

The Reformation 

Messenger

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New Year's Meeting at Streetsville

CHRISTIAN PERFECTION TODAY? TODAY

“But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Spirit is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, in all Judea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth.” Acts, 1:8.

Shortly before His ascension, Jesus Christ gave His disciples commission to fearlessly witness unto Him “In the past months - again and again reports are coming in about burnt down churches, reports of coerced conversions to the Islamic faith, about mistreated and murdered Christians, who became victims of religiously motivated crimes. This sad occurrences in many parts of the world, are still met by the Christian world of the West with silence, passivity and ignorance. “
Klingbreg, p. 7 .

Beside the gospel commission we must not forget the other: “Remember them that are in bonds, as bound with them” Heb. 13:3.

Today like then, the testimony of Jesus Christ excites not just opposition. In many a place, to profess Christ is synonymous with social isolation, consistent to the lowest degree of society, and unfortunately often falling victim to rape, torture and murder. And we? Why do we not **lift** up our voices for those whose voices are being crushed? Klingberg, p.10.

“Open thy mouth for the dumb in the cause of all such as are appointed to destruction?” Prov. 31:8.

From the newspaper in Stuttgart, October 29, 2001: “Masked men shoot into assembled group of Christians.” Several masked men causing massacre in Pakistan. With the shout “Allah-u-Akbar” (God is great) they went into a church shooting 16 people...More than hundred persons were gathered together at the time of the attack in the St. Dominic church for a prayer meeting. Four masked men, so eyewitnesses stated, entered the church shooting at random into the assembled group of Christians. The worshipers tried to hide beneath the benches to escape the hail of bullets. “Some laid themselves down and begged for mercy, but their cry fell on deaf ears,” said Ali Shah, who survived the attack. According to the statements given by physicians, four children and four women were among the dead, also the pastor was among the victims. The police said that even one Muslim policeman lost his life. Doctors testified that at least five persons received severe gunshot -wounds. A testimony from the eyewitness Shamoon Masih: “They had no mercy with the women neither for the children. They saw that small children were being hit by the bullets, but they just kept on shooting.” The whole incident lasted about two minutes. ...Already in 1997 hundreds of Muslims in the south of the country, in the city of Rahim Jar Khan, burnt 13 Christian churches to the ground.”

On September 11, 2001, a jet piloted by Islamic terrorists crashes into one tower of the World Trade Center in New York. Minutes later another jet dives into the other tower. After about an hour thousands of people perish in the rubble as the towers collapse. Behind this, so it is said, is to be the Saudi Arabian top terrorist Osama Bin Laden. On October 11, 2001, the evangelical newsagency Idea reported: “The suspected top terrorist Osama Bin Laden has his hands in the worldwide persecution of Christians. Several Islamic extremist groups killing Christians in Asia and Africa, are in connection with Bin Laden’s terrorist network “Al Kaida”.

The network spreads over groups to Algeria, Nigeria, Indonesia, the Philippines and to some extent into Malaysia, Bangladesh, Pakistan and Mghanistan. Bin Laden fostered close cooperation with the radical Islamic military regiment of Sudan, which stands for the most fierce persecution against Christians. Since 1998 about two million people fell victims to the Islam campaign - most of them Christians and such of primitive religions. Because of the “Malacca support- project” in Australia, Islam extremists in Indonesia are also in direct contact with Bin Laden. The contesters in the Malacca Islands which are responsible for the death of 10000 people and 300000 refugees in the last two years, most likely received financial support through Bin Laden. ... Bin Laden is also suspected to support the Islamic extremists “Abu-Sayyar” (sword of God) in the south of the Philippines.

When we hear the name of “Abu- Sayyaf” then we think of the Wallert family from Goettingen, which had for weeks to stand against the cruel power of these fanatics.

January 23 India 1999, Manoharpur,

The Australian missionary Graham Staines went with his two sons Phillip and Timothy on the yearly camping trip into the jungle. It was an exiting day for the boys. Graham opened the door of the car to make it as comfortable inside as possible for the night. Before they laid down to sleep, they huddled together for prayer. They talked to Jesus and were sure that He heard them and knew that He never leaves earnest prayers without an answer.

Graham Staines and his family have lived for 24 years in India and worked among other places as well at the Leprastation.

Sarida, an inmate says: "Our world was a hopeless one. We had death always before our eyes. None of the religious leaders ever offered us so much as a single meal. When we begged for alms, they threw stones at us and drove us away. We were the untouchable ones. These religious leaders usually said to us that we became leprosy because of our sins in our former lives - because of our karma. They pushed us out into the jungle to perish there like worms. But then Staines Dada and his friends arrived. They stretched their merciful hands toward us and brought us into the Leprastation. There we saw the love of God. Dada and his wife personally washed our sores and put medicine in our wounds. And when we were healed, they taught us special skills and gave us work. Is that wrong?" Rapp/Staines. They died for Jesus, p.28.

"In that night drums were heard and a group of young Santals organized the traditional Dangri-dance. They were only about a hundred meters away from the Staines vehicle." - Ibid, p.52."Towards midnight the Staines found themselves surrounded by an angry aggressive mob. Shouts were heard: Long live Bajrang Dal'." - Klingberg. Martyrs 2001, p. 56.

The Hindu-extremist Dara Singh was the first to attack. He swung an axe and chopped the tires to pieces. The others (gangmembers) knocked in the windows of the car and prevented the Staines from escaping. Graham was beaten mercilessly, his sons were not treated any better. All three got wounded by spears. Then Singh stuffed straw beneath the vehicle and set it on fire. In seconds the car was engulfed in flames. Graham tightly held his arms around his boys. ... The killers stood there watching as these three were being burned alive, while the flames destroyed the car. Someone came with water to stop the fire, but was being threatened and driven away. ... The attackers barricaded the doors of the huts in the village, so that nobody could come to the rescue of the Staines." - Raff/Staines, p. 53.

"A number of villagers fleeing from the enraged mob, later said that they saw a bright, wide beam of light shining from above upon the burning vehicle. "And I firmly believe," says Gladys (Graham's wife), "that my husband and my children received from the Lord and His angels special strength from heaven." Ibid, p.55.

Gladys Staines, the widow to the murdered Graham and mother of Timothy and Phillip, has only one message for the people of India: "I have only one message for the people in India. I am not bitter. I can forgive the murderers their deed. Their sins only Jesus can forgive. But they must ask for it. I have one great wish: that all inhabitants of this land come into a personal relationship with Jesus Christ; with Him who gave His life for sinners. Ever) person of India should know that God loves him or her, and they should confide themselves to Him and learn to love one another. Let us put out the fire of hatred and spread the flame of the love of Jesus." - Raff/Staines, p.63.

The magazine Ethos reported in May 1999.

Sudan: Muslim extremists burn 15000 books. "Sudan reports about encroachments on Christian students by Islamic extremists.

According to a message from the Info-Service Religion Today, Muslims attacked an exhibition of the Christian student group at the university of Khatum They burnt 15000 Bibles and other Christian literature, and threw thousands of audio-cassettes and chains with crosses into the river Nile,"

In the same issue (May 1999) we read:

India: Extremists hire club-squad against Christians. "In India, Hindu- extremists try to convert masses of the poorest people to Hinduism According to the human rights organization, Society for Threatened Nations (Goettingen), are powers behind these massive threats, who are involved in the Hindu-National Party (EJB) of the government. The social engagement of churches concerning the poor is to the Hindu-fanatics a thorn in the eye. Especially troubled are 70 - 80 million of the first nation, the Adivasi, and the 160 million Dalits (Untouchables), as given in a statement of the organization. A further statement: With the budget of about 2 million DM, the Hindu World Council wants to hire unemployed youth to send them to the villages of the Adivasi; as well as to the north east of India. "Together with the club-squad Bajrang Dal they are to intimidate Christians and to drive out missionaries. "

The - Stuttgart newspaper informed on February 21, 2000:

"Capital missionaries obviously persecution punishment for - North Korea practices systematic of Christians.

Beijing: Refugees from North Korea give account of active Christian persecution in the land. The population has to attend the executions of missionaries. The military regiment of North Korea deals against Christian missionaries who enter from China into that battered country, with severe punishments and sometimes carries out execution of them in public. Refugees from this starving country informed the German newspaper "Frankfurter Rundschau" that, processes against Christians are being made a "show" before the public. The executions are normally carried out by shooting the sentenced before the eyes of the population.

The south Korean human rights organization "Good Friends" which is supporting an auxiliary network in the Chinese border region of Yanbian keeps reference: The female spokesman Erica Kang in Seoul says: "We have so many independent information's about the shooting of missionaries, that we must take them for genuine."

ill a number of secretly held interviews, North Korean refugees confirm the brutal proceedings of the regiment. "We had at least once a month a public execution in our town, there were also Christian pastors among the executed," said a 28 year old peasant from the village Changhyon-Ri (province of North Hamgyong), who fled three months before into China.

A woman from Rangnim (province Chagang) said: "It was the duty of the people to attend these "shows" and we had to shout out insults and slander."

The newsagency AP reported on May 30, 2000:

"44 dead in Indonesia after attack on Christians in Jakarta (AP)

According to a news report from Tuesday, at least 44 people have been killed after a new armed attack in a village populated by Christians, in the eastern Indonesian province of North Malacca. More than hundred others, so the report says have been wounded. The army suspected the armed Muslim group: "Troops of the Holy War," so the newspaper says referring to a statement given by the commander.

The paper quotes a pastor from Halmahera, that according to his statements the victims have been attacked during their sleep at night. The attacker killed them with pistols and homemade bombs. In the Indonesian province of North Malacca, this month alone at least 106 people lost their lives during the conflicts between Christians and Muslims. "

The same agency makes known on June 22, 2000, 3:15 PM:

"No end of fights between Muslims and Christians defense minister secures enforcement of troops.

Jakarta (AP) Because of the continuous battles between Christians and Muslims in the Malacca Islands, the Navy of Indonesia evacuated last Thursday several hundred people. More than 700 refugees from the village Duma - where on Monday Muslim fighters massacre - have been taken away in two Navy ships. The land-route, has been said, is too dangerous. Since Monday, according to statements of the churches at least 190 persons lost their lives in these bloody battles between the two population groups. ...

Muslims made precious Christian provocations responsible for the attack on Monday, at which according to eyewitnesses up to 4000 armed Muslims stoned the village of Duma.

The troops began to interfere after the massacre had already been going on for one hour. The military commander of the Malaccas, General Max Tamaela said the soldiers stationed in Duma did not defend the Christians, because they were in the minority. The battles from Monday were of the worst kind since the 18 month ongoing violence, to which already several thousand have fallen victim About 90 percent of the 210 million people in hldonesia are Muslims. But the population of the Malaccas consists mostly of Christians."

The "Frankfurter Rundschau" reported July 24,2000

"The Philippines - the military reported again about massacres on Christians. Zabonga, July 23, (kna/afp) Muslim extremists murdered again 14 Christians in the southern region of the Philippines. The victims were mostly workers from a plantation in the province of South-Lamao in Mindanao said the military spokesman Johnny Macanas on Sunday. Fourteen more people were wounded or severely hurt. The bloodbath is once more being accounted to the rebels or the Islamic liberation front Moro(Mif), who just one week in the same region massacred 21Christians, and are also responsible for a bomb- attack in the province of North- Cotabato."

Statement from the Gemlan press, December 5, 2000, 10:53AM:

“At least 93 dead after new massacre in the Malacca Islands. Jakarta (dpa) - Workers of the church said that in the recent bloodbath of militant Muslims against Christians in the Indonesian Malacca Islands, at least 93 persons have been killed. It has been said that the attacks began two weeks before at the remote Malacca Island of Keisu, mostly in villages inhabited by Christians. Hundreds have at gunpoint been forced to convert to Islam. Since the beginning of the conflicts between Muslims and Christians, about 4000 people have lost their lives.”

Report from the newsagency AP January 13, 2001:

“Kabul (AP) The ruling Taliban in Afghanistan issued on Monday the death penalty against persons who would change from Islam to another religion. Also non-Muslims, who try to convert others face the same penalty. This was officially announced by the top leader of the Taliban Mullah Mohammed Omar through the radio station Scharlat.

Bookdealers, according to Omar, who sell anti-Islam literature or books about other religions, have to face a five year prison term. “

News from the evangelical news agency Idea, February 8, 2001:

Saudi-Arabia: Most violent persecution of Christians - Six Islamic and four communist governing nations among the worst oppressors.

Seesen, Geneva 8, February (Idea) - Saudi-Arabia is the land with the fiercest persecution of Christians. This stated the mission “Open Borders” in a recently published list.

To the first ten belong six Islamic oriented nations - Saudi-Arabia, Mghanistan, Turkmenistan the Iran, Egypt and the Maledives - as well as four communist governed countries - Republic of China, Laos, North Korea and Vietnam. In Saudi-Arabia the Islam is the state religion. Open practice of the Christian faith is forbidden. Every Muslim who changes over to another religion, faces the death penalty, because of “apostasy from the Islam. “

This oil-exporting land escapes international condemnation, for states like the USA, who depend on their oil, do not want to expose and embarrass the Sheiks of Saudi. Arabia. “

From the evang. newsagency Idea, March 2,2001:

“Persecution: Charity organization wants to evacuate Christians from the Malacca Islands - Those who refuse to change to the Islamic faith will be beheaded. abused, mutilated.

Washington/Tobelo, March 2 (Idea) - Christian auxiliaries want to evacuate about 7000 Christians who are facing death in the Malacca Islands of Indonesia. The people are being persecuted unto blood by the terrorists of the Islamic “Holy War”. The president of the organization “International Christian Concern” (Washington), Steve Snyder reports after visiting the Malacca Island Halmahera about the terrible atrocities there committed by Islam extremists. Christians who refused to change over to Islam have been beheaded, mutilated, abused and mistreated. Men had to undergo circumcision. Snyder, when on the way to Tobelo, a Christian village, was himself being caught by the military and interrogated by tile police. About 50,000 of the 200,000 Christian refugees in the Spice Islands sought refuge in Tobelo. Several thousand are in the hands of Islamic warriors. “

The press Idea reported March 30, 2001:

“Christians make lip the majority in religious persecutions.

Geneva, March 30 (Idea), - The Global Evangelical Alliance brought the persecution of Christians to the attention of the UN Human Rights Commission, which is holding conference in Geneva until April 23.

The director of tile commission of tile World Alliance for religious freedom Johann Candelin (Helsinki), stated that approximately more than 200 million Christians (no spelling error!) in at least 60 countries are being persecuted and discriminated, for their faith. they make up the largest group of believers to whom basic rights are being denied.

Candeling reminds us that in the common human rights declaration in the year 1948, the change of religion and other free private and public exercise of religion are part of the basic rights. Yet in several states people are being

persecuted when they convert to another faith or take part in public worship.

