

Education

#0103

Study Given by W. D. Frazee—March 30, 1974

“It is written in the prophets, And they shall be all taught of God. Every man therefore that hath heard, and hath learned of the Father, cometh unto Me” John 6:45.

Christ was quoting from the Old Testament Scriptures. In fact, He was quoting from Isaiah where it is written:

“And all thy children shall be taught of the LORD; and great shall be the peace of thy children” Isaiah 54:13.

Notice that Christ does not restrict it to the children. He’s applying it to all within His hearing. “And they shall be all taught of God.” We all need to be taught, and what a wonderful thing it is to have God as our Teacher. This is why Christian education is so important. We not only need, as children and adults, to be taught *about* God, we are to be taught *of* God. God is the One who is to lead our minds into an understanding of truth.

The program of Seventh-day Adventists throughout the world is molded by the concepts in this message. For example, we do not believe that the Bible teaches that man is a spirit that leaves the body at death and is intelligent apart from the body. We believe that “...the dead know not anything...” (Ecclesiastes 9:5–6.) We believe that when God made man, He formed him from the dust of the ground, “...and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and man became a living soul.” (See Genesis 2:7.) And understanding that man is put together in this way, we don’t see or understand that man functions apart from the body that God made. We do not know of seeing without eyes and hearing without ears. We do not know of running without muscles. We do not know of thinking without a brain. To us, conscious thought is a function of the brain cells, just as the other parts of our body have functions.

This all has a definite bearing upon our way of life. Believing that this body, made in the image of God, is what is functioning, we have a deep interest in what goes into the body. This is the basis of the health message. This is why we esteem it a privilege, as well as a duty, to be careful about what goes into our stomach because we know that what’s in the stomach goes on into the bloodstream. And the bloodstream is carried to all parts of the body and affects not only how the muscles work but how the mind works because the brain is built up from the blood, just as the liver or lungs are.

In the same way, our attitude toward education is derived from our understanding of the nature of man. Believing that, as the body is built up from the food we eat, so the

mind is built up from what goes into it. We are very much interested in what our children read and learn, and what we, as adults, read and learn, because just as what goes into the stomach becomes blood and then a part of the body, so what goes into our brain through the eyes and ears becomes thought and becomes a part of our character.

When Jesus comes, He is going to put the finishing touch of immortality on what we have worked with Him to build. It's true that after we have done all that we can in putting the right material into the body and the right material into the mind, there is still a tremendous lot for Him to do in making up our deficiencies. And He has promised to do that. And so He says:

“For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of His good pleasure” Philippians 2:13.

Surely we do not want to ask the Lord to work miracles to counteract the results of our carelessness. For example, we would not want to put whiskey in our bloodstreams and then ask the Lord to keep us sober. We wouldn't want to put any poison in our bloodstream and ask the Lord to counteract the results. So in the health message and in Christian education, we have wonderful aids helping us to develop, in our children and in ourselves, strong bodies, keen minds, and happy hearts.

Isn't that a wonderful privilege? Why should anyone think it a burden to take the best in nutrition and the best in education?

What are the channels of education? As food comes into the body through the channel of the mouth and the stomach and on into the bloodstream and so to all the body, so our minds are built up from the impressions that are constantly being made during all our waking hours through the five senses, but largely through the eyes and the ears.

Everyone is being educated, whether we are in school or out of school. The preschool child learns more before he goes to school in some ways than he learns all the rest of his life. Unless we have studied that, it sounds like an extreme statement. But if it were possible for us to remember how little we knew when we started life's journey and how much we learned during the first four to eight years, we would agree with the inspired statement that the lessons that the children learn during those early years affect their lives more than all the rest put together.

We think of Samuel trained by his mother at home. Yet as a child, he was brought up to the sanctuary, and there committed to the care of Eli. The lessons that Samuel learned at his mother's knee remained with him all through life.

As we think of Christian education, we think not merely of our schools. We are thinking of the total educational process. We are thinking of the child at home. We are also thinking of the education we all are receiving day by day, whether we are in our twenties or forties or sixties or eighties. We are all having our minds affected by what we see and hear.

In this work of education, the home and the church share in responsibility. Christian education comprehends what we learn around the fireside as well as what we learn in the classroom. Also, Christian education includes what we learn in the experiences of life.

