



A unit on the Spirit of Prophecy

# Ellen White: The Journey of faith

## Module IV

### “Walking with God”



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By

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## 1. Introduction.

If only I could see the world through God's eyes, what would change? How would I prioritize my time, responsibilities, goals and the daily flow of my routines? If only I could see the world through God's eyes, what would count? If I could stay in His presence, a little longer, what would I learn? How would His passion change my attitude and my vision? If only I could see people, through the caring, compassionate and loving eyes of Jesus, what would change in my life?

Take a moment to read the short poem. It illustrates the frantic flow of life so well known to us.

The clock is my dictator, I shall not rest  
It makes me lie down only when exhausted.  
It leads me to depression, it hounds my soul  
It leads me in circles of frenzy for activity's sake  
Even though I run frantically from task to task  
I will never get it all done, for my "ideal" is with me  
Deadlines and my need for approval, they drive me  
They demand performance from me, beyond the limits of my schedules  
They anoint my head with migraines, my in-basket overflows  
Surely, fatigue and time pressure shall follow me all the days of my life  
And I will dwell in the bonds of frustration forever.

Christine & Tom Sine, *Living on Purpose*, 17.

In view of the wild pace of life, what does it mean to walk with God? How does a walk with God fit into the frantic pace of the contemporary life, be it a school, home or work environment? How do we encourage children and young people to experience an authentic, faith-oriented journey with God?





*Think It Through:*

"Since Jesus came to dwell with us, we know that God is acquainted with our trials, and sympathizes with our griefs. Every son and daughter of Adam may understand that our Creator is the friend of sinners. For in every doctrine of grace, every promise of joy, every deed of love, every divine attraction presented in the Saviour's life on earth, we see "God with us."

*Ellen White, The Desire of Ages, 24*

- a) How did Jesus demonstrate that God is acquainted with human trials and sorrows?
- b) How did Jesus reveal the extent of His love and friendship?
- c) At times when God feels so remote what assures us of His presence?

Walking with God a Brief Definition:

The journey with God involves a process of discovering not only what God is like but how He relates to people. Mulholland defines a walk with God as "a journey into becoming a person of compassion, persons who forgive, persons who deeply care for others and the world, persons who offer themselves to God to become agents of divine grace in the lives of others in their world – in brief, persons who love and serve as Jesus did."<sup>1</sup> In other words, God relates to us relationally. It may be suggested that to walk with God means to share His love with the world. Mullholand defines the purpose of this journey as follows.

"Being conformed into the image of Christ for the sake of others"

*Mulholland, Invitation to a Journey, 25.*



## 2. Spiritual Journey – Ellen White’s View.

Did Ellen White ever use the term spiritual journey and if so, in what context? Well, one may say, sure, she wrote books like *Steps to Christ*. In several instances, she used expressions such as a “pilgrimage to the heavenly Canaan”.<sup>2</sup> She, also, described Christ’s ministry on earth as “pilgrimage of love on earth”.<sup>3</sup> However, if she did use the term ‘spiritual journey’ how did she apply it to one’s walk with God.

I have discovered that, during her stay in Australia, she wrote an article entitled “To Abide in Christ the Will Must be Surrendered,” printed in *Signs of the Times* on October 29, 1894. Here, she used the term spiritual journey.

*The will is a power, and as many triumphs are to be won in spiritual warfare, and many points of progress to be made in the spiritual journey, and many lessons to be learned from Christ, the great Teacher, it is necessary that the will should be sanctified.*<sup>4</sup> (Emphasis added)

A closer analysis suggests that she used the term in an interesting context.

**Many triumphs are to be won in spiritual warfare**

Many points of progress to be made in the spiritual journey

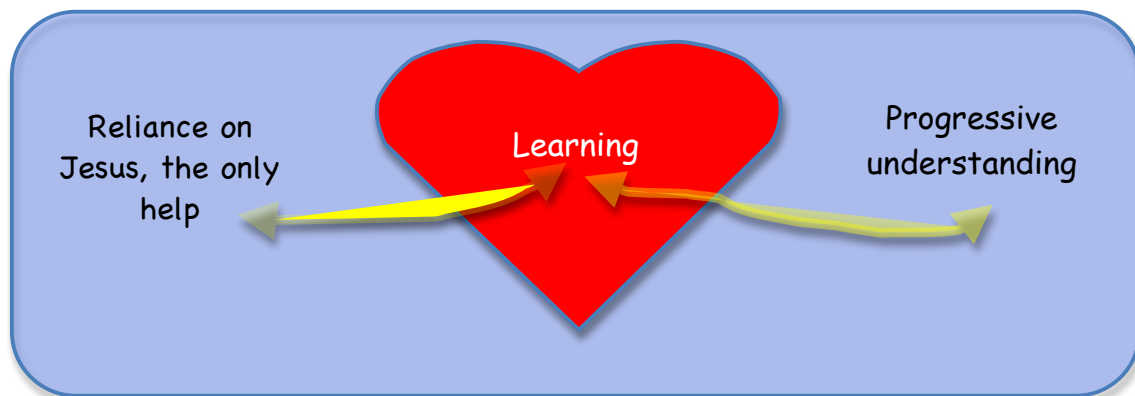
**Many lessons to be learned from Christ, the Great Teacher**

Ellen White links the growth associated with the spiritual journey with two other perspectives, namely spiritual warfare and the lessons to be learned from the Great Teacher par excellence, Christ. What follows is quite interesting.