Report from the catholic news agency KNA April 20, 2001: "Systematic Christian persecution in Buthan.

Rome (KNA) The wave of persecution against Christians in the Himalayan state Buthan is taking drastic measures. According to reports from the Vatican agency for missions "Fides," about 65000 Christians are being terrorized and menaced. They are threatened by the officials with: "Either you give up your religion, or leave the country." (Fides).

Non-Buddhists are being exposed to political and social discrimination. Harrassments towards Christians began already the year before. At that time Christians had to sign "rules and regulations for religious practices," in which they are being denied the benefit of free education for children, traveling abroad and medical care. Two weeks before police officials raided the churches of the country, taking the names of all believers, writes "Fides."

The press is quoting one Christian from Buthan: "Religious liberty is gone. In several towns because of the faith, believers can no more assemble together. In their employment they are not promoted, are fired for no reason, they are being driven out of the country."

Message from the evang. Newsagency Idea, November 1., 2001:

"The most severe persecuted are Christians.

"No other religious denomination suffers presently as severe under persecution as the Christians. This is the conclusion of an evangelical news agency, Idea documentation, under the title "Martyrs 2001", put together by the mission-researcher Thomas Schinmacher (Bonn), and the human rights expert Max Klingberg (Frankfurt/Main). The foreword states that Islam countries play an "unglorious front role" in these Christian persecutions. Afghanistan, Saudi -Arabia, Turkmenistan the Iran and the Maledives belong to the ten worst persecuting nations in the list of "Open Borders." Among them are also the communist countries Laos, China, North Korea, Vietnam and the Buddhist kingdom of Buthan. The statistic-expert for religion David Barrett (Richmond/USA), supposes that the number of Christian martyrs will rise this year to 167 000. In the year of 2000 it was 165 000.

"Indeed in the 20th century more Christian became martyrs for their faith, than in the past 19 centuries together." - Schirmacher, p.9.

This is the time we are living today. Normally such information should cause an outcry among the population. Did you ever notice any reactions? Have you ever even heard about one of these incidents I have quoted, in the news? The fact is: The persecution of Christians is being hushed up. But why?

Victor Mordecai gives solid evidence in his book: "The Islam." a Global Threat?"

The present (2001) Italian prime minister Silvio Berlusconi sold in 1995, 20 percent of his media company among others to the Saudi-Arabian Prince Walid Bin Tabal. Mordecai states further: "So was recently the United Press International (UPI) (a newsagency), bought by Islam petrodollars." - Mordecai, p.57.

"In countless conflicts in ethnic and religiously mixed areas Muslims have.. persecuted and murdered minorities ... The media ignores these tragedies, because the culprits are Muslims, and wealthy oil sheiks are standing behind them A sound and objective report does not bring any benefit to the media, and which journalist wants to be on the list for capital punishment?" - Mordecai, p. 56.

In the movement of the new tolerance and the amalgamation of religions, also called syncretism, such a discussion would be disturbing. Maybe some of you remember my representation (in earlier issues) about the new tolerance: everything is tolerated, everything is accepted, but the Christian faith - it is considered to be intolerant...

Prof. Schiumacher most deeply regrets that on the subject of Christian persecution research has been done only about the first three centuries. The evangelical theology mostly overlooks Christian persecutions. They just simply ignore them He comments: "Great parts of Christianity live today... not in a situation of prosperity, of peace and security, but in a state of persecution, and therefore do they understand the Old and New Testament much better and is more real to them as to the Christian world in the West." - Schiumacher, p. 1.

To be continued.

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WORK OF RESTORATION

Man was created in the image of God, but by falling into sin this image was lost and man became evil in every respect. Every commandment of God has been broken by man. He became selfish, proud, vain, loving sin and unrighteousness. God could have easily destroyed the sinners and create new people again in His own image, but because of His love toward mankind He decided to begin the work of restoration. To erase the sinful characteristics and to restore His own image in man again.

This work of restoration was not easy to God, neither to man himself, but yet it was possible.

The first step in the restoration was the sacrifice that God has to make. To give up His Son to die for the guilty sinner was a struggle to the Father.

“After the fall of man, it cost our heavenly Father an infinite price to provide a way to prevent the defaced image of God in man being wholly obliterated, and to provide for the restoration of that image in the soul.” Rev. Her. July 17, 1984

Now it was made possible that a repentant sinner could obtain pardon and be called a child of God again. But this was not all that was involved in the restoration of man. His character had been corrupted. His habits and deeds were evil, and also his thoughts and imaginations. “And God saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of his heart was only evil continually.” Gen. 6:5

The first thing that the sinner must realize is that alone he can do nothing. When the disciples listened to the words of Jesus they cried out, “Who then can be saved? But Jesus beheld them and said unto them, with men

this is impossible; but with God all things are possible.” Matt. 19:25-26

The second lesson for us to learn is that through Christ we can do all things. He said, “If ye have faith as a grain of mustard seed, ye shall say unto this mountain, Remove hence to yonder place; and ‘it should remove; and nothing shall be impossible unto you.” Matt. 17:20

When we learn this lesson then we will not trust in ourselves anymore. We will give up our wisdom and blend our will to the will of God.

“In this conflict of righteousness against unrighteousness we can be successful only by divine aid. Our finite will must be brought into submission to the will of the Infinite; the human will must be blended with the divine. This will bring the Holy Spirit to our aid; and every conquest will tend to the recovery of God’s purchased possession, to the restoration of His image in the soul.” MYP p. 55

In this work of restoration of the image of God in man the next lesson is a difficult one. It is our part in this work. Paul writes, “Ye have not yet resisted unto blood, striving against sin.” Heb. 12:4.

Jesus said, “If thy right eye offend thee pluck it out, and cast it from thee; for it is profitable for thee that one of thy members should perish, and not that thy whole body should be cast into hell. And if thy right hand offend thee, cut it off.” Matt. 5: 29-30

At this point many Christians do stop. They follow religion when it is easy and convenient, but when the temptations of Satan come overpowering against them, they give in, blaming human weakness.

People have invented a crossless religion. They believe and teach that we are saved by faith and not by works of the law. But they forget from what we are saved. Matt. 1 :21 says “He shall save His people from their sins.”

Now we understand the words of Paul, “Therefore by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in His sight: for by the law is the knowledge of sin. But now the righteousness of God without the law is manifested, being witnessed by the law and the prophets.” Rom. 3:20-21

The righteousness that we receive by faith is witnessed by the law. Without this witness we are not righteous yet.

Jesus said, “If thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments.” Matt. 19:17

The spirit of prophecy is clear on this point. “Without continual effort and constant activity, there can be no advancement in the divine life, no attainment of the victor’s crown. The strongest evidence of man’s fall from a

higher state is the fact that it cost so much to return. The way of return can be gained only by hard fighting, inch by inch, every hour. By a momentary act of will, one may place himself in the power of evil; but it requires more than a momentary act of will to break these fetters, and attain to a higher, holier life. The purpose may be formed, the work begun; but its accomplishment will require toil, time, and perseverance, patience and sacrifice.” Test. Vol. 8 p. 313

“Self-denial and whole-hearted sacrifice meet us everywhere. But they are provided to accomplish the restoration of the moral image of God in man.” Youth’s Instructor July 19, 1900

It is with a great effort on our part that the lost image of God can be restored in us. But we must not stop here. We must also work to restore this image in our fellow men. We are our brother’s keepers. We must watch our neighbors? our relatives, our brothers and sisters in the church, and the people around us to make sure that the image of God will be restored to them also.

“The work that Christ did on this earth His followers are to do. With the power and efficiency brought by the Holy Spirit they are to carry forward His plan for the restoration of the divine image in humanity. The Lord will do great things for them when they work under the Holy Spirit’s guidance. But they must place their entire dependence on God.” The Upward Look p. 173

“The moral image of God has been lost, but those who are laborers together with God are to restore in men the likeness of Christ. They are to impart ideas that will work their salvation, and that will prepare them to be temples of the Holy Ghost.” Manuscript Releases #9 p. 371

Paul counsels us, “Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual, restore such an one in the spirit of meekness; considering thyself lest thou also be tempted.” Gal. 6:1

“If a man be overtaken in a fault, restore such an one! Gal. 6:1. The word here translated ‘restore’ means to put in joint, as a dislocated bone. How suggestive the figure! He who falls into error or sin is thrown out of relation to everything about him. He may realize his error, and be filled with remorse; but he cannot recover himself He is in confusion and perplexity, worsted and helpless. He is to be reclaimed, healed, re- established. ‘Ye which are spiritual, restore such an one,’ Only the love that flows from the heart of Christ can heal. Only he in whom that love flows, even as the sap in the tree or the blood in the body, can restore the wounded soul.” ED 113-114

Now we learn another aspect of the restoration of God’s image in us. It can only be done by love. True successful missionary work can only be done by demonstrating the love that God has given us in our words and actions toward the sinner.

“Man can not enjoy divine blessing unless he shows love to God and to his neighbor. He has lost God’s favor by sin. The moral image of God can not be restored in him while he cherishes his own image; for this means defilement. He must work diligently for the right, if he desires to see the restoration of the divine image.” Youth’s Instructor Sept. 21, 1899

As we go out to save the sinners we must not forget the children. In our Bible studies with the families with children, we need to speak so that the children can understand and be interested.

“What can be more satisfying in the work together with God, than to see children and youth receiving the impressions of the Spirit of God in true nobility of character and in the restoration of the moral image of God - the children seeking the peace coming from the Prince of Peace?” Christian Education p. 156

And finally, what will be the end result of our work for ourselves and others?

“Every living Christian will advance daily in the divine life. As he advances toward perfection, he experiences a conversion to God every day; and this conversion is not completed until he attains to perfection of Christ’s character, a full preparation for the finishing touch of immortality.” Test. Vol. 2 p.505

Daily we must advance in the work of restoration of God’s image in us. If we come to the end and the work of restoration is not complete, then all would be lost. May the Lord help each one of us put out greater effort to overcome sin and faults in OUR characters and ask the Lord to help us in this battle. AMEN

Timo Martin

HOW SOON WILL JESUS COME

*“And after these things I saw four angels standing on the four corners of the earth, the four winds of the earth, that the wind should not blow on the earth, nor on the sea, nor on any tree. And I saw another angel ascending from the east, having the seal of the living God: and he cried with a loud voice to the four angels to whom it was given to hurt the earth and the sea, Saying, Hurt not the earth, neither the sea, nor the trees, till we have sealed the servants of our God in their foreheads.” **Revelation 7:1-3.***

“I saw four angels who had a work to do on the earth, and were on their way to accomplish it. Jesus was clothed with priestly garments. He gazed in pity on the remnant, then raised His hands and with a voice, of deep pity cried, “My blood, Father, My blood, My blood, My blood!” Then I saw an exceeding bright light come from God, who sat upon the great white throne, and was shed all about Jesus. Then I saw an angel with a commission from Jesus, swiftly flying to the four angels who had a work to do of the earth, and waving something up and down in his hand, and crying with a loud voice, “Hold! Hold! Hold! Hold! Until the servants of God are sealed in their foreheads..”

“I asked my accompanying angel the meaning of what I heard, and what the four angels were about. to do. He said to me that it was God that restrained the powers, and that He gave His angels charge over things on the earth; that the four angels had power from God, to hold the four winds, and that they were about to let them go; but while their hands were loosening and the four winds were about to blow, the merciful eye of Jesus gazed on the remnant that were not sealed, and He raised His hands to the Father and pleaded with Him that He had spilled His blood for them. Then another angel was commissioned to fly swiftly to the four angels, and bid them hold, until the servant of God were sealed with the seal, of the living God in. their foreheads.” Early Writings, p,38.

After the disaster in New York on the September the 11 2001, there was much fear throughout the Western World, being more intense in the United States of America. Have we reached a time when “Men’s hearts [are] falling them for fear, and for looking after those things which are coming on the earth: “? Luke 21:26. Then, shortly after the attack there was the fear of biological warfare as the Anthrax problem was causing quite a scare in the U.S.A. Is this the beginning of the end? What will happen next? These are questions that plagued many people’s minds.

Now here we are, over 3 months after this disaster; and where do we stand? Where is the fear? In New York, the clean-up is still going on and will continue for many months yet. The reminders are still there for those people who see them every day, however most of the rest of the world has almost forgotten about this event. It is not longer in the forefront of their minds as it is no longer making headline news. We are reminded of the events when we hear the news reporters saying that the war is almost over.

Life continued of our various countries and the fear has almost abated. What happened to cause this change? I believe if we look behind the scenes into the invisible world we would have an idea as with the above mentioned vision given through Ellen G. White. I am sure this is not the only time that these angels were about to let go. During the two great World Wars last century, many people feared that the end was at hand. Christians who studied their Bibles believed this was the time of the end. But the wars ended and life went on. There was fear again when Iraq invaded Kuwait in the early ‘90’s. Again it came to abrupt end. How many other wars could have escalated to a major disaster on this planet but evil men were check by the Power of the angels holdings those four winds? Only in eternity will we know. How long will the angels hold on? Until “we have sealed the servants of our God in their foreheads” Rev. 7.3. How long will this take? “Then I saw that Jesus would not leave the most holy place until every case was decided either for salvation or destruction, and that the wrath of God could not come until Jesus had finish His work in most Holy place, laid off His priestly attire, and clothed Himself with the garments of vengeance.” Early Writings p. 36. It depends partially on us. Who is slowing things down? Are you the guilty one? God is looking to seal 144,000 and He wants you to be one of them, however shout you refuse to yield your life to Him, He will eventually move on and look for someone else. When He has found 144,000 and they are all sealed, then the angels will let go there will be terrible trouble on this planet, however we must look to the light at the end of the tunnel. We must pass through this dark period in history if we want to be in paradise. We are called to carry our cross before we are given a crown. Jesus has promised to be with us through every difficulty and trial,

It is time now to make our “Calling and election sure” (2 Pet. 1: 10) as we do not know how long peace will remain on this earth. Although the peace today is very shaky, it is still holding out against all-out war. There is a great cry for “Peace and safety”, but if we read our Bibles we know what follows the Peace and safety message - it is “Sudden destruction.” (1 Thess. 5:3).

The final events on this earth will be rapid ones, once they begin. We do not know when the angels will let go of the four winds, but ~e can certainly thank God that He has given us a little more time t6 prepare - a little more

time to warn our friends and relatives, neighbours, workmates and fellow students, of the coming crisis. May God help us to be diligent with the time remaining, so that the terrible pronouncement will not be made for us, "The harvest is past, the summer is ended, and we are not saved." Jeremiah 8:20.

"But when ye shall hear of wars and commotions, be not terrified: for these things must first come to pass;" Luke 21:9.

Soon Jesus will step out of the Most Holy Place. His work will be finished, and then the angels will let go of the four winds and there will be a Time of Trouble, such as never was since there was a nation," Daniel 12:1. It is my sincere desire that you will be ready for that time, however we must be preparing today for the trouble tomorrow.

