted and grounded in the faith."¹ Cultivated young men and women are needed who may be fit for places of responsibility both in "public and private life," and "competent workers" for the various departments of the work of God.²

According to White there is only one work which is "the greatest,"³ and "the most sacred . . . ever committed to mortals"⁴— the proclamation of truth to the world.⁵ To prepare for service, especially in this saving task, is the object of education.

As it has been noted, White identifies the truth to be proclaimed with the accumulated religious heritage which is contained in the Scripture. From this it can be inferred that the role of education is to prepare young people to accomplish the worldwide work of transmitting the sacred legacy.

Moreover, its role goes even further. Education is itself a means of transmitting truth. Since, according to White, the Bible is the groundwork and subject matter of true education,⁶ and since

¹"The Best Education and Its Purpose," RH 70 (Nov. 21, 1893):725.
⁴"Go, Preach the Gospel," RH 75 (March 22, 1898):182.
the young person is educated by the Word, when education is taking
place, truth is in the process of being transmitted to individuals, and potentially, to other people—even future generations.

Education is not only a preparation for the joy of a future service; it is also a present joyful service. "To learn and do the works of Christ," in White's views, "is to obtain a true education."\(^1\) Therefore, education is a means—preparation—toward an end—service. But, service itself is also a means for a greater education. In other words, education for service is obtained through service.

What are the limits set for man's possibilities for service and education? There are none. White believes "God would have us students as long as we remain in this world, ever learning and bearing responsibility."\(^2\) In addition, she says: "In the school of Christ, students never graduate." They will continue their education "throughout eternity."\(^3\) It is a never-ending process.

**Summary**

To White, education is more than the mere acquisition of intellectual culture, more than the communication of knowledge. She sees the objective of education as the restoration of God's image in man. This work is a character-building procedure which develops the


physical, mental, and moral faculties of man. For this aim a comprehensive education is needed. Education prepares the student for service in this world, and in the world to come. In her thinking, education for service is the highest education. Love and experiential knowledge of God through the study of the Scriptures are the foundation for such education. Through it, men become able to develop their own individualities as independent thinkers. To know how the human body functions and how to take care of it is basic to any educational effort. Now, going to the very essence of the aim of education, White believes education is missionary training. The proclamation of the accumulated truth received from the past is the greatest work ever committed to mortals. To prepare for this service is the aim of education.

Moreover, education itself is a means to transmit truth. It is a present, joyful service, both for the teacher and for the student. In short, because of its nature, objective, foundation, and process, true education is the most important element in the transmission of the sacred legacy of Christianity to all the world.
This part of the study analyzes three major dynamic factors in the transmission of religious heritage that are found in White's writings. To meet this objective, these factors are considered in the following order: (1) conscious teaching, (2) celebration, and (3) modeling.
CHAPTER VII

CONSCIOUS TEACHING AND LEARNING IN THE TRANSMISSION OF RELIGIOUS HERITAGE

Having examined Ellen White's fundamental concepts basic to the transmission of religious heritage, the research now turns to conscious teaching and learning as dynamic factors in the transmission of the Christian legacy. These factors are considered in the realm of the home, the school, and the church.

The Teaching Task and Learning Process in the Christian Home

White's thinking on the teaching task and learning process in the Christian home is considered in this section under five divisions: (1) importance of the home teaching, (2) importance of education in the early years, (3) general parental responsibility, (4) home atmosphere, and (5) parental teaching task.

Importance of the Home Teaching

In White's writings there is a principle related to home teaching which is of paramount importance in the process of transmitting Christian faith and values. She expresses her views this way: "If children were trained to love and fear God at home, when they go forth into the world they would be prepared to train their own
families for God."\(^1\) Elsewhere she emphasizes the same principle: "The children, as they make homes of their own, feel under no obligation to teach their children what they themselves have never been taught."\(^2\) These two statements reveal the importance, in White's thinking, of the home-teaching task in passing on the Christian legacy to present and future homes. There is a close relation between today's and tomorrow's Christian homes. They are built on the same foundation.

"The family circle," says White, "is the school in which the child receives his first and most enduring lessons."\(^3\) The child's "spiritual" experience "begins" in the home.\(^4\) It is the first mission field to which parents are called to labor,\(^5\) and it is where "the future of their children is largely decided."\(^6\) Therefore, "home missionary work is a most important work."\(^7\)

Because of the far-reaching consequences of home training, and because of the parent's initial and immediate role, White considers the task of parents to be essential in the learning process of children. "There is no higher trust than that committed to __________

\(^{1}\) "Parental Neglect," RH 63 (May 4, 1886):273.

\(^{2}\) Patriarchs and Prophets, p. 143.

\(^{3}\) "The Home and the School," RH 59 (March 21, 1882):177.


\(^{6}\) Prophets and Kings, p. 245.

fathers and mothers in the care and training of their children."¹ Therefore, parents must become "mouthpieces" of God to "teach the precepts of true Christianity" and the home is to be a place of religious instruction.² In fact, parents stand "in the place of God to their children,"³ and they are responsible for bringing them to an understanding of the sacred knowledge they have received.⁴

For White, the family circle is a school and the first mission field, but it is also a "little church."⁵ And God demands parents to bring into His church the grace and power of heaven placed at their disposal.⁶ She summarizes her views on the importance of the home teaching this way:

Child training is the grandest work ever committed to mortals. The child belongs to the Lord, and from the time it is an infant in its mother's arms, it is to be trained for him, trained to enter his service. For the first years of a child's life, the home is to be its school. In the home, parents and children are together to learn the way of the Lord. Carefully and untiringly parents are to watch the opening minds of their children, giving them the lessons they need in order to develop into Christian men and women. Parents should make all else subordinate to the work God has given them to do for their children.⁷

¹ "Prophets and Kings," p. 245.
² "Duty of Man to His Fellow-men," RH 72 (Nov. 12, 1895):721.
³ "Ordained to Bring Forth Fruit," RH 72 (Feb. 19, 1895):113.
Importance of Early Years

White feels parents generally fail "to begin their work early enough."1 "Religious instruction should be lovingly imparted to the little ones from their earliest years."2 She sees the earliest years of childhood as the most impressionable. "There are no influences so potent, no memories so enduring, as those of childhood."3 Therefore, "the lessons which they receive in early years, they will carry with them through life."4 Their "whole religious experience" will be affected by their childhood.5 Moreover, in those early years, "influences are exerted the results of which are as enduring as eternity."6

Although, according to White, the very first teaching the child receives should be given by both parents,7 she emphasizes the teaching task of the mother. She is the child's "first teacher."8 White even mentions that "parents should be the only teachers of


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their children, until they are eight or ten years of age."1 She further states:

The work of parents precedes that of the teacher. They have a home school,—the first grade. If they seek carefully and prayerfully to know and to do their duty, they will prepare their children to enter the second grade,—to receive instructions from their teacher. If parents are so engrossed in the business and pleasures of this life that they neglect the proper discipline of their children, the work of the teacher is not only made very hard and trying, but often rendered wholly fruitless.2

What then is the parent's work during the years before the children enter school? First, White thinks they must study the minds and characters of their children. They also "must work, watch, pray, and encourage every good inclination."3 Second, parents are to teach their little ones "to know Christ."4 "One of the first sounds that should attract their attention is the name of Jesus."5 Third, the mother, White specifies, "should teach her children how to pray, by having them repeat a simple prayer after her";6 "in their earliest years they should be led to the footstool of prayer."7 Fourth, parents are to "teach [children] to love God, to fear to offend Him," and to be reverent.8 Fifth, parents should begin to establish in

5"Ordained to Bring Forth Fruit," RH 72 (Feb. 19, 1895):113.
7"Ordained to Bring Forth Fruit," RH 72 (Feb. 19, 1895):113.
them "correct methods and habits."1 Parents are to "train their children in habits of self-control and self-denial."2 Finally, parents should fill their children's minds "with stories of the life of the Lord," and should encourage their imagination "in picturing the glories of the world to come."3

To bring children up in the way of God "costs" something, says White. "It costs a mother's tears and a father's prayers. It calls for unflagging effort, for patient instruction, . . . but this work pays."4 She explains in other places why good results may be expected from parent's work. On one hand, White says, "children are the most susceptible to the teachings of the gospel; their hearts are open to divine influences, and strong to retain the lessons received."5 On the other hand, when parents fail "to instruct, guide, and restrain," the children tend to naturally accept "the evil and turn from the good."6 Therefore, in her opinion, to lead the "children's feet into the path of righteousness from their earliest years" should be the parent's first business.7 The children will go to

3 "Ordained to Bring Forth Fruit," RH 72 (Feb. 19, 1895):113.
4 "Overcoming As Christ Overcame," RH 78 (July 9, 1901):436.
5 Desire of Ages, p. 515.
6 Patriarchs and Prophets, pp. 572-73.
Jesus unless they are hindered by their parent's neglect in instructing, guiding, and restraining them.  

Parental Responsibility

It seems logical for White to say that the destiny of their children rests, to a great degree, in the parent's hands. This fact underscores not only the "highest duty" of parents to give their children a religious training, but, furthermore, it stresses the responsibility which rests upon them "of being light-bearers and light-givers." White points out that parents "are responsible for the health, the constitution, and the development of the character of their children."

To accomplish this responsibility, White emphasizes a supreme role for the mother. "Just as verily as the minister has his appointed work, the mother has hers." Further, "the wife [of a minister] and mother is doing fully as great and important a work as the husband and father." She is "God's agent to Christianize her family." "The true mother is adapted to be the true teacher of

1 "Desire of Ages," p. 517.
4 "Words to Parents," RH 78 (Jan. 29, 1901):65; see also "Moses and Aaron," RH 42 (July 29, 1873):52.
children.\textsuperscript{1} "She is to teach them to bring God into their lives."\textsuperscript{2}

White regards the mother's role as so important that she states that "the hand that rocks the cradle is the hand that rules the world."\textsuperscript{3}

White also considers the father's role as important. "The father should be the faithful high-priest of the home, the house-band of the family."\textsuperscript{4} As priest, he "should explain and enforce the Word of God,"\textsuperscript{5} and be a source of "constant sympathy and help" to the mother.\textsuperscript{6} He should feel that home and the family circle are "too sacred to be marred" by the bringing in of "unhappy perplexities" from his daily labor.\textsuperscript{7}

In order for parents to carry their responsibility successfully, there are some conditions they must fulfill. These conditions will prepare the parents for the realization of their responsibility. White points out some of these: First:

Before parents can teach their children correctly, they must themselves learn in the school of Christ. Then, in humility and love, let them work for their children, determined not to fail nor be discouraged. They are to have faith that their efforts will not be in vain. Patient, untiring work will win the blessing of God. Divine power will combine with human

\textsuperscript{1}"Address and Appeal Setting Forth the Importance of Missionary Work," \textit{RH} 52 (Dec. 19, 1878):194.

\textsuperscript{2}"Think on These Things," \textit{RH} 79 (Dec. 23, 1902):8.

\textsuperscript{3}"Overcoming as Christ Overcame," \textit{RH} 78 (July 9, 1901):436.


\textsuperscript{5}"The Parents' Work," \textit{RH} 58 (Aug. 30, 1881):145.


\textsuperscript{7}"Disease and Its Causes," \textit{RH} 76 (Aug. 8, 1899):506.
endeavor, and the hearts of the children will be turned in loving obedience to Christ.1

Second, parents must also learn how to "co-operate with the Lord in His work upon the heart. The first essential . . . is consecration" of themselves and their all to God.2 Third, "the will of the parents must first be under discipline to Christ, molded and controlled by the Holy Spirit, and then parents must have control of the child."3 And fourth:

Parents, your minds should be full of the truths of the Bible. Your memory should be stored with its inspiring examples and fascinating incidents, your hearts softened and subdued by its deep spiritual lessons. Then as you teach your children, they will catch the enthusiasm you feel.4

The Organization of the Home Life

Since the home is the first and most immediate environment of children, White counsels that in choosing a home, first of all, "the moral and religious influences that will surround" it are to be taken into consideration.5 She advises families to move out of the cities "as fast as possible. Parents can secure small homes in the country, with land for cultivation, where the children will not be surrounded with the corrupting influences of city life."6

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1"Words to Parents," RH 78 (Jan. 29, 1901):65.
4"Words to Parents," RH 77 (Dec. 18, 1900):801.
5Patriarchs and Prophets, p. 169.
In the country, she adds, "the influences are most favorable for physical and mental strength." This could be considered a preliminary step tending to create the best conditions possible for the transmission of the parent's beliefs and values to their children.

White is also concerned with the inner atmosphere of the home. This atmosphere includes all that provides a pleasant and comfortable home, such as simple furniture, tastefully arranged. But the home atmosphere to which White especially refers is of a different nature. She alludes to the atmosphere which is created when Christ is let into the hearts and homes. The home is then made all that the name implies, "a little heaven upon the earth," "a place where angels of God can come in and bless." White urges parents to do their part to create such an atmosphere:

Parents, let the sunshine of love, cheerfulness, and happy contentment enter your own hearts, and let its sweet, cheering influence pervade your home. Manifest a kindly, forbearing spirit; and encourage the same in your children, cultivating all the graces that will brighten the home-life. The atmosphere thus created will be to the children what air and sunshine are to the vegetable world, promoting health and vigor of mind and body.

It is the parent's "duty to make home as attractive as possible." Indeed, it "should be to the children the most attractive...

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place in the world, and the mother's presence should be the greatest attraction.\(^1\) "Let us," states White, "do everything in our power to make music in our homes, that God may come in."\(^2\) Addressing herself to parents, she further says: "Throw around your children charms for home, and your society."\(^3\) "Children have sensitive, loving natures. They are easily pleased, and easily made unhappy."\(^4\) Therefore, "if your heart is sad, let not your face reveal the fact. Let the sunshine from a loving, grateful heart light up the countenance."\(^5\) So, White urges a stable emotional and spiritual atmosphere in the home, and views this as a contributing influence to impress children forever. Then, as they come to maturity, "they may look back upon the home of their childhood as a place of peace and happiness next to heaven."\(^6\)

The extremes of blind affection and harsh measures are to be avoided. There must be a combination of authority and affection.\(^7\) "There should be no ruling by impulse, no parental oppression; but at the same time no disobedience is to be overlooked."\(^8\)

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While "parents should keep the atmosphere of the home pure and fragrant with kind words, with tender sympathy, and love,... they are to be firm and unyielding in principle." White expresses the same idea in another place this way:

Make the home a Bethel, a holy, consecrated place. Make the lives of your children as happy as possible. Keep the soil of the heart mellow by love and affection, thus preparing it for the seed of truth. Remember that the Lord gives the earth not only clouds and rain, but the beautiful, smiling sunshine, causing the seed to spring up and the blossoms to appear. Remember that children need not only reproof and correction, but encouragement and commendation, the pleasant sunshine of kind words.

Since "the influence of a well-ordered, well-disciplined family is far greater for good than is the influence of powerful sermons from the pulpit," White believes "the grandest and noblest work that parents have to do for their Master is to bring Bible discipline into their government." She even maintains that a spirit of gentleness, meekness, and long-suffering is not incompatible with home discipline, but is indispensable if one is to have proper control of the children. In this context, there is no room for "loud-voiced commands," nor for "harsh, severe, gloomy representation."

"Love and tenderness, patience, and self-control must be at all times

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1 "Words to Parents." RH 74 (March 30, 1897):194.
3 "Awake out of Sleep," RH 70 (Feb. 21, 1893):114; see also "Moses and Aaron," RH 42 (July 29, 1873):52.
the law" of the parent's speech.\textsuperscript{1} Under such a home atmosphere, in White's view, "a well-disciplined family" which loves and obeys God "will be cheerful and happy."\textsuperscript{2}

This home atmosphere is but the natural fruit of "the power of divine grace" controlling "all the regulations of the household."\textsuperscript{3} It is created when religion is "interwoven with all the concerns of life,"\textsuperscript{4} when "practical godliness" is brought into the home.\textsuperscript{5} In this Christian atmosphere, parents and children are guided together by the "high and holy standard" of the Bible,\textsuperscript{6} they receive "heavenly influences,"\textsuperscript{7} and grow together in a knowledge of the truth\textsuperscript{8} and "in the grace of Christ."\textsuperscript{9} In addition, home atmosphere should include "kindness, courtesy,"\textsuperscript{10} closeness,\textsuperscript{11} sympathy,\textsuperscript{12} and sharing of

\begin{itemize}
\item [1]{"Parental Responsibility," \textit{RH} 75 (May 17, 1898):304.}
\item [2]{"Disease and Its Causes," \textit{RH} 76 (Aug. 8, 1898):506.}
\item [3]{"The Parents' Work," \textit{RH} 58 (Aug. 30, 1881):146.}
\item [4]{"Awake out of Sleep," \textit{RH} 70 (Feb. 21, 1893):114.}
\item [5]{"Godliness in the Every-day Life," \textit{RH} 78 (Dec. 31, 1901):843; "Practical Christianity," \textit{RH} 81 (Jan. 28, 1904):8.}
\item [6]{"The Mother's Work," \textit{RH} 68 (Sept. 15, 1891):562.}
\item [7]{"A Message to Parents," \textit{RH} 89 (Feb. 1, 1912):3.}
\item [8]{"Home Schools," \textit{RH} 86 (May 6, 1909):23.}
\item [9]{"A Godly Example in the Home," \textit{RH} 88 (Oct. 12, 1911):4.}
\item [10]{"Resisting Temptation," \textit{RH} 68 (May 19, 1891):306.}
\item [11]{"Lessons from the Past," \textit{RH} 80 (Dec. 17, 1903):8.}
\item [12]{"Proper Education," \textit{RH} 62 (July 14, 1885):433.}
\end{itemize}
responsibilities of the "family firm." White explains: "The family firm is a sacred, social society, in which each member is to act a part, each helping the other."2

When Christian faith and values are integral parts of all life and learning, when an authentic religious spirit pervades all manifestations of home life and sanctifies parent's and children's relations, then religion becomes more appealing. White expresses her position in this way: "Parents are to make the religion of Christ attractive." As parents do this, "God will guide their children into all truth, filling them with a desire to fit themselves for the mansions which Christ has gone to prepare for those that love Him."5 As a consequence, the service of God becomes inviting.6 In such an elevating climate, she believes the hour of family worship "is the most precious, the most sacred, and the happiest hour of the day."7

Moreover, since "actions speak louder than the most positive profession of godliness," White maintains that "a well-ordered

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5Ibid.
6"Profession without Practice Valueless," RH 71 (June 12, 1894):369.
7"Peace in Christ," RH 64 (Nov. 29, 1887):737.
Christian household is a powerful argument in favor of the reality of the Christian religion,—an argument that the infidel cannot gainsay.¹ Thus, in her opinion, the influence of such a home atmosphere is exerted beyond the family circle.²

All can see that an influence is at work in the family that affects the children, and that God is with them. If the homes of professed Christians had a right religious mold, they would exert a mighty influence for good. They would indeed be "the light of the world."³

In short, for White, a well-ordered Christian family is "the best missionary work" parents can do.⁴ It is the proper means for learning and preserving the inherited truth of the gospel, and for transmitting it to the world and future generations.

Parental Teaching Task

Regarding the teaching work of parents, White has much to say. As it has already been noted, she considers the family circle as "the school in which the child receives its first and most enduring lessons."⁵ In the home school "the parents serve as under-teachers, while Christ Himself is the chief instructor."⁶ She emphatically exhorts parents to do their task.

¹Ibid., p. 144; see also "Words to Parents," RH 74 (April 13, 1897):225.


⁴"Words to Parents," RH 77 (Dec. 18, 1900):801.


⁶Desire of Ages, p. 515.
Coming events are casting their shadows upon our pathway. Fathers, mothers, I appeal to you to make most earnest efforts now for your children. Give them daily religious instruction. Teach them to love God, and to be true to the principles of right. With lofty, earnest faith, directed by the divine influence of the Holy Spirit, work, work now.¹

To know at least some of the characteristics of the children’s mind is the first step parents must take before they engage in any teaching activity. This knowledge may be gained by careful observation and study. White acknowledges that the work of dealing with human minds requires careful study. "Parents should keep themselves well informed, that they may give the minds of their children proper food."² She further says: "Through earnest prayer and study, you may become wise in your home, learning the different dispositions of your children, and carefully noting their behavior."³ In addition to having a knowledge of children's dispositions and behavior, parents should understand youthful temptations in order to teach children how to overcome them.⁴

Once this first step has been taken, parents are to learn and apply the best methods in teaching their children. In this respect, White maintains that parents "need to learn right methods and acquire tact for the training" of their children, "that they may keep the way of the Lord."⁵ "Do not speak of religion as something

²"Words to Parents," RH 77 (Dec. 18, 1900):801.
that children cannot understand, or act as if they were not expected to accept Christ in their childhood.\textsuperscript{1} Moreover, "the children are to be instructed with kindness and patience."\textsuperscript{2} She adds that parents are to "teach them of the love of God in such a way that it will be a pleasant theme in the family circle."\textsuperscript{3} Simplicity must be a predominant characteristic of the parent's teaching method.

Let the instruction you give your children be simple, and be sure that it is clearly understood. The lessons that you learn from the Word you are to present to their young minds so plainly that they will understand. By simple lessons drawn from the Word of God and their own experience you may teach them how to conform their lives to the highest standard.\textsuperscript{4}

In the training of children, White urges parents not to "weary them with long prayers and tedious exhortations, but through nature's object lessons teach them obedience to the law of God."\textsuperscript{5} Jesus "drew the most valuable illustrations of truth from scenes in nature. Parents, imitate His example, and use the things that delight the senses to impress important truths upon the minds of your children."\textsuperscript{6} She encourages parents to take their "children out into the open air, . . . under the noble trees, into the gardens, and point them through nature up to nature's God. Carry their minds up to

\begin{itemize}
  \item \textsuperscript{1}Desire of Ages, p. 517.
  \item \textsuperscript{2}"The Necessity of Cooperation with God," RH 69 (Oct. 25, 1892):657.
  \item \textsuperscript{3}Ibid.
  \item \textsuperscript{4}"A Message to Parents," RH 89 (Feb. 8, 1912):4.
  \item \textsuperscript{5}Desire of Ages, p. 517.
  \item \textsuperscript{6}"Seek First the Kingdom of God," RH 62 (Oct. 27, 1885):657.
\end{itemize}
contemplate the works of God in nature that they may learn to love Him in their childhood and youth."

In her writings, White often refers to the teaching experience of the Israelite families and to the divine instructions given to help parents in their work. She then draws practical implications for today's Christian homes. For instance, she calls attention to a classic passage. "Let parents study the instruction of the sixth chapter of Deuteronomy. If the counsels of the Word of God are faithfully followed, the saving grace of Christ will be brought to our youth." She refers specifically to verses 4 through 8. There it is written as follows:

Hear, 0 Israel: The Lord our God is one Lord: And thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might. And these words, which I command thee this day, shall be in thine heart: And thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up. And thou shalt bind them for a sign upon thine hand, and they shall be as frontlets between thine eyes.

"God commanded the Hebrews to teach their children His requirements," and to instruct them in all His dealings with their people. Thus, "thoughts of God were associated with all the events of daily life in the home dwelling." "It is in this way," states White, "that

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3Unless otherwise indicated all Biblical passages will be taken from the King James Version.  

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parents are to keep ever before themselves and their children the great standard of righteousness.\(^1\)

In referring to the passage of Deut. 30:19-20, White writes:

The people were directed to commit to memory this poetic history, and to teach it to their children and children's children. It was to be chanted by the congregation when they assembled for worship, and to be repeated by the people as they went about their daily labors. It was the duty of parents to so impress these words upon the susceptible minds of their children that they might never be forgotten.\(^2\)

Fathers and mothers must adapt "song, prayer, and lessons from the Scriptures" to impress the opening minds of children.\(^3\) So in every Christian home, parents should join with their children evening and morning in God's worship, praying, reading His Word, and singing His praise.\(^4\) Recitation of God's law and other passages of the Scriptures could also be a part of family worship.\(^5\)

Children should be taught by precept and, particularly, by example.\(^6\) White holds that "example will do more than can be accomplished by any other means."\(^7\) She tells parents they must

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\(^1\)"What Shall We Do, that We Might Work the Works of God?" RH 68 (April 21, 1891):241.

\(^2\)Patriarchs and Prophets, p. 468.

\(^3\)Desire of Ages, p. 69.