*When we come to Jesus as humble learners, seeking to know the mind of Christ, we shall have no disagreeable surprises. That which we received from him will be to us light, and life, and salvation. We shall walk in the light of the Sun of Righteousness, advancing from light to a greater light, and at every step our hearts will well up with gratitude for the precious revelations of his love. We shall not walk in darkness, we shall behold him who is our only help, him who only has the words of eternal life.<sup>5</sup>*

It seems that Ellen White links the notion of the spiritual journey with the process of learning, dependence on Jesus and an increasing understanding. However, the journey is in the context of the spiritual warfare where Jesus is the only One able to provide adequate support.



*Think It Through:*

- What does it mean to be a humble learner? Give practical examples.
- How can one seek to understand the mind of Christ? Is it possible? (Read Philippians 1–11)
- Discuss the implications of words such as 'light', 'life' and 'salvation'. How they relate to a spiritual journey?
- It seems that Ellen White speaks very clearly about progressive understanding and growth in one's walk with Jesus. In practical terms, what did she mean?
- What does it mean to focus on Jesus as the only help? How does this experience relate to the decision in life's journey?
- What can we learn from Jesus the Great Teacher?



i. The Heart of the Matter.

What follows is rather challenging.

“Could our spiritual vision be opened, we should see that which would never be effaced from the memory as long as life should last.”

Ellen White, *Signs of the Times*, 29 October 1894

This thought raises a question. What’s coming next? What would one see? What would exert such a lifetime memory? It seems obvious that we do not see what God sees and what matters to Him most. Therefore, the spiritual journey requires a complete reliance on Jesus, the Teacher par excellence, to enable us to understand and to see what matters to God.

Note the unfolding scene.

We should see souls bowed under oppression, loaded with grief and pressed down as a cart beneath the sheaves, and ready to die in discouragement. We should see angels flying swiftly to aid the tempted ones who stand as on the brink of a precipice. These souls are unable to help themselves, and avoid the ruins that threaten them; but the angels of God are forcing the evil angels, and guiding the souls from the dangerous places, to plant their feet on a sure foundation. (Ibid.)

If the spiritual eyes would be opened we would see beyond the facades, superficial smiles and clichés. We would see the world of people’s struggles, insecurities, pain and heartaches. We would see a fierce conflict between good and evil. More so, this spiritual insight would open minds and hearts to what matters most to God. Perhaps, it would help us to discern God's movements in people's lives and evoke sensitivity to the strength of human struggles.





## ii. The Impact of the Spiritual Conflict

**Struggle between Good and Evil****Evil Angels****Inflict the following:**

- Oppression
- Grief
- Discouragement
- Helplessness
- Hopelessness

**God's Angels****Provide the following:**

- Help
- Security
- Confidence
- Safety

Learning from the Greatest Teacher means to understand how Jesus responded to people's needs.

## iii. Learning what?

If we are to become God's extended hands and walk in the places where God is already at work, we need to learn how to provide help, safety, trust for people who struggle with injustice, grief, discouragement, helplessness and hopelessness. We need to learn how to walk with people who search for meaning and purpose and how to connect them to God. Ellen White expressed the depth of Christ's passion and sensitivity so adequately.

Jesus saw beyond the crowd on the shore of Galilee. Looking into the future, he saw faithful followers as they struggled with life--in loneliness, in pain, in temptation, or in prison. He saw them as they celebrated, as they fought, as they sat confused and concerned. He spoke for each of them as well. Through the miracle of the Holy Spirit, the Voices speaking from the fisherman's boat that morning would bring hope, comfort, wisdom and peace to human hearts until the end of time.<sup>6</sup>







### iii. Walking with God - Practical Application

The same year, in October 1894, Ellen White attended the camp meetings held in Ashfield, Sydney Australia. In spite of the time of depression, many people from the community attended the meetings. Interestingly, in her diary she referred to a notable event.

**"With Emily returned home to Granville Oct 29 or 30 to "get more bedding, mattresses and quilts, for many people could not be accommodated."**

**Diary Note: October 18- November 4 (1894)**

One may ask the question, why did the sixty-seven year old woman drive home to get more bedding, mattresses and quilts? The little reference shows her sensitivity and care. Naturally, she wanted to make the people comfortable and welcomed. In this, she role-modeled the practical expression of Christian faith, but where was the church? In the same diary notes, she expressed her serious concerns. Note the following:

- a) "There is a coldness of heart, an absence of love for God and for those who are of the same faith. There is not the sweet communion and fellowship of the Spirit that there should be".<sup>7</sup>
- b) I spoke from John 18:34,35 (A new commandment I give to you that you love one another) "How essential that we cultivate love for God to our fellow men. Let all remember that upon these two principles hang all the law and the prophets."<sup>8</sup>
- c) "I bore a very decided testimony in regard to the little faith, love, or confidence that is expressed by them toward each other.....there is need of kindness, deference, courtesy, Christian politeness, fervent love for each other. We are far behind on this point."<sup>9</sup>
- d) "I am afraid many souls will be lost to Christ because of the neglect to manifest that love which Christ has enjoyed."<sup>10</sup>



*Think It Through:*

Thompson suggests, "Hospitality means receiving the other, from the heart, into my own dwelling place. It entails providing for the need, comfort and delight of the other with all the openness, respect, freedom, tenderness, and joy that love itself embodies."<sup>11</sup>

- a) What does it mean to have a spiritual insight?
- b) How did Ellen White demonstrate the depth of her spiritual sensitivity and perception?
- c) Why did the church members fail to respond effectively to the needs of visitors?

## The meaning of spiritual hospitality

"Hospitality is essentially an expression of love. It is a movement to include the guest in the very best of what we ourselves have received and can therefore offer. It is the act of sharing who we are as well as what we have. Thus hospitality of heart lies beneath every hospitable act. The classic elements of hospitality offered to guests are food, drink, shelter, and rest, protection, care, enjoyment and peace. These paired categories cover a basic range of physical, emotional and spiritual needs. They reveal that hospitality is concerned with the total well-being of the guest."