"The ants are a people not strong, yet they prepare their meat in the summer." Proverbs 30:25. We also are a people not strong, and must be preparing our 'meat' for the 'winter'. God's people have always been few, a remnant. The world often views God's church as feeble, however as "Enfeebled and defective as it may appear, the church is the one object upon which God bestows in a special sense His supreme regard." AA, p. 12.

The individual members may also be seen as the weakest in society, however if they connect themselves to the Lord today, they will be prepared to stand as firm as a rock unmovable - when the times of trouble come as a mighty tempest to this earth. The weakest soul can overpower Satan if they are connected to Christ. Sister White was the most feeble in the church, yet God chose her to do a mighty work. "for the Lord seeth not as man seeth; for man looketh on the outward appearance, but the Lord looketh on the heart." 1 Samuel 16:7.

"I saw that the four angels would hold the four winds until Jesus' work was done in the sanctuary, and then will come the seven last plagues." Early Writings, p. 36.

Today we have a message for the world and we are to be faithful ambassadors for the Lord. We have such privileged information regarding the final events to unfold on this earth. The majority of the world lives in fear after events such, as that which happened on September 11-th, however God's people have no fear due to the knowledge they have of the Word of God and also their faith in God. What will we do with this information? Do we keep it to ourselves? or do we share it with the fearful. . . "The fearful, and unbelieving, . . . have their part in the lake that burneth with fire." Revelation 21:8. We need to share with these people the love of Christ, for "There is no fear in love; but perfect love casteth out fear:" 1 John 4:18.

We are definitely living on borrowed time. God has graciously given us a little more time in which to prepare for His coming. May God help us to use this time wisely in preparing ourselves and also warning others to whom the Lord places in our pathway to whom He wishes us to share the message of salvation with. Soon Jesus will step out of the Sanctuary and it will be too late to make any changes.

"Many desired life, but made no effort to obtain it. They did not choose .life, and now there was no atoning blood to cleanse the guilty, no compassionate Saviour to plead for them, and cry, 'Spare, spare the sinner a little longer.' All heaven had united with Jesus, as they heard the fearful words 'It is done. It is finished.' Then the plan of salvation had been accomplished, but few had chosen to accept it. And as mercy's sweet voice died away, fear and horror seized the wicked. With terrible distinctness they heard the words, 'Too late! Too late!' " Early Writings, p. 281.

"Today if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts." Hebrews 4:7.

In answer to the initial question? How soon will Jesus come? We cannot give you an exact answer, but we can only say that it will be soon, very soon. Just because events on this earth seem to be quietening down after the scare on September 11, does not mean we can relax our efforts for awhile. Heaven is in intense activity preparing for this final crisis when it comes. Will you be ready?

W. Eaton

POISON IN THE POT

2 King 4:38-40

In 2 Kings 4:38-40, we learn that during a time of famine a company of prophets partook of pottage in which a poisonous herb had been cooked, and nothing but a miracle, performed by Elisha saved them from death.

Elisha, (Heb.-God is salvation) (Greek- Eliseus) (Luke 4:27), was a prophet, the successor of Elijah, much like Joshua to Moses. Elisha's call to the prophetic office was given by the prophet Elijah and was acted out in the manner characteristic of many of the Old Testament prophets. As he passed by Elisha, Elijah cast his cloak or robe upon him. Elisha immediately ran after Elijah and said that he would follow him as soon as he had said farewell to his parents. Elisha, like many other Biblical heroes, was close to the soil. At the time of his call he was plowing with twelve yoke of oxen; and killed two of them in a farewell feast.

Elisha accompanied the older man as he made his rounds to the prophetic schools, or groups of "sons of the prophets". Elijah asked him what he wanted as a favor from him. Elisha requested a double portion of the spirit of the older man; this was granted on the condition that Elisha saw him as he was being taken away from him; separated by a chariot of fife and horses of fife, as Elijah was taken up by a whirlwind as the younger man watched in awe. (2 Kings 2:1-12).

The double portion of spirit Elisha received, in fact, resulted in twice as many miracles in his ministry. Many of these miracles, especially those in Chapter four of 2 Kings, have many similarities to the miracles that Jesus, Himself would later perform; the widow's oil the Shunamite son restored to life, the poisoned stew, feeding of a hundred, Naaman healed of leprosy, and the floating axe head. They show God's caring for the needs of ordinary people.

Elisha's work was very different from Elijah's. Elijah's was the thundering truth; the work of condemnation and judgment - a bold and rugged character. Elisha's was a more peaceful mission of sweetness and grace and glory. His work was to teach the way of the Lord, healing, and rejoicing; a "reformer" - steadfast, full of energy, determined. He was a man of great mildness, and kindly spirit, of self-denial, but could also be stem. He was mocked by many youth who were un-godly, saying "Go up bald head like Elijah", "Go up bald head like Elijah"! They were cursed and by an act of God, killed by bears. So, "even kindness and freedom has its limits. Authority and reverence must be maintained for God's representatives - ministers, pastors, leaders, teachers, parents and for God." (PK 235-237) (2BC 1037) (Ed 58) (5T 44)

But, in every miracle, whether of Elisha's, other prophets, or Jesus, in every book and verse, in every parable, there's a treasure, a hidden message for us; for our time. For every sermon or teaching from the pulpit, there's an important, comforting message for us by inspiration of God, through the Holy Spirit, "for instructional reproof, profitable for doctrine, for correction, for instruction in righteousness" (2Tim 3:6) ...and warning.

The healing of the poisonous stew by Elisha is both a warning and healing message for our time. "The poison of sin is at work at the heart of society and the world. Cities, and villages, are steeped in sin, moral corruption, and indifference. The world is full of sickness, suffering, fear, panic, and iniquity. Near and far off are souls in poverty and distress, weighed down with a sense of guilt, and problems, perishing for want of a Saviour. . . A saving influence. The gospel truth is kept ever before them, yet they needlessly 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, pride, anger, and hatred. Why? Because the springs are poisoned, when they should be like a well of water springing up unto everlasting life." (PK 232)

Poison is any substance that on contact with or being absorbed into the body or mind, is capable of exerting a deleterious effect. Poisons chiefly enter through the mouth or alimentary tract, or by injection into the body, or inhaled. There's very little mention in the Bible of poisons taken by mouth, although Paul, the Apostle, was attacked by a serpent, a poisonous serpent at that, and was miraculously saved. (Acts 28:3-6)

There is, however, on one of Elisha's visits to the school of prophets at Gilgal that he healed the poisoned pottage. "There was famine (death) in the land; and the sons of the prophets were sitting before him." Hunger and starvation was often on the horizon for many of the inhabitants of Palestine and Jerusalem. Its weather has always been fickle and crops varied from excellent to very poor. War, locusts or any other natural plague quickly depleted the food supply. The undernourished were always subject to disease and injury; and these people were numerous. The constant wars added to the problems, and accidents were common.

In this somber setting, "Elisha said unto his servant, 'set on the great pot, and seethe pottage for the sons of the

prophets. And one went out into the field to gather herbs, and found a wild vine, and gathered thereof wild gourds, his lap full, and came and shed them into the pot of pottage: for they knew them not. So they poured out for the men to eat. And it came to pass, as they were eating of the pottage, that they cried out, and said 'Dh thou man of God, there is death in the pot'! And he said they could not eat thereof. But, he said 'then being meal' (flour). And he cast it into the pot; and he said 'Pour out for the people, that they may eat.' And there was no harm in the pot." (1 Kings 4:38-40).

The plant here mentioned seems to be the colocynth (the cucumis co 10 cynthis) of botany which grows abundantly in the East; its leaves resemble the vine, its fruit like a large orange, and is here called 'wild gourds'. It's used for medicinal purposes, but is also very poisonous - which explains the cry - "there is death in the pot". The poison, however, was neutralized by a miraculous act of Elisha's: 'He cast meal into the pot, and there was no harm in the pot.'

"There is death in the pot"; or the "poisonous stew". As the company in Elisha's time had a lot of good material spoiled by the addition of the poisonous weed, so now there are certain evil or poisonous elements and movements that are the ingredients that spoil all the good there is in this life.

But, the young class of prophets seated around the table of Elisha were willing to believe there was great danger. They felt that God alone could make their food safe, and the faith of their teacher saved them from death.

There will soon be a revival of the antiquated Sunday laws, and endeavoring thus to decide by civil laws a controversy that has been going on for nearly 2000 years, dictating as to the day one elects for the Sabbath, or way of worship, and place of worship - acting in place of God - just what the papacy actually professes to do; spoiling all the good, as in Elisha's time by adding the "poisonous weed". It will take a miracle again to counteract the poisonous weed.

In Matthew 24, we're warned again as Jesus spoke to His disciples upon the Mount of Olives, as they asked Him for the sign of His coming and of the end of the world. He answered saying, "Take heed that no man deceive you, for many shall come in my name, saying, 'I am Christ, and shall deceive many'" (verses 3-5). Here, again, the company of believers, the children of God, need to be vigilant that the good material - the doctrines of truth and faith - not be spoiled by poisonous weeds - false doctrines and compromise - so that the woeful cry be not, "there is poison in the pot"; and apostasy follows.

The cultures of the world are at war with themselves. Civilization is boldly advancing, yet decaying, crumbling, from within with corruption and greed. Mankind is facing many of the same problems they always had. There are a bewildering array of men newly challenged, yet in the face of this, pervasive (invasive) and destructive forces are frighteningly escalating at a faster pace.

"For there are many devices in man's heart (Prov. 19:21), and he deviseth wicked devices to destroy." (Isaiah 32:7). A rare and unexpected "poisonous weed" is insidiously consuming the world. Its name is... ANTHRAX! We need to know more about this "poisonous weed", and its effect on our lives and faith, as a symbolic sign. ...A ghastly sign. ...Or another sign?

The "wicked devices" of man are senselessly using this heinous biological weapon to ruthlessly destroy mankind; but, "therefore shall they eat of the fruit of their own way, and be filled with their own devices." (Pro 1:51)

What is this plague-like disease and why is it important for believers and unbelievers to know? Anthrax, named from the Greek work for coal is so called because a sore with a coal-black center develops on the skin of the infected person. A strange omen, perhaps, of things to come? The first plague of Rev. 16:2, of the vial of wrath of God being poured upon the earth; "and there fell a noisome and grievous sore upon the men which had the mark of the beast, and whom they worshipped his image." This will be strange for many and grievous woe for many others; a "moment of truth;" the first sign to appear, a condemnation or acceptance by the Lord! But, for the here-and-now, science has confirmed anthrax as a bacterial disease, highly contagious, deadly, acute, specific, and rare zoonosis (transmittable to human) affecting man, caused by a *Bacillus anthracis*.

Past history of the plague, a malignant pestilence - a nuisance and evil scourge - occurred frequently in Egypt during the years B.C., as well as in Asia and Europe. In the 14th century, plague called Black Death swept across Europe and killed an estimated 25,000,000 people or one-fourth of the entire population. There was no known cure then for plague. The ancient Israelis suffered plagues, also, in their wilderness journeys.

In Leviticus 13 and 14 (KJV), the word plague is used loosely for any kind of skin rash. It was the duty of the priests to examine the victim and determine if it was harmless or required isolation.

The series of plagues in Egypt (Exodus 7- 12) were penal miracles... Called the “judgments”. . . “pestilence, plague” (Exodus 7:4); “signs and wonders” (Exodus 7:3). The sixth plague of Egypt (ancient) is interesting and calls for some consideration and study; “boils - inflammations breaking out in pustules” - “to bum; filled with pus”, or vesicles, or abscesses... “for the boils were upon the magicians” (Exodus 9: 11). The sixth plague reached the high counselors of the pharaoh. Rats and fleas were the common carriers of plague then.

Is the anthrax scare a plague in essence, or just another disease... or sign? It does have many similar traits or characteristics. The plague of pharaoh’s Egypt: when symptoms appeared, the ensuing progress is rapid, with severe fever, chills, septicemia (blood poisoning), pneumonia, buboes (inflamed lymph glands, edema, mental deterioration, and death - all within 3 days).

Anthrax is somewhat more deadly. Its bacteria from microscopic spores that can persist in the contaminated soil and dead animals (meat) which are highly resistant and retaining their virulence for years. They resist heat, desiccation (drying), and chemical disinfections. Goat, sheep, cattle, horses, pigs, mules, dogs, cats, and wild animals are the most susceptible. Man can acquire anthrax by handling wool, (called “wool sorters disease”), hair, hides bones, handling or eating contaminated meat, and those in contact with pastures.

Anthrax in man occurs as a cutaneous (skin), pulmonary, or intestinal infection, the most common (95%), being localized on skin in the form of a carbuncle (boil), or malignant pustule with a black necrotic center, which becomes generalized, leading to septicemia (blood poisoning). Other forms of the disease affect the lungs and intestine. The pulmonary form results from inhaling anthrax spores, makes a rapid course and ends in rapid death. Symptoms vary depending on the form of the disease. After a short incubation period, it can be characterized by fever, followed by depression, spasms, breathing or heart problems, trembling, staggering, convulsion, and death. There can also be bloody discharges from body openings, swellings on different parts of the body, vomiting and severe diarrhea.

Anthrax, however, a rare disease of man, is one of the oldest recorded diseases of animals and man, being mentioned by Moses in Exodus 9:9, and among classical authors of Greek and Roman antiquity, by Homer, Hippocrates, Pliny, Virgil, Ovid, and Galen. “And it shall become small dust in all the land of Egypt, and it shall be a boil breaking forth with blains Inflammatory swelling, sore, boil) upon man, and upon beast, throughout all the land of Egypt.

Although a rare disease, man again, “deviceth wicked device to destroy” anthrax, a favored biologic weapon today, because its microscopic spores are hardy and easy to produce; can survive being grouped up, dried, buried or sprayed around, to come back to life in a warm, wet place such as inside the human lung, intestine, or skin. Anyone with a good knowledge of microbiology and the right facilities can produce anthrax, but turning it into a biological weapon is a bit more difficult...but, man’s ingenuity and corrupt mind has accomplished it; capable to destroy millions of people, by simply spreading it on the air, the preferred mode, and breathing or inhaling it by the lungs. . . resulting in pulmonary anthrax, attacking the lungs, a suffocating bronchitis results, from which few survive.

Here we vividly see a shocking picture of the human potential for evil doing and the results of sin Here we distinctly see evil infecting the life of a nation; a vital nation founded and established on the foundations of “freedom of conscience of religion”... the fear of God, and represented in the Bible as “the lamb with two horns rising up from the earth.” (Rev 3: 11); America. . . measurable fulfillment of ongoing prophecy.