The great pattern in education, as in all other matters, is our Lord Jesus. Two thousand years ago, He left the courts of Heaven and came to this world to show us how to live. Jesus is the only one ever born in this world who had the opportunity to choose His home and educational advantages before He was born.

What were the conditions arranged by Jesus for Himself and by the Father for Him? It is most interesting to observe that Jesus was born into a poor family. He grew up in a poor home, having to struggle daily with hardship and difficulty and poverty. It is interesting to observe that, until He was 30 years of age, he was a member of the household at Nazareth, and that much of His time was spent in manual labor. However, the culture of the mind and soul was not neglected. Let us notice what the educated physician says of the development of Jesus:

“And the child grew, and waxed strong in spirit, filled with wisdom: and the grace of God was upon Him. And Jesus increased in wisdom and stature, and in favour with God and man” Luke 2:40, 52.

Physically, mentally, and spiritually, Jesus was developing in those years of childhood. In His teens, He increased in wisdom and stature. He was growing in body, mind, and soul.

How was Jesus educated? I have pondered over it. If I were educating a boy to be a teacher and a preacher and a physician—all three—I wonder if I would do it the way God arranged for His Son to be educated. Jesus was a preacher. He was a teacher. Even Nicodemus said he knew Jesus was a teacher come from God. And was Jesus a physician? Oh, yes. People from far and near came to His clinic.

Somebody says, “But Jesus was God's Son.”

Yet Jesus learned as we may learn. He took our humanity and developed. He didn't cause the wise men that came from the East to marvel by telling them wonderful things. Oh, no. He was a baby. When He was a child in Nazareth, He was a good child, but He was a child. When a youth, He was a good youth, but still a youth. He learned as we may learn.

What were His textbooks? We are told:

“His education was gained directly from the Heaven-appointed sources; from useful work, from the study of the

Scriptures and of nature, and from the experiences of life—
God's lesson books, full of instruction to all who bring to
them the willing hand, the seeing eye, and the understanding
heart” *Education*, page 77.

He drank from the fountainhead of knowledge and wisdom. What were His books? The Scriptures, of course. And one needs only to observe His familiarity with the Old Testament books in His ministry to know that He must have spent many hours in childhood and youth studying what Moses wrote, what Isaiah wrote, what Daniel wrote, what Jeremiah wrote, what all the prophets wrote. He didn't carry around with Him those scrolls from which He quoted in His public ministry. He memorized those when He was a boy, and He had a familiarity with them.

So, as we think of Christian education, let us focus first of all on this great fact: what you and I get from the Scriptures is true education. Whether it's in the study of the Sabbath School lesson, or whether it's in the study of the Bible lessons, or whether it's in our personal devotion, every one of us can be taught of the Lord as we study the Scriptures.

May I suggest to you, in a practical way, that many of us might do more than we are doing both with ourselves and children in memorizing the Scriptures? If Jesus needed to know the Word of God, surely you and I need to.

“But He answered and said, It is written, Man shall not live
by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the
mouth of God” Matthew 4:4.

I am so thankful, dear friends, that I had the privilege of having a father and mother who taught me to memorize the Bible. My father grew up in a home that was not religious at all. His father was not a Christian, so my father was not acquainted with the Bible. But my father and mother were baptized shortly before I was born, and my father made up his mind that his boys would have what he *hadn't* had—a knowledge of the Scriptures.

So he started me in at an early age memorizing verses from the Bible. I was about eight years old when he started having me memorize the prophetic part of Daniel. Within a few years, I had memorized Daniel 1 and 2 and 7 through 12. Then my father started me memorizing the book of Revelation. We went through all the 22 chapters. By the time I was 22, I had memorized those.

You say, “That's quite a bit.” Not nearly as much as Jesus learned in His twelve years. He learned to repeat by heart the first five books of the Bible. Every Jewish child learned those first five books of Moses. He was also very familiar with the Psalms. He quoted from them.

Every child's mind is memorizing *something*. And it's our choice, not *whether* they learn things or not, but merely *what* they learn. Those brain cells are filling up fast with something. And if we preoccupy the soil with the holy inspired truths of God's Word, what a privilege!