Thompson, *Soul Feast*, 122

*Biblical Perspective:*

Study the following passages and discuss Jesus' way of offering spiritual hospitality

- a) Mark 1:40-42 - What does it mean to be filled with compassion?
- b) Mark 2:1-10 - The first thing Jesus said was "Son, your sins are forgiven." What kind of hospitality was he offering to the person in need?
- c) Mark 2:13-17 - What did Jesus mean by saying, "Come and follow me"?

Thompson points out that "God sees the ugliness of our sin with the eyes of a Great Physician who yearns to heal. God feels the great tragic consequences of our alienation with the heart of the Good Shepherd who suffers compassion."<sup>12</sup> I add, He invites us to walk with Him to heal us and to restore our spiritual vision (Matthew 13:13-15).



### 3. Walking with God, what did it mean for Ellen White?

Exploring the nature of the spirituality among the early pioneers, Beem and Harwood point out "They sought God in prayer and meditation, searching the Scripture for further word from God. The spiritual confusion, distress, and discouragement needed to be met with a clear evidence of God's imprimatur on the movement."<sup>13</sup> Further, the nature of their spiritual knowledge was highly experiential as for the early pioneers God was more than a definable entity. "Every step forward led the pilgrims further into the path of light. Spiritual understanding was deepened and progress made when individuals practiced their faith and "put it to the test."<sup>14</sup> In other words, they walked with God with an implicit trust and confidence in His guidance and presence. No wonder that in view of her personal growth in spirituality and God's revelations, Ellen White, spoke with such a confident courage.

"Remember, brethren, in every perplexity, that God has angels still. You may meet opposition; yea, even persecution. But if steadfast to principle, you will find, as did Daniel, a present helper and deliverer in the God who you serve. Now is the time to cultivate integrity of character. The Bible is full of rich gems of promise to those who love and fear God.

Ellen White, *Life Sketches*, 285

#### a) It meant to be open to God's Leading in all circumstances even when the future was unclear.

Time and space does not permit us to explore all the stories, but it seems quite clear that Ellen White's childhood experiences helped her to develop an implicit trust in God. He did not respond to all her questions why, but she gained enough evidence to trust Him.

- i. Read Life Sketches, "Struggle with Poverty" page 105-107.
- ii. In what way did the struggles with poverty helped Ellen White to be confident in God's leading?
- iii. Note her thoughts, "At this time I was shown that the Lord had been trying us for our good, and to prepare us to labor for others." What did she mean? How can experiences such as poverty prepare us to be effective in ministry to others?
- iv. "We have made the child an excuse for not traveling and laboring for the good of others, and we feared the Lord was about to remove him." Was Ellen White's response to her child's sickness fair? What lessons did she learned from this experience?



Years later during her travels, she noted in her diary.

“I thought of those upon the boat who had no faith in God, no hope in Jesus Christ, the world's Redeemer. In sunshine where no danger threatens all is hilarity and full of amusement. But when the vessel is driven by fierce winds and tossed, when peril comes, when life is hanging in the balance, the appetite for amusement is at (an) end. . . . Amid the rough waters and the storm and the fog, I felt that Jesus was never nearer to me, never more precious. My faith reposed in God, however dark the surroundings. The faith of the believer is like the ship's compass, the ship may be struggling, with the waves and by the tempest, tossed by the ever restless sea, yet the compass keeps its position, doing its work, maintaining its level amid plunging and tossing, pointing to the pole. I felt that my soul could stay upon God whatever comes, calm waves or boisterous.”—

Ellen White, Manuscript 17, 1885.

## **b) It meant to have a passionate concern for others**

From an early age, Ellen developed a passion to share her faith in Jesus. This became evident in her ministry to her twin sister, Elizabeth Bangs, and especially in a pleading letter written in February 21 1891. Ellen feared that Elizabeth failed to take a decided stand for Jesus.<sup>15</sup> Elizabeth died on December 21, 1891.

### **i. Sharing personal challenges and trust in God**

I have had another ill turn since I wrote to you. For a little time - twenty-four hours - my life hung in balance. I was completely exhausted.....My only helper is the Lord. When I get into these hard, suffering times I try to be quiet in God and trust fully in Him, asking His forgiveness for my imprudence. I love to speak of Jesus and His matchless love and my whole soul is in this work. I have not one doubt of the love of God and His care and His mercy and ability to save to the utmost all who come unto Him. That which I have seen of His precious love is a reality to me. The doubts expressed by those who know not the Lord Jesus Christ have no effect on me. God so loved the world that He gave His only beloved Son that whosoever believeth on Him should not perish but have everlasting life.<sup>16</sup>



In becoming God's extended hands to her sister Lizzy, Ellen shared the story of God's presence in her life. She based her appeals on the experiential knowledge of Jesus. Her words were strong and convincing as she wrote about the evidence of Christ's life. For her, it was a reality. With full empathy, she reached across to someone in need of hope and courage, someone she loved and cared for.

## ii. Sharing Appeals

Don't you believe on Jesus, Lizzie? Do you not believe He is your Saviour? That He has evidenced His love for you in giving His own precious life that you might be saved? All that is required of you is to take Jesus as your own precious Saviour. I pray most earnestly that the Lord Jesus shall reveal Himself to you and to Reuben. Your life in this world is not one of pleasure but of pain; and if you will not doubt Jesus but believe that He died to save you, if you will come to Him just as you are, and give yourself to Jesus and grasp His promises by living faith, He will be to you all that you can desire.....Lizzie, believe, simply believe that Jesus means just what He says. Take Him at His word and hang your helpless soul on Jesus Christ.....Lizzie, my heart longs to see you trusting in Jesus, for He can give you His grace to bear all your acute sufferings. He loves you. He wants to save you.<sup>17</sup>

### *Reflection:*

- a) Why was Ellen White so sincere in the appeals to her sister?
- b) Why could she empathize with the spiritual needs of other people?
- c) What role did Jesus have in her life?
- d) When and how can we share Jesus effectively?