The anthrax scare has set off a mass world hysteria, mass fear has been gripping people around the world.. mass panic which is the prime objective. Authorities are trying to counter this terrible threat... a horrible threat that was unplanned, uncontrolled and probably unstoppable by man!

“Death is in the pot”;...”poison is in the pot...” The “poisonous weed”; the ingredients of fear, panic, and death: the malicious ingredients that spoil all the good there is in this life, ending in a lingering and senseless death of the soul and body. Panic is the worst counselor. The basis of panic is cowardice. Our Lord teaches us to look things full in the face. He says, “when you hear of wars don’t be scared for such things must happen, but the end is not yet.” (Mk. 13:7) It is the most natural thing in the world to be scared and the clearest evidence that God’s grace is at work in our hearts...is when we do not panic.

Our Lord insists and warns us of the inevitableness of peril. “You must make your accounting with wars, hatred, and death.” Men may have lived undisturbed over a volcano for a long while, when suddenly an eruption occurs. Jesus did not say, “you will understand why war has come, but-” Don’t be scared when it does come,”; so, do not

be in terror-stricken panic.”(Mk. 13:7)

It’s amazing, really astonishing how we ignore Jesus Christ’s words. He said that nations would end in war and bloodshed and havoc or devastation. We ignore His warnings; and when war and terror comes we frantically lose our wits and exhibit panic... bewildered panic!

In the healing of the poisonous stew, the meal (flour) cast in the stew by Elisha to counteract the poisonous wild gourds, portray’s sharply the power of God to remove evil. Through our faith He is able to remove the evil in us...the evil in man. . . with faith.

With the young “sons of prophets” seated in class around Elisha, the deadly alarm was given, and acted upon. But, in this troubled world, the alann makes little impression. No Elisha is here to present the truth; or even if he were, few would believe him! The terrible effects of the poison will soon be bitterly realized in all its unrestrained force... a terrifying force!

We learn, also, when Elisha’s terrified servant saw that the city was surrounded by their enemies, leaving no route for escape, Elisha calmly prayed, - “Oh Lord open his eyes that he may see.” Instantly the servant saw that “the host of the Lord’ had encircled them in protective care. (2 Kings 6:8-24). What a wondrous revelation! What a stirring sight!

When troubles surround us, it is easy to share the fear and despair of Elisha’s servant. That is when we need to remember Elisha’s prayer. Like him, we can pray, “Dh Lord open our eyes that we may see.” Then what fear will you bring over to God?

God is surrounding us with a protective presence and has promised that we will never be left alone or forsaken (John 1 :5). Supported and strengthened by this promise we can stand firm and trust God when circumstances look desperate and there’s “POISON IN THE POT... !”

AMEN

By: Dr. John Theodorou - U.S.A./Greece

THE WORSHIPPERS of THE SUN

“And hallow my sabbaths; and they shall be a sign between me and you, that ye may know that I am the Lord your God.” Ezek.20.20

BLASPHEMOUS BABYLON

There was a giant of a man who became king and priest of Babylon, that unholly city he founded and rule for 185 years. Nimrod the great grandson of Noah, encouraged idolatry to much extent, that the word Babylon become synonymous with false worship. Genesis 10:9 states: ”He was a mighty hunter before the Lord.” Because of his religious dominion, hunting prowess and enormous size, his subjects stood in awe of him. While on a hunting trip, Nimrod was ambushed and slain. His wife, Semiramis, quickly ascended to the throne and thence began a reign of lust and depravity with few parallels in ancient or modern times. She used her inventive mind to cover up her wickedness and it is upon the myths she concocted that the entire X-Mass fabrication rests. Following the death of Nimrod, Semiramis turned to harlotry, and when she conceived, she explained that her deceased husband, now ruling in the heavens as the sun-god, had visited her in spirit form and fathered her child. The superstitious people believed the myth and accepted Nimrod as a god. Semiramis then proclaimed herself a goddess, and the Queen of Heaven, whose worship Jeremiah condemned (Jeremiah 7:17~18; 44:16-19, 25-26). When her son, Tammuz, was born at the time of the winter solstice, by primitive reckoning about Dec. 25, he became a god in their eyes, also. To appeal further to the people’s imagination, Semiramis embellished her legend with a tale of an evergreen tree that sprang forth from a dead stump overnighto The X-Mass tree and yule log used today, were first used to celebrate the birth of Tammuz, in what became an annual religious festival in Babylon.

THE FIRST LENT

History Depicts Tammuz as the “greatest lover of women, strong drink, evil jokes and fun.” It is not strange then that the celebration of his birthday, always a wild drunken orgy, was a favorite. festival among the corrupt

people. When he died at forty years of age, the women of Babylon Lovingly set aside an annual mourning period for him of forty days (a day for each year of his age). When this practice was adopted by The LORD'S people later, Ezekiel sternly condemned it (Ezekiel 8:13 - 14). The introduction of this Lenten Season, however, did not abolish the Tammuz-mass, or T -mass celebration, for it was now a principal holiday in Babylon.

This is the Blasphemous record of pagan Babylon. We learn further from history, that the “Sun god, Queen of Heaven, and Son -of-Sun-god” that is, Nimrod-Semiramis- Tammuz became the First trinity godhead. Pagan Babylon passed on the false doctrine of the trinity, the T-mass (now called X-mass) celebration, and many other idolatrous customs and practices to our modern day. Over the years, the identities of their Pagan deities and festivals were disguised, historical truth was suppressed, and a spiritual darkness covered the religious world like a thick cloud.

The religion of Pagan Babylon did not disappear with the various world conquests. Rather, being so popular, it was passed on down, to what the Bible calls in Revelation 17, “Mystery Babylon.” Mystery Babylon is the Mother of Abominations of the Earth, according to verse 5. Who else is the Mother of Abominations, than Pagan Babylon? What other system, according to verse 3, is full of names of blasphemy? Thus, Mystery Babylon is really ancient Babylon in disguise.

In disguise or not, Babylon's influence has been quite powerful and penetrating over the years. Ahab's 450 prophets of Baal, and 400 prophets of the groves were, in reality, priests of Sun worship. Their worship and sacrifice was performed only during the daylight hours when their Sun god was in the sky. It was at noon, the hour of the sun's greatest strength, that Elijah chose to mock them for their god's indifference to their plight (1 Kings 18:26-29). Nimrod's Hebrew name was Baal. Semiramis was known to the Jews as Ashtoreth (Judges 2:13). In Rome she was called Venus; in Ephesus she was called Diana (Acts 19:27-28). The Assyrians knew her as Ishtar, and in Nineveh her name was Easter. The varieties of names for the same Babylonian deities are the results of the confusing of the languages at the tower of Babel (Genesis 11 :7-9). It is certainly clear then, that these “names of Blasphemy” which originated in ancient Babylon, have been preserved through the years and can still be found in “Mystery Babylon” (Revelation 17:3)

ALMOST ENOUGH SHEEPSKIN

Why is it then, that we hear very little of Nimrod, or Semiramis, or Tammuz today? Even Mystery Babylon, whose identity is the Roman Catholic Institution, doesn't speak of Nimrod or the other idols that filled ancient Babylon. Or do they? The Greek word for Mystery in Revelation 17, really means secret or hidden. GOD is clearly telling us in this text. That this latter day Babylon is truly Babylon of old; yet shrouded in secrecy. Yes, the Roman Catholic institution is ancient Babylon in disguise. It is obvious that ancient Babylon first disguised herself as a church. Next, she disguised her triune deity with the titles Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, and called it by the unscriptural term “the holy trinity.” But, the movement didn't gain acceptance until Constantine. the idol-worshipping emperor of Rome. was supposedly converted in the Fourth Century. and channeled his favorite dogmas and celebrations into Apostate Christendom. Here it was that Tammuz-mass was named Christ-mass. later shortened to Christmas. JESUS spoke of the wolf in sheep's clothing. And Paul wrote of Satan himself being transformed into an angel of light. This accurately foretold of Babylon's great fraud. Yes. truly the “names of Blasphemy” remain unto this day. They have simply been hidden behind the camouflage and sheepskin of Christian names. as her Biblical name Mystery Babylon implies.

THE X-MASS STORY 1 & 2

Jeremiah 1 0:2-4 thus saith the Lord, Learn not the way of the heathen. and be not dismayed at them. (3) For the customs of the people are vain? for one cutteth a tree out. of the forest, the work of the hands of the workman, with the axe. (4) They deck it with silver and wiith gold; they fasten it with nails and with hammers, that it move not.”

The prophecy of Jeremiah the prophet was: “Thus saith the LORD. Learn not the way of the heathen... the customs of the people are vain ...”

These articles set forth the truth taken straight from history on the origin of the holidays and the origin of the customs associated with their celebration. In these articles will be used sections taken directly from various encyclopedias and books on the holidays. History reveals that Christmas, New Year's, etc. all originated in BABYLON as festivals celebrated by the heathen in honor of their pagan gods, but were given “Christian” meaning by the Catholic Church in order to convert the idol worshippers to Constantine's new “Christian” religion. The Catholic Church simply took these seasonal feasts and festivals celebrated by the idolatrous heathen and “transformed” them into “Christian” celebrations, or “christianized” them, in order to make Christianity more

meaningful to pagan converts.

The same philosophy responsible for the development of the trinity doctrine is also responsible for the transformation of these pagan feasts, and no One-God worshipper of Jesus Christ will again take up the celebration of these idolatrous holidays after reading this book. God said through the prophet: learn not the way of the heathen! Rev. 18:4 says: "And I heard another voice from heaven, saying, come out of her. My people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues."

CHRISTMAS: Throughout this chapter, will be referred to and sometimes printing of the exact information found in "Christmas and its Customs," by Christina Hole; "Christmas Traditions," by William Muir Auld; "Celebrations," by Robert J. Myers; "4000 years of Christmas," by Earl W. Count and "1001 Christmas Facts and Fancies," by Alfred Carl Rotes.

In Mesopotamia:

The celebration of Christmas actually outdates Christianity itself by about 4000 years!. It began in an ancient Babylonian festival thousands of years before the birth of Christ in Bethlehem. From "4000 Years of Christmas" we read: "Christmas began there in Mesopotamia over 4000 years ago as the festival which renewed the world for another year. The "Twelve Days" of Christmas; the bright fires and probably the Yule log; the giving of presents; carnivals with their floats; merrymakings and clowriings; the mummers singing and playing from house to house; the feasting; church processions with their lights and song-- all these and more began there centuries before Christ was born."

This ancient Babylonian festival moved westward through Greece into Rome, merging with the Roman Saturnalia festival, where finally under the "Christian" influence of the new religion of the Roman Empire (Constantine had united church and state making Christianity the official state religion) it became "Christianized." There still remain the merrymaking, the giving of gifts, the feasting, and the special log, but now these are with praise to the Christian god.

Saturnalia

Let us try to visualize the Roman Empire before Christianity became its official religion. The city was wholly given over to idolatry. The first day of the Saturnalia began on December 17 and continued through the Kalends of January, beginning on January 1. The Kalends of January ushered in the new year, together they converted the closing and opening of the year into one continuous and uproarious carnival.

The approach of the feast was hailed by Romans in the Empire with wild joy, and began when a pontiff standing in front of Saturn's temple exclaimed, "Ho Saturnalia! Ho Saturnalia!" Sandwiched in between the Saturnalia and the Kalends of January was December 25, the day, as the Romans calculated, when the sun was at its lowest ebb, ready to increase again and impart its strength to the growing things of the earth.

By Steve Hancock

Submitted & edited by Michael Newby

JESUS CHRIST

When His mission was nearly hastening to a close one day, He took His disciples closer to the border of Syria and Lebanon to a town named Caesarea Philippi. They were beyond the limits of Galilee, in a region where idolatry prevailed. Here the disciples were withdrawn from the controlling influence of Judaism, and brought into closer contact with heathen worship. Around them were represented forms of superstition that existed in all parts of the world. Jesus desired that a view of these things might lead them to feel their responsibility to the heathen. During His stay in this region, He endeavored to withdraw from teaching the people and to devote Himself more fully to His disciples. He was about to tell them of the suffering that awaited Him. But first He went away alone, and prayed that their hearts might be prepared to receive His words.

Upon joining them, He did not at once communicate that which He desired to impart. Before doing this, He gave them an opportunity of confessing their faith in Him that they might be strengthened for the coming trial. Few months were left before His final death and 'He asked His disciples saying, whom do men say that I THE SON OF IfAN AM? And they said, some say that thou art John the Baptist some say Elias and others Jeremiah or one of the prophets. Jesus now poses a second question, relating to the disciples themselves: He saith unto them, But whom say ye that I am? And Simon Peter answered and said, Thou art the CHRIST, the SON OF THE LIVING GOD. And Jesus answered and said unto him, Blessed art thou Simon Bar-Jonas for flesh and blood hath not reveled it unto thee but my FATHER in heaven'. Matt.16:13-17.

In this we know worldly wisdom cannot reveal us about our Saviour. Only God himself. The revelation of Jesus is the highest glory a man can attain. At this time Jesus answered and said, I thank thee O! FATHER, LORD of heaven and earth, because thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes. Even so, FATHER for so it seemed good in thy sight. All things are delivered unto Me of my FATHER and no man knoweth the SON, but the FATHER neither knoweth any man the FATHER, save the SON, and HE to whomsoever the SON will reveal HIM. Matt. 11 :25-27. Our faith should be rooted and grounded in the Rock and no man can take us away.

Just few months before there was a crisis in Galilee. Seventy of his great disciples left Him and went just when He spoke to them about eating and drinking His blood and flesh, to vitally connect with Him. Many of His disciples left Him. But now awaited the greatest trial. After Peter's confession, for the first time Christ started to reveal His suffering and death. When the disciples heard this they became so sad. "Even amid their questionings they clung to the thought that some unforeseen circumstance might avert the doOI11 which seemed to await their Lord. Thus they sorrowed and doubted, hoped and feared, for six long, gloomy days." DA pg.418. "Right away Peter took Him and began to rebuke Him saying be it far from thee Lord; this shall not be unto thee." Matt.16:22. ' -"

Why did this condition did exist among them? Because they all longed for an earthly kingdom with its pride and glory. and who will sit next to Him on his throne. They were only interested in vanity. When His true mission was revealed it was like death, the greatest shock for them. All their hopes and ambitions became to naught. From this is the time onwards Judas lost hope in Jesus.