\(^6\)The power of example as a dynamic factor will receive fuller treatment in the chapter dealing with modeling in the transmission of religious heritage.

\(^7\)"The Duty of Parents to Children," RH 76 (June 27, 1899):405.
"instruct, warn, and counsel," ever remembering that their looks, words, and actions have a direct bearing upon the future of their dear ones.1 "Children will copy the lessons that they see practiced in the family circle."2 She views the examples found in the parent's daily life as the best method of transmitting biblical truths to their children.

Therefore, what should parents give their children as a religious legacy? In White's view, the parents' teaching should comprehend their faith and way of life; or stated in other words, the foundations of the Christian beliefs, principles, and attitudes as an all-integrating philosophy of life. It should not merely aim for the storage of a sacred heritage, but the development of the spiritual, intellectual, social, and physical powers of the children.

White specifically points out that children should be taught "to be learners in the school of Christ, to obtain a knowledge of the Scriptures, to diligently employ every means of grace, that their love may abound more and more, that they may approve things that are excellent."4 As a means of reaching this goal, she entreats parents not to "send them away to study the Bible by themselves." Read and study it with them. Take them with you into the

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school of Christ."\(^1\)

She attaches much importance to the Sabbath School lessons which should be learned by the children with their parent's help.\(^2\) "Let the more important passages of Scripture connected with the lesson be committed to memory, not as a task, but as a privilege."\(^3\) Indeed, the Bible should be made the children's "first textbook."\(^4\)

While rejecting those books and magazines which deal with love stories, novels, exciting tales, or "fascinating stories of real life, such as 'Uncle Tom's Cabin,'"\(^5\) White recommends the "books that will help the youth to put into character building the very best material."\(^6\) She believes the publications containing frivolous exciting stories, novels, or "ridiculous pictures" are originated by satanic agencies.\(^7\) In her opinion, "all such reading is poisonous; it leaves a stain upon the soul, and encourages a love for cheap reading which will debase the morals and ruin the mind."\(^8\)

\(^1\)"Search the Scriptures, RH 80 (March 31, 1903):8; see also "Search the Scriptures," RH 52 (Nov. 28, 1878):169.


\(^4\)"The Importance of Home Training," RH 76 (June 6, 1899):353.


\(^6\)"What Shall Our Children Read," RH 90 (Jan. 23, 1913):76.


\(^8\)"The Holidays," RH 54 (Dec. 11, 1879):189.
"It produces a false, unhealthy excitement, fevers the imagination, unfits the mind for usefulness, and disqualifies it for any spiritual exercise."¹ White further insists that "those who indulge the habit of racing through an exciting story are simply crippling their mental strength, and disqualifying their minds for religious thought and research."² Because of these consequences, "the mental tastes must be disciplined and educated with the greatest care."³

Children should be taught to reject trashy, exciting tales, and to turn to sensible reading, which will lead the mind to take an interest in Bible story, history, and argument. Reading that will throw light upon the Sacred Volume and quicken the desire to study it, is not dangerous, but beneficial.⁴

White suggests that parents "form a home reading circle, in which every member of the family shall... unite in study."⁵ The Scriptures and other interesting books, such as those treating health and religious matters, as well as the Testimonies, should be read aloud to benefit the entire family.⁶

In addition, White notes that children should be taught (1) to obey their parents⁷ to the point that it becomes an

¹"What Shall Our Children Read," RH 90 (Jan. 23, 1913):76.
²Ibid.
⁴Ibid.
established habit, and so a "part of their nature;" "to love," "fear," "trust and obey" God—"strict obedience to Bible requirements is to be taught;" "to have moral independence, not to follow impulse and inclination, but to exercise their reasoning powers, and to act from principle;" (4) to share responsibilities at home and in the church; (5) "to be kind and courteous to all, and especially to respect the old;" (6) to learn how to preserve health, "to exercise the body and the mind proportionately," and even how to cook; (7) to acquire habits of "temperance," "self-control," and

4Prophets and Kings, p. 245.
6"Notes on Travel," RH 60 (Nov. 6, 1883):690.
"self-denial;"\(^1\) (8) to select appropriate recreation;\(^2\) (9) to "lend all the help in their power to alleviate the sufferings of the poor and distressed;"\(^3\) (10) to exert a blessed influence in "the home, the school, and the church;"\(^4\) and (11) to take part in the work of communicating the truth,\(^5\) to "become missionaries for God."\(^6\) Their practical missionary life should begin at home and then in the neighborhood.\(^7\)

In other words, conscious teaching does not take place in isolation from other factors. The entire organization of the home life is to be planned with the object of transmitting Christian beliefs, values, and attitudes to children and to the world. The chief parental task consists mainly in creating a genuine Christian home atmosphere. In it, by precept and example, children are to be taught to love and fear God, to accept Christ as their


Saviour, and obey Bible principles. There they should be attracted by their parents' religion and find real happiness in following in their steps. The dynamic force of this factor—cautious teaching in the home—in the transmission of religious heritage, is without parallel.

In finishing this section two more points from White's writings should be emphasized. The first is the "sad fact, almost universally admitted and deplored, that the home education and training of the youth of today have been neglected."¹ She sees the neglect as "shameful"² and distressing.³ In addition to the lamentable results such a neglect produces in the children's lives, White points out that "many have been caused to stumble by the inconsistencies of professed Christians and have been led to reject the precious truths of the Bible."⁴

The second point is the exemplary experiences of Abraham and the Waldenses in their home-teaching responsibilities, and the fruits obtained. They are good illustrations of what a Christian home should do in passing on a religious heritage. Referring to Abraham's calling White says "the Lord selected Abraham to be his ... representative... because He knew Abraham would cultivate home

³"Is the Blood on the Lintel?" RH 72 (May 21, 1895):321.
religion;"¹ "God knew . . . he would not betray sacred trusts."² "He would instruct his family in righteousness,"³ and the true faith would "be preserved in its purity by his descendants from generation to generation."⁴ "Abraham would not only give right instruction, but he would maintain the authority of just and righteous laws."⁵ The patriarch did not disappoint God.

Abraham's affection for his children and his household led him to guard their religious faith, to impart to them a knowledge of the divine statutes, as the most precious legacy he could transmit to them, and through them to the world. All were taught that they were under the rule of the God of heaven. There was to be no oppression on the part of parents and no disobedience on the part of children. God's law had appointed to each his duties, and only in obedience to it could any secure happiness or prosperity.⁶

Furthermore, Abraham's household "received such instruction as would prepare them to be representatives of the truth."⁷ From that patriarchal experience, she derives an eternal principle for Christian parents:

Parental indulgence causes disorder in families and in society. It confirms in the young the desire to follow inclination, instead of submitting to the divine requirements. Thus they grow up with a heart averse to doing God's will, and they transmit their irreligious, insubordinate spirit to their children and children's children. Like Abraham, parents should command their households after them. Let obedience to parental authority be taught and enforced as the first step in obedience to the authority of God.⁸

³Patriarchs and Prophets, p. 141.
⁴Ibid.
⁵Ibid., p. 142.
⁶Ibid.
⁸Patriarchs and Prophets, pp. 142-43.
Regarding the Waldenses, White notes their belief was founded upon the Scripture. Their faith was not newly received, but "was their inheritance from their fathers."¹ And because they had the "truth unadulterated," they became "the special objects of hatred and persecution."² However, "they were determined to maintain their allegiance to God and to preserve the purity and simplicity of their faith."³ She believed that, under the mountainous conditions, God had provided them with "a sanctuary of awful grandeur, befitting the mighty truths committed to their trust."⁴ There, from very early in life "the youth were instructed in the Scriptures and taught to sacredly regard the claims of the law of God," while "precious words of the Bible were committed to memory."⁵ Concerning the teaching task of parents White states:

Parents, tender and affectionate as they were, loved their children too wisely to accustom them to self-indulgence. Before them was a life of trial and hardship, perhaps a martyr's death. They were educated from childhood to endure hardness, to submit to control, and yet to think and act for themselves. Very early they were taught to bear responsibilities, to be guarded in speech, and to understand the wisdom of silence.⁶

She also states:

Economy and severe self-denial formed a part of the education which the children received as their only legacy. They were taught that God designs life to be a discipline, and that their wants could be supplied only by personal labor, by forethought, care, and faith.⁷

Furthermore, having Christ's missionary spirit, they "felt that God

¹Great Controversy, p. 64. ²Ibid., p. 65. ³Ibid., p. 64. ⁴Ibid., p. 66. ⁵Ibid., p. 67. ⁶Ibid. ⁷Ibid.
required more of them than merely to preserve the truth in its purity in their own churches; that a solemn responsibility rested upon them to let their light shine forth to those who were in darkness."\(^1\) Accordingly, the Waldenses faithfully accomplished their work of passing on their religious inheritance to following generations and many people.

In brief, the family circle is the school where the child receives his first, and most enduring lessons. Parents should be aware of the way faith, beliefs, values, and attitudes are transmitted to their children. Then, the entire organization of the home life is to be planned with the objective of transmitting the parents' sacred heritage to their children. To create a genuine Christian home atmosphere is the main parental task. By precept and example, children are to be taught to love and fear God. In fact, they should be attracted by their parents' religion and find real happiness in following in their steps. The dynamic force of conscious teaching in the home in the transmission of religious legacy is without parallel.

The Role of the Christian School in the Transmission of Religious Heritage

Having analyzed Ellen White's views of the teaching task and learning process in the home for the transmission of religious legacy, it is now important to consider her position on the role of the school in the process of passing on a sacred heritage. This section is divided as follows: (i) contemporary Christian schools

\(^1\)Ibid., p. 70.
and the schools of the prophets, (2) the aim of the Christian schools, (3) the work of the Christian teachers, and (4) the school curriculum.

**Today's Christian Schools and the Schools of the Prophets**

In White's thinking, conscious teaching in the school should not be disconnected from her concept of education in general, and from the teaching task of the home, in particular. It has been shown that the home is the child's first school. In the home the child is instructed from infancy concerning the beliefs, values, attitudes, and hopes of the parents. But the time comes when parents have to send their child to school. The school then becomes an extension of the home.

The transition from the home school to the school outside the family circle is, in White's views, of great importance. In order to insure a positive continuity and, at the same time, to avoid a brusque separation of the child from the home, she emphasizes that "there should be schools established wherever there is a church or company of believers. Teachers should be employed to educate the children of Sabbath-keepers."¹ There are two additional reasons for having church schools. First, as she explains:

It is a serious matter to send children away from home, thus depriving them of the care of their parents. It is of the greatest importance that church schools shall be established, to which the children may be sent, and still be under the watchcare of their mothers, and have opportunity to

¹"For Each Church," RH 85 (July 2, 1908):29.
practise the lessons of helpfulness that it is God's design they shall learn in the home.¹

The second reason is "to save children from being drowned in the polluting, corrupting influences of this life."²

Regarding the youth, White believes they should be encouraged to attend "our schools, which should become more and more like the schools of the prophets."³ Throughout her writings, it is evident that, to her, those schools of the ancient Hebrews represented the ideal for today's Christian schools. Concerning those schools, she comments:

Further provision was made for the instruction of the young, by the establishment of the schools of the prophets. If a youth desired to search deeper into the truths of the word of God, and to seek wisdom from above, that he might become a teacher in Israel, these schools were open to him. The schools of the prophets were founded by Samuel to serve as a barrier against the widespread corruption, to provide for the moral and spiritual welfare of the youth, and to promote the future prosperity of the nation by furnishing it with men qualified to act in the fear of God as leaders and counselors. In the accomplishment of this object Samuel gathered companies of young men who were pious, intelligent, and studious. These were called the sons of the prophets. As they communed with God and studied His word and His works, wisdom from above was added to their natural endowments. The instructors were men not only well versed in divine truth, but those who had themselves enjoyed communion with God and had received the special endowment of His Spirit. They enjoyed the respect and confidence of the people, both for learning and piety.⁴

To learn the will of God and the duties of His people constituted the grand object of all study. The Hebrews not only studied,

²"For Each Church," RH 85 (July 2, 1908):28.
⁴Patriarchs and Prophets, p. 593.
preserved, and transmitted to the younger generations the law of God and the instructions given to Moses, but also, "from the events of the past," they drew "lessons of instruction for the future."¹

The Aim of the Christian Schools

White plainly states that the school's aim should be the progress of the transmission of the Christian message to all the world. "Our institutions are to be regarded as God's instrumentalities for the furtherance of His work in the earth."² She believes "it was as a means ordained of God to educate young men and women for the various departments of missionary labor, that colleges were established among us."³ Those young men who want to enter the field "as ministers, colporteurs, or canvassers," should first receive a proper degree of intellectual training and a special preparation for their particular calling.⁴ White reveals a distinct interest for the youth who should be trained to help the youth.⁵

In addition, men and women are to be taught "how to minister to others."⁶ She says, "there should be a systematic training of

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⁵ "The Best Education and Its Purpose," RH 70 (Nov. 21, 1893):725; "Training the Youth to be Workers," RH 89 (May 16, 1912):4.
the mind and manners, that they may learn to approach people in the best possible way. All should learn how to labor with tact and with courtesy, and with the Spirit of Christ." Furthermore, she thinks the youth should also be taught how to present the truth for our time "in an attractive manner."²

White's contention is that the training of the youth should go farther than just mental preparation for an effectual labor; it should include the development of "a symmetrical Christian character."³

We are under solemn, sacred covenant to God to bring up our children, not for the world, not to put their hands into the hands of the world, but to love and fear God, and to keep His commandments. We are to instruct them to work intelligently in Christ's lines, to present a noble, elevated Christian character to those with whom they associate. For this reason our schools have been established, that the youth and children may be so educated as to exert an influence for God in the world.⁴

In the previous quotation (from an article addressed to the students at Battle Creek College) White points out that the goal of "our schools" is to teach the youth (1) to love and fear God, (2) to keep His commandments, (3) to "work intelligently along Christ's lines," (4) "to present a noble, elevated Christian character," and (4) "to exert an influence for God in the world." This means that, in her

¹"Importance of Training in the Work of God," RH 64 (June 14, 1887):369.


³"Proper Education of the Young," RH 64 (June 21, 1887):386.

⁴"To the Students at Battle Creek College" RH 71 (Jan. 9, 1894):18.

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opinion, the formation of symmetrical characters is an indispensable condition to become useful workers.¹

This is the reason for White's emphasis on moral training as the school's aim. "They [the students] should be trained to have moral courage to resist the tide of moral pollution in this degenerate age."² Also, the teachers should train students "to have moral independence, to work for Jesus, and to take up burdens in this cause."³ The "great lesson" to be given to the youth is that "they are to cherish Bible principles, and hold the world as subordinate."⁴ The instruction given "is to be such as to lead to the practise of true humility. In speech, in dress, in diet, and in the influence exerted, is to be seen the simplicity of true godliness."⁵ In short, "knowledge harmoniously blended with a Christ-like character will make a person truly a light to the world."⁶

The Work of the Christian Teachers

White believed there are only two classes of educators. "One class are those whom God makes channels of light, and the other class are those whom Satan uses as his agents."⁷ Therefore, care

³ Ibid., p. 546.
⁶ "Proper Education of the Young," RH 64 (June 21, 1887):386.
should be exercised to select the right men for teachers in missionary schools. She outlines the essential qualifications teachers of Christian schools should have.

In view of the nature of the great responsibility of the teacher, White states that "the Lord will accept as teachers only those who will be gospel teachers." What is her understanding of a gospel teacher? On what grounds should the teacher be recruited? On one hand, she says that those "who are themselves deficient in Christian experience are not wanted." On the other hand, she also states that although "natural ability and intellectual culture" are indispensable, it is not sufficient that the teacher possesses these alone. She clarifies her position in this way:

God wants the teachers in our schools to be efficient. If they are advanced in spiritual understanding, they will feel that it is important that they should not be deficient in the knowledge of the sciences. Piety and a religious experience lie at the very foundation of true education. But let none feel that having an earnestness in religious matters is all that is essential in order to become educators. While they need no less of piety, they also need a thorough knowledge of the sciences. This will make them not only good, practical Christians, but will enable them to educate the youth, and at the same time they will have heavenly wisdom to lead them to the fountains of living waters. He is a Christian who aims to reach the highest attainments for the purpose of doing others good.

Yet, in White's writings, the preeminence of the moral and spiritual qualifications are plainly stated and the reasons explained.

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4 "Proper Education of the Young," RH 64 (June 21, 1887):386.

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The principles and habits of the teacher should be considered of greater importance than even his literary qualifications. If the teacher is a sincere Christian, he will feel the necessity of having an equal interest in the physical, mental, moral, and spiritual education of his scholars. In order to exert the right influence he should have perfect control over himself, and his own heart should be richly imbued with love for his pupils, which will be seen in his looks, words, and acts.

Therefore, "without a moral and spiritual fitness for the work, he [the teacher] is not prepared to engage in it." She also argues that in order for God to impart to the teachers "wisdom and knowledge . . . and to make them channels of light to others," "they must have His converting power upon the heart." Moreover, teachers "are certainly disqualified to educate . . . properly, if they have not first learned the lessons of self-control, patience, forbearance, gentleness, and love."

Furthermore, White stresses the need for teachers who realize their own deficiencies" and who eliminate from their reckoning all plans that tend to weaken their spiritual life, teachers who are constantly in the "school of Christ," who contemplate "the character of God" and behold Christ in order to become like Him, what are

"daily learning to speak words of the teacher sent from God,"1 who "have the true missionary spirit,"2 and who "carefully study the disposition and character" of their students in order to adapt the teaching to their peculiar circumstances,3 applying a proper methodology.4

Finally, White emphasizes the fact that the teachers are constantly exerting an influence upon their students.5 In reality, the student's destinies may be decided by their instruction and example.6 Therefore, "they must be in words and character what they wish their students to be."7 She summarizes the teachers' qualifications, work, and influence as follows:

Let it never be forgotten that the teacher must be what he desires his pupils to become. Hence, his principles and habits should be considered as of greater importance than even his literary qualifications. He should be a man who fears God, and feels the responsibility of his work. He should understand the importance of physical, mental, and moral training, and should give due attention to each. He who would control his pupils must first control himself. To gain their love, he must show by look and word and act that his heart is filled with love for

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5The power of example and influence receives a fuller treatment in the chapter dealing with modeling.
them. At the same time, firmness and decision are indispensable in the work of forming right habits, and developing noble characters.¹

The School Curriculum

Besides the selection of good teachers, the first step to be taken in the establishing of an ideal Christian school tending to the transmission of religious heritage is, in White's judgment, its location. She believes that "our schools [should] be away from the cities."² In addition, she says "God bids us establish schools away from the cities, where without let or hindrance, we can carry on the work of education upon plans that are in harmony with the solemn message that is committed to us for the world."³

As already noted, in White's thinking, the aim of the Christian school is the training of all the faculties of the youth. The young people must experience an integral and harmonious development of the whole being. To attain this goal she stresses that "the Bible must be regarded as the highest, the most important textbook."⁴ It is to be made "the chief book of study,"⁵ and "the basis of all education."⁶ In her opinion, it is evident that the school curriculum is to be based upon the study of the Scriptures.

²"Shall We Colonize around Our Institutions?" RH 81 (June 2, 1904):7.
Of course, White does not mean the Bible is the sole book to be studied to the exclusion of all other books. But she allows room in the school curriculum only for those books which "encourage" the students "to sincerity of life and lead them to the opening of the Word,"¹ which "inculcate substantial knowledge, and abound in sentiments which might be treasured in the heart, in precepts that might govern the conduct."² She insists that "our youth should read that which will have a healthful, sanctifying effect upon the mind. This they need in order to be able to discern what is true religion. There is much good reading that is not sanctifying."³ She encourages the students to make a careful study of books such as her Christ's Object Lessons and Ministry of Healing. Teachers "should teach these truths to their students, and seek to inspire the youth with a love for the precious thoughts the Lord has entrusted to us to communicate to the world."⁴

White argues that it is not necessary for "our teachers to bring in . . . objectionable books."⁵ Christians should turn away from authors who teach infidelity. She explains:

The Lord himself has signified that schools should be established among us in order that true knowledge may be obtained. No teacher in our schools should suggest the idea


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that, in order to have the right discipline, it is essential to study text-books expressing pagan and infidel sentiments. Students who are thus educated, are not competent to become educators in their turn; for they are filled with the subtle sophistries of the enemy. The study of works that in any way express infidel sentiments is like handling black coals; for a man cannot be undefiled in mind who thinks along the line of skepticism. In going to such sources for knowledge, are we not turning away from the snow of Lebanon to drink from the turbid water of the valley?

No books of skeptics should appear on the shelves of the school library. She states that if Christ should enter "our institutions for the education of the youth, He would cleanse them as He cleansed the temple, banishing many things that have a defiling influence. Many of the books which the youth study would be expelled."2 In other words, in White's thinking, there is room in the school curriculum only for those books which "help the students to form symmetrical characters, and to become useful workers in the cause."3

The school curriculum is not, however, merely centered upon the study of the Scriptures and other proper books and matters, but also upon the observance of Biblical teachings. A school which aims to prepare men and women for service should teach the Bible and how to obey its principles and apply its teachings. In fact, the whole school life should be an exemplification of Christian beliefs and standards. This is precisely what White means when she writes: "The most important work for our educational institutions to do at this time is to set before the world an example that will honor

1"Books in Our Schools," RH 68 (Nov. 10, 1891):689.


God. In her thinking it cannot be otherwise, because, as already noted, the Christian religion is more than mere theory. In the school curriculum faith, hidden or revealed, should be integrated with learning and with all other activities. She states it thus: "The Word of God is to lie at the foundation of all the work done in these schools." Explaining further her position, she notes:

Teachers and students are to bring the word of God into every study, into all their physical labors, and into every plan and purpose of life. By a living connection with God, they may surround their souls with an atmosphere that is Christ-like. If they are emptied of self, if they are humble and contrite before God, a wholesome, life-giving atmosphere will pervade the school.

Since Christian faith cannot be divorced from daily life, since theory and practice, teaching and obedience must go together, and since the school training is the beginning of a process which must last all through life, "the students are to be educated in practical Christianity." White emphasizes that "they should be taught practical, daily religion that will sanctify them in every relation of life, in their homes, in business, in the church, in society." But, as noted before, in order for the teachers to teach

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2"Notes of Travel--No. 1: Journey to Southern California," RH 84 (July 25, 1907):8.
practical Christianity, they "are to know by experience what it means to live consecrated lives."¹

Inasmuch as the youth are to be prepared to engage in missionary work as nurses, canvassers, evangelists, teachers, gospel ministers,² et cetera, the school should be able to qualify them for the fulfillment of their specific tasks. Commenting on the practical aspect of the curriculum content, White says the training schools should be connected with sanitariums in order that the students "may have opportunity to gain a knowledge of medical missionary work."³ The youth should be enlightened "in regard to right habits of living" and "to the care of the sick."⁴ Practical missionary work, in her opinion, is to have a part in the student training program.

It is necessary to the best education that we give the students time to do missionary work,—time to become acquainted with the spiritual needs of the families in the community around them. They should not be so loaded down with studies that they can not have time to put to use the knowledge they have acquired. They should be encouraged to make earnest missionary effort for those in the darkness of error, by becoming acquainted with them, and taking them the truth where they are. With all humility of heart, seeking knowledge from Christ, praying, and watching unto prayer, they may make known to others the truth that is placed before them day by day.⁵

A very important aspect of White's philosophy of education is the predominant place given to manual work. She maintains that


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"the students are to be taught the true dignity of labor." In addition to the economical gain obtained from the physical work, there are at least three benefits pointed to by White. First, as the teachers vigorously participate "with a group of students, working with them, and teaching them how to work, . . . they will gain a valuable experience. Their hearts will be bound up with the hearts of the students, and this will open the way for successful teaching. Second, when "there is land to cultivate, . . . the physical exercise taken by the students can be of such a nature as to act a valuable part in their character" development. And third, "the knowledge" students "have obtained in the tilling of the soil, in the erection of buildings, and in other lines of manual work" is most essential for those who go out as missionaries to foreign lands.