“We are created to be compassionate persons whose relationships are characterized by love and forgiveness, persons whose lives are healing, liberating, transforming touch of God's grace upon their world.”

Mulholland, *Invitation to a Journey*, 33.



### c) It meant to share the spirit of forgiveness

Ellen White defined God's love as an active principle. "Love is an active principle, it keeps the good of others continually before us thus restraining us from inconsiderate actions lest we fail in our object in winning souls for Christ."<sup>18</sup> She applied this spiritual principle in her personal journey.

- i. Childhood experience.
- ii. The traumatic childhood experience invaded the privacy of her life changing it forever. "My health seemed to be hopelessly impaired. For two years I could not breathe through my nose, and was able to attend school but little. It seemed impossible for me to study and to retain what I have learned."<sup>19</sup>(ITC, 12.)
- iii. How did young Ellen react to the person who caused her the misfortune? No doubt the home influence played a significant role. "Our parents had taught us never to be content with anyone, but if we were in danger of being abused or injured to hasten home at once."<sup>20</sup>
- iv. Note how Ellen White describes her reactions to the girl who changed the course of her life.

"The same girl who was the cause of my misfortune was appointed monitor by my teacher, and it was among her duties to assist me in my writing and other lessons. She always seemed sincerely sorry for the great injury she had done me, *although I was careful not to remind her of it*. She was tender and patient with me as she saw me laboring under serious disadvantages to get an education."

Ellen White, *Testimonies for the Church*, Vol 1, 13.

#### Reflection:

- a) Why was young Ellen so careful not to remind the girl, who caused her such an injury, of the accident?
- b) How would you behave in similar circumstances?
- c) "If we expect our own prayers to be heard, we must forgive others in the same manner, and to the same extent, as we hope to be forgiven" (SC, 97). What does it mean to forgive?





#### d) It meant to trust in God's silence

Life brings moments of sheer desperation. God seems to be distant, and prayers hit a brick wall. Yes, we are facing the wall. Hagberg and Guelich suggest "There is a deep sense of God at work in us in the Wall experience, and at the same time, we are at a loss to describe it" but "Experiencing the Wall is both frightening and unpredictable."<sup>21</sup> We hope and yet we dread what to expect at the end of the tunnel. Ellen White was not exempt from such experiences. Note how she describes the two painful experiences in her life, the loss of her two sons, the baby, John Herbert White and later Henry.

- i. September 20, 1860, my fourth child, John Herbert White, was born. When he was three weeks old my husband felt to be his duty to travel West.
- ii. Some time later Ellen White received a letter from her husband in which he expressed concerns. "I fear that all is not well at home. I have had some impressions as to the babe."<sup>22</sup> While praying for the family at home, he had a presentiment that the child was very sick.
- iii. When Ellen received James' letter, the babe was well and healthy. The next morning, the child, became sick. Note how Ellen White describes her emotional struggles.

#### **Mother's Pain**

My dear babe was a great sufferer. Twenty-four days and nights we anxiously watched over him, using all the remedies we could for his recovery, and earnestly presenting his case to the Lord. At times I could not control my feelings as I witnessed his sufferings. Much of my time was spent in tears, and humble supplication to God. But our heavenly Father saw fit to remove my lovely babe.

December 14, I was called up. My babe was worse. I listened to his labored breathing, and felt his pulseless wrist. I knew that he must die. That was an hour of anguish for me. The icy hand of death was already upon him. We watched his feeble, gasping breath, until it ceased, and we felt thankful that his sufferings were ended. When my child was dying, I could not weep. I fainted at the funeral. My heart ached as though it would break, yet I could not shed a tear.

(Ellen White, *Spiritual Gifts*, vol. 2, 296)

#### *Reflection:*

How does one cope with God's silence? When prayers seem not to be answered?







- iv. Just two years later, in 1863, another tragedy invaded the White's family, the death of Henry. He passed away at the tender age of sixteen from pneumonia. Before his death Henry said to his mother. "Promise me, Mother, that if I die I may be taken to Battle Creek, and laid beside my little brother, John Herbert, that we may come up together in the morning of the resurrection."<sup>23</sup>
- v. On the day of his death he said to his mother. "Mother. I shall meet you in heaven in the morning of the resurrection day, for I know you will be there. He then beckoned to his brothers, parents and friends and gave them all a parting kiss, after which he pointed upward and whispered, 'Heaven is sweet'. These were his last words."<sup>24</sup>

Note Ellen White's description of this traumatic experience.

"Oh, when our noble Henry died, at the age of sixteen – when our sweet singer was borne to the grave, and we no more heard his early song – ours was a lonely home. But God comforted us in our bereavement, and with faith and courage we pressed forward in the work He had given us, in the bright hope of meeting our children who had been torn from us by death, in that world where sickness and death will never come".

