

# The Reformation *Messenger*

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## CHRISTIAN PERSECUTION TODAY? TODAY! Part 2

### Biblical Foundations

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

We already read this text at the beginning. The New Testament was written in Greek. “Witnesses” means also “martyr.” What is a martyr? Let’s take the definition from the Christian Encyclopedia: A martyr is a person who voluntarily gives his life as penalty for his testimony, or refuses to deny his faith or adherent dogma, nor swerves from his principles or conduct.” - World Christian Encyclopedia.

Martyrs in History “Christian persecutions and martyrdom are not merely a theme of the early church, but is a constant companion throughout church history.” Schirrmacher, p. 9. They were present in every century. When we look in the Bible, martyrs began with Abel.

“Abel - 85 priests of Nob (1.Sam.22)- prophets through Jezebel a lord of king Jehoram trampled to death (2.Kgs. 7:17)- prophet Zachariah - prophet Uriah - John the Baptist - Stephen - James (Acts 12:2)- Peter - Paul - all apostles.

The history of the church is also the history of her persecution, starting with the early church, in the Dark Ages, and in the French Revolution (Bartholemew). The persecutions of Christians in the Islamic world and the masses of martyrs in Asia, here especially in Japan (1587-1635), China (1617, 1665, 1723, 1724, 1736, 1811, 1857, 1900) and Korea (1784, 1791, 1801, 1815, 1827, 1839, 1846, 1866, 1881, 1887), are in our hemisphere practically unknown. The almost total extermination (others call it massacring) of the Christians in Armenia by the Turks in 1877-1939 took a toll of about two million. Until today about two millions (Mordecai, p.9) have been killed for their faith. Here it speaks of adherents to Christian creeds who had to die before the eyes of an enlightened, public world. Over there in Karthum, Sudan, is also the largest slave market. Slavery in today’s Sudan is so widespread, that women and children are being sold for less than US\$ 15, and exported to Libya and other Islamic countries. - Mordecai, p.48.

“Gaddafi (Libya) is today the biggest importer of black children from the slave market of Karthum.” - Ibid, p.69.

Christianity was in some countries already suppressed and outlawed before the 20th century (in Japan 1635-1854, in Madagascar from 1835 and in Saudi Arabia until today).

Chiefly small groups have been persecuted. The bigger denominations were mostly passed by Ethelbert Staufer concludes in his book: “Martyrertheologie und Tauferbewegung” “The true church was at all times a church of martyrs.” - Schirrmacher, p. 10

### Persecution in the Bible.

It began in the Old Testament. The first person murdered was according to the words of Jesus, the martyr Abel (Matt.23:35). Besides, Stephen was asking: “Which of the prophets have not your fathers persecuted? ...” Acts, 7:52, “..and slew thy prophets...” Neh. 9:26.

In the New Testament Stephen (Acts 6:8 - 8:3) and James (Acts 12:2) are called martyrs. Only John was an exception. By Stephen needs to be mentioned that the persecution did not come from the state, but from the misled people of God, even from the very top of leadership, the clergy.

Large portions of the Bible are not understandable without the background of a past and future martyrdom. Otto Michel writes in his book “Prophets and Martyrs”: “The Letter to the Hebrews, the first epistle of Peter and the Revelation (are) in the actual sense martyr- scripts, because they serve the means to prepare churches for martyrdom, or to be comforted by them.”

“Only three books in the New Testament do not mention persecution. Four books have especially been written to encourage Christians when persecution comes. Persecution was one of the main topics of the Lord Jesus, Paul, Peter and John. Whole books were written for persecuted believers... In Acts only two chapters do not speak of persecution. The entire missionary work - experience theology of Paul is permeated with the theme of

persecution... Paul could not see himself as anything else but as a martyr." - Schirrmacher, p.1.1...c

"The martyr-theology must not keep silence of the fact, proven by history many times, that Christians in the name of the Christian faith were spreading persecution and death." - Ibid, p.16. Thus, "All of the prominent creeds have to recognize that there are martyrs, as well as that martyrs were produced by Christians who believe differently." -Ibid,p.17.

All persecutions really mean persecuting Christ.

Here I want to remind us of the thoughts of my previously given lecture about the new tolerance (printed last year in the "Messenger"). Which organization is being persecuted? Everyone is saying: "My church to which I belong, I support." But this is a fallacy. We read in Revelation 12:11: "And the dragon was wroth with the woman, and went to make war with the remnant of her seed."

The enemy of Christ, Satan, fights only against the remnant of God's people. It does not say here that Satan wars against a church or a congregation, also not against the people of God. He works solely against the remnant...

"The true reason of the suffering of Christians is Jesus. Christ is the actual trigger... "The clearer an understanding, knowledge and witness the church experiences, the more certain will she have to count on the opposition and hostility of the antichrist." Because of that, every suffering in persecution happens for "Christ's sake." That is why Luther says: "This must be considered, that every persecution, even on church level, which happens because of the devil in the heart, happens for the sake of Jesus." - Schirrmacher, p.19.

Christ Himself had always made it clear, that persecution would take place because of Him.

"And ye shall be hated of all men for my name's sake." Matt. 10:20. "...and whosoever will lose his life for my sake shall find it." Matt. 10:25. ";..they shall lay their hands on you, and persecute you... into prisons... for my sake." Lk. 21:12. "If they have persecuted me, they will also persecute you." John 15:20.

Persecution goes back to the hatred of the world against God and His revelation in Jesus Christ. "If the' world hate you, ye know that it hated me before it hated you. If ye were of the world, the world would love his own; but because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you." John 15: 18,19.

The Holy Ghost as: Comforter "If ye be reproached for the name of Christ, happy are ye: for the spirit of glory and of God resteth upon you." I.Pet.4:4.

"The early church was always aware of the fact, that the Holy Spirit is able to give the- persecuted the wisdom and power to endure. For Tertullian, the Holy Spirit goes to prison with him, yet the Holy Spirit as the trainer even prepares the Christians for the persecution." - Schirrmacher, p.24.

Before the stoning of Stephen, the glory of God appeared before him: "But he, being full of the Holy Ghost, looked up steadfastly into heaven, and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing on the right hand of God." Acts, 7:55. E.G. White expressed herself in similar words: "True, they had through fear of death, kept some timid souls from; embracing the truth; but many, even of the most timid, had received the truth, and there upon their fears and timidity immediately left them. As these witnessed the death of their brethren and beheld their firmness and patience, they knew that God and angels assisted them to endure such sufferings, and they grew bold and fearless." - EW, p.226.

I am now saddened that with many the Holy Spirit is being treated like a foster child, "The discussion about the personality of the Holy Spirit has probably produced one of the reasons." - Mager, p.9.

Maybe it is the opponent of God, who maneuvered us to this disregard of this omnipotent power of God -:the Holy Spirit.