In summary, the role of the Christian school in the transmission of religious heritage is of paramount importance. The dynamic of a conscious teaching is manifested in a systematic and consistent effort, with the aim of training the youth for the communication of the Christian legacy of faith. But the very process of teaching in a school situation is an intentional and continuous transmission of the Christian beliefs, values, ideals, and attitudes as a religious heritage. From these schools, as it was with the schools of the ancient Hebrews, should come forth many young people

1"Notes of Travel—No. 1: Journey to Southern California," RH 84 (July 25, 1907):8.
2Ibid.
4Ibid.
"vigorous in body and in mind, quick to perceive and strong to act, the heart prepared like good ground for the growth of the precious seed, the mind trained to see God in the words of revelation and the scenes of nature";\(^1\) imbued with a visible missionary zeal to spread the truth.\(^2\)

The Mission of the Church in the Transmission of Religious Heritage

This last section examines Ellen White's concept of the mission of the church in the transmission of religious heritage. Conscious teaching as a dynamic factor in the process of carrying the sacred Christian legacy to the world and future generations by means of the church is specifically studied here. For convenience of analysis, the section is discussed under six divisions: (1) the mission of the church, (2) Christ's commission for every believer, (3) a world-wide task for the church, (4) the work of the ministry, (5) the teaching task of the church, and (6) the church's strongest witness.

The Mission of the Church

In White's understanding, "Christ was the greatest missionary this world has ever known."\(^3\) He came to teach His followers "the importance of missionary effort."\(^4\) "During the years of Christ's

\(^1\)"The Schools of the Ancient Hebrews," RH 77 Oct. 30, 1900):691.


\(^3\)"Build on a Sure Foundation," RH 85 (Sept. 24, 1908):8.

public ministry," He trained His disciples for the work they, "as His representatives, . . . must carry forward when He should be no longer with them."1 "The disciples were under the instruction of the greatest Teacher" of all times.2

"At the ordination of the twelve" "the first step was taken in the organization of the church." The disciples were to carry on Christ's work after His departure.3 White believes God and the angels beheld the scene of the calling of the twelve with gladness and rejoicing. "The Father knew," says she, "that from these men the light of heaven would shine forth; that the words spoken by them as they witnessed for His Son, would echo from generation to generation till the close of time."4

As Christ's ministry drew to a close, and as He realized His disciples would soon have to carry on the work without His personal guidance and supervision, "He sought to encourage them and to prepare them for the future."5 He gathered them to Him and prayed to the Father on their behalf, and on behalf of those "also which shall believe on Me through their word; that they all may be one."6 White points out that "when Christ gave His disciples their commission ... He made full provision" for their work.

He made full provision for the prosecution of the work, and took upon Himself the responsibility for its success. So long

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1"Freely Ye Have Received, Freely Give," RH 89 (June 6, 1912):18.
3Ibid., p. 18. 4Ibid.
5Ibid., p. 21. 6Ibid., p. 24.
as they obeyed His word, and worked in connection with Him, they could not fail. Go to all nations, He bade them. Go to the farthest part of the habitable globe, but know that My presence will be there. Labor in faith and confidence, for the time will never come when I will forsake you.  

Under the Saviour's training, the disciples were no longer "ignorant and uncultured." They became "like Him in mind and character." Then, under the teaching of the Spirit, "they received the final qualification, and went forth to their life work." The disciples fulfilled the commission Christ gave to them. "By the cooperation of the divine Spirit, the apostles did a work that shook the world. To every nation was the gospel carried in a single generation."

Regarding the continuation of the work begun by Christ and followed by the disciples, White explains:

Christ appointed his disciples as his architects, who were to lay the foundation of his church. He opened the door of the world before them bidding them enter and proclaim the gospel. He laid upon them, and upon all who should succeed them as his ministers, the charge of handing his gospel down from generation to generation, from age to age. But, according to White, who were the successors of the apostles to be, since these successors would be responsible for the continuation of the disciples' task? First, she affirms that "the apostolic succession rests not upon the transmission of ecclesiastical authority,

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2 *Desire of Ages*, p. 250.


4 Ibid., p. 593; see also "Personal Effort," *RH* 75 (March 29, 1898):197.

but upon spiritual relationship." Then she justifies her position: "A life actuated by the apostles' spirit, the belief and teaching of the truth they taught, this is the true evidence of apostolic succession. This is what constitutes men the successors of the first teachers of the gospel."¹

White maintains that "in every age there were witnesses for God," true successors of the apostles by likeness of character. These witnesses accomplished a supreme task in the process of preserving the purity of the Christian faith. She writes:

How much the world owes to these men, posterity will never know. They were branded as heretics, their motives impugned, their characters maligned, their writings suppressed, misrepresented, or mutilated. Yet they stood firm, and from age to age maintained their faith in its purity, as a sacred heritage for the generations to come.²

To White, it is a fact that today's church has the truth which "has come down . . . as an hereditary trust."³ Its members "are but the earthen vessels, the depositaries in which God places the treasure of His truth."⁴ They are representatives of Bible truth.⁵ She insists God has made them "depositaries of truth" that

¹ Desire of Ages, p. 467. ² Great Controversy, p. 61.
³ See above p. 25, note no. 5.
⁴ "There is No Excuse for Spiritual Weakness," RH 70 (July 11, 1893): 433; see also Christ's Followers the Light of the World, RH 61 (May 13, 1884): 305.
⁶ "Visit to Trameland, Switzerland," RH 64 (April 5, 1887): 209.
they may impart it to others. Christ "transferred into [their] hands in a high and holy sense the work of carrying out His holy designs; that the church should take the work when He left it, and carry it forward to its consumation." Therefore, the church has been organized "for missionary purposes." "It was organized for service, and its mission is to carry the gospel to the world." "The church is God's agency for the proclamation of truth."

Christ's Commission for Every Believer

White maintains that the gospel commission given by the Master to the first disciples "is the great missionary charter of Christ's kingdom" and that it is given also to individual believers of each generation.

The Saviour's commission to the disciples included all the believers. It includes all believers in Christ to the end of time. It is a fatal mistake to suppose that the work of saving souls depends alone on the ordained minister. All to whom the heavenly inspiration has come are put in trust with the gospel. All who receive the life of Christ are ordained to work for the salvation of their fellow men. For this work the church was established, and all who take upon themselves its sacred vows are thereby pledged to be co-workers with Christ.

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1 "Go Ye into All the World," RH 72 (June 11, 1895):369.
2 "Losing Our First Love," RH 64 (June 7, 1887):353.
8 Desire of Ages, p. 822.
Consequently, "He who called the fishermen of Galilee is still calling men to His service" today. What is the rationale behind her belief? In addition to what has already been noted, she points out several other reasons.

First, "it is an eternal law of Jehovah," White holds, "that he who accepts the truth is to make it his first work to proclaim the truth." In other words, "he who is brought under the influence of the truth, and through faith is made a partaker of Christ's love, is by that very act appointed to save others. He has a mission in the world. He is a co-worker with Christ." Is this mission of proclaiming the truth the result of a divine imposition, or rather a voluntary human initiative in the reception of the truth? Perhaps it is a balanced combination of both.

On one hand, White says "God expects personal service from every one to whom He has entrusted a knowledge of the truth." Also, "Christ requires" those called by His name to "make his work the first and highest consideration." Furthermore, every "believer is under obligation to give to others the truth he possesses." He cannot do

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1Ibid., p. 297. 2See above pp. 190-92.


4"Personal Effort," RH 75 (March 29, 1898):198.


otherwise, because he realizes there is a "woe" upon him if he fails
to preach the gospel.\(^1\) So "upon every Christian rests the responsi-
bility" to impart the truth.\(^2\) On the other hand, she emphasizes the
idea that there is nothing "selfish in the religion of Jesus." Every
true Christian feels he has something to do for others,\(^3\) and therefore he cannot be silent regarding the message of truth.\(^4\) He real-
izes it is a privilege for him to have a part in God's great work.\(^5\)
As one gladly receives the knowledge of truth so one should gladly
impart it to the world.\(^6\) The transmission of truth is a work of
love to be accomplished freely by the believer. "All heaven is wait-
ing for human channels through which to communicate" the Lord's
mercy, goodness, and power.\(^7\)

Second, the gospel is not a static force but a dynamic power.
White maintains that it "is and ever will be aggressive"\(^8\) and "dif-
fusive."\(^9\) All those who accept it cannot stand still. They become

\(^2\) "Evidences of Discipleship," RH 81 (Feb. 4, 1904):8; "The
Importance of a Knowledge of Health Principles," RH 79
(July 29, 1902):7.
\(^3\) "Christ's Ambassador," RH 77 (May 29, 1900):337.
\(^6\) Desire of Ages, p. 279.
\(^7\) "Neglected Duties," RH 79 (July 22, 1902):7; Acts of the
Apostles, p. 600.
aggressive transmitters of the gospel. It cannot be otherwise if the truth is really received into the heart. "God's faithful people have always been aggressive missionaries."\(^1\) Under no circumstances can the aggressive and diffusive power of the gospel be stopped. Even under extreme conditions, sooner or later, the fruits of the gospel are manifested. She comments:

> Let not the follower of Christ think when he is no longer able to labor openly and actively for God and His truth, that he has no service to render, no reward to secure. Christ's true witnesses are never laid aside. In health and sickness, in life and death, God uses them still. When through Satan's malice the servants of Christ have been persecuted, their active labors hindered, when they have been cast into prison, or dragged to the scaffold or to the stake, it was that truth might gain a greater triumph. As these faithful ones sealed their testimony with their blood, souls hitherto in doubt and uncertainty were convinced of the faith of Christ and took their stand courageously for Him. From the ashes of the martyrs has sprung an abundant harvest for God.\(^2\)

Moreover, considering a genuine consecration as a sine qua non condition, White thinks God, through the believer's instrumentality, brings "into the truth others whom He can use as channels to convey light to many who are groping in darkness."\(^3\) Thus the aggressive transmission of the truth becomes a fact.

Third, the believer can have a decisive part in hastening the fulfillment of his hope of the second advent of Christ in glory. "By giving the gospel to the world," says White, "it is in our power

\(^{1}\text{Acts of the Apostles, p. 109; "The Great Commission; A Call to Service," RH 87 (March 24, 1910):3.}\)

\(^{2}\text{Acts of the Apostles, p. 465.}\)

\(^{3}\text{"The Importance of a Knowledge of Health Principles," RH 79 (July 29, 1902):7.}\)
to hasten the coming of the day of God."¹ Also, "by converted, sanctified, holy men and women the message of warning is to be proclaimed, that the prayer may be answered, 'Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven.'"² God has made men's action a necessity to precipitate the great event of the Christian hope.

And fourth, truth is a sanctifying and saving power for everyone who believes. But truth "that is not imparted to others loses its life-giving power."³ White maintains that "the reason why there is not more spirituality and vigor in our Christian life" is because of the "marked indifference" in teaching others the truth.⁴ "The very life of the church depends upon her faithfulness in fulfilling the Lord's commission. To neglect this work is surely to invite spiritual feebleness and decay."⁵ In an address and appeal setting forth the importance of missionary work, White says the church is only strong if it is a working church.⁶ Elsewhere she states that "if the church were a living, working organization, ... its members" would strive to impart the light of the knowledge of the truth.⁷ In other words, the life and vitality of the believers

⁵Desire of Ages, p. 825.
⁷"Go Ye into All the World," RH 2 (June 11, 1895):369.
depend upon their missionary activity, and their missionary activity depends upon their living faith. Since man needs the sanctifying and living power of truth, since man needs an ever-growing spirituality and vigor in his Christian life, God commands him to be faithful in fulfilling the gospel commission.

A World-wide Task for the Church

"In God's kingdom there are no territorial lines" nor national divisions; the disciples must go to all nations with the message of salvation.\(^1\) It "is a world-wide message."\(^2\) Referring to Christ's commission, "Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature," White writes: "This is to be our watch-word. To all nations and kindreds and tongues and peoples the message of saving grace is to sound forth."\(^3\) "To carry the truth to the population of the earth . . . is the mission of the followers of Christ."\(^4\)

White stresses the idea that in the expansion of the gospel throughout all lands, no class is to be neglected. "The religion of Christ ignores both rank and caste, worldly honor and riches."\(^5\) Every individual deserves a worthy consideration. She writes extensively concerning the work to be done among the poor, the needy, the

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\(^1\) *Acts of the Apostles*, p. 20.

\(^2\) "In the Thoroughfares of Travel," *RH* 83 (Jan. 25, 1906):9.


\(^5\) "How to Deal with the Erring," *RH* 88 (Jan. 26, 1911):3.
unlearned, and the black people. By a proper methodology they have to be reached with the gospel. "By kindness to the poor, the sick, or the bereaved, we may obtain an influence over them, so that divine truth may find access to their hearts." Regarding the black people, she emphasizes the need to establish many school missions among them in the Southern part of the United States, and also the need of black workers "to labor for their own people."

On the other hand, White argues that those belonging to the higher ranks of society have been too much neglected. "Men in business, in positions of trust, men with large inventive faculties, and scientific insight, men of genius, are to be among the first to hear the gospel call." "The truths of Scripture are to be brought before the great men of the world."

Through the power of the Holy Spirit many will accept the divine principles. Converted to the truth, they will become


5Ibid., p. 7.


7"The Call to the Feast," RH 77 (May 8, 1900):289.

agencies in the hand of God to communicate the light. They will have a special burden for other souls of this neglected class. Time and money will be consecrated to the work of the Lord, and new efficiency and power will be added to the church.

Despite the tremendous magnitude of the task of communicating the Christian faith to every individual in every nation, White maintains the work can and must be done. Furthermore, it could have already been done in her time. "Had the church of Christ done her appointed work as the Lord ordained, the whole world would before this have been warned, and the Lord Jesus would have come to the earth in power and great glory." She believes this commission has to be carried out before Christ's second advent. Upon the believers rests "the task of finishing the work that has been committed to man."

When and how will the world-wide task given to every church member be accomplished? When the believers "put forth earnest efforts to advance the message. . . . Triumph always follows decided effort." White further comments: "When the members of the church of God do their appointed work in the needy fields at home and abroad, in fulfillment of the gospel commission, the whole world will soon be warned and the Lord Jesus will return to this earth with power and great glory." When she states that the members of

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1Ibid., p. 140.
4Prophets and Kings, p. 74.
the church have their appointed work, she is referring to each one having "his special post of duty." ¹ Each one is "to find his place in the work." ² Even those "who have had few advantages," ³ and the humblest of all, are included. ⁴ God will do the work through them. ⁵ They, like all other "privileged" believers, are made channels through whom God communicates His will. ⁶

Therefore, intense efforts on the part of every believer are required to finish the proclamation of the present truth to all the world. These personal efforts, however, are fully effective only when they are made "in co-operation with all the forces of heaven," ⁷ and when, "by precept and example the essential elements of a true, healthy, influential Christianity" are revealed. ⁸ White holds that "a practical religion is the life and power of the church," and the "only way for the church to increase in efficiency is for the


⁴"The Call to the Feast," RH 77 (May 8, 1900):290.


⁶"Union with Christ in Our Work," RH 64 (Aug. 16, 1887):513; see also Desire of Ages, p. 438.


members to grow up to the full stature . . . in Christ. "1 "Then
work, yes, work with all your powers."2 As the disciples "expected
much, and therefore attempted much,"3 so it must be now.

White asserts that in the plan of Christ, "there is, first,
home missionary work to be done. The disciples were to begin at
Jerusalem."4 As the number of disciples increased, "their mission
would extend, until eventually the gospel message would belt the
world through their ministrations."5 "With every age God's plan
depthens and widens to embrace the world. God's instrumentalities,
His light-bearers, are to adjust their movements to His progressive
plans. They are to embrace new territory."6 Accordingly, "from town
to town, from city to city, from country to country, the warning
message is to be proclaimed."7 "If some souls embrace the truth in
a locality," a church is to be organized with them" as soon as it
can be wisely done."8 By public assemblies and by house-to-house


see also "Notes of Travel—No. 2 (Loma Linda, Cal.)," RH 84


4"Missionary Enterprise the Object of Christ's Church,"
RH 71 (Nov. 6, 1894):689.

5"Missionary Enterprise the Object of Christ's Church," RH 71
(Oct. 30, 1894):673.

6"The Need of Missionary Effort," RH 90 (Oct. 16, 1913):
1009.

7"The Work in Oakland and San Francisco—No. 1," RH 83
(Nov. 29, 1906):8.

8"At Willis, Mich.," RH 68 (July 21, 1891):450.
work the church is to be extended and consolidated. 1 "Church mem-
bers are to do evangelistic work in the home of their neighbors.
... By songs of praise to God, by humble, heartfelt prayers, by
simple presentation of Bible truth in the family circle, many will
be reached." 2

No great settlements of believers, no great congregations
are to be formed. Those who receive the knowledge of present truth
are not to "settle down and colonize;" they are to go to new places. 3
"Get away from the places where you are not needed," White says.
"Plant the standard of truth in towns and cities that have not
heard the message." 4 It would be a benefit both for the extension
of the gospel 5 and for the believers. She explains and illustrates
it as follows:

Many of the members of our large churches are doing com-
paratively nothing. They might accomplish a good work, if,
instead of crowding together, they would scatter into places
that have not yet been entered by the truth. Trees that are
planted too thickly do not flourish. They are transplanted
by the gardener, that they may have room to grow, and not be-
come dwarfed and sickly. The same rule would work well for
our large churches. Many of the members are dying spiritually
for want of this very work. They are becoming sickly and in-
efficient. Transplanted, they would have room to grow strong
and vigorous. 6

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1 "An Open Letter," RH 80 (Aug. 11, 1903):8; "The Work in

2 "A Call to Consecration," RH 84 (Nov. 21, 1907):5; see also
"The Duty of the Minister and the People," RH 72 (July 9, 1895):433.


6 "Lay Members to Go Forth," RH 80 (June 30, 1903):7; see also
"Shall We Colonize around Our Institutions?" RH 81 (June 2, 1904):7.

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Christians have no right to die in their personal spirituality and thus to let other people die in ignorance of the gospel truth for want of missionary activity. The world-wide task entrusted to the church "calls for the exercise of all the talents" which God has granted His people. "He has lent them to us," White states, "and He holds us responsible for the use we make of them,--for the faithful discharge of our duty to the world." ¹ To her there is no doubt that "when the heart is given to God, our talents, our energy, our possessions, all we have and are, will be devoted to His service."² Therefore, the "powers of body, mind, and soul," as well as the time and influence, are to be used.³ The "talents in the pen, the press, the voice, the purse, and the sanctified affections of the soul "must be exercised in transmitting the Christian faith to the world."⁴ "The work must not stop for want of means. More money must be invested."⁵ It is time to bring tithes and offerings into the storehouse to carry the warning message to new territory.⁶ "The world is large; its needs are great. Go, make new centers in


places where there is need of light."¹

In short, the world-wide task of the church will be realized when every believer does his divinely appointed work in cooperation with the heavenly agencies. Living a practical religion, the work is to begin at home, and from there it is to advance, not by organizing great settlements or congregations, but by forming, instead, many small, dynamic churches. The members will then have a living, spiritual experience, their talents will be exercised and developed and new centers of light will constantly be established to illuminate the world and satisfy its deepest needs.

The Work of the Ministry

In the world-wide mission of the church, "a most solemn, sacred work is given ministers to do." Full-time labor and energy is needed by ministers in order to transmit the light of the truth to those who do not know it.² Theirs is "a high and holy calling."³ White describes the essential task of the minister this way:

He should consider that he is standing between the eternal God and perishing souls. It is the duty of the gospel minister to cultivate a sense of his high and sacred calling, and to give evidence that he appreciates the privileges and opportunities placed within his reach through the example of Christ's meekness and love, and he should consider his sufferings and death, that he may bring these privileges within his reach. He should never become tame and lifeless in his efforts, but should be constantly reaching higher, and seeking

¹"Shall We Colonize around Our Institutions?" RH 81 (June 27, 1904):8. For the meaning of "light," see above pg. 25, note no. 5.


³"Words of Counsel to Young Ministers," RH 77 (Aug. 21, 1900):529.
to become better fitted through the grace Christ has provided. He should not be satisfied to be merely a commonplace minister, but a polished instrument in the hands of Christ. He should be constantly seeking by his words, by his deportment, and by his piety, to elevate his fellow-men and to glorify God.  

Each minister "should not only seek to bring men to the knowledge of the truth, but he should labor as did Paul, 'warning every man, and teaching every man in all wisdom; that he may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus.'"  

To White, "the special business of God's delegated messenger," the minister, is "to speak the words of truth to the people." In fact, Christ teaches through His servants, God's appointed means, of the "foolishness of preaching." So, "however small may be the number of interested listeners," the ministers should preach in such "a manner [as] to reach and impress the people" with the truth of God. "The words of the Bible, and the Bible alone," should be presented from the pulpit, "directly" and "in its purity," with 

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1"Our Sacred Calling," RH 64 (Feb. 22, 1887):113.
3"Our Sacred Calling," RH 64 (Feb. 22, 1887):113.
7Prophets and Kings, p. 626.
"simplicity and power." Since the message must be "meat in due season" to feed the people, it is not enough for ministers to present theoretical subjects, "to give information," or "to appeal to the intellect." "Hearts must be touched." Consequently, the words of the ministers should be full of "sound, practical instruction," and "should reach the hearts of the hearers."

In addition, the "discourse should be short," delivered in a "clear, low voice," and with a pleasing manner, earnest, sincere, and solemn. And finally, ministers "are to be controlled by the Holy Spirit"; and in their preaching "they are to show an energy proportionate to the importance of the subject they are presenting."

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11 Ibid.
In White's opinion, the preaching and teaching of the Scripture is but "one of the means ordained by God for diffusing light." According to her, to be a true minister for God means much more than merely to preach. "A minister is one who ministers." His task is not to be limited to any specific activity, nor "restricted to any time, nor confined to any place." Hence, his responsibility does "not cease with [his] pulpit labors." In reality, his "preaching in the desk is only the beginning" of his work. Moreover, if the minister "would preach fewer sermons and do more personal labor," his "ministry would be more like that of Jesus." White further explains the minister's work as follows:

The world is the field for the gospel minister, and the whole human family is his congregation. When he has finished giving a discourse, his work is only just entered upon; for the word of life is to be presented from house to house. The truth must be carried from city to city, from street to street, from family to family. Every method by which access may be gained to the homes of the people must be tried; for the messenger must become acquainted with the people.

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3 "In the Master's Service," R H 80 (Oct. 29, 1903):8.
4 "Preach in Regions Beyond," R H 79 (March 11, 1902):145.
8 "Preach in Regions Beyond," R H 79 (March 11, 1902):145.
By personal labor, the minister can reach those around him and "do the work that needs to be done," the work sermons cannot do.\(^1\) White states: "There is more power in visiting families, talking to them of the truth, and praying with them, than there is in all the sermons that can be given."\(^2\) "This is the highest missionary work that you can do."\(^3\) Therefore, the minister "should visit the people, and with care and wisdom seek to interest them in spiritual things."\(^4\) "Thus many will be brought to a knowledge of God."\(^5\) She further comments:

By preaching of the word and by personal ministry in the homes of the people, he learns their needs, their sorrows, their trials; and, cooperating with the great Burden-bearer, he shares their afflictions, comforts their distresses, relieves their soul-hunger, and wins their hearts to God.\(^6\)

In combining the teaching of the Scripture with the medical missionary work, opportunities are also given to ministers "to present the gospel to all classes and all grades of society."\(^7\)

White also argues that the ministers "are not simply to be

\(^1\)"Co-workers with God," RH 81 (March 24, 1904):8.

\(^2\)"Notes from General Conference," RH 78 (May 7, 1901):296.


preachers, but they are to be teachers, to be educators.\(^1\) She even says "the best work" they can do is to teach, to educate. "Preach less and educate more by holding Bible readings, and by praying with families and little companies."\(^2\) Ministers should devote half of their time to discourses educating "the people to understand the Scriptures and the claims of God upon them."\(^3\)

Let every minister to whom has been committed sacred trusts, take into consideration the vastness of the closing work of God in the earth, and study ways and means of placing the obligation of accomplishing this work on the large number upon whom it rests. Hundreds and thousands who have received the light of truth for this time but who are still idlers in the market-place, might be engaged in some line of useful service for God.\(^4\)

People should be taught in practical Christianity.\(^5\) White maintains that as soon as a church is organized, the minister should "set the members to work."\(^6\) He should teach them how to spread the knowledge of gospel truth.\(^7\) The minister should not think to do all


\(^3\)"Humility and Faithfulness in Laborers," RH 61 (April 8, 1884):225.