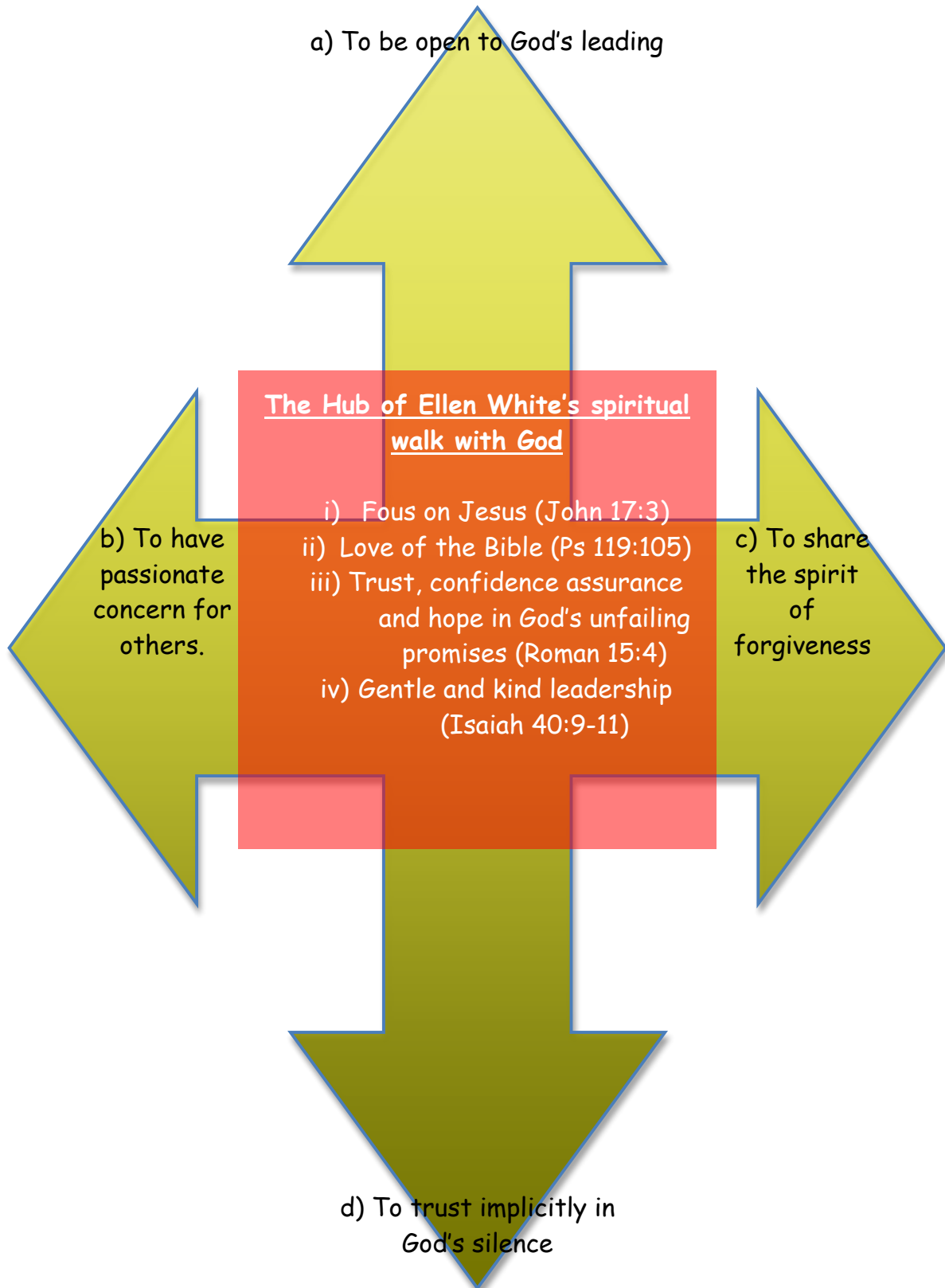
Ellen White, *Life Sketches*, 165,166.

*Reflection:*

- a) How does God comfort in times of sorrow and bereavement?
- b) Why were Henry's last words a blessing to Ellen and James White?
- c) Read, 2 Peter 1:3-4. What are God's "precious promises"? Make a list.



#### 4. Brief Summary of what it meant for Ellen White to walk with God





Ellen White's focus on Jesus and her growing understanding of His love empowered her personal walk with God. The way she handled the unexpected ambiguity of life's challenges and her attitude to people stemmed from the hub of her intimate relationship with Jesus. No wonder that she expressed her passion to know God in the following words.

**"The more we study the divine character in the light of the cross, the more we see mercy, tenderness and forgiveness blended with equity and justice, and the more clearly we discern innumerable evidences of a love that is infinite and a tender pity surpassing a mother's yearning sympathy for her wayward child"**

*Ellen White, Steps to Christ, 15.*

But there is more.....

## **5. God's view of life's journey – The Conflict between Good and Evil**

### **a) Ellen White's Experience**

- i. Sunday afternoon, March 1858, was one of immense importance in the life and ministry of Ellen White. During the funeral service at Lovett's Grove, conducted by her husband James, she received a vision lasting for about two hours. "In this vision at Lovett's Grove, most of the matter of *The Great Controversy*, which I had seen ten years before, was repeated, and I was shown that I must write it out."<sup>25</sup>
- ii. Also, she was warned that Satan would try to interrupt her work and that she would have "to contend with the powers of darkness". She wrote, "Satan would make strong efforts to hinder me, but angels of God would not leave me in the conflict, that in God I must put trust"<sup>26</sup>
- iii. The main thrust of the message unfolded the challenges God's people were to confront on the ongoing journey to heaven. "Patience and forbearance should ever characterize the lives of those lone pilgrims following the example of their blessed Master. They will have many trials to endure, but they have a hope that makes the soul strong, that bears them up above the trials....Those who possess a hope like this should never indulge a harsh, unkind spirit."<sup>27</sup>



Ellen White did not have to wait long for Satan's reaction. She felt the pressure and intensity of the struggle between good and evil. Note her words.