When one member suffers...

"Remember them that are in bonds as bound with them." Heb. 13:3. One Christian never suffers all alone, but always as a part of the body of Christ: .., And whether one member suffers, all the members suffer with it." 1.Cor. 12:26.

"A church which ignores its martyrs, and does not pray for them, nor steps in for them with courage and cares for

them, destroys not only the spiritual community among an. the members of the body of Christ. It betrays at the end Jesus Himself, the heart of the body who suffers with His members." - Schirrmacher, p. 48.

Two Bible texts of the Apostle Paul who grew from persecution: "For we would not, brethren, have you ignorant of our trouble which came to us in Asia, that we were pressed out of measure, above strength, insomuch that we despaired even of life: But we had the sentence of death in ourselves, that we should not trust in ourselves, but in God which raiseth the dead: Who delivered us from so great a death, and doth deliver: in whom we trust that he will yet deliver us; Ye also helping together by prayer for us..." 2.Cor.1:8-11.

"For I know that this shall turn to my salvation through your prayer, and the supply of the Spirit of Jesus Christ." Phil. 1:19.

"Your prayers," "your prayers"! Where are today our prayers for the persecuted?

Elisabeth and Jim Elliot. When we talk about persecution of Christians, then the story about Jim and Elisabeth must not be left out. In 1956, in the jungle of Ecuador, five young missionaries were killed by members of the Waorani tribe. It took 33 long years till the circumstances about this crime became known:

"In 1989 Olive Liefeld, widow of one of the five missionaries, went back for the first time to the Waoranis. She knew that Elisabeth Elliot, widow of killed Jim Elliot, together with Rahel Saint, sister of the murdered Nate Saint, had for years successfully worked among the Waorans. Apparently the five culprits were still alive, and all of them had accepted the faith of Jesus Christ."

In January of 1989 Mrs. Liefeld, through the help of Rahel Saint was able to meet one of the killers, Kimo and his wife Dawa. Both natives took the American lady to the spot of the crime.

Olive Liefeld remembers: 'In the months before the murder missionaries flew in wide circles over the native village, in a pail letting down donations. The day was celebrated when the natives sent back monkey meat, parrots clothing. Our men prepared a schedule when they could start with the frrst visit to these natives.'

On that day long looked forward to, they landed with a plane on the River Cuaray. The Waorani-men came out of the jungle to greet the missionaries.

'Dawa said, that one of the five men took a picture of an Indian girl from his pocket. The Ancas Indians wear no clothing and therefore knew nothing about pockets, cameras or photos. Thus they drew the conclusion, that these strangers must be cannibals, because they thought, one of them took a little Indian girl - the picture - out of his own body.'

The missionaries were totally unaware with how much fear the Indians prepared themselves for the next meeting. Because of that, five Waoranis attacked the young Americans at the shore after they had landed. Dawa and several others were watching everything from a safe distance. "Dawa was telling how our men (the Americans) deliberately shot above the heads of the attacking Waoranis," said Mrs. Liefeld, "and one shot even hit her in the knee. She knew that these strangers could shoot Kimo and the other Waoranis, but it was obvious they did not want to do that." Within minutes all five missionaries were murdered.

In the following years, people like Elisabeth Elliot and Rahel Saint let the Waoranis know that their men came in peace to them, to tell them about the gospel of Jesus Christ. Gikitia, the leader of the attack, was especially hit by the message that two of the Americans were former soldiers, but rather shed their own blood than to shoot these natives. Gikita became a Christian shortly after and with him several more Waorani men with their families.

The decision of the Americans to shoot no Waoranis, was more than a token of peace. And last but not least it was their death, that ended a circuit of revenge, violence and murder between the tribes. Because when the Waoranis became Christians, out of their initiative followed peace with the tribes, with which they were warring for generations." -Kraemer, p.91.

Steve Saint, son of the murdered Nate Saint continues to do the missionary work among the natives in the jungle of Ecuador.

"Why the missionary efforts among the Waoranis was crowned with success, has also to do with an additional mysterious event directly after the massacre. The natives told Olive Liefeld: Having the dead before their eyes, Dawa between the trees and Kime at the shore, they heard a peculiar singing. Both testify they saw a group of people above the treetops singing and beamed like a hundred flashlights, ... The lights were bright and radiated,

and suddenly they were gone.” - Kraemer, p.93.

Kimo told that only when they heard the word of God they were no more afraid. Those singers have been the angels of God.

Klaus Kraemer closes this story in his book: “Engel - Grenzgäenger zwischen den Welten”, with these words: “I try to say: that God out of this tragedy of death and grief was going to develop something good which the survivors at that time were not yet able to have in view.

Why angels of God keep some people from terrible catastrophes, why they allow such calamities to happen to others with all the grievous consequences, is a mystery of God and yet a part of His perfect plan. This is not a cheap attempt to explain something, no fatalism, but my deepest conviction and consolation. The love of God does not make distinctions, also when according to our perception, it reveals itself differently.” - Kraemer, p.93.

The missionary Ralph Shallis, who laboured many years among Muslims ‘in Algeria, writes in his book: “Lebendige Zellen: “I believe in the possibility of a global persecution which will be more cunning, inexorable, worked out and more cruel than all the persecutions in church history since the time of the apostles. After the falling through of our great organizations there remains only Jesus and His word. The more we live this reality, the better we are prepared for the difficult times.” - Shallis, p.119.

“The person of Jesus Christ has not lost its attraction; the Bible has not become obsolete, in the contrary: each generation becomes newly captivated by its truths, because Christ is that reality, that has answers ready for all the longings, the fears of every human being. But it is our way how we represent Christ to the world, that makes Him unintelligible, yes even invisible. We obscure His lucidity... for things of less importance... It is time to think over our ways how we evangelize, to think over our churches, our future and let our minds pass through the refining fire of the word of God.” - Shallis, p. ‘J! 115.117.

“The love of God makes no distinctions, even when according to our perception **it** reveals itself differently. Moreover, I am certain that God, to a person whom he had protected many times before, had to suffer much, and who died early and in a tragic manner,...

For all who count on the love of God: “He shall give angels charge over thee, to keep thee ill’ all thy ways.” By that Christians will be comforted, encouraged and strengthened.” - Kraemer, p.94.

“And the peace of God, which passeth understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.” Phil. 4:7.

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*By: Helmu Welker, Germany*

*Translated by Edda Tedford, Canada*

## YESTERDAY, TOMMOROW, TODAY,

### Yesterday

I walked with fear.  
Our talk brought only tear,  
I longed to be brave;  
But how to be saved,  
Fear tugged, along

### Today

Hope joined and it makes us three,  
Fear, hope and me.  
Hope pointed me to the Savior,  
Who lives on the other side of the river  
Fear declined; Faith joined.