\(^6\)"Work for Church Members," RH 91 (March 5, 1914):21.

the work himself, but should try to bring out and develop all the
talents that are within his reach. 1 And he "should not consider his
duty done until it [the church] is thoroughly organized and placed
in working order." 2 The best help the minister can give the members
of the church is "planning work for them"; 3 for the missionary ac-
tivity "will cause them to grow in spirituality." 4

In order that the minister may successfully do his work in
preaching the Word, in ministering in the homes, and in educating
church members for service, he must fulfill certain conditions in
the implementation of his task. (1) Since "the minister cannot give
to others that which he himself does not possess," 5 and since the
church needs to be nourished and brought into working order through
the Word, 6 the minister must be continually searching, learning, and
praying to acquire the pertinent knowledge from the Scripture to be
transmitted to the people. 7 (2) Since "preaching, in itself, has no
natural power to renew the heart, and yet this is the object of

5"Ye Are Laborers Together with God," RH 67
(Sept. 2, 1870):529.
6"The Missionary Work," RH 65 (Nov. 6, 1888):695; "Seek
First the Kingdom of God," RH 70 (Jan. 24, 1893):5; "Words to Min-
7"An Appeal to Ministers," RH 62 (May 12, 1885):289; "Chris-
tian Deportment and Influence," RH 61 (June 17, 1884):385; "Lessons
from the Life of Solomon—No. 4: To Every Man His Work," RH 82
preaching,"¹ and since it is the presence of the Holy Spirit which makes the preaching of the Word effective,² the minister should never venture to enter the pulpit until he has the assurance that the energy of the Spirit will accompany his efforts.³ (3) Inasmuch as "the Lord requires of his ministers to be pure and holy, and to rightly represent the principles of truth in their own lives,"⁴ "ministers need daily conversion" to Christ⁵ and an unreserved consecration of their lives to Christ.⁶ Otherwise they can never be His colaborers⁷ and exert a positive influence upon people.⁸ Finally, (4) as any sort of intemperance "disqualifies the mental powers for healthful and active exercise," and therefore affects the minister's task to properly instruct people,⁹ "ministers should be strictly temperate in their eating and drinking,"¹⁰ and work habits. Workers are not to embrace too much in their work. They are not to keep


⁵"Co-workers with Christ," RH 78 (July 30, 1901): 483.


themselves under such a strain that their physical and mental powers shall be exhausted.¹ Because of the responsibility which lies upon the gospel ministry, the church members should in a special way, respect and sustain the ministers as ambassadors for Christ.²

The Teaching Task of the Church

The church was organized to proclaim the gospel to all peoples through all generations. Its task is the transmission of the Christian message to the "ends of the world." On the basis of the magnitude of the mission, the rapid passing of time, and the multiplicity of activities needed, it is evident that "the ordained ministers alone are not equal to the task" of warning the world.³ White believes that God is not only calling upon the ministers, but "also upon physicians, nurses, canvassers, Bible workers, and other consecrated laymen of varied talent who have a knowledge" of the truth of the Scriptures.⁴ Therefore, all the institutions and activities of the church are to be organized and implemented in harmony with its specific missionary endeavor.

White derives from Christ's ministry the essential church responsibility in the world. Jesus was a missionary;⁵ he was also

"a teacher and a healer" such as the world has never known, before or since.

The Saviour's work of ministering to the suffering was always combined with his ministry of the Word. He preached the gospel and healed infirmity both by the same mighty power. He will do the same today; but we must do our part by bringing the sick in touch with the mighty Healer.

This very ministry Christ began is, therefore, the ministry to be continued by the church. Teaching and service are the two spheres of missionary action of the church and the "true interpretation of the gospel."

For White, the teaching task of the church is manifested through various kinds of meetings, activities, and attitudes of the believers. The teaching church is the church which worships, studies, and proclaims. Regarding the worship service, she writes:

Our meetings should be made intensely interesting. They should be pervaded with the very atmosphere of heaven. Let there be no long, dry speeches and formal prayers, merely for the sake of occupying the time. All should be ready to act their part with promptness, and when their duty is done, the meeting should be closed. Thus the interest will be kept up to the last. This is offering to God acceptable worship. His service should be made interesting and attractive, and not be allowed to degenerate into a dry form.

Moreover, the service of worship should be "instructive." Every

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follower of Christ should engage in the worship of God, which "consists chiefly of praise and prayer."¹ "As a part of religious service," singing "is as much an act of worship as is prayer."² In referring to the power of singing, she says:

Those who have the gift of song are needed. Song is one of the most effective means of impressing spiritual truth upon the heart. Often by the words of sacred song, the springs of penitence and faith have been unsealed. Church-members, young and old, should be educated to go forth to proclaim this last message to the world. If they go in humility, angels of God will go with them, teaching them how to lift up the voice in prayer, how to raise the voice in song, and how to proclaim the gospel message for this time.

Also, when during the week the church members faithfully do their missionary work, the testimonies carried by them in the Sabbath service will be filled with power. The meeting will then bring "to all present new life and fresh vigor."³ The prayer meetings are also appropriate places for believers "to edify one another by an interchange of thoughts and feelings, to gather strength, and light, and courage by becoming acquainted with one another's hopes and aspirations." By their sincere and earnest prayers they receive a renewed power from heaven.⁴

¹ "Praise Glorifies God," RH 55 (Jan. 1, 1880): 1
² Patriarchs and Prophets, p. 594; see also "Cooperation with Ministers," RH 60 (July 24, 1883): 466.
³ "Freely Ye Have Received, Freely Give," RH (June 6, 1912): 18; see also "Follow Me and I Will Make You Fishers of Men," RH 80 (Aug. 27, 1903): 8.
⁴ "Work for Church Members," RH 91 (March 5, 1914): 21.
To White the Sabbath school is a means of bringing children and youth to Jesus and educating them in Bible truth. Through object lessons, pictures, and blackboards, the Sabbath school should be made attractive, intensely interesting, and efficient. She further states:

The Sabbath-school is an important branch of missionary work, not only to give to young and old a knowledge of God's word, but to awaken in them a love for its sacred truths, and a desire to study it for themselves; above all, to teach them to regulate their lives by its holy teachings.

White also sees the campmeetings as an effective method to transmit the gospel message. It is her contention that campmeetings should be held in prominent places near large cities, and "be changed from place to place, that the light of truth may reach the greatest number of people." To make these meetings successful, several workers are needed; "the very best talent is to be employed."

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3.In White's time campmeetings offered spiritual help and instruction to the lay members and also served as evangelistic meetings aimed at the visitors. Those convocations represented major evangelistic campaigns to reach various places. At the present time, however, the emphasis given to campmeeting in the Adventist church differs from that of the past. The Seventh-day Adventist Encyclopedia states: "Steering away from the basically evangelistic nature of the nineteenth-century camp meeting, SDA's today tend more and more to utilize these yearly sectional gatherings as spiritual meetings for the church members, though not ignoring opportunities for neighborhood evangelism. In the last several decades the practice of maintaining permanent camp meeting sites, rather than moving to different locations each year, has become general" (Neufeld, s.v. "Camp Meeting").
preaching should be very spiritual in character, with well-balanced periods of rest provided between discourses for meditation and prayer. "In this way there will be growth in religious knowledge and experience."\(^1\)

The participation of every believer in religious meetings is so essential to their spiritual life that White emphasizes its importance as follows:

We sustain a loss when we neglect the privilege of associating together to strengthen and encourage one another in the service of God. The truths of His word lose their vividness and importance in our minds. Our hearts cease to be enlightened and aroused by the sanctifying influence, and we decline in spirituality. In our intercourse as Christians we lose much by lack of sympathy with one another. He who shuts himself up to himself is not filling the position that God designed he should. We are all children of one Father, dependent upon one another for happiness. The claims of God and of humanity are upon us. It is the proper cultivation of the social elements of our nature that brings us into sympathy with our brethren and affords us happiness in our efforts to bless others.\(^2\)

In White's opinion, the communication of the knowledge of Bible truth in printed form is also an important part of the teaching task of the church. She maintains that "the power of the press can hardly be over-estimated. It has been truly called the right arm of our strength."\(^3\) Since "every page is a ray of light from heaven"\(^4\) containing the special message for the people at this

\(^1\)"Spiritual Benefit the Object of Camp-meeting," RH 68 (June 23, 1891):385; "Spiritual Advancement the Object of Camp-meeting," RH 68 (June 30, 1891):401.

\(^2\)Patriarchs and Prophets, p. 541.

\(^3\)"Will a Man Rob God," RH 59 (May 15, 1882):305.

time, and since "our publications" can go in places where the living preacher cannot go, or meetings cannot be held, the canvassing work, properly carried on, is "a mighty factor in the dissemination" of the present truth. It "is missionary work of the highest order," "an important and most profitable line of evangelistic work." "By the canvassing work, the truth is presented to thousands who otherwise would never hear it." Consequently, White fully equates the importance of this work to that of the ministry.

Even in places where there are ministers at work, the ministry of the printed page is essential. In addition to the canvasser's example of courtesy and spirit of service, he "can reach a class that can not be reached" by the minister and finds opportunities to hold Bible studies and pray with people. Moreover, "a

7Ibid.
sermon may be preached and soon forgotten, but a book remains."\(^1\)

White further comments:

Papers and books containing the messages of truth are the Lord's means of thus keeping the truth continually before the minds of the people. These publications will do a far greater work than can be accomplished by the ministry of the word alone. Through the work of the canvasser, the silent messengers of truth that are placed in the homes of the people, enlightening and confirming men and women, will strengthen the gospel ministry in every way; for the Holy Spirit will impress the minds of those who listen to the preaching of the word of God's delegated ministers, and the same ministry of angels attends the books that contain the truth as attends the work of the minister who is educating the people as to what is truth. Thus the faithful, consecrated canvasser will lay up treasure beside the throne of God.\(^2\)

White believes the distribution of religious literature is "one means by which the message is to be proclaimed."\(^3\) The printed page is "the silent messenger"\(^4\) who teaches the Bible truth,\(^5\) prepares minds and removes prejudice for the reception of the gospel from a living preacher.\(^6\) The printed page also strengthens hearts in the truth and establishes them against error.\(^7\) Therefore, she concludes that "publications must be multiplied, and scattered like the

\(^1\)"An Appeal for the Southern Field," RH 78 (May 28, 1901):349.


\(^3\)"A Personal Appeal to Every Believer," RH 80 (Nov. 12, 1903):9.


\(^6\)"Distributing the Printed Page," RH 91 (Nov. 5, 1914):3.

leaves of autumn.\(^1\) "Let literature be distributed judiciously on the trains, in the street, on the great ships that ply the seas and through the mails."\(^2\)

According to White's understanding of the mission of the church, in addition to its specific and direct teaching task, there is a variety of possibilities of transmitting the gospel to each person, with an approach suggested by his particular and immediate needs. Thus the church can teach people by serving people. She acknowledges that "the poor, the unfortunate, the sick, and the suffering are in this world to test the characters" of those "in more favorable circumstances."\(^3\) The Lord has placed them "in the care of the church," and the character of the believers is shown by the way in which they treat those who need their help.\(^4\) In fact, it is impossible for the followers of "Christ to see the work which needs to be done, and yet do nothing."\(^5\) They must learn of the woes of the poor and suffering and seek to bring them relief.\(^6\) "Let the members of poor households be taught how to cook, how to make and mend their clothing, how to nurse the sick, how to care properly for the

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\(^1\)"Holiday Presents," RH 52 (Nov. 21, 1878):161; see also "Circulate the Publications," RH 85 (Aug. 13, 1908):8.


\(^3\)"How to Deal with the Erring," RH 88 (Jan. 26, 1911):3.


\(^5\)"The Need of Missionary Effort," RH 89 (April 11, 1912):3.

home."\(^1\) All this is necessary and important, as White points out: "Prayers, exhortation, and talk are cheap fruits, which are frequently tied on, but fruits that are manifested in good works, in caring for the needy, the fatherless, and widows, are genuine fruits, and grow naturally upon a tree."\(^2\) However, the mission of the church is not fulfilled by merely satisfying the immediate and material wants of people. Each person's deepest and more urgent spiritual needs are to be met. The poor are to have an opportunity to know and "understand the special truths for this time."\(^3\) To offer such an opportunity is the "raison d'être" of the church. Throughout White's writings, she refers, as already shown, to medical missionary work as a partner of the gospel ministry. "The gospel and the medical missionary work are to advance together. The gospel is to be bound up with the principles of true health reform."\(^4\) Great efforts should be made, she believes to encourage people to study the human organism "and the laws by which it is governed,"\(^5\) and to educate people "in the principles of health reform."\(^6\) Whenever the truth is presented, the people are to be


\(^3\)"How the Truth Should Be Presented," RH 67 (Nov. 25, 1890):721.


taught regarding the preservation and recovery of health.¹ She maintains that God's people in general, and gospel workers in particular, "are to learn to minister to the needs of soul and body."²

White also underscores the importance of medical missionary work as a pioneer work of the gospel. "It is the door through which the truth is to find entrance to many homes. A demonstration of health reform will do much toward removing prejudice against our evangelical work."³ Through this means hearts can be reached,⁴ and the way prepared "for more decided communication of the truth."⁵

Likewise, no church institution is to be regarded, in White's opinion, as a complete whole. The workers in one part of the field are to labor for the good of the entire cause.⁶ Thus the gospel ministry, the publishing work, the educational work, and the medical missionary work, which are "to represent the humble manner of Christ's teaching,"⁷ are to act as members of the same body, with

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various capacities. Their purpose is the spreading of the truth,¹ and "the recovery of the sick."²

Referring specifically to sanitariums, White states:

Now is the time for us to sound the warning message, by the agencies that God has given us for this purpose. Let us remember that one most important agency is our medical missionary work. Never are we to lose sight of the great object for which our sanitariums are established,—the advancement of God's closing work in the earth.

Consequently, all which is done in the sanitariums "is to bear the impress of heaven."⁴ By beholding the miracle-working power of Christ as revealed in the lives of physicians, nurses, and helpers, the patient's minds are to be impressed with "the truths we teach."⁵ Every sanitarium, she adds, "should stand forth as a representative of the living principles of truth," and "God's glory and the advancement of his kingdom should be the first consideration."⁶

On the other hand, connected with the gospel ministry, the medical missionary work, or medical work, "is a most effective


⁴"God's Interest in His Institutions," RH 79 (July 1, 1902):8.


instrument by which the ground is prepared for the sowing of the
seeds of truth" and "by which the harvest is reaped." It is "the
helping hand of the gospel ministry." Medical work "is as the
right hand of the body." "As the right arm is connected with the
body, so the health reform and medical missionary work is connected
with the third angel's message, and is to work efficiently as the
right arm, for the defense of the body of truth." There are to be
no walls of partition nor division between the different lines of
work.

The Church's Strongest Witness

Having reached this point, it is important to point out
that, according to White, in order for the church to accomplish its
mission of carrying to all the world the light of truth, there must
be harmony and cooperation among all the believers. With dissen­sions and unhappy differences there is a "great loss," since "a house
divided against itself cannot stand." But with harmony of thought

1 "Medical Missionary Work among the Colored People in the

2 "Ibid.; see also "Notes of Travel—No. 2: Dedication of

3 "God's Interest in His Institutions," RH 79 (July 1, 1902):
8; see also "A View of the Conflict," RH 80 (Nov. 25, 1903):8.


5 "God's Interest in His Institutions," RH 79 (July 1, 1902):
8; see also "The Canvassing Work," RH 76 (June 20, 1899):389.

6 "What the Cause of God Demands of His Servants," RH 86

7 "The Church's Great Need," RH 64 (March 22, 1887):177; see
also "Unity of the Church," RH 64 (Jan. 25, 1887):49.
and action there is strength. "United we stand, divided we fall."¹

"Unity should be recognized as the element of preservation in the church."² Therefore, each believer, while maintaining his own individuality, is to labor in harmony with every other believer.³

Furthermore, "heavenly messengers" never "place their endorsement upon irregularity, disorganization, and disorder" in the life and work of the church.⁴ White states:

"God is not the author of confusion, but of peace, as in all churches of the saints" [1 Cor 14:33]. He requires that order and system be observed in the conduct of church affairs today no less than in the days of old. He desires His work to be carried forward with thoroughness and exactness so that He may place upon it the seal of His approval. Christian is to be united with Christian, church with church, the human instrumentality cooperating with the divine, every agency subordinate to the Holy Spirit, and all combined in giving to the world the good tidings of the grace of God.⁵

Yet, order and system in church conduct cannot be the result of improvisation. All the members, especially the leaders,⁶ have a part in fulfilling this divine requirement.⁷


⁷"Duty of the Minister and the People," RH 72 (July 9, 1895):433.

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The leaders in God's cause, as wise generals, are to lay plans for advance moves all along the line. In their planning they are to give special study to the work that can be done by the laity for their friends and neighbors. The work of God in this earth can never be finished until the men and women comprising our membership rally to the work, and unite their efforts with those of ministers and church officers.

The church's strongest witness to the world is the existence of harmony and unity among its individual members. But in order for the church to manifest this unity, its members "must place themselves under Christ's command. Their characters must be conformed to His character, and their wills to His will."

Because of its nature and mission, "the church, enfeebled and defective, needing to be reproved, warned, and counseled, is," in White's opinion, "the only object on the earth upon which Christ bestows," in a special sense, "His supreme regard." "Nothing else in this world is so dear to the Lord as His church." His "love for the church is infinite." White summarizes her concept of, and mission of the church in these words:

Christ designs that heaven's order, heaven's plan of government, heaven's divine harmony, shall be represented in His church on earth. Thus in His people He is glorified. Through

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them the Sun of Righteousness will shine in undimmed luster to the world. Christ has given to His church ample facilities, that He may receive a large revenue of glory from His redeemed, purchased possession. He has bestowed upon His people capabilities and blessings that they may represent His own sufficiency. The church, endowed with the righteousness of Christ, is His depositary, in which the riches of His mercy, His grace, and His love, are to appear in full and final display. Christ looks upon His people in their purity and perfection, as the reward of His humiliation, and the supplement of His glory,—Christ, the great Center, from whom radiates all glory.

Summary

In Ellen White's opinion, the family circle is the school where the child receives his first and most enduring lessons. There the future of the children is largely decided. So, for parents, the home school is the first and most important mission field, and to guide the children into the path of righteousness from their earliest years should be their first business. They are responsible for the health, the constitution, and the development of the character of their children.

Parents should be aware of the way faith, beliefs, values, and attitudes are transmitted to their children. They should know that conscious teaching does not take place in a vacuum. The entire organization of the home life is to be planned with the objective of transmitting the parents' sacred heritage to their children, and even to the world. The main parental task consists, principally, in creating a genuine Christian home atmosphere. There, by precept and example, children are to be taught to love and fear God, to accept Christ as their Saviour, and obey the principles of the Bible. They

1Desire of Ages, p. 680.
should be attracted by their parents' religion and find real happiness in following in their steps. The dynamic force of this factor—conscious teaching in the home—in the transmission of religious legacy is without parallel. This is illustrated through the experiences of Abraham and the Waldenses in their successful religious teaching in the home.

Conscious teaching in the school situation should not be disconnected from Ellen White's concept of the teaching task in the Christian home. The school is to become, for the child, an extension of the home. To insure a positive continuity, schools with chosen Christian teachers should be established wherever there is a group of believers. The youth should attend schools which are like the schools of the ancient Hebrews. These institutions are God's instrumentalities for the furtherance of His work in the earth. They are to educate young men and women for missionary service. Consequently, although natural ability and intellectual culture are indispensable for teachers, moral and spiritual qualifications must take pre-eminence. They are to be gospel teachers, who, at the same time, are themselves in the school of Christ, and who have a true missionary spirit. The Scripture is to lie at the foundation of the school curriculum. Faith is, therefore, integrated not merely with learning but with all the school activities. The students are then educated in practical Christianity and practical missionary work.

In other words, conscious teaching as a dynamic factor in the transmission of the Christian faith takes place in a special way in the Christian school. It represents an intentional systematic
and constant effort, with the aim of training the youth for the communication of the gospel truth through missionary action. The very process of teaching in the school situation is a continuous transmission of beliefs, values, ideals, attitudes, and hopes which constitute the Christian religious heritage. The school's conscious teaching is a process of transmitting a sacred legacy of the past and, at the same time, a starting point for a greater and more extensive action of the same process elsewhere.

According to Ellen White, the church was organized for service, and its mission is to carry the gospel to the world. The church has the truth which has come down as a trusted heritage. It is charged with communicating this message to the entire world before the end comes, as well as hastening the return of Christ. In order for the church to accomplish its world-wide task, every believer is to realize his specific work in cooperation with the heavenly agencies. Living a practical religion, the work is to begin at home, and from there, it is to advance, not by organizing great settlements of believers, but by forming, instead, many small, dynamic churches. Because of the magnitude of the mission, the closeness of the end of time, and the multiplicity of the activities to be done, the ordained ministers alone are not equal to the task of warning the world. Therefore, God is also calling upon physicians, nurses, canvassers, Bible workers, and every other consecrated layman to share the church's task.

As Christ was a teacher and a healer, so teaching and service are the two spheres of the missionary action of the church.
To Ellen White, the teaching task of the church is administered through various kinds of meetings, activities, and attitudes of the believers. The teaching church is the church which worships, studies, and proclaims. The communication of the knowledge of Bible truth in printed form is also an important part of the teaching task of the church. The serving church, on the other hand, is the church which knows the woes of the poor and suffering, and seeks to bring them relief. It is the church which helps the rich and poor to preserve and recover their health. The church which serves by its institutions is the church which teaches by serving, and by serving it prepares the way for the communication of the gospel. The church will be able to accomplish its teaching mission when all the believers live and work in harmony and cooperation.
CHAPTER VIII

CELEBRATION IN THE TRANSMISSION
OF RELIGIOUS HERITAGE

As already noted, Ellen G. White wrote much concerning the theoretical basis of the Christian religion. Although she extensively commented about the meaning and importance of the knowledge and acceptance of the Scriptures, her main emphasis was on the practical character of the Christian religion. To White, religion was principally distinguished as practical piety, as communion with God and communication with man. Yet, in her view, religion was also characterized as celebration—the commemoration of specific sacred events and the observance of days of religious and social importance.

Having studied the role of conscious teaching as a dynamic factor in the transmission of religious heritage, it is now appropriate to consider the function of celebration in the process of reinforcing and communicating beliefs and values of the Christian faith. Celebration is examined first as a commemoration of sacred events with their ceremonies and festivities, and then as an observance of special days with their meaning and value.

Commemoration of Sacred Events

Three Jewish National Festivals

In harmony with the biblical record and with the history of
the Jews, White states that anciently there were three annual sacred assemblies of all Israel at the sanctuary in earlier times, and later in the temple at Jerusalem. From every city, from Dan to Beersheba, the people came to celebrate the Passover, the Feast of Pentecost, and the Feast of Tabernacles.

The Passover

The first of these festivals was the Passover. It was celebrated in the evening of the fourteenth day of the month Abib, or Nisan, of the Jewish year. This time corresponds "to the last part of March and the beginning of April." The Passover was followed immediately by seven days of the Feast of Unleavened Bread. In those days the cold of winter was past, the latter rain had ended, and the whole land was usually "bright with flowers" and filled "with the song of birds."

The Passover was ordained as a "commemoration of the deliverance of Israel from Egyptian bondage" and was celebrated with "solemn and impressive ceremonies." In every household on Passover eve, a year-old lamb was roasted whole and eaten with bitter herbs,
"pointing back to the bitterness of the bondage in Egypt." The manner in which the feast was celebrated served to vividly and dramatically recall the situation to which the origin of Israel as an independent nation was traced; namely, the flight from Egypt. White further explains:

At the time of their deliverance from Egypt, the children of Israel ate the Passover supper standing, with their loins girded, and with their staves in their hands, ready for their journey. The manner in which they celebrated this ordinance harmonized with their condition; for they were about to be thrust out of the land of Egypt, and were to begin a painful and difficult journey through the wilderness. Perhaps no festival in Israel better illustrates the manner in which festivals were used as occasions for religious instruction and training than the Passover. White recalls the biblical passage which points out that "in commemoration of this great deliverance a feast was to be observed yearly by the people of Israel in all future generations." "This day shall be unto you for a memorial; and ye shall keep it a feast to the Lord throughout your generations: ye shall keep it a feast by an ordinance forever." God had directed that when their children asked the meaning of that ordinance, parents were to relate the history, "that the wonderful deliverance from bondage might be kept fresh in the minds of all," "from generation to generation." Thus, within the home the parents, in

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1Ibid., p. 278.  
2Desire of Ages, p. 653.  
3Patriarchs and Prophets, p. 274.  
4Exod 12:14.  
6Desire of Ages, p. 77.
obedience to the divine command, explained to the children the origin of the festival and the meaning of each symbolic act.