While riding in the cars we arranged our plans for writing and publishing the book called *The Great Controversy* immediately on our return home. I was then as well as usual. On the arrival of the train at Jackson, we went to Brother Palmer's. We had been in the house but a short time, when, as I was conversing with Sister Palmer, my tongue refused to utter what I wished to say, and seemed large and numb. A strange, cold sensation struck my heart, passed over my head, and down my right side. For a while I was insensible; but was aroused by the voice of earnest prayer. I tried to use my left arm and limb, but they were perfectly useless. For a short time I did not expect to live. It was the third shock I had received of paralysis, and although within fifty miles of home, I did not expect to see my children again. I called to mind the triumphant season I had enjoyed at Lovett's Grove, and thought it was my last testimony, and felt reconciled to die.

Ellen White *Spiritual Gifts* Vol 2, 271.

Three months later, during another vision, the curtain was open and she was shown the reality of the conflict.

I was taken off in vision. In that vision I was shown that in the sudden attack at Jackson, Satan designed to take my life to hinder the work I was about to write; but angels of God were sent to my rescue, to raise me above the effects of Satan's attack. I saw, among other things, that I should be blest with better health than before the attack at Jackson.—Ibid.,272.

*Reflection:*

- a) In what way can Satan bring discouragement and set backs to our life?



## 6. God's vision for life's journey – What does it mean for us?

Space does not allow to consider all the lessons from Ellen White's journey, lessons which reveal the reality of the struggle between good and evil. However, the theme of the Great Controversy permeates her literary contribution but how does it relate to life as known today? What principles can be drawn from God's revelation to Ellen White and applied in the education of young people. In other words, what matters to God? Briefly, allow me to share a big-picture outline.

### a) Ellen White's Passion

- i. During her stay in Australia, Ellen White became passionate to write another book on the subject of Education. With the help of Sarah Peck, a teacher and a missionary, she began to work on the book published in 1903.
- ii. Prior to the publication, her son Willy shared some sections of the manuscript with Professor Sutherland, president of the Emmanuel Missionary College. His covering letter highlights, the underlying theme of this book.

You will notice that since you saw the manuscript last a wide range has been taken out. More of the plan of redemption has been worked in by drawing from Mother's published works, such as *Patriarchs and Prophets*, *Great Controversy*, *Desire of Ages*, *Mount of Blessings* and *Christ's Object Lessons*.

Arthur White, *The Australian Years*, 450.

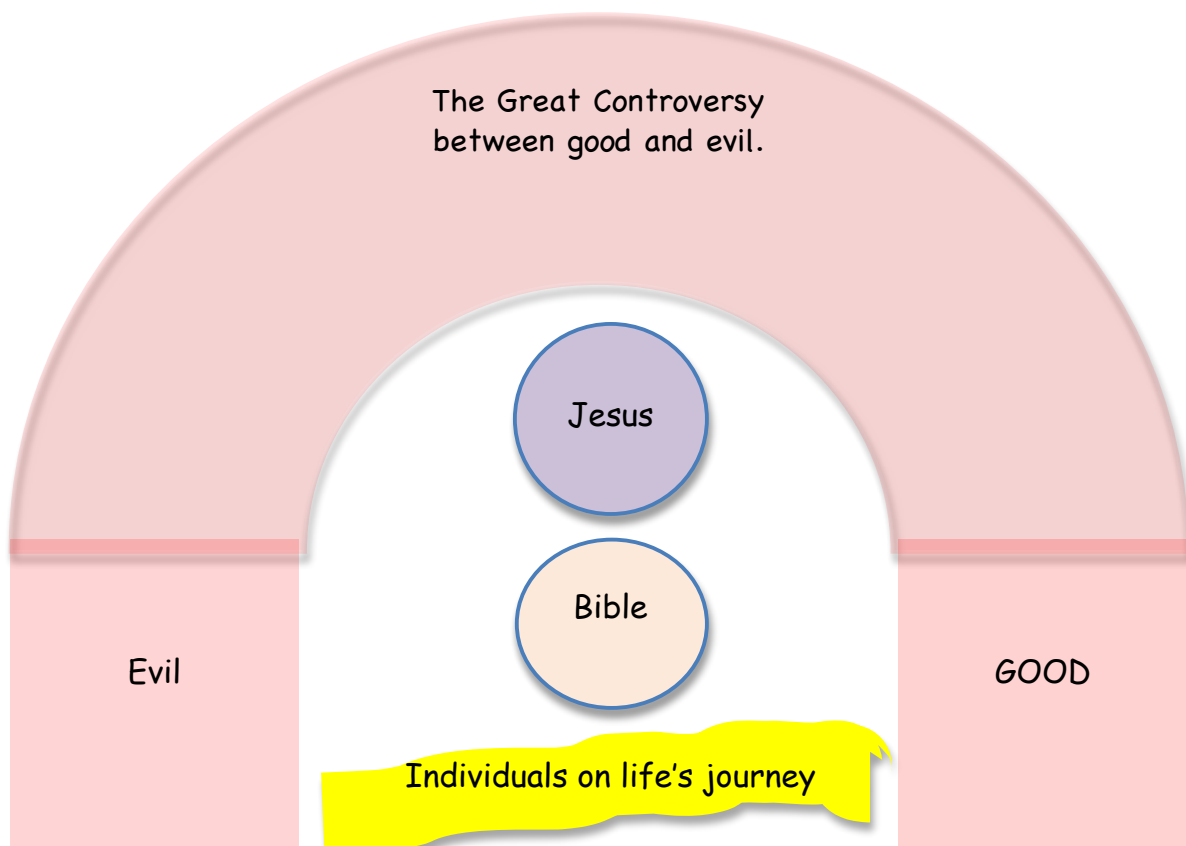
It is obvious that the permeating theme of the book *Education* is the expanded view of *The Great Controversy*. One may ask, how does spirituality fit into this theme. Allow me to illustrate.



a. The Source of All Education

Ellen White commenced the book with a well-defined objective.