### Tomorrow

It's my Savior, Faith, Hope and I  
And there is not a sigh nor a cry.  
For today I have found the Savior,  
And we will walk together forever.  
My Savior chased out fear.

*Elham Gordon*

## MARTYRDOM

Millions of martyrs in the past ages have given witness to the power of the gospel. Rather than violate their conscience, they welcomed imprisonment, torture and death. Their enemies, incensed by Satanic fury, inflicted upon their victims the most painful and cruel torture.

Little did the disciples of Jesus understand of their future sufferings and death when they joined with Him. Would Christ have revealed it to them in the beginning, they might have turned away from Him as did the 70. All of them except John suffered a martyr's death.

From the time of Nero, year 67, we find 10 distinct persecutions to the time of Diocletian, which began year 303.

Nero blamed the burning of the city of Rome upon Christians and started a great persecution against them. Thousands upon thousands perished in it, including the apostles Paul and Peter.

Soon after, year 81, Domitian, who was known for his cruelty, started to persecute Christians. He cast apostle John in the boiling oil but through the intervention of God he did not die; but Nicodemus and Timothy perished in this persecution.

The third persecution began under Tajan, A.D. 108. Many thousands were put to death daily. Seeing this, Pliny the Second sent a letter to Trajan saying that these Christians are law-abiding people not deserving the persecution. But this letter did not stop it. When Calocerius, a pagan witnessed the torment of the Christians, and their patience under it, he exclaimed in a kind of ecstasy, "Great is the God of the Christians"; for this he was apprehended and suffered a similar fate.

Marcus Aurelius started the fourth persecution A.D. 162. The cruelties used in this persecution were such that many of the spectators shuddered with horror at the sight, and were astonished at the intrepidity of the sufferers. In this persecution also Polycarp perished. When he was asked to deny his faith, he answered, "86 years have I served Him, alid He' never once wronged me; How then shall I blaspheme my King, who hath saved me?"

So the terrible persecutions continued, one after another. The tenth persecution came by Diocletian A.D. 303, and lasted the following 10 years. This time period in the history is called the Era Of The Mftlyrs. The decision was made to put a termination to Christianity. In some places, whole cities of Christians were burned, and all the inhabitants perished in the fire.

These 10 persecutions were carried on by Pagan Rome. The Papal Rome in the next 1260 years killed over 50 million Christians. It looked like Christianity was perishing; but history tells us differently. The blood of the martyrs was a seed for the Gospel. When one martyr lost his life, 20 took his place. They were converted to Christianity by the witness of these men, women and children who rather suffered torture and death than deny their faith. When they were brought to the place of execution, their appearances were of one going to his own wedding, praising God and singing joyful songs, as they gave up their lives.

"Every martyr of Jesus has died a conqueror. Says the prophet, 'They overcame him [ 'That old serpent, called the devil, and Satan'] by the blood of the Lamb; and they loved not their lives unto the death.' Rev. 12: 11, 9" PP 77

"Of all the gifts' that Heaven can bestow upon men, fellowship with Christ in His sufferings is the most weighty trust and the highest honor. Not Enoch, who was translated to Heaven, not Elijah, who ascended in a chariot of fire, was greater or more honored than John the Baptist, who perished alone in the dungeon." MH 478

"The disciples were not endowed with the courage and fortitude of the martyr's until such grace was needed. Then the Savior's promise was fulfilled." DA 354

"As; thy days, so shall thy strength be." Deut. 33:25

Today we are asking a question, "Why does the persecution linger?" "Why is it that God's people have so much freedom and prosperity in material things", when Paul writes to us, "Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution." 2Tim 3: 12

Sister White gives us an answer to this question, "Why is it, then, that persecution seems in a great degree to slumber? The only reason is that the church has conformed to the world's standard and therefore awakens no opposition. The religion which is current in our day is not of the pure and holy character that marked the Christian faith in the days of Christ and His apostles. It is only because of the spirit of compromise with sin, because the great truths of the word of God are so indifferently regarded, because there is so little vital godliness in the church, that Christianity is apparently so popular with the world. Let there be a revival of the faith and power of the early church, and the spirit of persecution will be revived, and the fires of persecution will be rekindled." GC 48

What does the Spirit of Prophecy tell us about the near future? II A great crisis awaits the people of God. Very soon our nation will attempt to enforce upon all the observance of the first day of the week as a sacred day." Last Day Events p. 144

"The persecution of Protestants by Romanism, by which the religion of Jesus Christ was almost annihilated, will be more than rivaled when Protestantism and Papacy are combined." Last Day Events p. 147

"Many will be imprisoned, many will flee for their lives from cities and towns, and many will be martyrs for Christ's sake in standing in defense of the truth." 3SM 397

The prophesies are clear to us. We are not to plan our lives in this world but make speedy preparations for the future. Soon our money and property will be useless to us.

In the mighty shaking which is before us, the cowards will leave the church. World loving members will give up their faith rather than suffer persecution. But the faithful remnant, who in times of peace and prosperity were faithful, now in the time of persecution will remain true to God. The fires of persecution will purify the little

remnant and prepare them to enter into their heavenly home.

May the Lord help each one of us to consecrate our lives to Him a new and bring in a revival similar to the early church, and by so doing hasten the coming of the Lord.

AMEN

*Timo Martin*

## THE PERFECT PERSON

***'Be ye therefore perfect, even as my Father in heaven is perfect. Mat. 5:48.***

Jesus didn't say, "Strive to reach perfection sometime at the end of your life." He said, "Be perfect." This is present tense. He asks you to be perfect right here and right now. He would never ask you to do something that is not possible, so it is time we put the idea out of our minds that it is impossible for us to be perfect.

"Jesus said, Be perfect as your Father is perfect. If you are the children of God you are partakers of His nature, and you cannot but be like Him. Every child lives the life of his father. If you are God's children, begotten by His Spirit, you live by the life of God. The life in you will produce the same character and manifest the same works as it did in Him. "MB 77,78.

"God's ideal for His children is higher than the highest human thought can reach... This command is a promise. The plan of redemption contemplates our complete recovery from the power of Satan. Christ always separates the contrite soul from sin. He came to destroy the works of the devil, and He has made provision that the Holy Spirit shall be imparted to every repentant soul to keep him from sinning." DA 311.

### GOD IS PERFECT:

God is spoken about in the Bible as being perfect. He never leaves his work unfinished or imperfect. He will carry through the plan of salvation to its perfect end. "He is the Rock, his work is perfect: for all his ways are judgment: a God of truth and without iniquity, just and right is he." Deut. 32:4. And thus Jesus is telling us to be perfect as His heavenly Father is perfect.

Whatever God does is right. "As for God, his way is perfect: the word of the Lord is tried: he is a buckler to all those that trust in him." Ps 18:30.