In pointing out another dimension of the Passover, White says that "on the second day of the feast the first-fruits of the year's harvest were presented before God." A sheaf of barley, the earliest grain in Palestine, "was waved by the priest before the altar of God, as an acknowledgement that all was His." Also, the people were to entreat God's blessing upon their families, lands, flocks, and herds. Therefore, in addition to keeping in the memory of the Hebrews the deliverance from Egypt, the Passover had, according to White, another divine design.

This ordinance was designed to call their minds from their world-loving interests, and from their cares and anxieties in relation to temporal concerns, and to review the works of God. They were to call to mind his miracles, his mercies and loving-kindness, to them, that their love and reverence for him might increase, and lead them to ever look to him, and trust in him in all their trials, and not turn to other gods.

A third dimension of the Passover is brought out in White's writings. She sees it not only as commemorative, but also as typical. On one hand, the Passover pointed back to the deliverance of Israel from Egypt. On the other hand, it pointed "forward to the greater deliverance which Christ was to accomplish in freeing His people from the bondage of sin." She states:

1*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 539; see also *Desire of Ages*, p. 77.


4*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 277; see also p. 539.
All the ceremonies of the feast were types of the work of Christ. The deliverance of Israel from Egypt was an object lesson of redemption, which the Passover was intended to keep in memory. The slain lamb, the unleavened bread, the sheaf of first fruits, represented the Saviour.¹

Each new generation was taught the origin, three-dimensional meaning, and importance of the Passover.²

The Feast of Pentecost

The second yearly feast, Pentecost, came fifty days after the offering of first-fruits. It was called also the Feast of Harvest and the Feast of Weeks. Pentecost occupied only one day, and it was devoted to religious service. White says that "as an expression of gratitude for the grain prepared as food, two loaves baked with leaven were presented before God."³ She mentions this festival in passing and provides no further comment.⁴

The Feast of Tabernacles

The Feast of Tabernacles, or Ingathering, came in the seventh month, at the close of the harvest. It was the crowning festal gathering of the year.

The land had yielded its increase, the harvest had been gathered into their granaries, the first-fruits had been stored, and the people came with their tributes of thanksgiving to God, who had thus richly blessed them. Joy and rejoicing were there combined with the solemnities of a holy and sacred convocation.⁵

It was a special occasion of rejoicing. "It occurred just after the

¹Desire of Ages, p. 77.
²Patriarchs and Prophets, pp. 277, 539.
³Ibid., p. 540. ⁴Desire of Ages, pp. 75, 447.
⁵"Our Camp-meetings," RH 54 (July 10, 1879):17.
great Day of Atonement, when the assurance had been given that their iniquity should be remembered no more.\(^1\) At peace with God and fitted to enjoy the festival, they came to rejoice before the Lord, acknowledge His goodness, and to praise Him.\(^2\)

That feast was not only the harvest thanksgiving. Like the Passover, the Feast of Tabernacles was commemorative. "The children of Israel called to mind the time when their fathers dwelt in tents in the wilderness, as they journeyed from Egypt" to Canaan under God's miraculous protection and care.\(^3\) The people were to leave their houses for seven days to celebrate the festival. In remembrance of the tent-life in the wilderness, they dwelt in "booths, or tabernacles of green boughs. These "were erected in the streets, in the courts of the temple, or on the housetops."\(^4\)

The commemoration of "the pillar of light that guided Israel in the desert" was part of the ceremonies of the feast celebration.\(^5\) The services of the day were of "peculiar solemnity." The greatest interest, however, centered in the ceremony commemorating the flowing of water from the rock in the desert.\(^6\) In a golden vessel the waters of Siloam were borne by the priest into the temple, and, after being mingled with wine, "the water was poured out upon the altar

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\(^1\)Patriarchs and Prophets, p. 540.

\(^2\)"Christ's Life a Testimony to His Divine Claims," RH 73 (July 7, 1896):418.


\(^4\)Desire of Ages, p. 448.  
\(^5\)Ibid., p. 463.

of burnt offering," followed by "demonstrations of great rejoicing."\(^1\)

In White's understanding, the ceremonies of celebration of the festival were also figurative of the Messiah. He was to be "the Light of the world."\(^2\) Furthermore, the refreshing water was "an emblem of the divine grace which Christ alone can bestow."\(^3\) In addition, she states:

The Feast of Tabernacles was not only commemorative but typical. It not only pointed back to the wilderness sojourn, but, as the feast of harvest, it celebrated the ingathering of the fruits of the earth, and pointed forward to the great day of final ingathering, when the Lord of the harvest shall send forth His reapers to gather the tares together in bundles for the fire, and to gather the wheat into His garner.\(^4\)

Generation after generation, at those annual celebrations, old and young would be encouraged in their faith and hopes, and the ties which bound the chosen people strengthened. Probably no other factor in Jewish life has played a more impressive role in stimulating and developing the religious consciousness of the Israelites regarding the origin and sacredness of their religious heritage.

The Jewish Ceremonial System

It has been noted that the celebration of festivals in Israel was centered on ceremonies, rites, and symbols. In reality, the ritual provided both the form and the occasion for the expression of faith. That special system of rites and ceremonies, with the sacrificial offerings and the priesthood, was established during

\(^1\) Patriarchs and Prophets, p. 412.
\(^2\) Desire of Ages, pp. 463-65.
\(^3\) Patriarchs and Prophets, p. 412.
\(^4\) Ibid., p. 541.
Moses' life time. But White believes, in accordance with Genesis, the sacrificial offerings were ordained by God soon after Adam's fall. In describing the object of that divine order and the experience of Adam's first sacrifice, she writes:

The sacrificial offerings were ordained by God to be to man a perpetual reminder and a penitential acknowledgment of his sin and a confession of his faith in the promised Redeemer. They were intended to impress upon the fallen race the solemn truth that it was sin that caused death. To Adam, the offering of the first sacrifice was a most painful ceremony. His hand must be raised to take life, which only God could give. It was the first time he had ever witnessed death, and he knew that had he been obedient to God, there would have been no death of man or beast. As he slew the innocent victim, he trembled at the thought that his sin must shed the blood of the spotless Lamb of God. This scene gave him a deeper and more vivid sense of the greatness of his transgression, which nothing but the death of God's dear Son could expiate. And he marveled at the infinite goodness that would give such a ransom to save the guilty. A star of hope illumined the dark and terrible future and relieved it of its utter desolation.

"From Adam's day down to the time when the Jewish nation became a separate and distinct people, "the faithful believers were instructed in regard to the Redeemer to come, "which their sacrificial offerings represented." In patriarchal times the same sacrifices "connected with divine worship constituted a perpetual reminder of the coming of a Saviour." Thus, White acknowledges, "the Jewish system was symbolical, and was to continue until the perfect offering should take the place of the figurative," until "type met

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2 Patriarchs and Prophets, p. 68.


4 Prophets and Kings, pp. 684-85.

anti-type in the death of Christ."\(^1\) In her view, "the death of Christ gives the Christian a correct knowledge of the system of ceremonies and explains prophecies which still remain obscure to the Jews."\(^2\)

Looking back to the Jewish system of types and ordinances from her Christian perspective, White points out that the sacrificial offerings were established to (1) "secure the remembrance of God among His people,"\(^3\) (2) "represent the death and mediatorial work of Christ,"\(^4\) (3) "be a standing pledge to man of God's pardon,"\(^5\) (4) brighten the way of the Hebrews,\(^6\) and (5) "keep faith alive in the hearts of His people."\(^7\) Commenting about this last point, she says:

> The solemn service of the sanctuary typified the grand truths that were to be revealed through successive generations. . . . Thus through age after age of darkness and apostasy faith was kept alive in the hearts of men until the time for the advent of the promised Messiah.\(^8\)

To a great extent, that goal was attained when their celebrations became meaningful to the people. Those ceremonies illustrated their faith and beliefs. White explains it in this way: "In the ministration of the tabernacle, and of the temple that afterward

\(^2\)"The Law of God," RH 45 (May 6, 1875):146
\(^3\)Ibid.
\(^6\)"The Sacrifice of Separation," RH 60 (Jan. 9, 1883):17.
\(^8\)Patriarchs and Prophets, p. 367.
took its place, the people were taught each day, by means of types and shadows, the great truths relative to the advent of Christ.\(^1\) His "death and ministration."\(^2\) Moreover, through the direct participation in specific services, the individuals were taught lessons, the impressions of which could never be forgotten.\(^3\) For instance, when "the sinner brought his offering to the door of the tabernacle," and placed his hand upon the victim's head, he confessed his sins, and then, by his own hand, slew the innocent sacrifice.\(^4\) This was also the case on the most solemn day of the year when every man was to afflict his soul while the ritual of the Day of Atonement was going forward. "All business was laid aside, and the whole congregation of Israel spent the day in solemn humiliation before God, with prayer, fasting, and deep searching of heart."\(^5\)

The children received even a greater impression when they were taught while observing or participating in those celebrations. White insists that "the use of figures and symbols caused the lessons given to be more firmly fixed in the memory. The great truths of God's providence and of the future life were impressed on the young mind."\(^6\) Likewise, children had an unforgettable experience when their parents vividly instructed them concerning the

\(^{1}\) Prophets and Kings, pp. 684-85.

\(^{2}\) Patriarchs and Prophets, p. 358.

\(^{3}\) "The Two Dispensations," RH 63 (March 2, 1886): 129.

\(^{4}\) Patriarchs and Prophets, p. 354.

\(^{5}\) Ibid., p. 355.

\(^{6}\) Ibid., p. 592.
significance of sacred monuments or landmarks.\(^1\) Thus, the sacred legacy of Israel was impressed and reinforced in the hearts and minds of the old and young in each generation.

The Gospel Rites

According to White, baptism and the Lord's Supper are the two rites which Christ originated by His example and teachings. They are symbolic and are to be celebrated by every believer as outward signs of an inward living experience with God's Spirit.

**Baptism**

White does not recognize as valid any other form of baptismal ceremony but immersion. Referring to the baptism of Jesus, she carefully emphasizes that "John . . . led the Saviour down into the Jordan, and buried Him beneath the water."\(^2\) White makes clear that "Jesus did not receive baptism as a confession of guilt on His own account. He identified Himself with sinners, taking the steps that we are to take, and doing the work that we must do."\(^3\) But the baptism of John was in itself a "symbol of cleansing from sin."\(^4\) For those whose sin and uncleanness are washed in Christ, "the great fountain," baptism is still a symbol of moral cleansing.\(^5\) She further explains:

> When we submit to the solemn rite of baptism, we testify to angels and to men that we are purged from our old sins, and

\(^1\)Ibid., p. 484; Josh 4:21-22.
\(^2\)Desire of Ages, p. 111; see also Acts of Apostles, p. 108.
\(^3\)Desire of Ages, p. 111.
\(^4\)Ibid., p. 104.  
\(^5\)Ibid., p. 646.
that henceforth, having died to the world, we will "seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God." Let us not forget our baptismal vow.¹

In fact, the rite of baptism is a symbol of Christ's death, burial, and resurrection, without which the purification of man's sin would have been an impossibility. Therefore, the resurrection of Christ is commemorated by the believer who is buried with Him by baptism and raised out of the watery grave, in commemoration of His resurrection, to live a new life. Consequently, the connection established between Christ's baptism and the baptism of His followers through past centuries ties all together as a spiritual line in which the celebration of this rite has been a dynamic factor.

The Ordinance of Foot-washing

Alluding to the occasion when Jesus partook of His last Passover supper with His disciples, White states:

Christ was standing at the point of transition between two economies and their two great festivals. He, the spotless Lamb of God, was about to present Himself as a sin offering, that He would thus bring to an end the system of types and ceremonies that for four thousand years had pointed to His death. As He ate the Passover with His disciples, He instituted in its place the service that was to be the memorial of His great sacrifice. The national festival of the Jews was to pass away forever. The service which Christ established was to be observed by His followers in all lands and through all ages.²

Referring to "the service which Christ [then] established," White points out that "the Lord's Supper was ordained by Christ shortly

²Desire of Ages, p. 652; see also p. 653.
before His death, and the ceremony of feetwashing was instituted just prior to the Lord's Supper.\textsuperscript{1} This ordinance of foot-washing is "Christ's appointed preparation for the sacramental service," and a memory of His humiliation.\textsuperscript{2} It is also an illustration of the Master's teaching—"not to be ministered unto, but to minister"\textsuperscript{3}—that is to impress forever the "minds and hearts" of His disciples.\textsuperscript{4}

In White's opinion the foot-washing is a "humiliating ordinance" which is made "an occasion of appeal to the spiritual imagination."\textsuperscript{5} It is "to encourage humility, but it should never be termed humiliating, in the sense of being degrading to humanity. It is to make tender our hearts toward one another."\textsuperscript{6} She further develops this point:

There is in man a disposition to esteem himself more highly than his brother, to work for self, to seek the highest place; and often this results in evil surmisings and bitterness of spirit. The ordinance preceding the Lord's Supper is to clear away these misunderstandings, to bring man out of his selfishness, down from his stilts of self-exaltation, to the humility of heart that will lead him to serve his brother.\textsuperscript{7}

White also emphasizes the idea that this ceremony fulfills an inner human need. If man is to be convinced, the truth and rites

\begin{footnotes}
\footnote{\textsuperscript{1}"If Ye Know These Things, Happy Are Ye If Ye Do Them," \textit{RH} 79 (Nov. 4, 1902):8.}
\footnote{\textsuperscript{2}\textit{Desire of Ages}, p. 650.}
\footnote{\textsuperscript{3}Matt 20:28.}
\footnote{\textsuperscript{4}\textit{Desire of Ages}, p. 642.}
\footnote{\textsuperscript{5}"The Lord's Supper and the Ordinance of Feet-washing—No. 5," \textit{RH} 75 (June 28, 1898):406.}
\footnote{\textsuperscript{6}"The Lord's Supper and the Ordinance of Feet-washing—No. 1," \textit{RH} 75 (May 31, 1898):342.}
\footnote{\textsuperscript{7}\textit{Desire of Ages}, p. 650.}
\end{footnotes}
of the Christian religion must appeal to his mind and to his heart.\(^1\) Unfolding her thinking, she writes:

This ordinance does not speak so largely to man's intellectual capacity as to his heart. His moral and spiritual nature needs it. If his disciples had not needed this, it would not have been left for them as Christ's last established ordinance in connection with, and including, the last supper. It was Christ's desire to leave to his disciples an ordinance that would do for them the very thing they needed. . . . \(^2\)

To celebrate the ordinance of foot-washing with the right disposition is, in White's view, a source of blessing for the believers. "To those who celebrate the spirit of this service," says she, "it can never become a mere ceremonial."\(^3\) (1) God is brought near on each occasion,\(^4\) (2) Christ by the Holy Spirit is there to witness and "to set the seal to His own ordinance,"\(^5\) (3) angels are present, and (4) the atmosphere of heaven surrounds every faithful one.\(^6\) The impression received by those who participate in the celebration of this ordinance in the right attitude is an important factor to reinforce their faith, and, therefore, a potential also

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\(^1\) "The Lord's Supper and the Ordinance of Feet-washing—No. 5," RH 75 (June 28, 1898):406.

\(^2\) "The Lord's Supper and the Ordinance of Feet-washing—No. 3," RH 75 (June 14, 1898):373.

\(^3\) Desire of Ages, p. 651.


\(^6\) "The Lord's Supper and the Ordinance of Feet-washing—No. 6," RH 75 (July 5, 1898):422; Desire of Ages, p. 656.
for the transmission of their beliefs to the world. White further discusses this point:

Whenever this ordinance is rightly celebrated, the children of God are brought into a holy relationship, to help and bless each other. They covenant that the life shall be given to unselfish ministry. And this, not only for one another. Their field of labor is as wide as their Master's was. The world is full of those who need our ministry. The poor, the helpless, the ignorant, are on every hand. Those who have communed with Christ in the upper chamber will go forth to minister as He did.

The Lord's Supper

Regarding the symbolic value of the Lord's Supper, White affirms that it is an anti-type of the Passover. "When the Saviour yielded up His life on Calvary, the significance of the Passover ceased, and the ordinance of the Lord's Supper was instituted as a memorial of the same event of which the Passover had been a type." The Lord's Supper was given to celebrate the "deliverance wrought out as the result of the death of Christ." In this manner the sacrifice of the Saviour is to be kept alive in each believer's mind.

This ordinance is to be celebrated until He comes the second time in "power and glory." In fact, in her view, it was also "designed to keep this hope vivid" in the minds of the believers.

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1Ibid., p. 651.
2Patriarchs and Prophets, p. 539.
3Desire of Ages, p. 653.
6"The Lord's Supper and the Ordinance of Feet-washing—No. 2," RH 75 (June 7, 1898):357; Desire of Ages, p. 659.
Furthermore, since "the broken bread" and the wine "are to represent the broken body and spilled blood of the Son of God," White maintains that only "unleavened bread" and "pure juice of the grape" are the "correct representation[s] of the Lord's Supper. Nothing fermented is to be used." She also argues that, although "the ministration of the sacrament is commemorative of Christ's humiliation, betrayal, and sufferings," it is not to be taken merely as a form. Symbolically, "Christ is set forth crucified among us."

Concerning the application of the term "sacrament" to both the rite of baptism and of the Lord's Supper, an explanation seems pertinent here. Nowhere, in White's writings do the two rites of the Christian church appear as conferring in and of themselves any particular or special grace to the believers. She thinks Christ intended that this Supper should be celebrated often "in order to bring to our remembrance His sacrifice" for the remission of sins. Those who participate in it publicly bear witness of their faith in Christ as their personal Saviour. She insists that Christ "has instituted this service, that it may speak constantly to our senses

1"The Lord's Supper and the Ordinance of Feet-washing--No. 2," RH 75 (June 7, 1898):357.

2"The Lord's Supper and the Ordinance of Feet-washing--No. 5," RH 75 (June 28, 1898):405.

3"The Lord's Supper and the Ordinance of Feet-washing--No. 2," RH 75 (June 7, 1898):357.

4"The Lord's Supper and the Ordinance of Feet-washing--No. 5," RH 75 (June 29, 1898):405.

5"The Ordinances," RH 74 (June 22, 1897):385.

of the love of God that has been expressed in our behalf."¹ "Our senses need to be quickened to lay hold of the mystery of godliness."² Consequently, it may be said these rites accompany the works of God's saving grace upon the heart. They are powerful means to strengthen the faith of the believers,³ and dynamic factors for transmitting, in an impressive way, the knowledge of salvation through Christ's merits and His glorious return.

**Observance of Special Days**

Although some references are given in the writings of Ellen G. White concerning the celebration of special days, such as birthdays, Thanksgiving, and Christmas, to her there is only one sacred day to be religious observed in the Christian era—the Sabbath. Its celebration is an important factor in the transmission of the knowledge of God the Creator and of His loving care for the welfare of mankind.

**The Sabbath**

White believes the Sabbath was originated at creation,⁴ to celebrate the work of creation.⁵ She states:

In Eden, God set up the memorial of His work of creation, in placing His blessing upon the seventh day. The Sabbath was

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¹The Ordinances," RH 74 (June 22, 1897):386; "The Lord's Supper and the Ordinance of Feet-washing—No. 2," RH 75 (June 7, 1898):357; Desire of Ages, p. 660.
²Desire of Ages, p. 660. ³Ibid., p. 661.
⁴Patriarchs and Prophets, p. 111.
committed to Adam, the father and representative of the whole human family. Its observance was to be an act of grateful acknowledgment, on the part of all who should dwell upon the earth, that God was their Creator and their rightful Sovereign; that they were the work of His hands and the subjects of His authority. Thus the institution was wholly commemorative, and given to all mankind. There was nothing in it shadowy or of restricted application to any people.

In White's thinking, it is evident that "man was not made to fit the Sabbath. The Sabbath was made after the creation of man, to meet his necessities." As God rested on this day, and was refreshed, likewise, He desired man to rest and be refreshed. In other words, "God made man in His own image, and then gave him an example of observing the seventh day, which He sanctified and made holy. He designed that upon that day man should worship Him, and engage in no secular pursuits." In fact, the Sabbath was designed "to bring men into communion with God." As man "observes this memorial, the mind will be directed to the living God, who created the heavens and the earth."

Moreover, White believes in the perpetuity of the Sabbath. It is a memorial that is to stand "from age to age, till the close

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1Patriarchs and Prophets, p. 48.
2"How Shall We Keep the Sabbath?" RH 37 (May 30, 1871):186.
5Desire of Ages, p. 286.
of earth's history.\textsuperscript{1} She also acknowledges that the Sabbath, as an essential part of the content of religious heritage, was committed to Israel as "a peculiar treasure," a sacred truth "to be carefully cherished."\textsuperscript{2} But she clearly states that "God designed it to be observed through every age as a perpetual covenant."\textsuperscript{3} The Sabbath was to be a continual sign of God's love and mercy, and of obedience on the part of His people.\textsuperscript{4}

White strongly argues against the position which maintains that the Sabbath was "originated" at Sinai. She stresses the idea that the Sabbath institution is "as old as the world itself."\textsuperscript{5} "Hallowed by the Creator's rest and blessing, the Sabbath was kept by Adam" before and after his fall. "It was kept by all the patriarchs, from Abel to righteous Noah, to Abraham, and to Jacob."\textsuperscript{6} It is true, she says, that "during the bondage in Egypt, . . . to a great extent they [the Israelites] lost the knowledge of its sacredness."\textsuperscript{7} But when the law was proclaimed at Sinai, "the Sabbath was not introduced as a new institution but as having been founded at

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{1}"The Sabbath Test—No. 1," \textit{RH} 75 (Aug. 30, 1898):549.
\item \textsuperscript{2}Ibid.; "God's Sign," \textit{RH} 79 (Oct. 28, 1902):8.
\item \textsuperscript{3}Ibid.
\item \textsuperscript{4}"For a Perpetual Covenant," \textit{RH} 77 (April 17, 1900):241; "God's Sign," \textit{RH} 79 (Oct. 29, 1902):8.
\item \textsuperscript{5}\textit{Patriarchs and Prophets}, p. 336.
\item \textsuperscript{6}\textit{Great Controversy}, p. 453.
\item \textsuperscript{7}\textit{Patriarchs and Prophets}, p. 336.
\end{itemize}
creation. It is to be remembered and observed as the memorial of the Creator's work."  

From that day to the present the knowledge of God's law has been preserved in the earth, and the Sabbath of the fourth commandment has been kept. Though the "man of sin" succeeded in trampling underfoot God's holy day, yet even in the period of his supremacy there were hidden in secret places, faithful souls who paid it honor. Since the Reformation, there have been some in every generation to maintain its observance.

In rejecting the rationale by which many accept Sunday as the Sabbath of the Lord, White states that when "men transfer the benediction given to the seventh day to the first day of the week," they are "laying aside the commandments of God," and teaching "for doctrine the commandments of men." Even the New Testament has not changed the fourth commandment of the law of God. She holds that the sacredness of the Sabbath "is as firmly established as the throne of Jehovah." As a result of her position she affirms that the Sabbath has lost none of its meaning. "It is still the sign between God and His people, and it will be so forever." White believes the Sabbath is a sign of Christ's creating and sanctifying power, and, as such, it "is given to all who through Christ become a part of the Israel of God."

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2*Great Controversy*, p. 453.

3"Tradition," *RH* 75 (March 8, 1898): 150.


6*Desire of Ages*, p. 288.
According to White, if the acceptance of the Sabbath is essential as the day of rest and worship, also essential is its appropriate observance. "God requires that His Holy day be as sacredly observed now as in the time of Israel."\(^1\) The right observance of the Sabbath cannot be the result of a mere improvisation. During the week a thorough preparation should be carried out by every believer in every home.\(^2\) Despite "the multitude of cares and perplexities" of life, the requirements of the law are to be met.\(^3\) Friday, particularly, "should be made a day of preparation, that everything may be in readiness for its sacred hours."\(^4\)

Referring specifically to the observance of the Sabbath, White states that it is not to be "a gloomy day" of "unrest and uneasiness."\(^5\) The diet should be light, "selected with reference to the duties of the day on which the purest, holiest service is to be offered to God."\(^6\) Above everything, parents should give attention to their children upon the Sabbath.\(^7\) "Do not allow them to violate God's holy law by allowing them to play in the house or

\(^1\) *Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 296.