Our ideas of education take too narrow and too low a range. There is need of a broader scope, a higher aim. True education means more than the pursual of a certain course of study. It means more than a preparation for the life that now is. It has to do with the whole being, and with the whole period of existence possible to man. It is the harmonious development of the physical, the 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.<sup>28</sup>

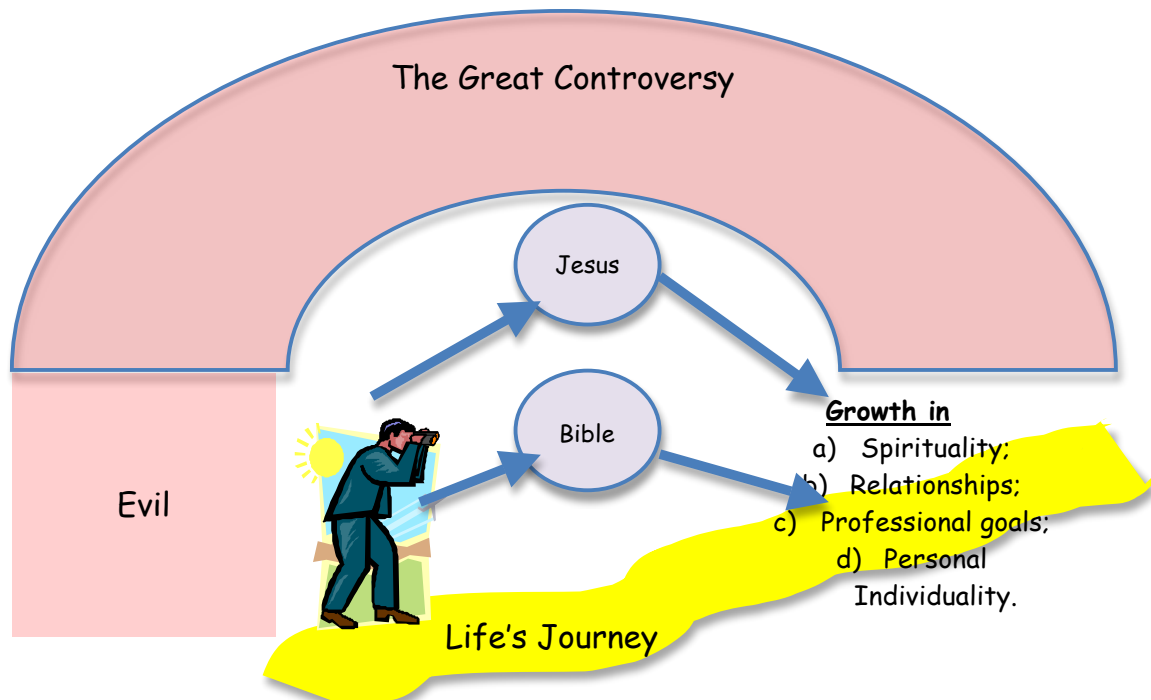




In view of the Great Controversy, the essence of true education has to do with development of the whole being. It included, "the harmonious development of the physical, the mental and the spiritual power." In other words, God invests entire interest in individuals – the genius of His creative activity. The ministry of Jesus unfolds the fulcrum of God's saving act (John 20:31) and shows the extent of His love for mankind. It focuses on Jesus and speaks to us from the pages of the Bible. Note how Ellen White summarized the heart of Jesus' ministry.

"In every human being He discerned infinite possibilities...Looking upon them with hope, He inspired hope. Meeting them with confidence, He inspired trust. Revealing in Himself man's true ideal, He awakened for its attainment, both desire and faith. In His presence souls despised and fallen realized that they still were men, and they longed to prove themselves worthy of His regard..." Ellen White, *Education*, 80

Children, young people and adults need the wisdom how to choose Jesus as the King of their lives. No wonder, Ellen White pointed out, "All are by their own choice deciding their destiny."<sup>29</sup> "The youth must, each for himself, make the choice that shapes his life; and no pains should be spared that he may understand the forces with which he has to deal, and the influences which mold character and destiny."<sup>30</sup>







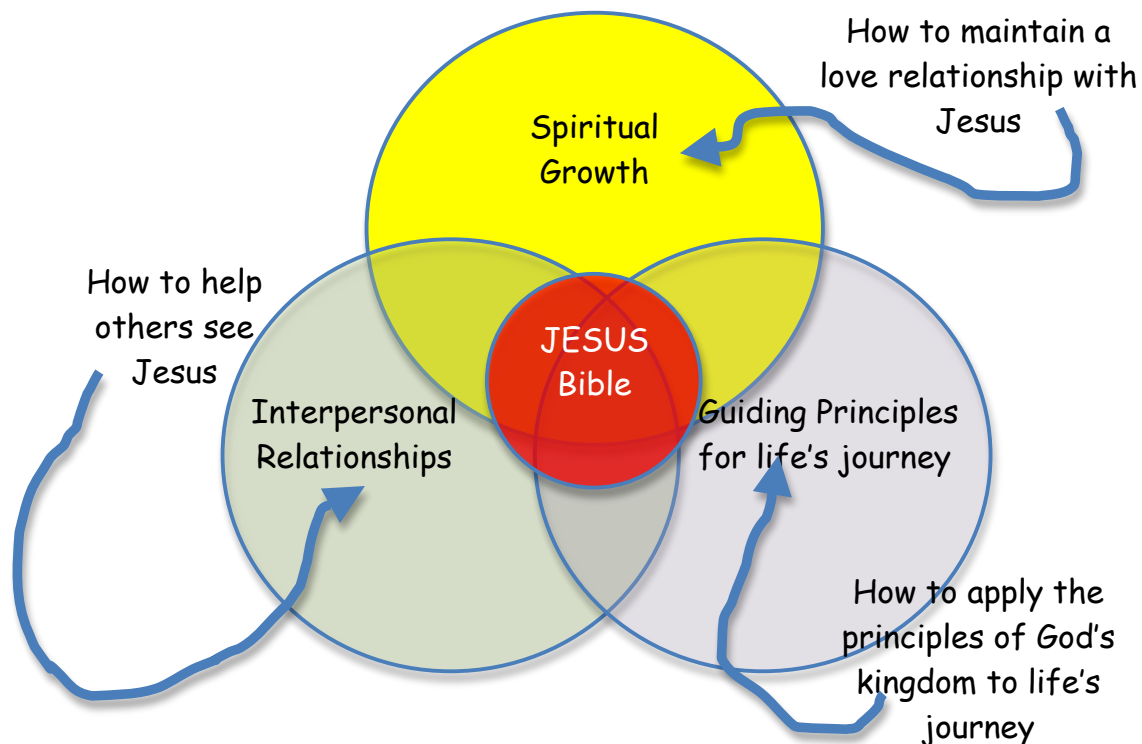
## b. The Purpose of God-Focused Education