And therefore we can conclude that His law is also perfect. "The law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul: the testimony of the Lord is sure, making wise the simple." Ps 19:7.

### EXAMPLES OF PERFECT PEOPLE:

In the Bible, God revealed His will to mankind and that will is for man to live a perfect life.

Abraham, in the Old Testament, was also told to be perfect, "And when Abram was ninety years old and nine, the Lord appeared to Abram, and said unto him, I am the Almighty God; walk before me, and be thou perfect." Genesis 17: 1. He was called to be sanctified and to lead a blameless life before God. God wanted Abraham to measure up more completely to His exalted standard of purity and holiness. He was called to a higher experience than he had known before. The Christian life involves growth. We will be ever growing up into the likeness of Christ.

Jehoshaphat gave instructions to the Levites and priests in the temple and ended his exhortation by saying, "Thus shall ye do in the fear of the Lord, faithfully, and with a perfect heart." 2 Chron. 19:9.

Paul encouraged the believers to be perfect. "Finally, brethren, farewell. Be perfect, be of good comfort, be of one mind, live in peace; and the God of love and peace shall be with you." 2 Cor. 13:11.

Solomon was also told to be perfect, "Let your heart therefore be perfect with the Lord our God, to walk in his statutes, and to keep his commandments, as at this day." 2 Kings 8:61. David continued to encourage him... "And thou, Solomon my son, know thou the God of thy father, and serve him with a perfect heart and with a willing

mind.” 1 Chron. 28:9.

However Solomon allowed his many wives to turn his heart away from the Lord and it is recorded that, “His heart was not perfect with the Lord his God, as was the heart of David his father.” 1 Kings 11:4. He did not heed his father’s counsel.

When there was a call to bring offerings for the building of the temple in the time of Solomon, “the people rejoiced, for that they offered willingly, because with a perfect heart they offered willingly to the Lord: and David the king also rejoiced with great joy.” 1 Chron 29:9. The people were working for the Lord with a perfect heart.

In the Bible we read of several other men who were considered perfect. First there was Noah, “Noah was a just man and perfect in his generations, and Noah walked with God.” Genesis 6:9. Noah preserved the law and he taught it to his descendants. Noah was said to be a perfect man, yet later he proved susceptible to the weakness of the flesh.

The perfect and mature Christian is one who is fully dedicated to the Lord. Though they have weaknesses to overcome, they press on toward the mark. The day will come when the work of eradicating all sins and selfishness from the redeemed will be complete and the saints will be fully and permanently without spot or wrinkle.

Then there was Job; “There was a man in the land of Uz, whose name was Job; and that man was perfect and upright, and one that feared God, and eschewed evil,” Job 1:1, “The man who is perfect in the sight of God is the man who has reached the degree of development that heaven expects of him at any given time,” 3BC 499

And a third person is a king of Judah, named Asa, “But the high places were not removed: nevertheless Asa’s heart was perfect with the Lord all his days.” 1 Kings 15:14.

Hezekiah thought he was perfect, “I beseech thee, O Lord, remember now how I have walked before thee in truth and with a perfect heart, and have done that which is good in thy sight. And Hezekiah wept sore.” 2 Kings 20:3. But did he really know his heart?

Then there were others who definitely were not perfect. .. Above we mentioned Solomon after his heathen wives led him astray. There was also a king of Judah named Amaziah, “And he did that which was right in the sight of the Lord, but not with a perfect heart.” 2 Chron. 25:2. It is possible to outwardly do good things and serve the Lord, but not have a perfect heart

When we think of perfection often we think of a term that means we have fully attained. We have reached the ultimate goal from which there is no possibility of reversing. Is this true? Was there any room for these men to grow? Did they know all there was to know about salvation? Did they remain in a perfect state? We will answer this question later in the article. First we will study

## HOW TO BE PERFECT

**Bible reading:** “And that from a child thou hast known the holy scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus. All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness.” 2 Tim. 3:15, 16. “No man, woman or youth can attain to Christian perfection and neglect the study of the Word of God.” CSW 17. “God reaches for the hand of faith in us to direct it to lay fast hold upon the divinity of Christ, that we may attain to perfection of character. And how this is accomplished, Christ has shown us. By what means did He overcome in the conflict with Satan? By the word of God.” DA 123.

Separation from habits and practices of the world: In Deuteronomy 18:9-14 we see Moses relating a message from the Lord to the people. If they would refuse to have anything to do with the abominations of the nations in the land of Canaan, especially those that are involved in Spiritualism, then the Lord would bless them. He told them to drive them out, and to be “perfect with the Lord thy God.” V.13. So one condition of reaching perfection is to separate our affections from practices of this world. “Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world...” I John2:15.

By the Strength and power of God (co-operation with God): Towards the end of his life King David was able to acknowledge that, “God is my strength and power: and he maketh my way perfect.” 2 Sam. 22:33. Only by the strength and power of God can we obtain perfection, yet it is not an impossibility for God. The difficulty lies in our lack of faith. Do we really believe that God can make us perfect? “The work of gaining salvation is one of co-partnership, a joint operation. There is to be co-operation between God and the repentant sinner. This is necessary for the formation of right principles in the character. Man is to make earnest efforts to overcome that

which hinders him from attaining to perfection. But he is wholly dependent upon God for success. Human effort of itself is not sufficient. Without the aid of divine power it avails nothing. God works and man works. Resistance of temptation must come from man, who must draw his power from God. On the one side there is infinite wisdom, compassion, and power; on the other, weakness, sinfulness, absolute helplessness." AA 482.

**Keeping the Commandments:** Perfection of character is the prerequisite to entrance into the kingdom of heaven. The standard of perfection is found in those principles of righteousness and love set forth in the commandments of God.

The rich young ruler came to Jesus asking what he must do to be saved. He was sure that he was keeping the commandments, however he still felt there was something missing. "Jesus said unto him, If thou wilt be perfect, go and sell that thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come and follow me." Mat. 19:21. The outward keeping of the letter of the commandments (as opposed to the spirit of the commandments) does not make one perfect. The heart needs to be changed. "For the law made nothing perfect, but the bringing in of a better hope did; by the which we draw nigh unto God." Heb. 7:19. (Ceremonial law 9:9, 10:1, 11:40). "Christ read the ruler's heart. Only one thing he lacked, but that was a vital principle. He needed the love of God in the soul. This lack, unless supplied, would prove fatal to him; his whole nature would become corrupted.. By indulgence, selfishness would strengthen. That he might receive: the love of God, his supreme love of self must be surrendered.

"Christ gave this man a test. He called upon him to choose between the heavenly treasure and worldly greatness. The heavenly treasure was assured him if he would follow Christ. But self must yield; his will must be given into Christ's control. The very holiness of God was offered to the young ruler. He had the privilege of becoming a son of God, and a co-heir with Christ to the heavenly treasure. But he must take up the cross, and follow the Saviour in the path of self- denial... .