Because of His disciples gloomy state He further journeyed to one of the highest mountains in the region, Mt. Hermon, which is about 9,232 meters high. When He reached there He left His nine disciples at the foot of the mountain and climbed with only His three disciples to the summit. Stepping a little aside from them, the MAN of SORROWS pours out His supplications with strong crying and tears. He prays for strength to endure the test in behalf of humanity. The Saviour has seen the gloom of His disciples, and has longed to lighten their grief by an assurance that their faith has not been in vain. Now the burden of His prayer is that they may be given a manifestation of the glory He had with the FATHER before the world was, that His kingdom may be revealed to human eyes, and that His disciples may be strengthened to behold it. He pleads that they may witness a manifestation of His divinity that will comfort them in the hour of His supreme agony with the knowledge that He is of surety the Son of God and that His shameful death is a part of the plan of redemption. His Prayer is heard. While HE is bowed in lowliness upon the stony ground, suddenly the heavens open, the golden gates of the city of God are thrown wide, and holy radiance descends upon the mount, enshrouding the Saviour's form. Divinity from within flashes through humanity, and meets the glory coming from above. Arising from His prostrate position, Christ stands in GODLIKE MAJESTY. The soul agony is gone. His countenance now shines 'as the sun' and His garments are white as light. About this incident Peter later wrote in his book 'For we have not followed cunningly devised fables, when we made known unto you the power and coming of our LORD JESUS CHRIST but were eyewitnesses of HIS MAJESTY. And this voice which came from heaven we heard, when we were with Him in the holy mountain. 2 Pet 1: 16, 18.

Christ was the perfect pattern of humanity because of this, although when He wanted to manifest His divinity He prayed. Every miracle He performed He didn't use His divine power. He only used the power every son of Adam

who has faith and prayer. In all that He did, Christ was co-operating with His Father. Ever He had been careful to make it evident that He did not work independently. It was by faith and prayer that He wrought His miracles. DA. p. 536. Since Jesus came to dwell with us, we know that GOD is acquainted with our trials, and sympathizes with our grief's. 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'.

Satan represents GOD'S law of love as a law of selfishness. He declares that it is impossible for us to obey its precepts. The fall of our first parents with all the woe that has resulted he charges upon the Creator, leading men to look upon God as the author of sin, and suffering, and death. Jesus was to unveil this deception. As one of us He was to give an example of obedience. For this He took upon HIMSELF our nature, and passed through our experiences. "In all things it behooved Him to be made like unto His brethren." Heb. 2:17.

Genuine faith is life. A living faith means an increase of vigor, a confiding trust, by which the soul becomes a conquering power. This is the faith Christ used not to talk of religion in a casual way, to pray without soul hunger. True character is not shaped from without and put on. It radiates from within. If we wish to direct others in the path of righteousness, it must be enshrined in our own hearts. 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. So fully was Jesus surrendered to the will of God that the Father alone appeared in His life. Although tempted in all points like as we are, He stood before the world untainted by the evil that surrounded Him. Thus we also are to overcome as Christ overcame. 'To HIM that overcometh will I grant to sit with ME in MY throne even as I also overcame and am set down with MY FATHER in HIS throne. Rev.3:21.

Now, Christ comes and asks his people 'Who do other churches say that I The Son of Man Am? The people of God reply, "Hindu say that thou are a good man, Jehovah's Witness say thou are a created being, and Mormons say that thou are Morni, Mohammedans say thou are a prophet."

Now Christ asks "But whom do you say that I am?" We look at the Bible for the answer. Because in the Bible it is written "Search the scriptures: for in them ye think ye have eternal life and they are they which testify of ME." Jn 5:39. Now if you look at John, when angel Gabriel asked him to call John, according to Hebrew the meaning was "Jehovah's favorite". In the Old Testament, many of the names have significant meaning for an individual. When Moses asked "What is thy name, what shall I say unto them," "God said unto Moses "I AM THAT I AM." If this is correctly translated it means "I am He who exists"--the timelessness of God as well as His ever-present existence. What does that mean? It means "self-existent one", the one who has no beginning or ending or in real meaning you can call him Jehovah. When Jesus was explaining to them about his existence before Abraham, he said "Truly, Truly I say unto you before Abraham was, I AM". When he used this words 'I AM' meaning self-existing one, the Jews took stones to cast at him. But again when he spoke about Judas's betrayal, "I speak not of you all, I know whom I have chosen, but that description may be fulfilled, he that eats bread with me have lifted up his heel against me, now I tell you before it come that, when it come to pass ye may believe that I AM HE." So here Christ used the same words that he used "self-existing one", and not only that, here he prophesied about the fall of his own disciple. When the Angel appeared thus he said to Joseph .. And she shall bring forth a son and thou shalt call his name JESUS which leads to the Hebrew word "JEHOVAH" meaning self-existence or Eternal. So each time when we say Jesus we say Jehovah because His name was never changed even when He was a man.

For He shall save His people from their sins. If you take the word CHRIST, what does that mean? According to Greek CHRISTOS means "the anointed one". In the Jewish tradition whenever a King or a Prophet or Priest, if he is selected for this office he was anointed by oil, but in the case of Christ He was not anointed by oil, He was anointed by the Holy Spirit, by His Father Himself. Now the reason for them to be anointed with oil is to show that they are working in harmony with God, and the oil represents THE HOLY SPIRIT. In the anointment of Christ, it was JOHN THE BAPTIST (JEHOVAH'S FAVORITE) who baptized Him, and was presenting Jehovah. "This is the lamb of GOD who takes away the sins of the world" representing that He is the Redeemer of the world, He is the creator of the humans. Again it was written concerning the anointment of Christ, writing in Isaiah 61, "the Spirit of the Lord GOD is upon Me because the Lord has anointed Me to preach good tidings unto the Meek; He has sent Me to bind up the broken hearted to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound." Again here God anointed Him for this great work, that's why He was called CHRIST the "ANOINTED". In reality JESUS CHRIST means "JEHOVAH THE ANOINTED". I write these things that ye may believe in HIS name and have salvation. AMEN.

Augustus Ratneiyya, Montreal

AMAZING GRACE

A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you: and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh; and I will give you an heart of flesh. Ezekiel 36: 26

This is the miraculous work that the Lord will do for us. But do we believe it? Do we want Him to do this work in us?

I have always wondered about what exactly it is that is:

- a) Our part to play?
- b) What is the Lord's part in our salvation?

The last thing my grandmother said to me at the airport coming back to Australia was, "remember that we have our part to play."

For years I have struggled and believe me I am still struggling because the more I study the more the Holy Spirit is revealed. But I have found out a few things I would like to share with you.

One person that I would not want to be is, the one who prophesied in Your name, in Thy name have I cast out demons, in Thy name done many wonderful works. (Mathew 7:21,22)

The Lord says to this person, "I never knew you, depart from me, ye that worketh iniquity. "

How can I not be that person?

I bought a daily devotional called God's Amazing Grace and it is changing my life.

Let us read first Romans 5:1,2 - "Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God; through our Lord Jesus Christ, By whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand; and rejoice in hope of the glory of God" When we accept Jesus as our Saviour, we begin to have access to this grace.

"Moreover the law entered, that the offence might abound. But where sin abounded; grace did much more abound That as sin hath reigned unto death, even so might grace reign through righteousness unto eternal life by Jesus Christ Our Lord " Romans 5:20-21.

Dearest Brothers and Sisters, I believe that grace is what sets us apart. Accessing God's grace. His free gift to us; a gift that we do not deserve.

"Grace is unmerited favour, and the believer is justified without any merit of his own, without any claim to offer to God. He is justified through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, who stands in the courts of heaven as the sinner's substitute and surety. " 1 SM 398

Jesus says, "My grace is sufficient for thee.

2 Corinthians 12:9

Paul writes, "I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me." Philippians 4: 13,

And, "For though he was crucified through weakness, yet He liveth by the power of God. For weak/so are weak in Him." 2 Corinthians 13:4.

Okay so we have "Grace" what is the world doing with it - nothing - they talk about it but that is all. If you received a gift what would you do with it? Leave it sitting there and say: "I've got Grace I've got grace? "Grace is a verb, a doing word - it is something that Sister White has written about extensively. Let us read a few lines from her writings.

"All heaven is interested in the work going on in this world, which is to prepare men and women for the future, immortal life. It is God's plan that human agencies shall have the high honour of acting as co-workers with Jesus Christ in the salvation of souls They should look upon the work of God as sacred and holy and should bring to Him, every day offerings of joy and gratitude in return for the power of His grace, by which they are enabled to

make advancement in the divine life... “ 5T pp. 573, 574

“In the religious life of every soul who is finally victorious, there will be scenes of terrible perplexity and trial... Summon all your power to look up, not down at your difficulties,. then you will never faint by the way. You will soon see Jesus behind the cloud; reaching out His hand to help you,. all you have to do is give Him your hand in simple faith and let Him lead you God gives you intelligence and a reasoning mind; whereby you may grasp His promises,. and Jesus is ready to help you in forming a strong, symmetrical character. “ 5T pp. 578, 579

Study the Bible. How else will you know the promises?

So now we have found out that we both have a work to do.

Jesus says, “Come unto me... my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.” Mat. 11:28,30. Give your heart truly to Jesus.

But we also have our part as Sister White writes in the above quote - “Summon all your power to look up.” With your intelligence and reasoning mind study the scriptures - then you can grasp the promise; then Jesus can help you to form a strong, symmetrical character.

“Therefore being justified by faith we have peace with God; through our Lord Jesus Christ. “ Romans 5: 1,2

But now the best part of all.

We know and believe that the Elijah message (which IS the gospel and the law) has to be preached by us. We are the Elijah messengers of today.

“The gospel is to be presented not as a lifeless theory, but as a living force to change the life. God desires that the receivers of His grace shall be witnesses to its power He would have his servants bear testimony to the fact that through His grace men may possess Christlikeness of character, and may rejoice in the assurance of his great love. He would have us bear testimony to the fact that He cannot be satisfied until the human race are reclaimed and reinstated in their holy privileges as His sons and daughters. “ DA p. 826.

“While we yield ourselves as instruments for the Holy Spirit’s working, the grace of God works in us to deny old inclinations, to overcome powerful propensities, and to form new habits. “ COL p. 354

‘To make God’s grace our own, we must act our part. The Lord does not propose to perform for us either the willing or the doing. His grace is given to us to will and to do, but never as a substitute for our effort. “ 4 B.C. p.1167

The influence of grace is to soften the heart, to refine and purify the feelings giving a heaven born delicacy and sense of propriety.

“There must be a power working from within, a new life from above, before men can be changed from sin to holiness. That power is Christ.” SC p.18.

His grace alone can quicken the lifeless faculties of the soul, and attract it to God, to holiness.

“We all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord; are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord. “2 Corinthians 3:18

“The work of transformation from unholiness is a continuous one. Day by day God labours for man’s sanctification, and man is to cooperate with Him, putting forth persevering efforts in the cultivation of right habits. He is to add grace to grace; and as he thus works on the plan of addition, God works for him on the plan of multiplication. Our Saviour is always ready to hear and answer the prayer of the contrite heart, and grace and peace are multiplied to His faithful ones. Gladly He grants the blessings they need in their struggle against the evils that beset them

“John and Judas are representatives of those who profess to be Christ’s followers. Both these disciples had the same opportunities to study and follow the divine Pattern. Both were closely associated with Jesus and were privileged to listen to His teaching. Each possessed serious defects of character; and each had access to the divine grace that transforms character. But while one in humility was learning of Jesus, the other revealed that he was not a doer of the word; but a hearer only. One, daily dying to self and overcoming sin, was sanctified through the truth; the other, resisting the transforming power of grace and indulging selfish desires, was bought into bondage to Satan.

“Such transformation of character as is seen in the life of John is ever the result of communion with Christ. There may be marked defects in the character of an individual, yet when he becomes a true disciple of Christ, the power of divine grace transforms and sanctifies him. Beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, he is changed from glory to glory, until he is like Him whom he adores .,” God can be honoured by those who profess to believe in Him, only as they are conformed to His image and controlled by His Spirit. Then, as witnesses for the Saviour, they may make known what divine grace has done for them. “ AA 532, 558, 559

“] am the Lord your God; ye shall therefore sanctify yourselves, and ye shall be holy, for lam holy.” Lev.11:44

“It is the glory of God to give His virtue to His children. He desires to see men and women reaching the highest standard; and when by faith they lay hold of the power of Christ, when they plead His unfailing promises, and claim them as their own, when with an importunity that will not be denied they seek for the power of the Holy Spirit, they will be made complete in Him

“Before the believer is held out the wonderful possibility of being like Christ, obedient to all the principles of the law. But of himself man is utterly unable to reach this condition. The holiness that God’s Word declares he must have before he can be saved is the working of divine grace before he bows in submission to the discipline and restraining influences of the Spirit of truth. Man’s obedience can be made perfect only by the incense of Christ’s righteousness, which fills with divine fragrance every act of obedience. The part of the Christian is to persevere in overcoming every fault. Constantly he is to pray to the Saviour to heal the disorders of his sin-sick soul. He has not the wisdom or the strength to overcome; these belong to the Lord; and He bestows them on those who in humiliation and contrition seek Him for help.

“The Holy Spirit will be given to those who seek for its power and grace and will help our infirmities when we would have an audience with God Heaven is open to our petitions, and we are invited to come “boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need. (Heb. 4: 16).” We are to come in faith, believing that we shall obtain the very things we ask of Him.

“If you have a sense of need in your soul, if you hunger and thirst after righteousness, this is an evidence that Christ has wrought upon your heart, in order that He may be sought unto to do for you, through the endowment of the Holy Spirit, those things which it is impossible for you to do for yourself.

“If we will empty the soul of self, He will supply all our necessities.” God’s Amazing Grace, p. 217.

May God Bless You

Jenny Nalder

THE VEREDICT

I am standing in His presence
Awaiting my sentence.

The atmosphere is solemn.
To me, it says condemned!!

But His I’ll obey
And so await for the day when
He shall say,

“My child, you have walked well
With me forever you shall dwell.”

Elliam Gordon

AUSTRALIAN FIELD CONFERENCE DECEMBER 27-31, 2001

From far and wide, we gathered together for our annual field conference in Australia. Once again, our dear believers from Perth made the long journey across the continent to receive the blessings the Lord had in store for them at the conference. Seven of them made the 4,000 km journey in a bus belonging to one of the sisters. The Lord was truly good to them and kept them safe.

We were also privileged to have fellowship with believers from farther away places. Brother Kang, our minister in South Korea, made the journey with his son. Also some young people from New Caledonia joined in the spiritual feast. And it would not be complete without the presence of our dear Brother Cholich, who was visiting his 16th country of the year. At the young age of 82, he doesn't seem to be slowing down.

With ten tents set up in the backyard along with 3 campers and the Perth bus (which can sleep a couple of people), everyone found a comfortable corner in which to sleep for the nights. There was also room for 9 people to sleep in the church.

The business meeting was conducted during the day on Thursday the 27th of December. The meeting was shorter than expected due to the unity of thought and feeling felt throughout the congregation. The election of new officers went smoothly and we were happy to see brother John Thiel from Perth make his decision to answer the call of the Lord to enter the mission field as a Bible Worker.

The theme of the Conference was: "Those things which cannot be shaken may remain." Hebrews 12:27.