\(^3\) "Cheerful Obedience Required," *RH* 62 (June 9, 1885):354.

\(^4\) *Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 296; see also "Looking on the Sabbath," *RH* 74 (June 8, 1897):353.

\(^5\) Ibid.


\(^7\) "Duty of Parents to Their Children," *RH* 6 (Sept. 19, 1854):46.
out-of-doors." Instead, parents should be "reading to them the most attractive portions of Bible history, educating them to reverence the Sabbath-day, keeping it according to the commandment." Parents and children should spend a part of the Sabbath hours in nature. She maintains that "the mind cannot be refreshed, enlivened, and elevated by being confined nearly all the Sabbath hours within walls." White summarizes her views concerning the observance of the Sabbath in this way:

The demands upon God are even greater upon the Sabbath than upon other days. His people then leave their usual employment, and spend the time in meditation and worship. They ask more favors of Him on the Sabbath than upon other days. They demand His special attention. They crave His choicest blessings. God does not wait for the Sabbath to pass before He grants these requests. Heaven's work never ceases, and men should never rest from doing good. The Sabbath is not intended to be a period of useless inactivity. The law forbids secular labor on the rest day of the Lord; the toil that gains a livelihood must cease; no labor for worldly pleasure or profit is lawful upon that day; but as God ceased His labor of creating, and rested upon the Sabbath and blessed it, so man is to leave the occupations of his daily life, and devote those sacred hours to healthful rest, to worship, and to holy deeds. The work of Christ in healing the sick was in perfect accord with the law. It honored the Sabbath.

The Sabbath should be made "the sweetest, the most blessed day of the whole week" and "so interesting to our families that its weekly return will be hailed with joy."
To White there is no doubt that the Sabbath constitutes a chain which connects the lost paradise to the earth made new. As it was to be observed in Eden, so "when Eden shall bloom on earth again, God's holy rest-day will be honored by all beneath the sun." During the period of time between the two Edens, Sabbath obedience is essential for man's full development and happiness. It is to be observed as an act of love and worship to God. She further says:

Its observance was to be an act of grateful acknowledgment, on the part of all who should dwell upon the earth, that God was their Creator and their rightful Sovereign; that they were the work of His hands and the subjects of His authority.

White claims that if through the millenia from Eden to the present "man had always remembered to keep holy the Sabbath, there would never have been an atheist or an infidel in our world." Rightly observed, the Sabbath is the best means for transmitting the belief of creation and a weekly reminder of man's obligation toward his Creator.

Popular and Christian Holidays

In addition to the Sabbath-day celebration, White comments concerning the celebration of birthday anniversaries, Christmas, and Thanksgiving. When rightly observed, they play an effective role in the transmission of some essential Christian beliefs, principles, and values.

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2 *Desire of Ages*, p. 283; see also pp. 769-70.
3 *Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 48.
4 Ibid., p. 48.
5 Ibid.
Birthdays

In White's writings there is a principle which is of great importance in any celebration, especially concerning birthdays: "Every opportunity should be employed to implant" in the hearts of the children "right views of God and His love for us."  Therefore, she deplores the fact that parents take "special pains to present gifts to their children upon their birthdays; they make this an occasion of honoring the child, as though honor were due to the human being."  

"Instead of calling their attention to themselves by giving them presents" in such an amount, children should be taught "to look to God as the Giver of life, their protector, and their preserver, and to come to Him with an offering for all His favors." She further specifies:

On birthday occasions the children should be taught that they have reason for gratitude to God for his loving-kindness in preserving their lives for another year. Precious lessons might thus be given. For life, health, food, and clothing, no less than for the hope of eternal life, we are indebted to the Giver of all mercies; and it is due to God to recognize his gifts, and to present our offerings as gratitude to our greatest benefactor. These birthday gifts are recognized of Heaven.

In addition to preventing vanity, pride, and self-importance, these gifts are a blessing for the needy and help to carry the knowledge of truth to the world.

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5Ibid.
Finally, White maintains that parents should also teach their children to examine "the past year of their life, to consider whether they would like to meet its record just as it stands in the books of heaven. Encourage in them serious thoughts, whether their deportment, their words, their works, are of a character pleasing to God."  

Christmas

White acknowledges that since Christmas "is observed to commemorate the birth of Christ [and] as the children have been instructed . . . that this was indeed a day of gladness," it would be difficult "to pass over this period without giving it some attention." But, since "the day chosen to honor Christ is devoted by the many to honoring and pleasing themselves," and since this day "has been made a most effective means of turning the mind away from Christ," she claims that, "if Christmas is kept at all, it should be kept in a way that will be in harmony with its significance. Christ should be remembered, His name honored."

Consequently, by no means should Christmas "be devoted to gluttony and self-indulgence." In White's view, the best way to celebrate Christmas is "by bringing God to our remembrance, and showing our love to Him by putting our gifts into His treasury,"

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2"Christmas is Coming," RH 61 (Dec. 9, 1884):769.
3"Christmas Gifts," RH 67 (Dec. 9, 1890):753.

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that the gospel may be transmitted to all the world.\footnote{257}{"Christmas Gifts," \textit{RH} 67 (Dec. 9, 1890):753; "Present unto the Lord Gifts of Gratitude," \textit{RH} 71 (Nov. 13, 1894):705; "How Shall We Observe the Holidays," \textit{RH} 83 (Dec. 27, 1906):8.} She even believes "God would be well pleased if on Christmas, each church would have a Christmas tree on which shall be hung offerings" for the advancement of the Lord's work.\footnote{2}{"The Holidays," \textit{RH} 54 (Dec. 11, 1879):189.}

\textbf{Thanksgiving}

In the celebration of this feast, White once more insists:

"Let not any more Thanksgiving days be observed to please and gratify the appetite, and glorify self."\footnote{3}{"Thanksgiving Sermon," \textit{RH} 61 (Dec. 23, 1884):801.} "If a feast is to be made, let it be for those who are in need."\footnote{4}{Ibid., p. 802.} Let "it be what its name implies--giving thanks. Let our voices ascend in praise."\footnote{5}{Ibid.}

In short, White opposes the celebration of any feasts which are devoted "to selfish gratification." But, God is pleased when "his goodness, his constant care, and his unceasing love" are brought to mind on such anniversary occasions as birthdays, Christmas, and Thanksgiving.\footnote{6}{"An Appeal to Our Churches," \textit{RH} 67 (Dec. 23, 1890):786.} They can also become a source of blessing when offerings and gifts are made for the proclamation of the gospel message to the world. White explains her personal experience in this matter: "I have said to my family and my friends, I desire that no one shall make me a birthday or Christmas gift, unless it
be with permission to pass it on into the Lord's treasury, to be appropriated in the establishment of missions.\(^1\) When such festive occasions are transformed into opportunities in which God is honored, religious lessons are taught and learned, and the communication of the truth can be advanced faster, they become effective means for the reinforcement and transmission of Christian beliefs and values from year to year and from generation to generation.

**Summary**

White sees celebration as a commemoration of sacred events and as an observance of special days. Religious celebration involves the performance of certain ceremonies, rites, and other activities. It has played an important role in the religious and social life of Israel and the church and in the transmission of the sacred heritage through generations.

The Passover was a yearly commemoration of the deliverance of Israel from Egyptian bondage. The celebration of solemn and impressive ceremonies was used as an occasion for religious instruction and training. The experience of the past had to be kept fresh in the minds of all, from generation to generation.

The Feast of Tabernacles was the crowning festal gathering of the year. In commemoration of Israel's tent-life in the wilderness under God's protection and care, they dwelt for seven days in booths or tabernacles of green boughs. In White's understanding, those ceremonies were also figurative of the Messiah.

\(^{1}\)"How Shall We Observe the Holidays," *RH* 83 (Dec. 27, 1906): 8.
Generation after generation, old and young, were encouraged in their faith and hopes by participating in those annual celebrations. These festivals played a decisive part in Jewish life, stimulating and developing the religious consciousness of the people concerning the origin and sacredness of their religious heritage.

White claims the sacrificial offerings were ordained by God after Adam's fall. She believes the Jewish system was symbolic of the coming Saviour, so they were to continue until Christ's death, when type met anti-type. Age after age, the sacrificial system was to keep faith alive in the hearts of men. Those rites and ceremonies illustrated their beliefs and provided both the occasion and the form for the expression of their faith. Furthermore, by the use of figures and symbols to teach children, the great truths of God's providence were firmly fixed in the memories of the young. Thus, the sacred legacy of Israel was impressed and reinforced in the hearts and minds of individuals in each generation.

Baptism and the Lord's Supper are two rites which originated in the life and teachings of Christ. Since baptism is a symbol of Christ's death, burial, and resurrection, the resurrection of Christ is commemorated by the believer who is buried with Him by baptism and raised out of the watery grave, in remembrance of His resurrection, to live a new life.

In White's view, the ordinance of foot-washing is Christ's appointed preparation for the communion service, a memorial of His humiliation and a practical illustration of His teachings. It appeals to the mind and heart. The impression received by the
believer reinforces his faith and zeal to transmit his beliefs and hopes to the world.

The Lord's Supper is the antitype of the Passover. It is a memorial of the same event of which the Passover had been a type. It is the means by which the sacrifice of the Saviour is to be kept fresh in the minds of the believers. In White's thinking, the Lord's Supper was also designed to keep the hope of the second coming of Christ vivid in the memory. The gospel rites are means to strengthen the faith of the believers and are dynamic factors for transmitting the knowledge of man's salvation and the return of Christ.

To White, there is only one sacred day to be religiously observed—the Sabbath. It was made during the creation week to meet man's necessities. It is a memorial of creation which is to stand till the close of earth's history, a continual sign of God's love and mercy, and the emblem of obedience on the part of the believer. The sacredness of the Sabbath "is as firmly established as the throne of Jehovah." It is a day of rest and worship, and it is to be rightly observed. The Sabbath should be made the sweetest and most blessed day of the week.

White maintains that the celebration of birthdays, anniversaries, Christmas, and Thanksgiving, when rightly observed, plays an effective role in the transmission of Christian beliefs and values. On birthdays children should be taught that they have reason to be grateful to God, and that they ought to come to Him with offerings for all His favors. Christmas should be celebrated by
bringing Christ to our remembrance, by showing love to Him by putting our gifts into His treasury for the proclamation of the gospel. Thanksgiving offers a similar opportunity to the faithful.

In other words, when the celebration of any event or day becomes an occasion in which God is honored, religious lessons are taught, and the truth progresses, it is an effective means to reinforce and transmit Christian beliefs and values from year to year.
Conscious teaching and celebration, as already observed, play dynamic roles in the transmission of religious heritage. They represent, in fact, two important facets of the Christian religion: instruction and liturgy. The first facet deals essentially with the mind, the second with the heart. If instruction is particularly called to impress the intellect, then celebration is to deal with emotions or feelings. At this point, it is pertinent to study a third dynamic factor, namely, modeling. Modeling, as used here, refers to the manner of instruction which relies on the influence of example in the transmission of religious heritage. Consequently, modeling depends on the practical or experiential aspect of religion and its sacred legacy.

In order to comprehend, in proper perspective, White's thinking regarding the transmission of religious heritage through the power of modeling, the following points are considered: (1) the dynamics of example, (2) the dimensions of a Christian example, (3) the contrasting influences of example, (4) transmitting the religious heritage through modeling, (5) Bible characters and their examples, (6) the Perfect Model, and (7) toward a positive Christian modeling.
The Dynamics of Example

The Power of Example

Although Ellen G. White does not offer a technical definition of the terms "example" or "influence," her writings present enough relevant information to understand her concepts. She clearly states that every individual life exerts an influence upon other individuals. She refers to this personal impact as the power of example or influence. The living example of any person exerts an influencing power for good or for evil upon the lives of others.1 She further says:

Every life is a light that brightens and cheers the pathway of others, or a dark and desolating influence that tends toward despair and ruin. We lead others either upward to happiness and immortal life, or downward to sorrow and eternal death.2

A person's influence is, in White's view, like a spiritual atmosphere which surrounds him and which is felt by those who come in contact with him.3 Referring to the example of an energetic person, she states that "he has an electric power over others."4 She considers influence a "very great power."5

According to White, what are the dynamics by which the powerful influence of example is exerted over others? Her answer to

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2 Prophets and Kings, p. 94.
4 "Diligence a Necessary Qualification in the Minister," RH 63 (April 6, 1886):209.
this question is twofold. First, she says, "the minds of those with
whom we are closely associated are impressed through unseen influ-
ences." ¹ The mental impressions caused through these invisible
influences remain forever.² Second, she explains:

It is a law both of the intellectual and the spiritual
nature that by beholding we become changed. The mind gradually
adapts itself to the subjects upon which it is allowed to dwell.
It becomes assimilated to that which it is accustomed to love
and reverence.³

Regarding this law or principle, she maintains that "Jesus presents
the truth before His children that they may look upon it and, by
beholding it, may become changed."⁴ Under the influence of God's
grace working through the believers, "hearts will be softened and
subdued."⁵

In many instances throughout her writings, White acknow-
ledges that in the case of the faithful Christian, the modeling
power of example goes far beyond the mere force of human influence.
The believer is the means through which divine power is exercised in
behalf of mankind. She states:

Personal influence is a power. It is to work with the influ-
ence of Christ, to lift where Christ lifts, to impart correct
principles, and to stay the progress of the world's corruption.
It is to diffuse that grace which Christ alone can impart. It
is to uplift, to sweeten the lives and characters of others by

² Patriarchs and Prophets, p. 574.
³ Great Controversy, p. 555.
⁵ "Notes of Travel—No. 7—The Merced Camp-Meeting," RH 84
(Sept. 12, 1907): 10.
the power of a pure example united with earnest faith and love.¹

A Teaching and Modeling Power

Since Christian example is a modeling power, and since modeling takes place through an experiential learning process, example is to be an effective dynamic teaching process. In harmony with this principle, White urges every follower of Christ, minister or layman, to teach the truth of the gospel, "not only by precept, but [also] by example."² "By precept and example the essential elements of a true, healthy, influential Christianity are to be revealed."³ She further states that God's people are to communicate their knowledge of truth by exemplifying it in their lives.⁴ God's work can be accomplished in the earth only by exerting a genuine Christian influence.⁵ Her exhortation is, therefore, very clear. "Let us teach the truth by practising it."⁶

 Truly, in White's thought, there is no more effective and proper way of transmitting the treasures of revealed truth to the world than through personal example and influence. Religion which

¹Prophets and Kings, p. 232.
³"The True Church," RH 90 (April 24, 1913):387.
⁴"Notes of Travel," RH 86 (March 11, 1909):8.
is not experienced is powerless.\(^1\) Nothing less than genuine daily Christian living is authentic Christianity. It is not enough to have a theoretical knowledge of God or a formal acceptance of His will.\(^2\) He is to be known practically, not just theoretically.\(^3\) Those who profess to be Christians are to reveal the reality of Christianity in their lives.\(^4\)

Just as the Judeo-Christian religious heritage came down through the centuries embodied in the lives of God's faithful followers, so, in White's opinion, today's believers are to embody the truth in their lives that they may be a "power to convince unbelievers of the truths they are teaching."\(^5\) Through the believers' transformed lives, "the light of truth" is to go forth from them to the world.\(^6\) She explains this elsewhere:

Those who profess the name of Christ, are to represent Christ as their pattern and example. They are to unfold to others the truth in its purity, and make known to them what are the privileges and responsibilities of the Christian life; and this can be done by the professed follower of Christ only as he conforms his character to the sacred principles of truth.\(^7\)

\(^1\)"Bible Religion," RH 74 (May 4, 1897):273.
\(^2\)"Union with God," RH 64 (July 12, 1887):433.
\(^5\)"Notes of Travel--No. 7--The Merced Camp-Meeting," RH 84 (Sept. 12, 1907):10.
\(^6\)"To Every Man His Work," RH 63 (June 15, 1886):370.
\(^7\)"Be Separate," RH 71 (Nov. 20, 1894):721.
Thus, through the modeling power of example, the Christian religious heritage is transmitted from life to life, from generation to generation.

The Features of a Christian Example

Foundations of a Christian Example

The influence exerted by a genuine Christian example does not come about by chance, nor is it wrought only by man's own power. White points out that the believer has a part to accomplish toward this end. He is to try to imitate Jesus' life of self-denial and sacrifice and be sensitive to the needs of others around him. Each person should also acquire a deep knowledge of the Master, to the point of being imbued with His spirit. As she explains it:

By having a knowledge of Christ, his words, his habits, his lessons of instruction, and by borrowing the virtues of the character which we have so closely studied, we become imbued with the spirit of the Master which we have so much admired.

Persevering faithfulness is expected from every Christian, in the smallest as well as the greatest details of daily life. "The principles of the truth must be interwoven with our character and life." White recognizes the great importance of human effort in building an exemplary character. But the main task for man is to let God do the task for him and in him. She describes this work as follows:

3Patriarchs and Prophets, p. 574.
Christ has made provision that his church shall be a transformed body, illumined with the light of heaven, possessing the glory of Immanuel. It is his purpose that every Christian shall be surrounded with a spiritual atmosphere of light and peace. There is no limit to the usefulness of the one who, putting self aside, makes room for the working of the Holy Spirit upon the heart, and lives a life wholly consecrated to God.

In other words, when the attitude of the believer is entire "consecration and submission to the will and ways of God," "when he is learning at the feet of Jesus," then he is "molded and fashioned by the Spirit of Christ." The "holy spirit of Christ, working upon the heart, will yield in the life a converting influence upon others." It is then, when the combination of the divine-human action is real, that the religion of Christ is in the heart and Bible principles are fully carried into everyday life.

Observable Elements

Alluding to those "whom God has made the depositaries of sacred truth," and in whose hearts is the religion of Christ, White states that they are "to stand in a pure atmosphere." Wherever they go, they bear with them "the atmosphere of heaven." What

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1"The Promise of the Spirit," RH 85 (April 30, 1908):8
4"Take Heed to Thyself," RH 80 (Feb. 24, 1903):8.
8"Work for Church Members," RH 91 (March 5, 1914):21.

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are the characteristics by which this "atmosphere" can be identified in the believer? What are the components of the personality which constitute this influence?

Acts and words are manifestations of one's faith and character. They make indelible impressions, for good or for evil, upon those with whom one associates. But good works have "a more powerful influence than words." White further develops this idea:

The influence of a true Christian is like the cheering rays of sunshine, which pierce the darkness wherever they are allowed to enter. Arguments may be resisted, persuasion and entreaty may be scorned, the most eloquent appeals may be disregarded; but a daily piety in all the walks of life, an unselfish love for others, beaming from the countenance and breathing in the word, make an appeal that it is well-nigh impossible to resist.

Also, in words a mere profession of faith can be hidden. But by "the virtuous life and unselfish acts, the beholder is led to desire the same righteousness which produces good fruits." Thus, White argues: "A practical example of the power of the gospel in the daily life is of much more value to the world than sermons or professions of godliness that are not accompanied by good works."

Moreover, she insists that "our influence upon others depends not

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so much upon what we say as upon what we are."¹ And, "what we are" is shown through the faithful performance of every one of the "little duties."² Concerning these so-called "little duties," or "little things," White comments:

"It is the acts of faith and love in the so-called little things of life, the spirit of Christ manifested at home, in the field, in the workshop, as well as in the church, that make us living epistles known and read of all. Men may combat and defy our logic, they may resist our appeals; but a life of holy purpose, of disinterested love, is an argument in favor of the truth which they can not gainsay. Far more can be accomplished by humble, devoted, virtuous lives, than can be gained by preaching when a godly example is lacking."³

However, when words are the expression of an authentic Christian life, they are also valuable. In this respect, White writes: "Great thoughts, noble aspirations, clear perceptions of truth, unselfish purposes, yearnings for purity and holiness, will bear fruit in words that reveal the character of the heart-treasure."⁴ By the words the converted believer speaks, he is to sow the seed of truth.⁵ On the other hand, "people are eager to hear the truth from those whose lips are governed by the law of kindness. The divine word, spoken by such messengers, will be as music in their ears."⁶

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¹ "Desire of Ages," pp. 141-42.
² "Patriarchs and Prophets," p. 574.
⁴ "Our Words—No. 5," RH 75 (Jan. 25, 1898): 54.
One's actions, facial expression, words, and the tone of the voice are mentioned in White's writings as important elements of personal example. Even the countenance plays a significant role in the life of the Christian. She says: "Benevolence, gentleness, patience, nobility of thought and action, and the love of God, if cherished permanently, impress the countenance, and win souls, and give power in preaching."\(^1\) "Anointed for the mission," every individual believer is to bear with him "the atmosphere of paradise," and "to reflect the image of his Master."\(^2\) Such a true, lovable Christian, setting an example of "faithfulness in all the walks of life,"\(^3\) "is the most powerful argument that can be advanced in favor of Bible truth."\(^4\) "Kind words, pleasant looks, a cheerful countenance, throw a charm around the Christian that makes his influence almost irresistible."\(^5\) "His life is the most convincing evidence that can be borne to the power of divine grace."\(^6\)

Unstudied Influence

In the domain of example, White refers to what she calls

\(^1\) "Notes of Travel--Marshallton, Iowa," \textit{RH} 61 (Oct. 21, 1884):658.

\(^2\) "Co-Laborers with Christ," \textit{RH} 64 (March 8, 1887):145.


unstudied or "unconscious influence."\(^1\) This is, in fact, the natural, unaffected kind of influence which is exerted by "the sincere children of God."\(^2\) It is the normal fruit of a consistent religious life, holy conversation, godly example, and true-hearted benevolence."\(^3\) This unconscious influence "may be esteemed as of little worth, but it will be felt throughout time," helping hundreds and even thousands as in a chain reaction. The results may never be known until the day of final reward.\(^4\)

A believer's unconscious influence involves all the manifestations of his daily religious experience.\(^5\) It is evident in his modest personal apparel and manners, in his "Christlike words and actions,"\(^6\) and in a "sweet rest and peace" expressed in the countenance.\(^7\) White comments regarding the convincing power of this authentic Christian influence in this way:

The unstudied, unconscious influence of a holy life is the most convincing sermon that can be given in favor of Christianity. Argument, even when unanswerable, may provoke only


\(^3\) "The Duty of Forgiveness," RH 87 (May 19, 1910):3.


opposition; but a godly example has a power that it is impossible wholly to resist.\textsuperscript{1}

The Contrasting Influences of Example

White stresses her belief that "every uttered word exerts an influence, every action involves a train of responsibility. No one can live to himself in this world, even if he would."\textsuperscript{2} This statement emphasizes the fact that every individual inevitably serves as a daily, negative or positive model to others. These contrasting influences of example have been mentioned briefly earlier. However, further consideration may be helpful here.

A Negative Influence

In White's opinion, when Christians are Christians only in name, they are like the salt that has lost its power. "They have no influence for good in the world. Through their misrepresentation of God they are worse than unbelievers."\textsuperscript{3} Those who profess to be Christians and are "careless in their dress and person; loose in their business transactions . . . ; coarse, uncourteous, and rough in their manners; low in their conversation," are exerting a negative and mortal influence upon many observers.\textsuperscript{4} Their inconsistent lives are hindering the saving power of the gospel for a suffering and perishing world. She comments concerning this:

\textsuperscript{1}Acts of the Apostles, p. 511.
\textsuperscript{2}"Our Words," RH 74 (Feb. 16, 1897):97.
\textsuperscript{3}Desire of Ages, p. 306.
\textsuperscript{4}"Disease and Its Causes," RH 77 (Jan. 30, 1900):70.
The world needs evidence of sincere Christianity. The poison of sin is at work at the heart of society. Cities and towns are steeped in sin and moral corruption. The world is full of sickness, suffering, and iniquity. Nigh and afar off are souls in poverty and distress, weighed down with a sense of guilt and perishing for want of a saving influence. The gospel of truth is kept ever before them, yet they perish because the example of those who should be a savor of life to them, is a savor of death. Their souls drink in bitterness because the springs are poisoned, when they should be like a well of water springing up unto everlasting life.\(^1\)

Consequently, they are held responsible for the results of their misleading behavior.\(^2\)

In this same vein of thought, White emphasizes that "one rash act, one thoughtless word, . . . may exert so deep an influence on the life of another that it will prove the ruin of his soul. One blemish on the character may turn many away from Christ."\(^3\) Every single act and word exerts an influence upon others which will bear a sure fruit. She expands this concept with further implications:

One reckless movement, one imprudent step, and the surging waves of some strong temptation may sweep a soul into the downward path. We cannot gather up the thoughts we have planted in human minds. If they have been evil, we may have set in motion a train of circumstances, a tide of evil, which we are powerless to stay.\(^4\)

A Positive Influence

By contrast, a positive, modeling influence is a power for good which will "flow out in righteous actions to others."\(^5\) It helps

\(^1\) Prophets and Kings, p. 232.
\(^2\) Patriarchs and Prophets, p. 556.
\(^3\) Prophets and Kings, p. 86.
\(^5\) "To the Workers," RH 64 (May 3, 1887):273.