"Christ made the only terms which could place the ruler where he would perfect a Christian character. His words were words of wisdom, though they appeared severe and exacting. In accepting and obeying them was the ruler's only hope of salvation. His exalted position and his possessions were exerting a subtle influence for evil upon his character. If cherished, they would supplant God in his affections...

"His claim that he had kept the law of God was a deception. He showed that riches were his idol. He could not keep the commandments of God while the world was first in his affections. " DA 519 - 522.

"You cannot equal the copy; but you can resemble it and, according to your ability, do likewise. 'Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind; and thy neighbour as thyself.' Such love must dwell in your hearts, that you will be ready to give up the treasures and honours of this world if thereby you may influence one soul. to engage in the service of Christ." 2T 170.

**Self-control:** "For in many things we offend all. If any man offend not in word, the same is a perfect man, and able also to bridle the whole body." James 3:2. "He who speaks only what is pure and honest and kind has attained to the goal of Christlikeness. Such a man makes the best kind of teacher. . . . With the most difficult member of the body under control it should be relatively easy to control the other members... A man's words reveal the tenor of his thoughts. If he controls his thoughts to the extent that his words are consistently Christlike, the whole body is safely under control." 7BC 525.

"You cannot attain to Christian perfection unless you possess perfect control of your own spirit." 2T 3U."The greatest triumph given us by the religion of Christ is control over ourselves. Our natural propensities must be controlled or we can never overcome as Christ overcame." 4T 235.

"Through the help that Christ can give we shall be able to learn to bridle the tongue. Sorely as He was tried on the point of hasty and angry speech, He never once sinned with His lips. With patient calmness He met the sneers, the taunts, and the ridicule of His fellow workers at the carpenter's bench. Instead of retorting angrily, He would begin to sing one of David's beautiful psalms; and His companions, before realizing what they were doing, would unite with Him in the hymn. What a transformation would be wrought in this world if men and women today would follow Christ's example in the use of words." RH 5- 26-04

"It is impossible for those who indulge the appetite to obtain Christian perfection." 2T 400.

It is important to make a covenant with God to guard well your words. Revengeful speech never makes one feel that he has gained the victory.

**Through suffering:** Jesus has sent us an invitation: "But the God of all grace, who hath called us unto his eternal glory by Christ Jesus, after that ye have suffered a while, make you perfect, stables, strengthen, settle you." 1 Peter

5:10. God, Himself will equip you to endure all the assaults that Satan may bring against you.

“And he said unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness “ 2 Cor. 12:9.

Firmness in principle: “For he that wavereth is like a wave of the sea driven with the wind and tossed. Let not that man think that he shall receive any thing of the Lord.” James 1:6,7. “Purity of life and a character moulded after the divine pattern are not obtained without earnest effort and fixed principles. A vacillating person will not succeed in attaining Christian perfection. Such will be weighed in the balances and found wanting.” 2T 408/9.

Continual Growth: “Therefore leaving the principles of the doctrine of Christ, let us go on unto perfection; not laying again the foundation of repentance from dead works, and of faith toward God,...” Heb. 6:1. Having built a foundation is not enough, This does not make a person perfect. We must build a good foundation and then go on to perfection. “As in nature, so in grace; there can be no life without growth. The plant must either grow or die. As its growth is silent and imperceptible, but continuous, so is the development of the Christian life. At every stage of development our life may be perfect; yet if God’s purpose for us is fulfilled, there will be continual advancement. Sanctification is the work of a lifetime.” COL 65.”

“The tempter’s agency is not to be accounted as an excuse for one wrong act. Satan is jubilant when he hears the professed followers of Christ making excuses for their deformity of character. It is these excuses that lead to sin. There is no excuse for sinning. A holy temper, a Christlike life, is accessible to every repenting, believing child of God.” DA 311

**THE GOAL:** Jesus is looking for perfection in His people and this is why He gave gifts to the church, “Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ:” Eph. 4:13.

“Not as though I had already attained, either were already perfect: but I follow after, if that I may apprehend that for which also I am apprehended of Christ Jesus... Let us therefore, as many as be perfect, be thus minded: and if any thing ye be otherwise minded, God shall reveal this unto you.” Phil. 3:12,15. Any earnest Christian will see the necessity of disregarding the past and hastening on to perfection. When we earnestly press on in the Christian race, God will point out to us our errors in doctrine and practice and it is our choice as to whether we want to give them up. If we choose to give them up, God will supply the strength.

“Whom we preach, warning every man, and teaching every man in all wisdom; that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus.” Col. 1:28.

### THE RESULT:

There are blessings given to God’s perfect people. Not that He favours and loves some people more than others. The blessings are a natural result of our lives being one with Jesus. He has promised us much peace and happiness. Also protection during crisis and comfort during difficult times. He has promised to be an ever- present helper in our times of need.

“That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works,” 2 Tim. 3:17. He will perform good works.

“I in them, and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one;” John 17:23. He will be one with Jesus and there will be unity amongst their fellow believers.

“The disciple is not above his master: but everyone that is perfect shall be as his master.” Luke 6:40. He shall be like his Master.

“Mark the perfect man, and behold the upright: for the end of that man is peace.” Ps. 37:37. He will have perfect peace.

“For the upright shall dwell in the land, and the perfect shall remain in it.” Pro 2:21. He shall remain in the land. The heavenly Canaan is promised to them.

“The righteousness of the perfect shall direct his way...” Pro 11:5. He will have direction in his life.

“Mine eyes shall be upon the faithful of the land, that they may dwell with me: he that walketh in a perfect way, he shall serve me.” Ps. 101:6. They will dwell with Christ and will serve Him.

“Unless you seek to serve Him with your undivided affections, you will fail to perfect holiness in His fear, and

you will be compelled to hear the last fearful word, Depart.” 2T 237.

### THE BLESSING:

“For the eyes of the Lord run to and fro throughout the whole earth, to shew himself strong in behalf of them whose heart is perfect toward him.” 2 Chron. 16:9.

“Much may be done to restore the moral image of God in man, to improve the physical, mental and moral capabilities. Great changes can be made in the physical system by obeying the laws of God and bringing into the body nothing that defiles. And while we cannot claim perfection of the flesh, we may have Christian perfection of the soul. Through the sacrifice made in our behalf, sins may be perfectly forgiven. Our dependence is not in what man can do; it is in what God can do for man through Christ. When we surrender ourselves wholly to God, and fully believe, the blood of Christ cleanses from all sin. The conscience can be freed from condemnation. Through faith in His blood, all may be made perfect in Christ Jesus. Thank God that we are not dealing with impossibilities. We may claim sanctification. We may enjoy the favour of God. We are not to be anxious about what Christ and God think of us, but about what God thinks of Christ our Substitute. Ye are accepted in the Beloved. The Lord shows, to the repenting, believing one, that Christ accepts the surrender of the soul, to be moulded and fashioned after His own likeness.” 2SM 32.