In the evening, at 7:00 P.M., our spiritual conference was opened with an inspiring message brought by Brother Kang from Korea. He expressed his "great pleasure to be in Australia amongst God's people. He thanked God for the privilege and brought greetings from the believers back in Korea. He began his message by relating his experiences in his Christian walk. Two years ago, he belonged to the 1951 Reform church for which he had worked for 20 years. He really believed they were God's church. Before that he belonged to the S.D.A. church, and before that to a Sunday-keeping church. In the SDA church, he thought they were God's church since they were the 7th church in Bible prophecy, but with much prayer and study he understood the message in Revelation 18, thus joining the Nicolici Reform Church. Two years ago, Brother Cholich presented to him another church. With much prayer and study, he understood this church to be God's remnant church today. It was not easy to leave his church that he had belonged to for 20 years, however he felt he must answer the call of the Lord. Brother Kang continued his message but reading from Matthew 22:1,2 regarding the king who made a feast which no one came to. He sent his servants to the highways and hedges to find the poor and needy. They did come, but there was one man found without the wedding garment. Only one. Who is this one? We must make sure that one man is not us. It may even be someone in God's church. We all believe we will go to heaven, but if we keep one little defect in our character, it will be enough to keep us out. Even if we follow all other church teachings, one deviation from the perfect will of God is enough to have the Lord tell us, "I know you not." We must cast away every little sin - let them go.

FRIDAY DECEMBER 28TH

In the morning Brother Cholich gave us a presentation entitled, "Personal Reformation and the Shaking." The word, "Shaking" comes from the sifting of wheat. They throw the wheat up in the air, the wind blows away the chaff and the wheat falls back. Then they use a sieve to do the final separation. If the sieve stays on the ground, nothing happens. The sieve must be taken and shaken. This is the test of faith. Many tests have come to God's church in the past. At one time the SDA church membership numbered approximately 150,000. Then came wind (war) such as never before in 1914. The newspapers called it Armageddon. God does not test those who have fallen - only those who remain and think they are strong.

Brother Cholich continued by speaking about false religions, beginning with the very first false religion in history. This religion was the religion that Cain set up. It was contrary to the truth of God. Abel followed the plan of salvation and Cain persecuted Abel. False religion often persecutes true religion. Very often we have seen them persecuting God's church. All throughout the ages there has been many more false religious movements. Babylon is called the "Mother of Harlots" and she has many daughters - who is the youngest of these daughters? "For without are dogs, and sorcerers, and whoremongers, and murderers, and idolaters, and whosoever loveth and maketh a lie." Rev. 22:15. By focusing in on the "Whosoever loveth and maketh a lie" we can identify the youngest daughter of Babylon - the one which has its existence based on lies. God has only one true church and clearly the identifying marks of the youngest daughter point to the false reform movement that was organized in 1951. This is the latest false religious movement that has been organized. When the nation of Israel separated, God was with the nation of Judah, but the nation of Israel had left the favour of God.

In the evening Brother John Thiel began by telling us he is going to give us an introduction to his workshop which was to be held Monday morning by defining the word Shaking. During the shaking time not one grain will fall to the earth. If you have a genuine desire to have Christ 100%, when you are sifted, you will remain. We are looking at something that is not easy. It is not easy to be knocked about in a sieve. While the Holy Spirit is doing a solemn and important work, Satan is not at rest. Jesus gathers and unites. Satan scatters and divides. In Early Writings, p.

50 it says, "The mighty shaking has/ commenced. " Many are looking to the future for the shaking, but it is going on now. What does the Nature of Christ have to do with the shaking? "The sacrifice of Christ as an atonement for sin is the great truth around which all other truths cluster. In order to be rightly understood and appreciated, every truth in the Word of God, from Genesis to Revelation, must be studied in the light which streams from the cross of Calvary, and in connection with the wondrous, central truth of the Saviour's atonement. Those who study the Redeemer's wonderful sacrifice grow in grace and knowledge." 5 BC 137.

Brother Andrade continued by telling us that what happened to the human race was unnecessary but yet it happened. He focused on heaven. All was peaceful in heaven until sin came to this earth. Through the course of time, one day Eden will be restored and all will be peaceful and happy in heaven again.

Brother Altwein opened the Sabbath with a short message on Sabbath observance. It is a miracle that we are here today and we should not take life for granted. The Lord loves us so much that He gave us a special gift - the Sabbath. He then related several experiences that he made in his life when the Lord blessed him by his faithfulness to the fourth commandment. There were times when it seemed impossible to keep the Sabbath and keep his job also. But the Lord worked miracles. The Lord can touch the hearts of unconverted and unchristian people to show mercy to His faithful followers. We just have to have the faith to do God's will and watch Him work miracles for us.

Sabbath, December 29th

For the Divine Service, Brother Cholich spoke about "Preparation for the Final Crisis." If we know the truth we have nothing to worry about, however our great knowledge will not be of any help if we are lacking faith. In these times of crisis ahead we must unite together in God's church. Satan will attack, doing whatever he can to disrupt and turn brother against brother. Sadly he has succeeded in the past He also spoke of the importance of holy conversation as needful preparation for the final events. We must first develop holy conversation within the family then within the church and in all levels of the General Conference. The greatest preparation that must be made is to have unity in the midst of God's church.

For the youth meeting, the young people spoke about Talents. You will see their short articles in this issue of the Messenger.

After the youth meeting, Brother Kang once again shared the truths of God's Word with us. He related to us the story of Gideon and compared that story to the Mighty Shaking that God is going to do with His church. Hum8cnly it seems that such a small army could never defeat the enemy, however with God all things are possible. The Midianites were also children of Abraham (Genesis 25:1,2). We see two brothers here fighting. If God's church is Spiritual Israel, then who is Spiritual Midian? Is it not all those churches who are fighting against God's church? There are many churches today but God established only one. All others were established by men and are "Midianites." The Israelites made a loud cry as they descended upon the Midianites that fateful night. Spiritual Israel is also to make a Loud Cry. we see that the Spiritual Midianites are joining forces to fight against God's church. We must be ready.

After dinner Brother John Thiel continued with his introduction to Monday's workshop. The shaking has to do with our perseverance. Satan tries to throw a spanner into God's work. By sharing many Bible verses and spirit of prophecy quotes, we were shown the importance of a true understanding of the atonement. It is essential for our salvation. Some who labour in word and doctrine do not have a practical understanding of the atonement of Christ; they only have a legal understanding. The atonement of Christ is not simply a way to have our sins pardoned; it is a complete restoration to spiritual health. The atonement is the remedy and we must take it to cure ourselves. If we want to be cured, we must understand our medicine.

Brother Cholich brought a few thoughts for Sabbath closing. He spoke of the final victory; the song of freedom that God's people will sing on the sea of glass. The song of Moses

Sunday, December 30th

In the morning we were richly blessed with a health workshop conducted by Sister Rose and Sister Carol from Perth. Through the light given by the Spirit of Prophecy we were shown how the Three Angels Messages play an important role in the health message. The health message is important in this shaking time. In the near future we will have this workshop printed in the Messenger so that you can read it in its entirety.

Brother Kang once again gave us a stirring message. He spoke of the church of Christ throughout history. The church is the body of Christ and this church will grow up into Christ. Throughout history there were only 5 churches that were ever called and ordained by God. The first being the Jewish church which was established in the time of Abraham when he was called out of Ur. The second was the Christian church, when the Jewish church was rejected at the stoning of Stephen. The third was the Protestant church which rose up in protest after long years of persecution at the hands of the previous church that had been established. The fourth church was the Seventh-day Adventist church, which was established when the previous church rejected the Three Angel's Messages, and the final church is the Seventh-day Adventist Reform church, which was called into existence in 1914 when the SDA church rejected the Christ our Righteousness message in 1888 and finally persecuted those that were faithful during the first world war. After that time, there were no other churches called into existence. In

1951 there was no call for another organization because there was no new message from heaven that was given, and that was rejected by the existing church organization. In the previous calls - each church was given new light, which they rejected, necessity thing the call for another church. God has only one church today. Christ is the head and the church is the body. In the afternoon Brother Andrade spoke to us about faith. "The just shall live by faith." Faith means confidence, assurance, trust, obedience etc. Without faith it is impossible to please God. While we may be sinners, we may find cleansing by the blood of Christ. He spoke to us about how we need strong faith if we will make it through the final crisis on this earth. After supper, Brother Kang gave us evening worship. When God created Adam, He could have created Eve at the same time, however He knew that it would be better if Adam would recognize his need of a companion (after naming all the animals). When Eve was created, Adam said she is, "bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh." Genesis 2:23. Eve was the wife of the first Adam. The second Adam also has a wife. Jesus is the second Adam and His wife is the church. Eve was beautiful - so God's church is to be beautiful one day. The second Adam only has one wife, as does the first Adam. Since Jesus took upon His flesh the sinful nature of man, it can also be said that the wife of the second Adam is "bone of His bone, and flesh of His flesh." In the end of time all people will be bundled - some to be burned, some to be saved. There are three bundles that will be burned - the dragon, the beast and the false prophet. Two bundles will be saved, the 144,000 and the Great Multitude. If your membership is in one of the three that will be burned, you will be bundled up with them also and be burned. It is important that you join yourself in membership with the church of Christ and be bundled with the redeemed to avoid being in the wrong bundle.

Monday, December 31st

In the morning we were given the two-hour workshop by Brother John Thiel regarding the Shaking and the Nature of Christ, that he has been introducing to us for the past few days. What causes shaking? Present truth. Why? Because Satan does not want the people of God to come into unity of truth. Four points were examined during this workshop: 1) the Nature of the Shaking, 2) The Nature of our Condition, 3) The Nature of Christ and 4) the Nature of the resistance to this message. Jesus became one with us BUT we must become one with Him. In Leviticus 23:27';29 we read that those who did not afflict their souls on the Day of Atonement were cut off from God's people. The shaking includes affliction and cleansing. We were richly blessed in our understanding from the Bible and Spirit of Prophecy regarding the Atonement - the cleansing and purging that God wants to do among His people. Only those who afflict their souls in this serious time will be purged and prepared.

Following this message came time for the farewell meeting. Many stirring testimonies were shared. Truly it has been a spiritual feast and hopefully in the near future some of these messages can be put into print to share these blessings with our brothers and sisters around the world.

The afternoon was spent in packing and preparations to depart in the morning for the long drive home for those who came from distant places by car or bus.

Before the final farewell, Brother John Thiel gave us evening worship on the subject of Truth and Obedience as seen in the Atonement. Reformers are instructed to bring their lives into harmony with reform. Obedience requires a cross and often our human nature recoils from the calls for obedience. It is contrary to our sinful nature. We have two voices calling us and we must decide which voice we will listen to. The voice we choose will become stronger while the other weaker. To obey often means suffering - a tug-o-war with bodily feelings and inclinations. We feel like doing one thing, while our mind tells us we really should be doing something else. "Though he were a Son, yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered." Hebrews 5:8. Jesus learned obedience through suffering and so must we as we follow His footsteps.

It was time to say good-bye and good night - until we meet again. Jesus is coming soon and may we all be found faithful, waiting, praying and afflicting our souls before the Lord.

AMEN

TALENTS

“The kingdom of heaven is as a man traveling into a far country, who called his own servants, and delivered unto them his goods. And unto one he gave five talents, to another two, and to another one; to every man according to his several ability; and straightway took his journey.” Matthew 25:14,15.

On Sabbath, December 29 111, at the conference in Sydney, Australia the young people presented a program on Talents. The youth ranged in age from 9 to 24. We were blessed by the messages the young people brought so we want to share them with you.

KINDNESS:

Last week I read a story about kindness. Uncle Arthur drove his car out of London when suddenly he came into a dense fog at night. So dense that he couldn't even see a white line or the curb of the road. Suddenly the wheels went bump, bump, bump, bump, and when he got out of the car he saw that he had driven over the curb onto the sidewalk. It looked as though he had to stay there all night, or at least until the fog had lifted.

Suddenly there appeared a little boy with a flashlight beside his window and said, “May I help you?” Uncle Arthur said, “You couldn't help me with that little flashlight, not even my big car lights can help me.” But he answered, “I shine against the curb and you follow slowly.” And he went ahead of me, and I could just see the curb and barely him. So he walked in front of me, at least 2 km until the fog lifted. When I stopped to thank him; he was suddenly gone. Probably he had gone back to help someone else.

“And be ye kind one to another, tender-hearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you.” Ephesians 4:32.

And if we meet kind people it makes us happy. And it makes us think, let us be kind to one another.

Henry Danmasch

MONEY:

Money can be two things, a blessing or a curse. “He who realizes that his money is a talent from God will use it economically, and will feel it his duty to save that they may give.” FLB 162.

Money is a blessing, but having too much can be a curse. “The Lord has lent men talents to improve. Those whom He has entrusted with money are to bring their talent of means to the master. Men and women of influence are to use that which God has given them” RC 29

If the Lord entrusts us with money we should not use it for our own selfish purposes. We should use it to the glory of God. In the days of Ellen White, the use of self-denial boxes was greatly encouraged by her. In this way money that was to be spent on luxuries and candy could be put in these boxes and sent to missions. Thus a lot of money was sent to foreign countries for the aid of missionaries. Today there is a mad rush for money. Men will go to the jaws of death for more wages. “Money has great value because it can do great good. In the hands of God's children it is food for the hungry, drink for the thirsty, clothing for the naked. It is a defense for the oppressed and a means of help to the sick. But money is of no more value than the sand, only as it is put to use in providing for the necessities of life in blessing others, and in advancing the cause of Christ.” COL 351.3. Let us not waste money for our own selfish purposes.

Ben Dammasch

INFLUENCE:

You can be an influence for good or evil. Through Christ, God has invested man with an influence that makes it impossible for him to live for himself. As Christians we have an influence on the people that we come into contact with. No man can be independent of his fellow men. standing under mutual obligations. Our words, our acts, our dress, the way we carry ourselves - even the expression on our face, has an influence. “Character is power. The silent witness of a true, unselfish, godly life carries an almost irresistible influence. By revealing in our own life the character of Jesus we co-operate with Him in the work of saving souls. It is only by revealing in our own life His character that we can co-operate with Him. And the wider the sphere of our influence, the more good we may do.” COL 340. Those that act in a Godly fashion cause a chain reaction, influencing others to do well.

Throw a pebble into a lake, and a wave is formed, and as they increase, the circle reaches the shore. So with our influence. Beyond our knowledge or control it tells upon others in blessing or in cursing. There are two kinds of influence. Good and evil. One is sincere, open honest and a minority in today's society. The other is very widespread, cunning, sophisticated and undercover.