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others to reform their lives and to develop right principles.  "The true follower of Christ strengthens the good purposes of all with whom he comes in contact."  

White also maintains that the effects of a Christian influence are immeasurable. The believer's example aids others in giving them power to do good. "In their turn they exert the same beneficial influence over others"; "thus thousands are helped" by a single influence. Nobody can avoid influencing others and being influenced by them. "Each one forms a part of the great web of humanity, and through our individual threads of influence, we are linked to the universe." 

Therefore, every action, either good or evil, is inevitably reproduced within people through individuals and generations for eternity. White illustrates and explains this principle and its implications.

As the seed sown produces a harvest, and this in turn is sown, the harvest is multiplied. In our relation to others, this law holds true. Every act, every word, is a seed that will bear fruit. Every deed of thoughtful kindness, of obedience, of self-denial, will reproduce itself in others, and through them in still others. So every act of envy, malice, or dissension is a seed that will spring up in a "root of bitterness" whereby many shall be defiled. And how much larger number will the "many" poison! Thus the sowing of good and evil goes on for time and for eternity.

2 Prophets and Kings, p. 348.
3 Ibid.
5 Heb 12:15.
6 Prophets and Kings, p. 86.
Because of these far-reaching results of one's example, White warns against carelessness or indifference concerning his influence. ¹

Moreover, since the example and life of the believer "tells either for heaven, eternal life, or darkness and death,"² he should be Christ-like and "act as Christ acts, have His spirit at all times, in all places, and under all circumstances."³ His life should be holy, and he should often hold communion with God and "draw nourishment from Jesus the living vine." Then he can exert a holy influence.⁴ This is the way to be faithful to Christ's commission, and "to bear witness to the verity of the message" to be proclaimed to all peoples.⁵ As White clearly states:

Our profession of faith may proclaim the theory of religion, but it is our practical piety that holds forth the word of truth. The consistent life, the holy conversation, the unswerving integrity, the active, benevolent spirit, the godly example,—these are the mediums through which light is conveyed to the world.⁶

Transmitting Religious Heritage through Modeling

Consciously or unconsciously, people try to conform to practices, values, and attitudes of individuals they respect or


admire. People, especially young people, for one reason or another, tend to imitate specific models. The influencing power of these models affects not only the observer's behavior but also his cognitive and affective life. To exert such an influence, the model does not necessarily have to be a prototype of human superiority or perfection.

Every person is a model. However, Ellen G. White acknowledges that some people, by reason of their responsibility or situation, play a more active role as models than others. She emphasizes the modeling function of parents, ministers and teachers, and Bible characters as essential to transmitting the Christian religious heritage. There are also other copying models considered in her writings whose influence may affect positively or negatively the passing on of a sacred legacy to a younger generation, such as peers and associates.

The Modeling Influence of Parents

Nothing is so strongly emphasized in the works of White as the importance, and transcendence, of the modeling influence of parents upon their children. On the one hand, she says "the destiny of children rests, "to a great extent" in the hands of parents. She explains that "if in your own lives you set before them a godly example, you may lead them to Christ, and they in turn will influence others, and thus many will be saved through your instrumentality."¹ On the other hand, she states that "the best test of the

Christianity of a home is the type of character begotten by its influence.  

In addition, in White's view, "no influences [are] so potent as those which surround" the children.  

This is due to the fact that in childhood and youth the natural powers of imitation are strongest and most active.  

Furthermore, as a rule, she thinks children not only "inherit the dispositions and tendencies of their parents," but also "imitate their examples."  

Hence, parental modeling will do more to children "than can be accomplished by any other means."  

In order for parents to be able to do the maximum good in behalf of their children, they should necessarily exert a "holy influence" in their lives.  

White warns: "Not until parents themselves walk in the law of the Lord with perfect hearts will they be prepared to command their children after them."  

They "should ever present before their children the example they wish to be imitated."  

She further comments: 

1Patriarchs and Prophets, p. 579.  


4Patriarchs and Prophets, p. 118.  


7Patriarchs and Prophets, p. 143.  

Children will learn to love that which the parents love. Those who would interest their sons and daughters in Bible study, and impress its truths upon their minds, must themselves feel its ennobling, sanctifying influence. They must exemplify its sacred principles in daily life.¹

Thus, when parents' lives illustrate their beliefs and values, the way is prepared for their children to accept the same beliefs and values of a sacred heritage. However, according to White, there is a lack of understanding regarding the importance of a good example.

There are few parents who realize how important it is to give to their children the influence of a godly example. Yet this is far more potent than precept. No other means is so effective in training them in right lines. The children and youth must have a true copy in right-doing if they succeed in overcoming sin and perfecting a Christian character. This copy they should find in the lives of their parents. If they enter the city of God, and rejoice in the overcomer's reward, someone must show them the way. By living before their children godly, consistent lives, parents may make the work before them clear and plain.²

Very often White regrets that "the errors of parents produce the most disastrous effects upon their children and children's children, long after the actors themselves have been laid in the grave."³ To avoid these sad consequences and to bring children up "in the fear and admonition of the Lord," parents should "seek in their own character and in their home life," to exemplify the principles of their religion.⁴ They are to "instruct, warn, and counsel"

³Patriarchs and Prophets, p. 556.
their children, ever remembering that their "looks, words, and actions have a direct bearing upon the future" of their dear ones.¹

In White's discussion of the home teaching task and influences, she describes the modeling responsibilities of the father, mother, and older siblings.² The father's example and influence are strong factors in molding his children's character. Nevertheless, she tends to emphasize, to a greater extent, the importance of the example of the Christian mother. There is no other work to equal hers. She "holds in her own hands the destiny of her children." The impressions made during the early years upon the developing minds of her children "will remain with them all through life."³ It is, therefore, White's contention that mothers should seek to illustrate in their own lives the teachings of Christ.⁴

Finally, White maintains that fathers and mothers have a double task to provide for their children the right kind of modeling influence outside the home. First, parents have the "solemn duty" to watch over their children and to choose proper society for them "at all times."⁵ She thinks "the atmosphere of lax morality, of unbelief, of indifference to religious things, has a tendency to

²See above, pp. 152-60.
³Patriarchs and Prophets, p. 244.
⁴Ibid., p. 572.
counteract the influence of the parents."¹ Moreover, "Christian youth who are inclined to be influenced by irreligious associates should have for companions those who will strengthen good resolutions and religious inclinations."² And second,

Fathers and mothers should feel that a duty devolves upon them to guide the affections of the youth, that they may be placed upon those who will be suitable companions. They should feel it a duty, by their own teaching and example, with the assisting grace of God, to so mold the character of the children from their earliest years that they will be pure and noble and will be attracted to the good and true. Like attracts like; like appreciates like. Let the love for truth and purity and goodness be early implanted in the soul, and the youth will seek the society of those who possess these characteristics.³

It is evident that, to White, the influence exerted by parents should be aimed at impressing the minds and hearts of their children with high Christian beliefs and values. Fathers and mothers are to place ahead of anything else the exhibition, through their examples, of what it means to know, love, and serve Christ. Their "home is to be a place of peace and happiness next to heaven."⁴ The children will naturally follow their parents' steps and will long to offer a similar home to their own children. Thus, the parents' faith will be transmitted to their children and to their children's children.

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¹Patriarchs and Prophets, p. 169.
³Patriarchs and Prophets, p. 176.
⁴Ibid.
The Influence of Significant Adults

In addition to parents, ministers, as well as teachers and other church leaders, are called on to play a prominent role in communicating their Christian beliefs, ideals, and values to the youth through the teaching and modeling influence of their example. The professional qualifications and dynamism they may reveal are important elements in the performance of their task. But their life pattern is the key factor in the success of their ministry. There is no better way to transmit the teachings of the gospel than by illustrating them in the lives of the religious leaders.

Ellen White acknowledges that the hearts of youth are like "impressionable wax," and so they are to be led now to admire the Christian character, since "in a few years the wax may become granite." Referring to the teachers, she says they have "a heavy responsibility to bear." While cultivating the intellectual powers of their pupils, they are "constantly exerting an influence upon their habits and character. Their destiny in this world and the next may be decided by [their] instruction and example." Therefore, the teachers are to combine "a deep Christian experience" with the work of true education. By their example, they should be a "constant help" to the real development of the youth. "They must be in words and character what they wish their students to be,—men and

1."An Appeal for Our Students," RH 51 (Feb. 21, 1878):59
women that fear God and work righteousness. If they are acquainted
with the way themselves, they can train the youth to walk in it."¹

White also states that the preachers have "a very great in-
fluence upon the people." The people imitate them.² The manner in
which ministers behave "in the pulpit and out of it," "educates the
people by its influence."³ Their lives shed "a light that is re-
lected upon others."⁴ Occasionally the church members "may rise
above the moral level of their teachers, but not often."⁵ On the
other hand,

When the living preacher exemplifies in his own life the self-
denial and sacrifice of Christ, when his conversation and acts
are in harmony with the Divine Pattern, then he will exert a
powerful influence upon those who listen to his voice.⁶

Consequently, White argues that the Christian religion
should be an obvious "quality in the lives" of Christian workers.⁷
She challenges the ministers "to rightly represent the principles of
truth in their own lives."⁸ They must illustrate their preaching

²"Communication to Elder M. Hull," RH 23 (Jan. 19, 1864);
62.
³"Personal Labor Required of the Ministers," RH 72 (March
5, 1895):145.
⁷"Ministers as Christ's Representatives," RH 86 (Sept. 2,
by their personal example. "Consecrate your lives to Him," she
entreats, "and be indeed ensamples to the flock. Be no longer con-
tent to remain dwarfs in spiritual things. Let your aim be nothing;
short of perfection of Christian character."

Moreover, White claims God designs that the religious leader
should be, not only in his character but also in his home life, "a
specimen of the principles of the truth which he is teaching to his
fellow-men." The home of a gospel worker is an essential exten-
sion of his example. Great are the consequences when the influence
of his home fails.

But great as are the evils of parental unfaithfulness under
any circumstances, they are tenfold greater when they exist
in the families of those appointed as teachers of the people.
When these fail to control their own households, they are, by
their wrong example, misleading many. Their guilt is as much
greater than that of others as their position is more respon-
sible.

White insists that there is no limit to the influence
exerted by a church leader. Any defect "will surely be reproduced
in others."

If he presents coarse, rough ways, those who have less know-
ledge and experience will follow in his wake. And so the
sowing of tares goes on from one to another; and if these
deficiencies are not overcome, they will result in the de-
struction of souls for whom Christ died.

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3 "The Sin of Licentiousness," RH 64 (May 17, 1887):305;
see also "Communication to Elder M. Hull," RH 23 (Jan. 19, 1864):
68.
4 Patriarchs and Prophets, p. 579.
Thus because of the far-reaching consequences one single defect might have in the lives of others and in hindering the transmission of religious heritage, White emphasizes the need the minister has of watching himself. In order to exalt the standard of truth and to push forward the knowledge of the Bible, the minister must exert a sacred and sanctifying influence upon those around him.¹

In every aspect of life the shepherd is to be an example. White maintains that his character and deportment must be an exemplification "of the truth he advocates."² It cannot be otherwise because the Christian religion is primarily practical and immediately applicable. Moreover, since the minister's teaching has no more weight of modeling influence than that given by example, his beliefs must necessarily be fully integrated in his daily life. Then even "those who are not naturally inclined to religion" will be favorably impressed by the elevating truth he teaches.³

In every aspect of their behavior and attitude, the religious leaders are to be examples. Their religious experience must be of a high type.⁴ The living principle of the love of Christ "is to be made manifest as an abiding power" in their hearts.⁵

²"A Faithful under Shepherd," RH 89 (July 25, 1912):3.
influence must be sanctified "by cultivating truth, purity, and a
disposition to help others." Ministers are to show themselves
"friendly," "sociable," "modest, and dignified" in their manners. God's Spirit is to shine through them, lighting up their faces and
finding expression in the tone of their voices. They are to be "in
a condition to properly instruct" others in healthful living through
their example of temperance. "The humility, meekness, and lowli-
ess of Christ, must characterize their lives." The teaching and modeling power of such exemplary Christian
lives is almost impossible to resist. Example is the most effec-
tive way of transmitting to the people, young and old, the accumu-
lated sacred heritage of a highly practical religion. For White, example is the ultimate way through which the riches of the truth
should be communicated to all the world and to younger generations. In fact, the power of the truth lies precisely in the convincing in-
fluence of example.

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1 "Notes of Travel—Worcester, Mass.," RH 61 (Nov. 4, 1884):689.

2 "Overcoming Prejudice," RH 89 (June 13, 1912):3.


6 "The Knowledge of Christ and Self Leads to Humility," RH


8 Ibid.
Bible Characters and the Transmission of Religious Heritage

The teaching and modeling power of example has been an indispensable dynamic factor in the transmission of religious heritage through past centuries, as it is today. Thus, evidences of this concept are found in the writings of Ellen White. This is certainly the case when she refers to men and women whose characters and actions were a force in hindering and/or furthering the preservation, development, and transmission of the sacred legacy.

Negative Modeling Influences

In many instances White illustrates the baleful consequences of a negative example. Among others, she records the cases of men, such as Lot, Ishmael, Eli, and Solomon, whose negative influences hindered, at least in part, the passing on of the deposit of faith to their children and people. To consider her thinking on the matter, a brief, but sufficient delineation is made here concerning the influence of these men.¹

Instigated by his wife,² Lot chose Sodom for its pleasure and profit and left Abraham's altar. He "permitted his children to mingle with a corrupt and idolatrous people."

He was saved at last as a "brand plucked out of the fire" (Zech 3:2), yet stripped of his possessions, bereaved of his wife and children, dwelling in caves, like the wild beasts, covered with infamy in his old age; and he gave to the world, not a race of righteous men, but two idolatrous nations, it

¹For a fuller description of their lives and the consequences of their negative examples, see: Patriarchs and Prophets, pp. (Lot) 127, 132-33, 156-70, 174; (Ishmael) 146, 174, 211-12; (Eli) 575-85; Prophets and Kings, pp. (Solomon) 51-60, 77-86.

²Patriarchs and Prophets, p. 184.
enmity with God and warring upon His people, until, their cup of iniquity being full, they were appointed to destruction. How terrible were the results that followed one unwise step!  

"The case of Lot," says White, "should be a warning to all those who wish to live a godly life, to separate themselves from all influences calculated to lead them away from God."  

A similar picture is portrayed in the biography of Ishmael. Although Abraham taught Ishmael the love and fear of God, "the father's influence upon his son was counteracted by that of the mother's idolatrous kindred" and by his "connection with heathen wives." In his later years, Ishmael "repented of his evil ways, and returned to his father's God; but the stamp of character given to his posterity remained." His descendants were "a turbulent, heathen people" who annoyed and afflicted Isaac's posterity.  

The consequences of another father's attitude is examined in the story of Eli and his sons. Eli was a priest and judge of Israel. "As a man divinely chosen for the sacred duties of the priesthood" and as "the highest judicial authority" in the land, he exerted "a great influence over the tribes." But although "appointed to govern the people, he did not rule his own household." An indulgent father, Eli did not "correct the evil habits and passions of his sons." The pernicious results of his example were widespread.  

Because of Eli's position, his influence was more extended than if he had been an ordinary man. His family life was

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1Ibid., p. 168.  
3Patriarchs and Prophets, p. 174.  
4Ibid.  
5Ibid., p. 575.
imitated throughout Israel. The baleful results of his negligent, ease-loving ways were seen in thousands of homes that were moulded by his example.\footnote{Ibid., p. 579.}

Solomon in his youth as a king desired wisdom and understanding to accomplish his task. "He longed for quickness of mind, for largeness of heart, for tenderness of spirit."\footnote{Prophets and Kings, p. 28.} And God gave him wisdom, riches, and fame. While he remained humble, the extent of his influence for good was great. But years later "his life was darkened by apostasy."\footnote{Ibid., p. 51.} Nobility was supplanted by depravity and dissipation, faith by unbelief, and justice by despotism. White emphatically points out that "among the many lessons taught by Solomon's life" the most pointed one is "the power of influence for good or for ill."\footnote{Ibid., p. 85.} Although the king repented of his wrong doings, the consequences of his apostasy could not be avoided. Regarding those consequences, White makes the following considerations:

Solomon's repentance was sincere; but the harm that his example of evil-doing had wrought, could not be undone. During his apostasy, there were in the kingdom men who remained true to their trust, maintaining their purity and loyalty. But many were led astray; and the forces of evil set in operation by the introduction of idolatry and worldly practices, could not easily be stayed by the penitent king. His influence for good was greatly weakened. . . . Though the king confessed his sin, and wrote out, for the benefit of after-generations, a record of folly and repentance, he could never hope entirely to destroy the baleful influence of his wrong deeds. Emboldened by his apostasy, many continued to do evil, and evil only. And in the downward course of many of the rulers who followed him, may be traced the sad influence of the prostitution of his God-given powers.\footnote{Ibid., pp. 84-85.}
Positive Modeling Influences

The list of Biblical characters whose negative influences have been a hindering power in the transmission of religious heritage could go on. But the cases mentioned should be sufficient to illustrate White's thought on the matter. Fortunately, there is, in her view, a more positive aspect of influence shown by men like Enoch, Noah, Abraham, Moses, Peter, and Paul. It is a fact that the bad which one originates never dies, but neither does the good.

According to White, Enoch was not satisfied in merely proclaiming the truth. She states that he taught and lived the truth. His character was "harmonious with the greatness and sacredness of his mission." Through his example Enoch made known to the people that which God had revealed to him.

Similar to Enoch, the life of Noah was a living illustration of his beliefs and teachings. White comments:

While Noah was giving his warning message to the world, his works testified of his sincerity. It was thus that his faith was perfected and made evident. He gave the world an example of believing just what God says. Every blow struck upon the ark was a witness to the people.

As it has been noticed, Abraham received a special consideration in the writings of Ellen White. He set a worthy example for his household, as well as for future generations. "His religion was not held as a precious treasure to be jealously guarded and enjoyed solely by the possessor." By a consistent display in the home of

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2 Patriarchs and Prophets, pp. 86-87.
3 Ibid., p. 95.
4 Ibid., p. 134.

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qualities of integrity, benevolence, and courtesy, Abraham transmitted to his household and to the world the riches of his beliefs and hopes. He cultivated home religion by "the combined influence of authority and affection." In fact, White emphasizes that "that which gave power to Abraham's teaching was the influence of his daily life." The silent influence of his daily life was a constant lesson. He kept the law of God and commanded his household to follow in his footsteps. Since God's will was paramount in his life, "the fear of the Lord became the "atmosphere of his dwelling place." It is no wonder that "Abraham's habitual faith in God and submission to His will were reflected in the character of Isaac," as well as in the lives of thousands and thousands of believers in many countries and numberless generations. The dynamic power of his example is still influencing and strengthening the faith of many followers of three of the greatest religions on earth.

Moses is another man of old whose influence has also been


4Patriarchs and Prophets, p. 142; "Co-operation between the School and the Home," RH 81 (April 21, 1904):9


7Patriarchs and Prophets, p. 171.
great in many lives. Although the record of Moses' life is not blameless, his example of faithfulness, integrity, unselfishness, and meekness was so permanently established in the minds of the people of Israel that it remained with them even after Moses' death.

White comments:

Moses was dead, but his influence did not die with him. It was to live on, reproducing itself in the hearts of his people. The memory of that holy, unselfish life would long be cherished, with silent, persuasive power molding the lives even of those who had neglected his living words. As the glow of the descending sun lights up the mountain peaks long after the sun itself has sunk behind the hills, so the works of the pure, the holy, and the good shed light upon the world long after the actors themselves have passed away. Their works, their words, their example, will forever live. "The righteous shall be in everlasting remembrance" [Ps 112:6].

It is important here, however, to underline the influence of the teaching and life of Moses' mother. Her example bore its fruit in Moses' entire career. "The whole future life of Moses," says White, "the great mission which he fulfilled as the leader of Israel, testifies to the importance of the work of the Christian mother."2

Forgetting the failures of the past, Peter "brought his own life under the discipline of the Master." He continually "exalted Jesus of Nazareth as the Hope of Israel, the Saviour of mankind." In addition to his influence as an educator and a spiritual leader, White says that Peter's "example and untiring activity inspired many young men of promise to give themselves wholly to the work of the ministry."3 Thus, by the power of his influence, Peter was able to transmit to young and old not only the content of the teachings

1Ibid., p. 481.
2Ibid., p. 244.
of Christ but also their very spirit.

Although White acknowledges the important work brought about by the apostles, she maintains that nobody has ever accomplished a greater work for the church than that done by the apostle Paul. She states concerning him:

Paul's heart burned with a love for souls, and he gave all his energies for the conversion of men. There never lived a more self-denying, earnest, persevering worker. His life was Christ; he worked the works of Christ. All the blessings he received were prized as so many advantages to be used in blessing others.¹

By his faithful life, Paul encouraged Christian development in his converts. "The atmosphere of heaven" which Paul carried with him throughout his life, was felt by "all who associated with him."² This elevating power came from his own religious life which was "a continual sermon."³ White insists that "Paul's life was an exemplification of the truths he taught; and herein lay his power. . . . He clung to the cross of Christ as his only guarantee of success."⁴ The dynamic power of his teachings and his life have been preserved through centuries in the minds and hearts of millions of Christians. The dynamism of his influence still lives today. His living and dying testimony contained in the inspired writings will remain forever. Regarding his dying testimony, White writes:

Well-nigh a score of centuries have passed since Paul the aged poured out his blood as a witness for the Word of God and the testimony of Jesus Christ. No faithful hand recorded for

¹"Christ's Ambassadors," RH 77 (May 29, 1900):337.
³Ibid., p. 464.
⁴Ibid., p. 507.
the generations to come the last scenes in the life of this holy man; but Inspiration has preserved for us his dying testimony. Like a trumpet peal his voice has rung out through all ages since, serving with his own courage thousands of witnesses for Christ, and wakening in thousands of sorrow-stricken hearts the echo of his own triumphant joy: "I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand. I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith: henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love His appearing."¹

The Perfect Model—How Did Jesus Teach the Truth

The Single Perfect Pattern

Although White recognizes that men and women lived exemplary lives in all times, she also acknowledges that human models, effective as they may be, cannot be sinless examples or perfect patterns. The appealing influence of their lives could never avoid the disappointment caused sometime, in some way, by some negative trait of character or some mistake. "But in Christ," she believers, "a greater example has been given us than that of either patriarch or apostle."² To White, the example of Christ's character is the standard of perfection,³ His life, the perfect model.⁴ He is the

¹Ibid., p. 513.

²"Bible Examples of True Courtesy," RH 62 (Sept. 8, 1885):561.


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single "great Exemplar" and, consequently, the only one given His followers to emulate. Moreover, in White's understanding, "Jesus came to earth to be, not only man's Redeemer, but his great Exemplar." Emphasizing this same idea, she points out that "He came that we might have an example of what human nature may become by receiving Him as a Perfect Saviour." What did Christ do to redeem man and to become his great example? He taught and lived the truth even to His death on the cross. Also, Jesus gave man the power to follow in His steps. By His example, He set the foundation for the disciples to extend and perpetuate His teachings. Christ showed them in practical ways how they were to receive and pass on to others the truth He taught.

Teaching through Modeling

How did Jesus prepare His disciples for the task of transmitting the teachings of their Master to the world? According to Ellen White, He trained them by a method "far more effective than any mere doctrinal instruction"; that is, the example of His own life.