### CAN WE LOSE PERFECTION? (is it a permanent condition?)

As mentioned earlier human weakness Noah showed of Asa it is said: “Asa’s long record of faithful service was marred by some mistakes, made at times when he failed to put his trust fully in God. When on one occasion, the king of Israel entered the kingdom of Judah and seized Ramah, a fortified city only five miles from Jerusalem, Asa sought deliverance by forming an alliance with Benhadad, king of Syria. This failure to trust God alone in time of need was sternly rebuked by Hanani the prophet.” PK 113. And did Asa listen to the prophet? “Asa was wroth with the seer, and put him in a prison house; for he was in a rage with him because of this thing. And Asa oppressed some of the people the same time.” 2 Chron. 16:10. This is what happened to a man who at one time had a perfect heart.

Lucifer lost his perfection, “Thou wast perfect in thy ways from the day that thou wast created, till iniquity was found in thee.” Ezekiel 28:15.

Hezekiah considered himself a perfect man, yet he made a mistake when the ambassadors came from Babylon to inquire regarding the sun going backwards.

“Behold, God will not cast away a perfect man, neither will he help the evil doers.” 8:20

A man can be perfect today, however this does not mean he has been sealed. When the angel has sealed God’s people with the indelible seal, they cannot sin anymore. A person may be perfect today - as soon as you repent of your sins, you are perfect, until the next time you sin. Thus if a man is perfect today this does not mean that he has fully attained. He may lose his way in the future. He may fall at some point in time, however we can be perfect right now by the grace of God. But being perfect includes growth. The perfect man will continue to grow in grace (the sanctification process). Jesus is looking for perfect people today and you can be one of them.

“The ideal of Christian character is Christlikeness. As the Son of man was perfect in His life, so His followers are to be perfect in their life. Jesus in all things made like unto His brethren. He became flesh, even as we are. He was hungry and thirsty and weary. He was sustained by food and refreshed by sleep. He shared the lot of man; ye He was the blameless Son of God. He was God in the flesh. His character is to be ours. The Lord says of those who believe in Him, ‘I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people.’ 2 Cor 6:16.

“Christ is the ladder that Jacob saw, the base resting on the earth, and the topmost round reaching to the gate of heaven, to the very threshold of glory. If that ladder had failed by a single step of reaching the earth, we should have been lost. But Christ reaches us where we are. He took our nature and overcame, that we through taking His nature might overcome. Made ‘in the likeness of sinful flesh’ (Rom. 8:3), He lived a sinless life. Now by His divinity He lays hold upon the throne of heaven, while by His humanity He reaches us. He bids us by faith in Him attain to the glory of the character of God. Therefore we are to be perfect, even as our ‘Father which is in heaven is perfect’ “DA 311/312.. AMEN

*Wendy Eaton*

## HUNGER AND THURST AFTER RIGHTEOUSNESS

One day while I was visiting the big city the capital of Tamil Nadu called Madras, I stepped into an Indian restaurant for a plate of rice and some eggs. It was a Hindu rice shop with the usual row of charcoal fire, with a big pot of rice and varies kinds of curries, a long bench in front on the sidewalk and tables behind. I sat on one of the benches and gave my order. When I was served and while eating I noticed an Indian beggar boy in front of another eating place .Just across the street. He said hello, hello, plaintively, patting his empty stomach. "Give me some food, I am dying with hunger, have mercy! Please sir," he was begging. But pestered with beggars all day long and troubled by this nuisance, the restaurant owner took a big wooden spoon and chased this fellow out. "Get out you little pest." Abased, this little beggar boy came to the next eating-place and he made the same plea. "Sir, please give me something to eat." And he continued repeating the same phrase again but the restaurant owner likewise had no mercy. "Get out you little boy," and chased him away. Sadly he turned away and he came to the shop where I was eating and waiting to be served. He repeated the same cry again. "Give me some food. I am dying of hunger." The man who was preparing the food answered the boy. "go away", and he chased him.

Most of the oriental eating-places have a garbage can in-the entrance where people spit and put their beetle with their tobacco in their mouth when they come to eat. That's where all the scraps and left overs and all the garbage ~s dumped. As the beggar boy was going away he just came across a small-unfinished meal inside the garbage can. Right away he moved slowly and swiftly. He took the food in the can and started to run and he was eating the meal. He was jumping with joy saying, "I got some food I got some food."

transport or be ashamed of being seen by people reading a Bible. Or to help the poor who ask for help or to help an old man who ask for help on the road or what others are going to think about me if I stoop low to help someone. To be with the outcast of the society and help them because I am proud, I don't want to do these things. If I am truly hungering and thirsting after righteousness my soul becomes different.

When I have this soul hunger I will behave exactly like Christ. Then I will pray to God without ceasing like this hungry boy was begging. When he found little food he was so happy. If we will plead with God for our soul. hunger surely we will be filled, not like these restaurant owner's who have no mercy but like our Heavenly Father who's love to us and who's mercies are many.

Suddenly something struck on my mind. I knew the beggar boy was very hungry but I was really feeling what hunger could do. I have discovered that people who are really hungry are not ashamed. They can eat anything, anywhere. They don't mind how many people see them or what others say to them or about them. And sometimes I wondered if I was really hungry for righteousness. I don't mind carrying a Bible to church or to read the Bible on the public

"The Lord is merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and plenteous in mercy. He will not chide neither will He keep his anger forever. He hath not dealt with us after our sins; nor rewarded us according to our iniquities. For as the heaven is high above the earth, so great is His mercy toward them that fear Him. As far as the east is from the west so far hath he removed our transgressions from us. Like a Father pitith his children so "the Lord pitith them that fear Him. For He knoweth our frame He remembreth that we are dust." Psalm 103.

There is a story about what happened in the second world war. There was an Arabian and a British soldier. They both were serving the British Empire at that time. Israel didn't exist and the Sinai front was governed by the British. The two soldiers were crossing the Sinai desert. Suddenly their jeep had some mechanical problem and stopped and they continued their journey by foot. They ran out of water and they became exhausted and they could not walk because they were so thirsty. They were thinking they will die before they could cross the border. They determined to walk. While they were walking they saw a dead British soldier and in his possession he had a container full of water and they slowly drank the water and they crossed the border. In their survival story they made a statement saying at that moment that if anybody would have given them the whole world they would have not desired it. In this story we can see what thirst can do to a human soul.