“It should never be forgotten that influence is no less a power for evil. To lose one's own soul is a terrible thing; but to cause the loss of other souls is even more terrible.” COL 340. That our influence could be used for death is a fearful, yet possible thought. Many in the church indulge in criticism and accusing. Sister White says that church members by giving expression to suspicion, jealousy and discontent, yield themselves to Satan. Frivolity, selfishness and indifference on the part of professed Christians turns souls from the path of life.

“It is only through God’s grace that we can make a right use of this endowment. There is nothing in us of ourselves by which we can influence others to good.” COL 341. If we realize our helplessness we shall not trust ourselves. I pray that every person’s influence in here may be a silent, unconscious but mighty power in drawing others to Christ and the heavenly world.

HEALTH

Health is a blessing which few appreciate the value of. Yet upon it the efficiency of our mental and physical powers largely depends. Our impulses and passions have their seating in the body, and it must be kept in the best condition physically and under the most spiritual influences in order that our talents may be put to the highest use. Anything that lessens our physical strength enfeebles the mind and makes it less capable of discriminating between right and wrong. We become less capable of choosing the good and have less strength of will to do that which we know to be right.

The relation of the physical organism to the spiritual life is one of the most important branches of education. All need to become acquainted with their physical structure and the laws that control natural life. He who remains in willing ignorance is sinning against God. All should place themselves in the best possible relation to life and health. Our habits should be brought under the control of a mind that is itself under the control of God.

In Counsels on Diet and Foods, page 69, we read that the health reform¹ is the right hand of the Third Angel’s Message because it can help man to understand the will of God for His people and what the will of God for His people is in the final events on this earth’s history.

We also read on page 91 that “In order to have good health, we must have good blood; for the blood is the current of life. It repairs waste, and nourishes the body. When supplied with proper food elements and when cleansed and vitalized by contact with pure air, it carries life and vigour to every part of the system. The more perfect the circulation, the better this work will be accomplished.”

And in Ministry of Healing, page 310 it says, “A disordered stomach produces a disordered, uncertain state of mind. Often it causes irritability, harshness, or injustice. Many a plan that have been a blessing to the world has been set aside, many unjust, oppressive, even cruel measures have been carried, as the result of diseased conditions due to wrong habits of eating.”

All who understand the laws of health should realize their obligation to obey these laws, which God established for their being. Obedience to the laws of health is to be made a matter of personal duty.

Jean-Marie Hecquet

STRENGTH

The most beautiful strength which the Lord can give to His children is health, strength and a comprehension of the things that the Lord places at the disposition of His children. He gives to His children this talent but we must cultivate it. Why must we cultivate it? We must cultivate it, because “Christ was a true worker in temporal as well as in spiritual things, and into all his work he brought a determination to do His father’s will.” COL, p. 348. How can you obtain these things? It is only by faith. Let us remember Moses, Noah and Abraham It is by faith that they were the friends of God and that they were justified.

If the Lord gave wisdom, grace and strength to the workers to build the earthly tabernacle, he can also give us all those things. For “it is just as essential to do the will of God when erecting a building as when taking part in a religious sense. And if the workers have brought the right principles into their own character making, then in the erection of every building, they will grow in grace and knowledge.” COL 350

The Lord gave Joseph and Daniel great strength. What was this strength? It was to righteously manage the possessions of their masters. They received the intellectual strength and also the physical strength. If they had this strength, it is because they did don’t seek their own pleasures but looking only at the achievement of the will of God. The lives of Joseph and Daniel are a lesson to help us to form this strength of character which they had.

let us pray to the Lord so that He will give us this strength.

Alexandra Hecquet

MENTAL FACULTIES

The brain is what makes or gives the human being power to discern many things including the difference between

right and wrong.

The human mind if pushed can achieve many things but through the Lord it can do things that are humanly impossible. Without God the human mind can become a tool of the devil.

God requires the training of the mental faculties. He designs that His servants shall possess more intelligence and clearer discernment than the worldling, and He is displeased with those who are too careless or too indolent to become efficient, well informed workers. The Lord bids us love Him with all our strength. And with the entire mind we may know and love our creator.

The Lord also desires us to obtain all the education possible, with the object in view of imparting our knowledge to others. None can know where or how they may be called to labour or to speak for God. Our heavenly Father alone sees what He can make of men.

Let the youth of today who desire an education set to work with determination in order to obtain it. We should not wait for an opening but instead we should take hold of every opportunity and practice economy. We must not spend our money and resources for our own pleasure but we must be thorough and efficient in what ever we do especially, if we are doing it for the Lord.

The people in this world who are always trying to get knowledge to be a blessing to their fellow man will receive a great blessing from God. Through the study of the Holy Scriptures their mental powers will be aroused to activity like never before. There will be an expansion and development of the facilities, and the mind will become very powerful and efficient.

We have a choice, either we can expand our mind through the constant study of the Bible in combination with other types of book learning and manual labour or we can go drift onto Satan's ground becoming lazy and rarely using the mind for anything good or useful. The choice is yours.

Chris Cosson

TIME

Everyone has the talent of time. Our time belongs to God. Life is too short to waste time in idleness and sin. Time that is wasted can never be called back. However we can redeem wasted time by witnessing to others. Now it is time that we make an effort for others salvation.

Often when we want to take time to pray, Satan makes us think of all these things that we have to do immediately.

On Sabbath mornings, Satan makes us think of things that need to be done before we leave for church. Often these things make us late. We would never dare to be late to our job or to school, but when it comes to church, we are not so diligent with our time and we don't make as much of an effort to be on time. We don't think it matters that much. Brothers and Sisters, What's more important? Being late for an appointment with Jesus or being late for worldly responsibilities? What would happen if we were late to heaven? We would be like the 5 foolish virgins. They were late to the wedding feast and the door was closed and they were not allowed to go in. It would really be sad if we were late also because we could not go in.

How did Mary and Martha spend their time? Martha was so particular about her housework that she didn't have time for Jesus. Mary left the housework for a while and went to listen to Jesus. Some people are so particular about their house being spotless that they don't have any time to read their Bible and pray. By the end of the day they are so tired from picking up every dust particle that they just collapse in bed at night. But this does not mean that we should not neglect housework and have messy, Unclean houses. We should keep them clean and tidy, but not be so particular that we have very little time to study the Bible and pray.

There are many instances when time is wasted, like when we are on the bus or train, or waiting for meals, or even waiting in a doctor's office. At all these times we are tempted to pick up the worldly reading material in the doctor's office, but Sister White says that we should carry a Bible or other religious book with us so that we can read a verse or paragraph in these little bits of time that are normally wasted. We would get a lot more Bible reading done this way.

We all have to work or go to school and that is time well spent, but often the time that is not so wisely used is leisure time. What does Sister White mean when she says in the book Early Writings on page 58? "What leisure time we have should be spent in searching the Bible, which is to judge us in the last day." Does she mean that as soon as we finish our day at work or school that we pullout our Bible and read the Bible until we go to bed? When we get home, there is usually work to do also around the house, but there will always be free time and there is danger that we use the free time in the wrong way. We should aim for about an hour a day in Bible study, but we could also spend some of our free time doing missionary work. We do need to have a balance because we need some quiet time for ourselves also. When we take walks along the beach or in the parks, we can be in quiet communion with Jesus.

The angels write down every detail of our lives - what we have done every second of the day. In the judgment God will require a strict account of how we have used our time. Every moment is precious. We have no time to waste.

No time to devote to selfish pleasure. No time for the indulgence of sin. It is now that we are to form characters for the future immortal life. It is now that we are to prepare for the searching judgment.

Sharon Eaton

MUSIC

Music is something that can be a beautiful talent and tool in pushing forward the Lord's work, but at the same time can be so satanic that people who listen to it are led to think and do many evil and devilish things.

Ellen G White's writings and the Bible are very positive about music used in glorifying God and, in fact, they say that this kind of music is just as important as prayer. Here is some of what Ellen G. White has to say about the talent of music

"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.

"The song of praise, the prayer, the words spoken by Christ's representatives, are God's appointed agencies to prepare a people for the church above, for that loftier worship into which there can enter nothing that defileth.

"The melody of song, poured forth from many hearts in clear, distinct utterance, is one of God's instrumentalities ducted with solemnity and awe as if in the visible presence of the Master of assemblies."

In this quote we see clearly that if music is used in the right way it can be a great way of impressing truth on the minds of unbelievers. Another thing Ellen G. White says about music is this "I call your attention to the singing talent which should be cultivated; for the human voice in singing is one of God's entrusted talents to be employed to His glory." So as we can see, the human voice is something that can be used for the honour and glory of God today.

I remember when we went to the conferences in Canada - the main thing that always impressed me was the singing and playing of the young people. It was so beautiful and at the same time it had "Electrifying power" exactly like the simple music that the early Adventists played which although was not fancy with all kinds of special effects like today. It had something that all the best popular music of today doesn't have - the sweet, clear, and yet powerful messages from a living God.

The Bible also mentions quite a bit about music. First in 2 Chronicles 20:22 we read "And when they began to sing and to praise, the Lord set ambushments, against the children of Ammon, Moab, and Mount Seir, which were come against Judah; and they were smitten." What a way to go into battle, singing and praising the Lord. Their songs possessed the beauty of holiness and if only more singing and praising of the Lord was done we would not have any more wars.

Music is a great talent and whether you go to nursing homes to comfort the old folks, play at church for the honour and glory of God, or just sing wherever you are - Jesus and the angels are sure to join in and some needy soul is bound to hear you. Imagine how beautiful it will be in heaven with all the heavenly hosts singing at the tops of their voices praising the Redeemer for eternity.

Another story that also happened in Canada is there was this one soul who came to church fairly often, but still had his own views on most everything. However, no matter how much he disagreed with us on religious topics, when we sang some old hymns that he remembered from his childhood the Lord touched his heart and he would sing all of them and in many of them he would shed tears of joy.

Unfortunately, Satan has perverted music in such a way as to make it very pleasing to the ear but having a terrible corrupting influence to the mind. We see a great example of this in the Bible in Exodus 32:18 where it says "And he said, It is not the voice of them that shout for mastery, neither is it the voice of them that cry for being overcome: but the noise of them that sing do I hear." In this verse Moses was coming down from Mt. Sinai just after a long talk with God. When he comes close to the camp he hears not sounds of people in trouble but instead sounds of people singing and dancing around a golden calf. As soon as Moses had left the camp certain people had gotten the idea that since he was gone God must have left them so Satan came into their heads and they ended up in a very bad situation going directly against God's commands. I think it is plain and simple that worldly music is something that we Christians should stay completely away from. Satan is especially out to get the youth of today with songs about unrealistic and perverted love, and although these songs sound very nice to the human ear they are completely out of line with God's plan for our lives.

There are so many types of music in so many different fancy forms in today's world that it is hard not to stay away from it. Most of the music in the world is extremely exciting and stimulating exactly what Ellen G. White writes against because she says that it is best for the young and old to have as little stimulation as possible. We Christians have to learn to stay away from all the music of this world at all costs.

There are many more reasons why this music is so bad for our mental and especially our spiritual health. First of all much of the music out there has words and themes that excite the mind to unnecessary and corrupt activity that distracts the mind from God. The words in these songs are often more fit for the city garbage dump, they are that evil and satanic. Also studies have been done on music like heavy metal and it has been found that the song's lyrics, when played backwards, contain satanic messages that the subconscious mind picks up and stores. In addition the beat of worldly music often makes people just want to let themselves go, and this empties the mind

therefore leaving the way open for Satan to come in and plant whatever he wants there. Finally the individuals or groups that play and sing the music of today's world are often very unstable mentally and this rubs off in their music and of course then affects the listener in a negative way. The music of today looks so nice but just like Satan it is a roaring lion that, given its chance, it will devour.

It is very important that if you have a talent in some kind of musical instrument, or in singing, that you develop it, otherwise you will be just like the man in the Bible who buried his one talent and the Lord then took it away and he was given no place in heaven. Think of it, if everyone in the church who had some kind of musical ability and would at least learn to play the songs in The Church Hymnal then if they happened to visit a church where there was nobody who could play an instrument they could play and, through the grace of Christ, they would be a big encouragement to all. So it is my wish and prayer today that we will give up entirely the music of the world because Jesus is coming soon and none of that garbage will be in the New Jerusalem. Instead we should try our utmost to develop our talent of music for the Lord because the talent of music is a very, very important kind of missionary work that has its rightful place in our church today. And of course when we get to heaven we will still be singing and playing praises to the Lord forever.

Richard Eaton

SPEECH.

The power of speech is a talent that most people have and it is one that should be diligently cultivated. Of all the gifts that God has given to man, none are more capable of being a greater blessing for mankind than is this one. With our voice we can give praise and pray to the Lord. We can also convince and persuade others regarding the love of Jesus. It is very important that we train our voice to be a blessing for others.

It is important not only to praise the Lord but also as we speak it is important that we speak clearly that others may understand. We should cultivate a clear reading voice so that in church when we are asked to read we may read clearly and with expression so that our reading can be easily understood and it will not put others to sleep. Also when we pray, we should pray with clear distinct words so that all in the room may understand. Often the force and impressiveness of a message or reading can be lost because of the tone of voice that is used.

With our voice we can bless others but if we are not careful, we may be a means of discouraging someone. One careless word can discourage a soul from the truth.

Children should also be taught to speak respectfully and lovingly to their parents as well as to one another. Only words of gentleness and purity should pass by our lips.

Also we should be speaking of Christ to others, especially those who do not know him. We should do as Christ did, (To illustrate this point further, at this point in time Johann read a story and that story you will find in the Children's Corner for this issue). Wherever we are, we should watch for opportunities to speak to others of Jesus. This is the very highest work in which we can use our talent of speech.

Johann Nalder

TALENTS - LIFE

Each of us has been given different talents for different purposes. Some have more and some have less, but we are still to use each one we have to the best of our ability for the service of the Lord. One talent we all have is that of life. Have you ever thought of life as a talent? It is a gift from God.

"I know thy works, that thou hast effort to keep up a name! If one has the name that thou livest, and art dead." reputation of being a successful Rev. 3: I "God calls upon this church to evangelist, a gifted preacher, a man of make a change. They had a name to live, prayer, a man of faith, a man of special but their works were destitute of the love devotion, there is positive danger that he of Jesus. Oh, how many have fallen will make shipwreck of faith when tried because they trusted in their profession for by the little tests that God suffers to come. salvation! How many are lost by their effort to keep up a name! If one has the reputation of being a successful evangelist, a gifted preacher, a man of prayer, a man of faith, a man of special devotion, there is positive danger that he will make shipwreck of faith when tried by the little tests that God suffers to come. Often his great effort will be to maintain his reputation.

"He who lives in the fear that others do not appreciate his value is losing sight of Him who alone makes us worthy of glorifying God. Let us be faithful stewards over ourselves. Let us look away from self to Christ. Then there will be no trouble at all. All the work done, however excellent it may appear to be, is worthless if not done in the love of Jesus. One may go through the whole round of religious activity, and yet, unless Christ is woven into all that he says and does, he will work for his own glory." Letter 48, 1903.