The purpose of education and of all the doctrines is twofold.

- i. To uplift and restore human dignity and value.
- ii. To help people discover their God-given uniqueness and potential.

For Ellen White, the purpose of such education was clear. Walking with God means to rediscover one's full potential. In God's presence spiritual development is aimed "for the stability and uplifting of the society".<sup>31</sup> It means to hear what God reveals to us about the past, present and future. It involves the process of translating the principles of God's kingdom into the words of which touch people's hearts. It means to reach for the highest star for such education prepares students for "the joy of wider service in the world to come."

How can we summarize the impact of Ellen White's spiritual walk with God? Note the three suggested areas.





## Conclusion

How could one recap Ellen White's walk with God? I wish I had the opportunity to walk with her, talk to her and listen to her. Perhaps, such an experience would leave a lasting impression in my life. However, as I study her life, I am impressed with the depth and sincerity of her spiritual walk with God. Indeed, she walked the talk. Those who journeyed with her confirmed the validity of her Christian experience. During the funeral service at Elmshaven, Elder Starr gave this testimony. "I have never heard any other person speak of love for Jesus, as I heard her speak. Many times I have heard her exclaim, 'I love Him, I love Him, I love Him'. Her entire life was devoted to winning others to love him and serve Him with all their heart..."<sup>32</sup> He affirmed her absolute faith and trust in God with the following words. "Her faith in God was invincible. Under trials that might have swept away the faith of many, she maintained firm confidence and triumphed."<sup>33</sup> She became a visionary leader, spiritual inspirer, sensitive encourager and a role model of what it means to become God's extended hands on the journey to heaven. More so, her spiritual life encourages both young and old to develop an implicit faith-oriented trust in God. This is the greatest and most essential ingredient in one's walk with God.

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<sup>1</sup> M Robert Mulholland, *Invitation to a Journey: A Road Map for Spiritual Formation* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1993), 25.

<sup>2</sup> Ellen White, Manuscript 134, 1899.

<sup>3</sup> Ellen White, *Review and Herald*, January 24, 1893.

<sup>4</sup> Ellen White, *Signs of the Times*, 29 October, 1894

<sup>5</sup> Ibid.

<sup>6</sup> Jerry D. Thomas, *Messiah*, 180. Also, see *The Desire of Ages*, 245.

<sup>7</sup> Ellen White, *Diary Notes*, 28 October - 4 November 1894.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid.

<sup>10</sup> Ellen White, Lt 42, White to Kellogg, October 24, 1894.

<sup>11</sup> Thompson, *Soul Feast: An Invitation to the Christian Spiritual Life* (Louisville, Kentucky: John Knox Press, 1995), 122.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid., 124.

<sup>13</sup> Beverley Beem and Ginger Hanks Harwood, "My Soul Is On the Wing For Glory: Adventist Spirituality, 1850-1863). *Andrews University Seminary Studies* (Vol. 44, No. 1): 160.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid., 166.

<sup>15</sup> Ellen White. Letter 10, April 18, 1883.

<sup>16</sup> Ellen White, Letter 61, February 21, 1891

<sup>17</sup> Ibid.

<sup>18</sup> Ellen White, *Testimonies for the Church* Vol 5 (Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press, 1948), 124.

<sup>19</sup> Ellen White, *Testimonies for the Church* Vol 1 (Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press), 12.

<sup>20</sup> White, *Testimonies* Vol 1, 9.

<sup>21</sup> Hagberg and Guelich, *The Critical Journey: Stages in the Life of Faith* (Salem, Wisconsin: Sheffield Publishing Company, 2005), 115.

<sup>22</sup> Ellen White, *Spiritual Gifts*, Vol 2 (...) 295.

<sup>23</sup> Arthur White, *The Progressive Years 1862-1876* (Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald, 1986), 71

<sup>24</sup> Ibid.

<sup>25</sup> Ellen White, *Spiritual Gifts*, Vol 2, 270.



<sup>26</sup> Ibid.

<sup>27</sup> Ibid., 266.

<sup>28</sup> Ellen White, *Education*, (Mountain View, CA: Pacific Pressm 1952), 13.

<sup>29</sup> Ibid., 178.

<sup>30</sup> Ibid., 202.

<sup>31</sup> Ibid., 29.

<sup>32</sup> Ellen White, *Life Sketches*, 452.

<sup>33</sup> Ibid.