My parents nor I knew that I would ever be a minister, but it has come in very handy in my work in winning souls to Christ to have these books of Daniel and Revelation and other texts stored in my mind. But the greatest value of our children learning the Scriptures is not information. It is inspiration and power. As David says:

“Thy word have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against Thee” Psalms 119:11.

There is keeping power in the Word of God.

Another one of the great lesson books that Jesus studied was the book of nature. This, too, is open to our children. As I think of these great rocks around this country and as I have the privilege occasionally of visiting and walking out over these desert sands and admiring these mountains, looking for the little flowers which brighten up the prospect, and otherwise becoming more acquainted with nature and its varied moods, I remember that both Jesus and John were exposed to such influences in their formative years. They were acquainted with the various forms of life represented in nature—the birds, the trees, the flowers, and all the things that God has created—and from them, they received lessons of truth.

Someone may say, “And what does nature have to teach us?”

Nature has three great lessons to teach us. First, that God is *wise*. Second, that God is *powerful*. Third, that God is *love*. As we become better acquainted with the design in nature, we marvel at the wisdom of God in arranging so many different patterns and making every one of them contribute to life and joy.

What does nature have to tell us about God's power? As we look at the stars by night and the sun by day, we marvel at the infinite power that puts all these objects right where they belong and keeps them going.

“Lift up your eyes on high, and behold who hath created these things, that bringeth out their host by number: He calleth them all by names by the greatness of His might, for that He is strong in power; not one faileth” Isaiah 40:26.

What does nature have to teach us about God's love? There are so many things in nature that are there to make us happy. Why should the hour of sunrise be a time of beauty? Why should the clouds glow at sunset? Why should flowers bloom and be beautiful? Why should they be arranged in many tints and with various odors? Why is

food made not only to nourish us but to delight us? Why is a watermelon such a lovely combination of color and flavor? Why? Why? Why?

There is so much in nature to cheer us and delight us and make us happy. The only answer can be that the One who runs this universe must be interested in us. All this Jesus, as a child and a youth, was learning from the hillsides and fields around Nazareth. He was filling His mind with evidences of the Heavenly Father's love. And so, in His public ministry, we see Him using nature all the time. He said, "Behold the lilies of the field how they grow." "Consider the birds and how God feeds them." He pointed to the sun shining in the heavens and said, "I am the light of the world." He drew lessons from the fish, from the rocks, from the wheat fields, from all the different things in nature. During His childhood, He was storing up those lessons. Taught of God, He came to associate nature and the things of Heaven.

Another of Jesus' great textbooks was useful work. When He grew up and came back to Nazareth, some said, "How can this man preach as He preaches when all His life He has been a carpenter and a carpenter's son?" But Jesus was not simply sawing boards and putting them together. He was learning from work how to solve the problems of life. Jesus was learning from work the fact that God has given man something to do with his muscles as well as his mind.

Careful educators observe that the mind that has been trained to associate thinking and action is better developed than the one who merely thinks and doesn't act. One of the great curses of modern TV is that people are looking all the time at things but have very little to do about it. Something on the screen is solving the problem. Something on the screen is doing something. But you and I can sit there and enjoy the tension and enter into it vicariously. We are removed from the scene of action, and this has an effect upon the character.

God intends that every child, every youth, every adult, shall have the opportunity every day to do something with the muscles as well as with the mind. Man is more than ten billion brain cells. He is a group of 600 muscles and 206 bones, and every joint, every nerve, every muscle calls for action. When the mind and the muscles cooperate in useful work, something happens both to the mind and the muscles. They are developing. And something happens to the *character*. All this was a part of the education of Jesus. All this is a part of Christian education today. And God intends that, in every home, in every school, at every church, we shall all be seeking to learn more of God through His Word, through His works, and through working *with* Him to accomplish something. I'm thankful for Christian education.

There is a place in God's school for each one of us, for our text says we shall all be taught of God. Do you know the greatest lesson that God wants to teach you and me through all these agencies? He wants to teach us how much we are worth to Him.

I was talking to an attorney friend in Georgia, and he was telling me how he had quit tobacco and how thankful he was that he wouldn't take a \$1,000 to bribe him to go back to the habit. His young partner was sitting across the table, puffing on a cigarette.