If we do our work in the love of Jesus, we will be an example to those around us far greater than we can imagine.

"For the Son of man is as a man taking a far journey, who left his house, and gave authority to his servants, and to every man his work, and commanded the porter to watch. Watch ye therefore: for ye know not when the master

of the house cometh, at even, or at midnight, or at the cockcrowing, or in the morning: Lest coming suddenly he find you sleeping.” Mark 13:34-36. We are the steward. We need to watch and pray in order to be ready for the Master’s return, but this involves using all of our talents wisely. We must not be like the servant who hid his talent in the earth. His talent was taken away from him and this will happen to us if there is any talent that we are not using to the best of our ability. Even if we only have one talent - life - we need to be sure we are glorifying God in what we do. Especially in little things like:

-Smiling to a lonely stranger

-Giving a helping hand when needed

-Being kind and polite

-Being understanding to others

-Sharing our faith. “The physical powers are to be brought into service from love to God. The Lord requires the physical strength, and you can reveal your love for Him by the right use of your physical powers, doing the very work, which needs to be done. There is no respect of persons with God.” 8MS, 1894

“However small your talent, God has a place for it. That one talent, wisely used, will accomplish its appointed work. By faithfulness in little duties, we are to work on the plan of addition, and God will work for us on the plan of multiplication. These littlest will become the most precious influences in His work

“Wherever we may be, Christ bids us take up the duty that presents itself. If this is in the home, take hold willingly and earnestly to make home a pleasant place. If you are a mother, train your children for Christ. This is as verily a work for God as is that of the minister in the pulpit. Put your mind on what you are doing. In all your work represent Christ. Do as He would do in your place.” COL359/360.

Marcus Darnmasch

PRESSING ON THE UPWARD WAY

The Apostle Paul exhorts the Christian to press toward three goals in Christ:

“I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.” Philippians 3:14

Is it possible to attain to the high calling, receive the mark, or gain the prize without Christ? Let us examine what is meant by Paul to be in Christ, to press toward our high calling, the mark and the prize.

In Christ

What does it mean to be in Christ?

“Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.” 1 Corinthians 5: 17

When we are in Christ old things pass away. In leaving behind the old things, we must necessarily fill the void with something new. What is it that we leave behind? What do we receive in its place that makes us new?

“Christ is to live in Him human agents and work through their faculties and act through their capabilities. Their will must be submitted to His will; they must tact with His Spirit. Then it is no more they that live, but Christ that lives in them.” Thoughts from the Mount of Blessings p.94.

“I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me. Galatians 2:20

We leave behind our will, our thoughts, our actions. They are exchanged for the will and desires of Christ, When we submit our will to Christ, and act with His Spirit, we become a new creature because Christ lives in us:

“There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus who walk nor after the flesh, but after the Spirit.” Romans 8:1 ,”

To be in Christ means to walk by faith (the Spirit) and to crucify the flesh. ‘It is only then that we are free of the condemnation of the law.

When we have Christ living in us, what is the natural reaction in our life?

“If Christ be in us the hope of glory, we shall walk even as He walked; we shall imitate His life of sacrifice to bless others; we shall drink of the cup, and be baptized with the baptism; we shall welcome a life of devotion, trial, and self-denial, for Christ’s sake. Heaven will be cheap enough whatever sacrifice we may make to obtain it.” Testimonies for the Church, Volume 2, p.73

Why did Christ have to live a life of sacrifice? What is the walk of Christ that we must follow in? Christ was

consciously pressing toward something. He had a mission.

“Think not that I have come ‘to destroy the law or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfill.” Matthew 5:17.

What does Jesus mean by this? ‘How did He fulfill the law and the prophets?’

Speaking of the law, Jesus said; “I am not come to destroy, but to fulfill.” He here used the word “fulfill” in the same sense as when He declared to John the Baptist His “purpose to ‘fulfill all righteousness” (Matthew 3:15); that is, to fill up the measure of the law’s requirement, to give an example of perfect conformity to the will of God: ‘Thoughts from the Mount of Blessing; p. 48

‘Though he were a Son, yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered; And being made perfect, he became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him”. Heb.5:8,’9 ‘Christ had to live a life of sacrifice, obedience and suffering because He was being made perfect. It then follows that if we are to walk as Jesus walked, and imitate His life of sacrifice, we will be made perfect through our sufferings: This is the high calling that we are to press towards -perfection of character in Christ.

Our High Calling

‘The ideal of Christian character is Christlikeness. There is opened before us a path of continual advancement. We have an object to reach, a standard to gain, which includes everything good and pure and noble and elevated. There should be continual striving and constant progress onward and upward toward perfection of character. ...’ Counsels to Teachers. Parents and Students-p. 365.

“Every day we should make advancement. in gaining perfection of character, and this we shall certainly do if we press toward the mark of the prize of our high calling in Christ Jesus.” Sons and Daughters of God p. 368.

“If the heart has been renewed by the Spirit of God, ... our lives will reveal whether the grace of God is dwelling within us. A change will be seen in the character; the habits, the pursuits;” Steps to Christ p. 57.

In order to serve God, we must become partakers of the afflictions of the gospel - which are the sufferings or Christ: There is a reason for the sufferings we are to go through, and we must always bear this reason in mind - we are called, “with an holy calling” Yet we are not expected to go through these afflictions in our own strength.

“By His humanity, Christ touched humanity; by His divinity, He lays hold upon the throne of God. As the Son of man, He gave us an example of obedience; as the Son of God, He gives us power to obey. “ Desire of Ages p. 24.

“Set your faces heavenward, and press toward the mark for the prize of your high calling in Christ Jesus. Run the Christian race with patience, and rise superior to every temptation, however grievous it may be, that shall come to you. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. Draw nigh to God; and if you are desirous of taking the first upward step, you will find His hand stretched out to help you.” Sons and Daughters of God p. 80.

What happens when we attain to this high calling? How is the high calling related to the mark which Paul exhorts us to press toward?

The Mark

“Nevertheless the foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal, The Lord knoweth them that are his. And, Let every one that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity.” 2 Timothy 2:19

“And I saw another angel ascending from the east, having the seal of the living God: and he cried with a loud voice to the four angels, to whom it was given to hurt the earth and the sea, Saying, Hurt not the earth, neither the sea, nor the trees, till we have sealed the servants of our God in their foreheads. And I heard the number of them which were sealed: and there were sealed an hundred and forty and four thousand of all the tribes of the children of Israel,” Revelation 7:2-4

Those that in Christ continually press toward the high calling will receive a mark. This mark, or seal, and the high calling are inseparable. You cannot receive the one without attaining to the other.

“John saw a Lamb on Mount Zion, and with Him 144,000 having His Father’s name written in their foreheads. They bore the signet of heaven, They reflected the image of God. They were full of the light and the glory of the Holy One. If we would have the image and superscription of God upon us, we must separate ourselves from all iniquity. We must forsake every evil way, and then we must trust our cases in the hands of Christ.” Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary, Volume 7 p. 978

“Those that overcome the world, the flesh, and the devil, will be the favored ones who shall receive the seal of the living God. . . . Only those who, in their attitude before God. are filling the position of those who are repenting and confessing their sins in the great anti-typical day of atonement, will be recognized and marked as worthy of God’s protection. . . . Let your souls answer the question, Does my character correspond to the qualifications essential that I n)ay receive a passport to the mansions Christ has prepared for those who are fitted for them? Holiness must

be inwrought in our character.” Testimonies to Ministers and Gospel Workers, pp. 445, 446

The Apostle Paul tells us that the mark is given to us for a purpose. We have discovered so far that the mark is given to those who, by the power of Christ, obtain perfection of character. The question now presented to us is: what is the prize given to those that have the mark, or seal, of God?

The Prize

“But we are bound to give thanks always to God for you, brethren beloved of the Lord, because God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth”. 2 Thessalonians 2:13

“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.” 2 Timothy 4:7, 8

Our salvation is given to us through sanctification. We are sanctified as we grow in grace, walking as Jesus walked, having fellowship with His sufferings, being conformed unto His death. This is a life-long task. Sanctification leads to the fulfillment of salvation - a crown of righteousness. And as we have seen, this incorruptible crown can only be received by those, with an incorruptible character.

Hebrews 10:35-39 “Cast not away therefore your confidence, which hath great recompense of reward. For ye have need of patience, that, after ye have done the will of God, ye might receive the promise. For yet a little while, and he that shall come will come, and will not tarry. Now the just shall live by faith: but if any man draw back, my soul shall have no pleasure in him. But we are not of them who draw back unto perdition; but of them that believe to the saving of the soul.”

After we have done the will of God, we will receive the promise. When we are in Christ, we will have a change of character. When we have a change of character, through the power of Christ, we receive the seal of God. To those that have the seal of God will be given a crown of righteousness.

It is my prayer that we will be of those that believe to the saving of our souls. Let us continue, through the grace of God, to press on the upward way.

Sandra Godfey, Perth, Western Australia.

CHILDREN'S CORNER

SHERRY PRAYS ONCE

God's never been very real to me. Not that I don't believe in His existence. It's just that, well, He's an Idea. Something like the clouds - out there in the blue, but not affecting my day-to-day life much.

It used to bug me the way people would say, “The Lord did this for me,” or “The Lord opened this door or that door.” I have a brain, and I know the only person who opens doors and does things for me is me. Anyway, I used to know it

I guess my story really starts during Christmas vacation. I had just brought my girlfriend back from a date, and we were sitting in the car in her driveway and she was talking. I don't remember what she was saying, because I had my mind on the term paper I was going to ask her to type for me.

“Say, Sherry,” I tried to sound as if it were a new idea. “Would you by any chance be interested in typing something for me?”

Sherry's a Christian, She smiled and said she wouldn't mind. I reached behind the seat, but couldn't see it. I opened the door of the car, took the flashlight, checked the trunk, and gave the whole auto a good once-over. No briefcase anywhere.

“You probably left it at home,” she said. I knew I hadn't left it at home.

“I had my term paper in that briefcase,” I tried not to sound as angry as I was. Besides that I had almost \$200 in cash, my credit cards, and the watch she'd given me for my birthday

“Why don't we pray about it?” she suggested.

Pray? I'd never been caught like this before, but I couldn't let her know I didn't want to pray. I didn't want her to think I was an unbeliever.

“But not out loud,” I said.

We bowed our heads. It was dark, and the car lights going by embarrassed me. I wondered, crying, what people thought about us. Most couples kiss at the end of a date, and here we were standing beside the car, praying.

In a moment (a very long moment for me), it was over.

“There. Now its all taken care of” Sherry said.

But it wasn't all taken care of I walked her to the door, declined an invitation from her mother to come inside, and headed for home. When I got there, I took the flashlight and went through the car again.

The briefcase had been with me when I took the car in for its annual check up. Then I had gone to Richard's Art supply and Service to buy some canvas and oils. Then I had come home. I remembered seeing the briefcase when I was in the garage, but I couldn't remember it after that. I must have left it at the garage.

The next morning, when the garage opened its doors, I was waiting. “Trouble with your car?” the owner asked. “No. It's running fine. I'm I wondering if you saw my briefcase sitting around here anyplace. It's brown leather with gold snaps.” I added hopefully.

He shook his head. “You can ask around, but I haven't seen it. If you left it here, it probably got stolen. Kids come in all the time and pick up stuff that's sitting around.”

After asking a couple other people and receiving negative answers, I searched the garage myself. But the briefcase was not to be found.

I headed for the art store. Maybe I left the thing there. But Richard's Art Supply and Service was closed for the holidays. I knew it wouldn't be there anyway, but I was mad because the store was closed.

“Thanks a whole big lot! “ I aimed the bitter remark out into the blue, in case He was listening.

That night Sherry was bubbling as always. I was moody.

“Come on,” she finally said, “your briefcase is going to show up, so quit being so gloomy. I'll help you tomorrow, and together we'll get a term paper turned out fast. I'll type it and you won't have lost a thing.”

“Except \$200, the wrist watch you gave me, and my briefcase.” I was desperate. “Maybe we should pray again,” I said. Those words coming from me embarrassed me as much they had the night before when she'd said them.

“Why?” Sherry looked at me.

“Well, because” – I finished around.

“We prayed once. God's not deaf There's no need to pray again.”

I suddenly had a headache and had to go home. All the way home I racked my brain over the briefcase. After brainstorming, I prayed to be able to remember where it was.

Sherry prays once and is certain that everything is going to work out, I thought. Very, very simple. I prayed, and racked my brain, and prayed, and I knew it was all hopeless.

Christmas vacation ended, and we headed back for another quarter of campus life. I tried to forget the briefcase. Other things were going along fine, and I didn't want to be reminded about the unhappy loss.

The weeks went by. Three, four, five, six of them If the briefcase mentioned, Sherry just said, “He'll bring it back.”

People laughed at her behind her back. Some kids admired her but she was too idealistic. You know, with Vietnam, the Middle East, pollution, and campus revolutions, what could God afford to do about a briefcase?

I was embarrassed, ashamed, and sorry for her naiveté, but nothing would change her mind. Nothing. “Just wait,” she said, “You'll see.”

Spring was breaking through the snow and ice when the next vacation came. We were eager for a change in our tidy study schedules. And I needed some time to work on another term paper and catch up with my lagging business office account.

On our first Sabbath at home, Sherry and I went to church together. A man asked half- joking about the briefcase.

Before I could say anything, Sherry spoke up. “The Lord is taking good care of it,” she said. “He'll bring it back.”

His face broke into a wise condescending smile, as if he were going to pat her on the head and say, “Come, come my child, Let's be realistic about things.”

I was embarrassed, but furious at his response to Sherry's words. “It will come back,” I heard myself say.

The fierceness of my tone startled him. His mouth straightened into rigid lines, and he walked away.

Sherry smiled at me. I wished she hadn't. I didn't believe the words I'd said. It's just that I couldn't stand everybody thinking she was sweet but deluded.

It was during Sabbath dinner that we got the telephone call.

I was the closest to telephone, so I answered it.

“Mr. Jim Peterson's Art Supply and Service I think you left a briefcase in here about Christmastime.”

I suddenly felt cold all over.

“We've been trying to contact you,” the voice went on, “but haven't had any answer at this number.”

“My folks work during the day,” I said. It was hard to talk. That idea out there in the blue was crowding very close.

Mom and Dad and Sherry stared at me with worried faces and mouthed the questions, “What's wrong? What's happened?”

But the voice was still talking. “If you could pick it up as soon as possible, we'd appreciate it. You've got some

money in here, and we don't like to leave the cash in the store overnight.”

“You mean everything is still there?”

“Sure.”

“I'll be down first thing Monday morning,” I said as I hung up.

The story tumbled out. We were all amazed. That is, all of us was except Sherry