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Christ instructed His disciples "by personal contact and association." White unfolds this methodology as follows:

Day by day they walked and talked with Him, hearing His words of cheer to the weary and heavy-laden, and seeing the manifestation of His power in behalf of the sick and the afflicted. Sometimes He taught them, sitting among them on the mountainside; sometimes beside the sea or walking by the way, He revealed the mysteries of the kingdom of God. Wherever hearts were open to receive the divine message, He unfolded the truth of the way of salvation. He did not command the disciples to do this or that, but said, "Follow Me." On His journeys through country and cities, He took them with Him, that they might see how He taught the people. They traveled with Him from place to place. They shared His frugal fare, and like Him were sometimes hungry and often weary. On the crowded streets, by the lakeside, in the lonely desert, they were with Him. They saw Him in every phase of life.

In all circumstances, even amid the turbulence of angry enemies, Christ was surrounded by "an atmosphere of peace." A fragrant influence was diffused to those around Him. "The beauty of His countenance, the loveliness of His character, above all, the love expressed in look and tone, drew to Him," writes White, "all who were not hardened in unbelief."

In all circumstances of His existence, Christ displayed by His life and teachings what obedience to the law meant. His was a perfect life, "a life of meekness, lowliness, purity, and

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2 Ibid., pp. 17-18.
3 Desire of Ages, p. 254.
5 Desire of Ages, p. 254; see also "The Teacher of Truth the Only Safe Educator," RH 68 (Nov. 17, 1891):706.
6 "A Peculiar People," RH 67 (Nov. 18, 1890):705.
unlimited trust in God."\(^1\) The Master taught by personal experience "the great lesson of calm, constant, unwavering confidence" in God.\(^2\) What He was and what He did exerted such a powerful influence that people were changed into His likeness. White explains it this way:

He was the reservoir of all power and truth, noble, courteous, full of sympathy and pitying tenderness, ever touched with human woes. He was the way, the truth, the life. Words of truth were ever flowing from His lips. His presence in any community made a decided change in the ideas of men. Wherever He went, He created an atmosphere of heavenly purity. Whatever He did, He did to make men like Himself,—pure, spotless, undefiled. And He was ever engaged in helping the poor, in preaching the gospel to them.\(^3\)

When the disciples were eventually separated from the Master, "they were no longer ignorant and uncultured. They had become like Him in mind and character, and men took knowledge of them that they had been with Jesus."\(^4\) Those who were influenced by the modeling example of Christ were so impregnated with His love and Spirit that they were able to spread to all the world the news of His life and teachings in one generation.

**Toward a Positive Christian Modeling for the Transmission of Religious Heritage**

As it has been shown, White clearly states that Christ is the only pattern for man. Man is not to be the model for other people to emulate. And yet she does not mean that human beings

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\(^2\)Ibid.

\(^3\)"At Willis, Mich.,” *RH* 68 (July 21, 1891):450; see also *Great Controversy*, p. 43.

\(^4\)Desire of Ages*, p. 250.

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cannot learn from another's life and character. She maintains that man is constantly influenced by man. Hers is a balanced position. So she encourages the believer to look at the lives and qualities of the noble characters of men and women of the Bible. Explaining her personal thinking on this aspect of modeling, she recognizes that through fidelity to God's principles those men of old are still speaking to the men of today.¹

By studying the lives of Biblical characters who loved and feared God, the spirit that animated them is directly transmitted to present-day believers, spanning the distance of time and space which separates them.² While further comments:

In contemplating the history of the patriarchs, the prophets, the men who loved and feared God and walked with Him, hearts will glow with the spirit which animated these worthies. As the mind dwells upon the virtue and piety of holy men of old, the spirit which inspired them will kindle a flame of love and holy fervor in the hearts of those who would be like them in character.³

Just as the lives of those faithful believers have been exerting a positive influence upon many, and just as "by the beauty of true goodness shining forth in the life of these chosen men, others were charmed and filled with a desire to imitate them," so all who seek to accomplish God's designs for them will stimulate others also to reach higher attainments. "They are living epistles, known and read of all men."⁴

¹Prophets and Kings, p. 488.

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The Christian, however, is called to reach perfection of character and a life of service. This is his privilege. But, for man to attain such a high moral and spiritual ideal, Christ is the only perfect pattern to be copied. As already noted, White insists He is the single perfect model worthy of imitation.

How, according to White, is the believer to obtain the perfection offered to him by God? Since, as has already been noted, the mind is impressed and molded by the experiences with which it has the most frequent contact, "to think of Jesus, to talk of Him," says White, "will enable you to become like Him in Spirit and character. You will reflect His image in that which is great and pure and spiritual. You will have the mind of Christ." As noted, White believes this transforming work is accomplished by the action of the Holy Spirit through the Scriptures.

Now, what does Christ expect from each one who has been transformed into His likeness? The answer to this vital question flows naturally from the very essence of such a transformation. First, White thinks the person who is transformed "cherishes the spirit of the great Missionary Worker [and] is filled with a desire to transmit the tidings of salvation" to all those, among all nations, "who do not know the Saviour." And second, Christ sends every one

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1"Let This Mind Be in You, which Was Also in Christ Jesus," RH 76 (Nov. 21, 1899):749.
3"A Call to Consecration," RH 84 (Nov. 21, 1907):5.
4Ibid.
of His followers" into the world as His spiritual representative.\(^1\)

So, what does Christ expect from each person who has been transformed into His likeness, and who, therefore desires to spread the gospel? Here is White's answer?

Christ's work is an example to all who go forth as missionaries. It is the model for all missionary endeavor. It calls for unreserved surrender, for the consecration of time and talents. It demands that we return to God the goods He has entrusted to us, with the interest that has come to us as we have traded upon them. All is to be put into the cause to advance the work Christ came into this world to do.\(^2\)

Consequently, according to White, the modeling influence of example is a means and an end for the transmission of the religious heritage. It is a means, since by the process of modeling believers are trained and transformed for the spreading of the gospel. And it is also an end, because there is no more effective way for the proclamation of the teachings of the Master than the influence of exemplifying them in one's life.

Summary

In White's understanding, every individual life exerts an influencing power for good or for evil upon those around him. It is a law, both of the intellectual and the spiritual nature, that by beholding, man becomes changed. In the case of the faithful Christian, however, this power goes beyond the mere human influence. Christ's Spirit works through each Christian to uplift humanity. Example is a teaching and modeling power. There is no more

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effective and proper way of transmitting the treasures of Christian-revealed knowledge than through the influence of personal example.

The principles of the gospel are to be interwoven with all the aspects of the believer's daily life. Molded and fashioned by the Spirit of Christ, each person will yield a converting influence upon others. Therefore, a practical example of the power of the gospel will do much more than sermons in the spreading of the legacy of Christianity. The unstudied, unconscious influence of a holy life is the most convincing sermon given in favor of the Christian faith.

White emphasizes the fact that the progress of the gospel is hindered, or even stopped, because of the negative influences of those who misrepresent the truth in their lives. By contrast, a positive Christian influence makes the spreading of the gospel a sure success. Thus, every act and word is a seed for either good or evil and is inevitably reproduced in people in other generations.

Although every man is a model, White recognizes that some people, by reason of their responsibility or situation, play a more transcendent role as models than others. The modeling influence of parents, teachers, ministers, and other religious leaders cannot be overemphasized. The parents' modeling power is without parallel. Since in childhood the natural tendencies are most strong and active, parents should present before their children the example they wish to be imitated. In order to impress Bible truths upon their children's minds, they must themselves feel its ennobling, sanctifying influence. Then children will naturally follow their parents' steps. Thus, the parents' faith is transmitted to children and to
children's children. Likewise, when teachers and ministers exemplify in their lives the principles of the truth, the school and the church become shining centers from which the accumulated sacred heritage of Christianity is communicated to younger generations and to all peoples.

In the Bible is found the record of the lives of many men and women whose example exerted either a positive or a negative influence upon those around them and upon those for generations to come. Their lives are graphic illustrations of how the Judeo-Christian religious heritage came down through centuries. At times, the revealed, accumulated, sacred legacy was absent from the lives of people. But there were also times that it emerged with renewed strength by the action and influence of men such as Noah, Abraham, Moses, and Paul. The teaching and modeling power of their exemplary lives has remained alive through the years, passing on their beliefs and hopes and transforming lives by the same Spirit who animated them.

However, among all the models worthy to be imitated, in Christ man finds the standard of perfection; His life is the perfect model. He taught and lived the truth. By the influence of His example and teachings and by personal contact and association, the Master established the foundation for the apostles and disciples to extend and perpetuate the sacred, saving legacy of ages. Today's Christians are called to behold their Master, to be transformed by His Spirit, and to accomplish the task expected of them.
CHAPTER X

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

The Judeo-Christian religious heritage has been received, preserved, developed, and handed down from generation to generation to the present time. The purpose of this study was to determine what, according to Ellen G. White, are the major contextual dimensions of this sacred legacy and its transmission, and the dynamic factors involved in the transmission process.

In her writings, White expresses a specific concept of the nature of the Judeo-Christian religious heritage and its transmission. She maintains that the sacred heritage of Christianity is the treasure of truth which has come from the patriarchs, prophets, and the teachings of Christ and the apostles, and which has been accumulating from age to age. Its essentials came directly from God by revelation and are contained in the Scriptures. Religious heritage was originated, therefore, by God Himself. The inspired Word of God contains the revealed truth, principles, and promises of the Judeo-Christian faith. The plan of salvation is the ground and pillar of the truth around which all other themes cluster.

The essence of religious heritage, nevertheless, is not just written or inspired "content." In harmony with the declaration of the Apostle Paul in Rom 1:16, White believes the gospel is the power of God for salvation. Religious heritage participates in that power
which belongs to God. Consequently, the Christian sacred heritage
is not merely a legacy from the past. It is also a living and re-
generating force. Its objective is to offer a right knowledge of
God and Christ through which man may participate in the divine
nature. Under its influence, the believer becomes a transformed
person, ready for service and salvation.

Furthermore, religious heritage possesses an inherent poten-
tial for measureless dynamic development. White believes in both
progressive revelation and a constant unfolding of the sacred Chris-
tian legacy. Although truth has always remained the same, addi-
tional "light" is constantly shining from the Scriptures through
the church to fill the needs of each generation. While expanding,
truth is to be sorted from the "rubbish of errors" invented by
Satan to counterfeit it. The church has been entrusted with the
last message for mankind, "the present truth." There are, however,
old and yet new truths still to be added to the treasures of reli-
gious legacy.

Both the major contextual dimensions and the dynamic factors
presented in Ellen White's writings have significant implications
for contemporary religious education. These implications will be
noted with the contextual elements or dynamic factors from which
they rise.

The major contextual dimensions of White's concept of the
transmission of religious heritage and their religious education
implications are as follows:

1. The biblical teachings concerning man's origin and na-
ure, his fall and its consequences, his needs, the divine plan for
man's restoration, and God's self-disclosure and redemptive activity in the person of Christ constitute the foundation and source of Christianity. They are the essence of the Judeo-Christian religious heritage and that which explains and justifies its transmission. The ultimate solution to man's problem is found only in God's revealed plan of salvation.

These teachings imply a clear mandate for a curriculum outline for contemporary religious educators. Taken as a whole they provide a fully balanced teaching and learning content. Every single teaching constitutes a major area which offers the pertinent basis for training program development. Man's nature, fall, and needs form a uniting foundation for psychology, sociology, and related social sciences. Man's origin and his relationship to the Creator lead the mind to a study of the nature and to an understanding of God's methods and purposes. The divine plan for man's restoration through Jesus Christ leads the individual to realize his potential for development and so to counteract both the emptiness of evolution and the artificial idealism of humanism. A strong emphasis is to be made for balanced curriculum elaborated with the essential Bible teachings. Such a curriculum would include the present-day necessary disciplines and would provide a needed balanced spiritual emphasis to originate an effective religious education. Integrating wisely the essential teachings of the Bible to the school disciplines those religious teachings would be transmitted to younger generations as a part of their necessary cultural tools with which they can forge successful lives.
2. This plan for man's restoration is the one essential aspect of the Christian faith. Christianity must not be reduced, however, to a mere theory or formula. For White, religion is more than a saving truth to be intellectually known. It is a truth to be lived, a conviction to be experienced. It must regulate the entire life of the believer. Religion is full acceptance of God's will and obedience to His requirements. In brief, religion is to know, believe, love, and share the revealed, divine plan of salvation. It is being involved in God's activity on behalf of mankind.

When educators and psychologists try to define learning, there is a general agreement that, whatever learning is, it originates a modification in the ability to perform. If the learning process has taken place, the learner is necessarily able to do things in another way than before learning. The ability to explain the nature of the change or the proper direction for that change seems to be a point in debate in education.

From the writings of Ellen White can be derived that, as far as religious education is concerned, the Christian educator possesses the answer to these questions in the divine plan for man's restoration. This plan not only defines the change and identifies the source of the dynamic power for change but also points out the goal of the change process. Furthermore, the religious educator should not separate Christian thinking from Christian doing. Since truth is a conviction to be experienced and since it must regulate the entire life of the believer, in order for the educator to facilitate the desired modification of behavior of the learners along religious lines, they must have internalized that Christian truth in
their own lives. Their teaching will be effective as far as their
task is not limited to the teaching of the knowledge of religion.
They are to communicate the Christian religion as a lived and livable
reality which they are experiencing in their own lives.

3. The transmission of religious heritage takes place in
the framework of the cosmic conflict between good and evil, between
God and Satan. Both supernatural and human powers are at work, yet
the responsibility for the proclamation of the gospel rests upon the
believers. Although God could find other means to transmit reli-
gious heritage, in order to bless men He charged them with the
responsibility of its transmission. Men are, therefore, God's in-
strumentalities. Angels are invisible leaders of the divine commis-
sion, and while they create situations, prepare circumstances, and
influence people to make possible the transmission of the Christian
message, the Holy Spirit works on hearts and minds.

Hair-splitting theological theories and endless polemics re-
garding the nature of the conflict between good and evil and its
circumstances are not the framework for a growing Christian exper-
ience. According to White, man is the divinely appointed agent to
accomplish the most important single task in the entire universe,
the proclamation or transmission of God's plan of salvation to his
fellow men. The religious educators should therefore consider their
main responsibility to be a key instrument in implementing such a
process and should act in harmony and cooperation with God. All the
living Christian experience of the religious educators is to be
directed toward the transmission of religious heritage for, in
transmitting, they find their real "raison d'être."
4. The cosmic controversy between good and evil is also present in each individual life. Because of man's sinfulness, because of his weakness in fighting evil, and because of Satan's opposition to the divine plan of redemption, God is constantly intervening in behalf of man to insure the success of His designs.

Man is to be protected from Satan's hindering action. The believer is to consider the contingencies of heredity, environment, and physical and mental conditions, as well as the immensity of the task which is before him, and to organize himself and work in accord with and dependence upon heaven. Therefore, to assist man in his responsibility, God provides him with supernatural power. The effective teaching activity and regenerating power of the Holy Spirit, together with the leading ministry of the angels, make the believer's task possible and successful.

One of the assumed truths in secular and religious study of man is that man is a creature of his environment. Controversies concerning "Heredity versus Environment" or "Nature versus Nurture" occupy educators and others interested in human understanding. From White's writings the religious educators can find much simple and yet practical direction to confront successfully those problems related with the interaction between man, his environment, and the effect of heredity, physical and mental conditions, and social influences on human learning and behavior. The religious educators, founded on the biblical teachings of the cosmic conflict between supernatural and human powers which influences and shapes man's environment, can provide the education pertinent to confront these problems and transmit religious heritage.
Furthermore, secular education is failing to harmonize or solve the conflicts within modern man himself. Traumatic guilt, fear, conflicting value systems, hatred and sensuality are among others of these conflicts. But religious educators, through biblical teachings as presented by Ellen White, should be able to understand that the problems today's man faces in himself rise from the cosmic conflict which directly affects his life. The influence of the Holy Spirit and angels pulls men toward the accomplishment of God's purposes for their lives. The religious educators should know that this is the basis for the solution of such internal conflicts, and that they are best solved through the powers provided by God. The best religious education is imparted and the desirable conditions are thus created for the transmission of religious heritage.

5. Christian education has an important role to play in the divine design for the restoration of God's image in man and, therefore, for man's salvation. Since education seeks to prepare youth for missionary service and heaven, it should be theocentric and practical. It should not be extraneous to life or a mere instrument to prepare people for life. It is a constant, lifelong process which must take place within and without the walls of the school. The main emphasis of education is upon the harmonious development of all human faculties. It is more than the mere pursuit of knowledge or the attainment of secular culture. These considerations under-line White's claim that the work of Christian education is a character-building process similar to the work of redemption. Because of the nature, objective, foundation, and process of Christian
education, it is the most significant activity in the transmission of the sacred legacy of Christianity.

The major dynamic factors involved in the transmission of religious heritage found in this study are conscious teaching, celebration, and modeling. White particularly considers them within the sphere of the Christian home, school, and church. By the combined human and supernatural powers acting through these dynamic factors, the transmission of religious heritage permeates every aspect of the existence of these institutions. Moreover, the elements, circumstances, and influences of conscious teaching, celebration, and modeling are contributing determinants in the process of passing on the Judeo-Christian religious legacy to younger generations and to all peoples.

1. Since conscious teaching is that which is structured and implemented with the intention of transmitting religious heritage, it is clearly seen as a powerful dynamic factor in the transmission process. This dynamic factor of conscious teaching for the transmission of sacred legacy finds its greatest strength in the Christian home, school, and church.

The home is the most powerful, pervasive, and enduring influence; it affects virtually all aspects of an individual's experience. Parents should be aware of this fact and of the way faith, beliefs, values, and attitudes are transmitted to their children. The Biblical principles should be integrated into the parents' lives and the entire family life organized with the objective of transmitting the parents' sacred heritage to the children. In fact,
the main parental responsibility consists of creating a genuine
Christian atmosphere where children may be attracted by their par-
ents' religion and find real happiness in following in their steps.
In such a teaching and learning situation the spiritual beliefs of
parents are transferred to their descendants. Their faith, spirit,
and ideals have the power to transcend time and remain through gen-
erations. The dynamic force of conscious teaching in the home for
the transmission of religious legacy is without parallel.

Consequently, religious education must increasingly concen-
trate its activities on training programs directed toward utilizing
the powerful dynamic factors of home influence and family relations-
ships. The religious educators find in these factors the greatest
areas of need and also the strongest natural agency for growth.
Therefore, the use of home influences as a training center and
methodology should become an essential instrument for them. The
transmission of social and spiritual heritage through home relation-
ships is an inevitable process. Religious educators have the un-
avoidable necessity of accepting the task of guiding this ideal and
inevitable process toward the accomplishment of God's purposes. The
same principles apply to that extension of the home, the school, and
also to the church. Moreover, since the family situation is the
basic foundation of a healthy Christian experience and the starting
point and the most effective situation for the transmission of reli-
gious heritage, religious educators should plan and implement mean-
ingful programs to educate young and older couples to organize the
family life according to the counsels of Ellen White. It must be

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remembered that when the parent's responsibility to practice and share their religious convictions with their children is neglected, neither the Christian school or the church can ever fully fill the gap.

The Christian school, with its structured learning situations, should offer the proper climate to pursue the conscious teaching initiated in the home. For the child, the school is, in reality, an extension of the home. As an agency of the church, the school has inherited the contribution of Christians of previous generations. It is to train youth for service, and in this way provide self-sacrificing missionaries in all areas of needed service. The conscious teaching of Christian beliefs and values in the school situation should be accomplished through a full integration of faith into the teachers' lives, the curriculum, and all the school activities. Thus, the Christian school represents an intentional, systematic, and constant effort in preserving and transmitting its religious heritage to younger generations.

The church can be considered an organization of believers and institutions with the power to adapt its methods of action to the needs and circumstances of the times. The church is also a communion of believers with the capacity for human warmth and closeness, and for sharing and deepening of the Christian faith among themselves. It is an institution which celebrates by means of its liturgy, through prayer, singing, and worship. Nevertheless, as the depositary of the Judeo-Christian religious heritage which has come down through generations as a trusted legacy, the church is
primarily a herald. It was organized for service and its mission is to carry the gospel to all peoples in all times. In order to accomplish its mission, it is to be a conscious teaching church which with unity, harmony, and cooperation among all the members and departments, worships, studies, serves, and proclaims.

2. Celebration, in White's understanding, is a commemoration of sacred events and an observance of special days. The festivals in Israel, for instance, stimulated and developed the religious consciousness of the people concerning the origin and sacredness of their religious heritage. Also, by the rites and ceremonies, the sacred legacy of Israel was impressed and reinforced in the hearts and minds of individuals in each generation.

Likewise, baptism and the Lord's supper, along with the ordinance of foot-washing, are means to strengthen the faith and hope of the believers, and are dynamic factors for transmitting the knowledge of the essentials of the Christian faith in a vivid and impressive manner. Thus, the religious observance of the Sabbath and the proper celebration of birthdays, anniversaries, Christmas, and Thanksgiving, play an efficacious role in the transmission of religious heritage. In fact, when the celebration of any event or day is an occasion in which God is honored and religious lessons are taught, it becomes a powerful dynamic factor to strengthen and transmit Christian beliefs and values. The force of celebration is powerful and unique because it is vivid, impressive, and repetitive.

Thus religious educators should be aware of the great learning power inherent in celebration. The impressive celebrations of the church should be more than mere formal occasions through which
to transmit the church heritage. Instead they must become intensely real and impressive teaching opportunities in which children and adults are led to a more profound knowledge of God's designs. The church celebrations are the beginnings of the use of this dynamic factor by religious educators. Each family unit develops its own unique celebrations which greatly influence its members. Therefore, the religious educators must recognize this fact and use this dynamic factor to consciously guide family and church to develop celebrations and practices which provide an atmosphere in which the living spiritual impression desired by God can take place. In so doing, the Christian religious heritage is vividly carried on to younger generations.

3. The modeling force of example is not as obvious a dynamic factor as conscious teaching and celebration, but it is a more powerful factor in the transmission of religious heritage. To White, the unstudied, unconscious influence of a holy life is the most convincing "sermon" given in favor of Christianity. Furthermore, since a consistent life, holy conversation, unswerving integrity, a benevolent spirit, and a godly example are mediums through which light is conveyed to the world, and since man by beholding becomes changed, Christian parents, teachers, and ministers should present before others the example they wish imitated. Because of their position and responsibility, the modeling influence of their example is almost irresistible to young people. Therefore, the power for the transmission of religious heritage is measureless.

In addition, modeling is not an uncontrolled force. It is a power which can consciously be directed toward specific ends.
Consequently, accepting the modeling power of example, the religious educators can structure opportunities and ways of modeling within the sphere of the education experience guiding the young toward the aim of salvation. By inculcating awareness of the teaching and modeling power of example, and by training in its implications, the force of influence can be directed as an active power in leading men and women to Christ. In this way modeling becomes a powerful curriculum area and a methodological device fully applicable in the home, school, and church situation.

Finally, since the life, growth, and power of the Christian home, school, and church depend on giving and receiving, it is evident that they can continue to exist as Christian institutions only by transmitting to others that which they have received from God as a sacred trust. It is within the sphere of these institutions that the dynamic factors of conscious teaching, modeling, and celebration find their fullest development and greatest influence. A genuine Christian climate created by the presence of the Holy Spirit and the angels and an attitude of prayer, obedience, and service on the part of every believer presents the indispensable conditions for the transmission of religious heritage with its vitalizing energy. When parents, teachers, and ministers—every believer, for that matter—exemplify in their lives the principles of truth, the home, the school, and the church will become centers where the accumulated riches of the Judeo-Christian religious heritage are communicated to younger generations and all peoples. When these institutions are involved in transmission, the Christian religious heritage will be fully developed, and its transmission speeded. The end result will
be a God-fearing home, school, and church ready for translation at the coming of their glorious Lord.

The matter of religious heritage and its transmission thus becomes the realm within which the religious educators pursue their vocation. It provides the material from which they build their programs and establish the goals and objectives which determine the focus and the direction of every activity. Religious heritage supplies the methodologies and the dynamic powers which they use as instruments to accomplish their tasks. In the whole spectrum of the contemporary process of transmitting religious heritage, the religious educators play a central part in carrying forward the divine design for man's restoration to his original position. The Judeo-Christian religious heritage is the foundation and the justification of the educators. It must fashion the educators themselves and be reverently applied by them in their appointed task of leading men, women, and children into a fuller relationship with the Founder and Sustainer of that heritage.
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