Jesus answered them and said:"truly, truly I say unto you, Ye seek Me not because ye saw the miracles but because ye did eat of the loaves and were filled. Labour not for the meat which perisheth, but for that meat which endureth unto everlasting life which the Son of Man shall give unto you, for Hiro hath God the Father sealed. John 6:26,27. Many follow Christ for this temporal blessing, the same as the Jewish people. There is no difference today. There are many billions of Christians with worldly ambitions.

Then said Jesus unto them, truly, truly I say unto you, Moses gave you not that bread from heaven. The giver of the manna was standing among them. It was Christ Himself who had led the Hebrews through the wilderness, and had daily fed them with the bread from heaven. That food was a type of the real bread from heaven. The life-giving Spirit, flowing from the infinite fullness of God is the true manna. Jesus said, The Bread of God is that

which cometh down out of heaven and giveth life unto the world. I AM THE BREAD OF LIFE. JN3:3.

The figure which Christ used was a familiar one to the Jews. Moses, by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit had said, "Man doeth not live by bread only, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of the Lord. And Jeremiah says "Thy words were found and I did eat them and thy word was unto me the joy and rejoicing of mine heart. "And Jesus said unto them, I am the bread of life; he that cometh to me shall never hunger; and he that believeth on me shall never thirst. In: 6:35 This is the will of Him that sent Me, that everyone which seeth the Son, and believeth on Him may have everlasting life and I will raise him at the last day.

No longer need men mourn in hopeless grief over their dead. The Saviour said "I am that bread of life. Your fathers did eat manna in the wilderness, and are dead. This is the bread which cometh down from heaven, that a man may eat thereof, and not die. I am the living bread which came down from heaven: if any man eats of this bread, he shall live forever. "To this figure Christ now adds another. Only through dying could He impart life to men, and in the words

that follow He points to His death as the means of salvation. He says, The bread that I will give is my flesh which I will give for the life of the world. "Truly, truly I say unto you, Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink His blood ye have no life in you. Whoso eateth My flesh and drinketh My blood hath eternal life and I will raise him up at the last day. For My flesh is meat indeed, and My blood is drink indeed. He that eateth My flesh and drinketh My blood dwelleth in Me and I in him. To eat the flesh and drink the blood of Christ is to receive Him as a personal Saviour; He becomes closer than any earthly friend or our own parents believing that He forgives our sins, and that we are complete in Him. It is by beholding His love, by dwelling upon it, by drinking it in, that we are to become partakers of His nature.

What food is to the body, Christ must be to the soul. Food cannot benefit us unless we eat it, unless it becomes a part of our being. So Christ is of no value to us if we do not know Him as a personal Saviour. Like Moses said, I set the Lord ever before me. If we don't have a vital connection with Him it is no use. If we don't Love Him like He loved us. Many have excellent theoretical knowledge but this will do no good. We must feed upon Him; receive Him into the heart, so that His life becomes our life. His love, his grace, must be assimilated. "As the living Father hath sent me and I live by the Father so he that eateth Me even he shall live by Me. As the Son of God lived by faith in the Father, so are we to live by faith in Christ. So fully was Jesus surrendered to the will of His Father 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.

The unbelieving Jews refused to: see anything except the most literal meaning in the Saviour's words. By the ritual law they were forbidden to taste blood, and they now construed Christ's language into; sacrilegious speech and disputed over it among themselves. Many even of the disciples said this is hard saying who can hear it. And many disciple who were very close to Him left Him and went away. When He really invited them not to be a casual friend, but to be a part with Him.

The same rejection came upon His disciples when He invited them in 1888. Many Adventists rejected Him. The life of Christ that gives life to the world is His word. Who being the brightness of His glory and the express image of His person and upholding all things by the word of His power, when he had by Himself purged our sins sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on High.

Today because of technology we have voice activated computers. We have voice activated cars. If you speak to the car it will open the door, it will start the engine. But if a stranger gets near the car and if he says to open the door or even if he will touch the door the alarm goes on. The car only recognizes its owner. It is the same when Jesus created the world. He spoke and everything obeyed his word. All of them heard His voice and came into existence;

One time when there was a storm in the sea, in fear His disciples woke Him. He arose and rebuked the winds and the sea and there was a great calm. The men marveled saying, what manner of man is this that even the winds and the sea obey Him. The winds and the sea should obey His voice because He is their creator. Nothing can exist in this universe without His voice because He is our creator. Even Satan knows this. It was by His word that Jesus healed disease and cast out demons. By His word he stilled the sea and raised the dead and the people bore witness that His word was with power. He spoke the word of God as He had spoken through all the prophets and teachers of the Old Testament.

The whole Bible is a manifestation of Christ and the Saviour desired to fix the faith of His followers on the word. When His visible presence should be withdrawn the word must be their source of power. Like their Master they were to live "by every word that proceeded out of the mouth of God." As our physical life is sustained by food, so our spiritual life is sustained by the word of God. And every soul is to receive life from God's word for himself. As we must eat for ourselves. We are not to obtain it merely' through the medium of another's mind. We should

carefully study the Bible, asking God for the aid of the Holy Spirit, that we may understand His word. We should take one verse, and concentrate the mind on the task of ascertaining the thoughts which God has put in that verse for us. We should dwell upon the thought until it becomes our own, and we know "what saith the Lord."

By looking constantly to Jesus with the eyes of faith, we shall be strengthened. God will make the most precious revelations to His hungering and thirsting people. They will find that Christ is a personal Saviour. As they feed upon His word, they find that it is Spirit and Life. The word destroys the natural, earthly nature, and imparts a new life in Christ Jesus. The Holy Spirit comes to the soul as a comforter. By the transforming agency of His grace, the image of God is reproduced in the disciple; he becomes a new creature. Love takes the place of hatred, and the heart receives the divine similitude. This is what it means to live "by every word that proceeded out of the mouth of God." This is eating the Bread that comes down from heaven.

By the word of truth, the chaff is separated from the wheat. Many are too vain and self-righteous to receive reproof, too world loving many are turning away from Jesus. Souls are tested today as in the time of Christ. When truth is brought home to the heart, they see the need of an entire change in themselves; but they are not willing to take up the self-denying work. Therefore they are angry when their sins are discovered. Praise and flattery would be pleasing to their ears; but the truth is unwelcome; they cannot hear it. When the searching of God's Spirit reveals their sin, and bids them leave it, they turn their backs upon the truth, and walk no more with Jesus. When a Christian turns away from Christ a different spirit takes control of people. They see nothing attractive in Him whom they had once found so interesting. They seek His enemies for they are harmony with the spirit of the world. While we cannot now comprehend the works and ways of God, we can discern his great love, which underlies all His dealings with men.

He who lives near to Jesus will understand much of the mystery of godliness. He will recognize the mercy that administers reproof, which tests the character, and brings to light the purpose of the heart. If we are truly hungry we will eat and if we are thirsty we will drink. This truth applies to our spiritual existence too.