I said to the young man, "Perhaps you might be interested in a five-day plan to quit smoking that we are having at the Chattanooga YMCA next month."

He said, "Mr. Frazee, I think that, in order for a man to quit smoking, no plan will do him much good unless he *wants* to very much."

I said, "I agreed with you." Then I asked him, "Would you like to know what I have found to be the greatest motivation possible in quitting tobacco?"

"Yes," he said, "I would."

Then I told him about an experience that had happened in South America. A little boy was kidnapped. His father had to pay \$900,000 to get him back.

I said to the young attorney, "Was the boy worth it?"

He said, "Well, I suppose he was, to his father."

Then I said, "Was a ransom paid for you?"

Was a ransom paid for us? \$900,000? More than that.

I was talking to another man who had been our county judge for many years. I told him about this boy in South America, and asked him if he knew the ransom that had been paid for him. He did. He knew about the cross and about the gift of Jesus.

I said, "Judge, are you worth it? Are you worth the ransom that was paid for you?"

He bowed his head and said, "Mr. Frazee, I'm afraid not."

Does Jesus know value? If you are not worth what Jesus paid for you, then He got cheated. But who is it that *establishes* values? Was the boy worth \$900,000? The father thought so. He paid the money willingly to get his boy back.

So to that young attorney, I said, "Do you see that when a man realizes what has been paid for him as a ransom when he realizes what he is worth to the One who created him, he's not going to want to paint up the inside of his lungs with tobacco tar and ruin those beautiful cells. He's not going to want to put anything into this wonderful body that has been purchased at such infinite price."

So it is in the mental. If I just belong to myself and life is here, and I don't know what is going to happen in the future, whatever will tickle me and make me laugh, ok. Bring it on. Whether it's something to swallow or something to look at with my eye or hear with my ear. But listen, if back of those eyes and ears is a brain that piles up impressions like the photographic film does, if there is a mind there that is thinking and developing thought patterns and character, and if God thinks that character is of such value that He, in Christ, would die upon the cross that I may live forever rather than die forever, does it make a difference what goes in? Whether it is at the mother's knee or the TV? Whether it's in the public school or the church school? Whether it's in the popular media, the newspaper, the magazine, the radio, the television, or whether it's through God's original sources—His Word, His works, and sharing with Him in daily work?

Don't misunderstand me, friends. I cannot decide for you how much of your time is spent with this and how much with that. I cannot decide how much the TV dominates your living room. I cannot decide for you how much of what is up here comes from the radio and the TV and the newspaper and how much from the Bible and the Spirit of Prophecy and the things of nature. I cannot decide that, and I wouldn't if I could. Every soul decides that himself.

But I can tell you that what we eat today we are tomorrow, whether we put it in the stomach or whether we put it into the brain. Every day, we are being transformed and becoming *more* like what we want to be or *less* like what we want to be.

The lessons our children are learning in the daily school are important. Not long ago, the state of Tennessee conducted a very interesting experiment in education. They sent a group of teachers into a mountain section where they thought that the homes needed bringing up in their nutrition. They thought they would try an experiment in seeing what could be done in the schools. And the particular experiment they tried was one in which they confined themselves to the teaching of arithmetic. But they used material in the arithmetic classes that dealt with food and diet. Using food problems and food situations to teach arithmetic, they measured the results in the diet and nutrition program of that whole county, and they found that just by teaching arithmetic to the children in terms of dealing with better nutrition that the nutrition in the homes came up as the children got ideas and carried them home.

I thought as I heard of those results, Isn't this interesting? Even what the children deal with in arithmetic teaches them not only mathematics but concepts of life and work and activity. If this is so, then I pray that God may help us to be interested in everything that goes into the minds of our boys and girls and interested in everything that goes into our *own* minds, for you and I are still at school.

And remember the great lesson that the Great Teacher is longing to teach us is this: we are of infinite value to Him. We are too precious to have our lives wasted. We are too precious to have our health destroyed. We are too precious to have our minds defiled or twisted.

Oh, how great is the privilege of the remnant church to have light from the sanctuary, messages from Heaven in these latter days, to know how to train ourselves and our children to know God and His Son Jesus Christ, and to get ready for His soon coming.

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