One day in my friends Christian mission where sometime I visit for a few months to help the poor children of my country one day I noticed a girl called Amy. Now Amy was a very clever girl and lively too. She became very friendly with me during my stay. While I was there I noticed one day she didn't come for the morning service neither for the breakfast so I went to the dormitory to see what the after was with my little Amy, I found her wrapped a blanket lying on a mat, sick with fever. "Are you all hot, Amy?" I asked. "yes, sir," came the weak reply. "And does your head ache? Did you have any breakfast this morning?" "No, I don't want any." "No Amy," I said. "I know for little girls who have fever, will go to the kitchen and get you a piece of toast and little bit warm milk. Won't that be nice?" "I don't want any," She whispered. But I thought the best for her to have a simple meal will help her. I returned to the kitchen and prepared the toast and warm milk and visited her again. "Now here we are, Amy, come on up and taste this nice toast." She sat up because she was a very obedient little girl. She took a spoonful. "There now," I encouraged, "isn't that nice?" "No I don't like it." "But I said you must -take a little more and soon you will be better." She took another spoonful and another with a little quaking and another. Then she suddenly clapped her hand then reached for an empty can. Then I will let you guess the rest. She was not hungry, she was sick. I called the doctor and the nurse of the mission school and the doctor wrote the medicine and the nurse took care of the little girl. Then I left the mission for a week away because I had to addend a seminar in another city.

On my return when the train reached the mission I noticed a group of little girls playing around. I greeted them and asked them if they were happy and they all shook their heads. "How is my little Amy?" I posed a question. "Oh" Said one, "she is healthy again. And now she is hungry all the time. She can hardly wait from one meal to another." Just then the dinner bell rang. Looking up I saw Amy was dancing down the corridor and entering the dinning room. As soon as she got better she was hungry again. And I questioned, if we were quite well spiritually we would be naturally hungry and thirsty for spiritual food or for the bread of Life. If we are not hungry anymore for the bread which proceeds from the FATHER could it be because we are sick spiritually. If this spiritual sickness isn't cured we will worsen and die.

How do we cure this sickness? When you are sick the doctor prescribes medication. This is the same as the spiritual doctor who is CHRIST who will prescribe medication for you. First we should know the danger of the existence of Satan and his constant warfare with the human soul, how he tries his level best to destroy us. If you read the Bible "For all nations have drunk of the wine of wrath of her fornication, and the kings of the earth have committed fornication with her and the merchants of the earth are waxed rich through the abundance of her delicacies. Nobody is safe because the whole world is drunk and even all the rulers of this earth are against our CREATOR. That's why the whole world is keeping the Sunday to go to church and they celebrate these pagan festivals like Christmas and Easter. Nobody is safe from this false doctrine, but still the world believes that it is God who has sanctioned it. We should read the Bible through the guidance of the HOLY SPRIT and try to understand it and apply to our life.

Secondly, work bestows another blessing. It was God's purpose to have useful occupation as one of the surest safeguards against evil. Idleness is one of the greatest curses, for crime and poverty follow in its way. Those who are always busy who go cheerfully about their daily task are useful members of society. In the faithful discharge of the various duties that lie in their pathway, they made their life a blessing to themselves and to others. Diligent labor keeps them from many of the snares of him who finds some mischief still for idle hands to do." Messages to Young People 213, 214.

And then we should pray without ceasing. These are the medications our Doctor prescribes for sick souls because many minds are toxic by Satan's food. If you look at television, movies, theater, dancing, over-eating, drinking, smoking, etc. all these things do corrupt our mind from not willing to grow neither become hungry towards the bread of Life. I hope you understand your spiritual need and change. Amen.

*Augustus Ratneiya Montreal*

## SPEAK LORD!

### *I SAMUEL 3:7-10*

In those days the word of the Lord was rare; there were not many visions. Because of sin ,among God's people, the word of the Lord was "precious" (yaqar, rare); no "open visions", that is, one broken open like an alabaster bottle of perfume and the fragrance dispersed.

There was an eerie darkness in the land. Moral decline and lawlessness was everywhere. Israel has passed through 300years of the rule of judges; a period of decline, defeat, and shortcomings in a nation attempting to live on its past glories. The root cause of Israel's decline was that the covenant relationship with the Lord, with its requirement of absolute and loyal obedience to His commands was broken. This led to disintegration in the political, religious, social, and family spheres and to a sharp increase in immorality.

Against this somber background, the enduring character of God stands out more clearly. "He is able to save by few as well as by many (Judg 7: 2-7). The reign of Judges closes with Samuel, the first prophet. When His spirit comes upon a man, such an anointing makes that man invincible! (Judg 3:10;6:34;11 :29),

There was a great need in the land. A need for the word of God. God chose Samuel by divine grace to be the human instrument through whom the word of God might come; the chosen instrument.

This would then be the close of the reign of the Judges and the beginning of the prophetic ministry and monarchy. Samuel was the spiritual bridge. Samuel was to be the human expression of the voice of God to both Saul and David; King Saul, the man of flesh, and David, the man of faith.

But first, we can see how God's hand was working in the birth of Samuel. We learn that Hannah (Heb. grace, favour) was one of two wives of a man named Elkanah, a man of wealth and influence who loved and feared the Lord. Although Hannah, a woman of fervent piety and Elkanah's favorite wife, she had no children, being barren. She was, consequently, unmercifully taunted and mocked by the other wife, Peninnah, who was jealous, proud, and narrow-minded, having many children of her own.(PP 569).

Hannah's barrenness is symbolic of the spiritual state of Israel at this time. Israel fell into a state of "infertility" and "barrenness". The priesthood, which God established along the tabernacle and Levitical law had begun to disintegrate and disappear.

There was an eternal conflict between the proud, self-confident heart and the humble spirit that depends on God completely. This was the problem with Israel. The priesthood was failing not because anything was wrong with the priesthood (which represents the ministry of the Lord Jesus Christ), but because the people refused to bow before the Lord. They refused to come for cleansing. They refused to turn from idolatry.

There was no mediator, intercessor, between the people and God. Israel reached one of the lowest ebbs in its history; a deplorable state!

At this point we return to Hannah, that woman of deep earnestness and lofty faith, and her unusual offspring. Similar offspring's of barren women occurred with Sarah, Samson's mother, Rebekah, Rachel, and Elizabeth.

Hannah prayed, communing with God in silence, a scene of worship which in those evil times was rare.

Hannah's passionate prayer and vow, with her consecration were answered. She received the gift which she had so earnestly entreated. The name, Samuel, "asked of God", was given to the child as a token of the Lord's faithfulness in answering Hannah's earnest prayer. When Samuel was just a small boy, he was brought to the temple and dedicated to God, as Hannah vowed, under the loving care of Eli, the Levite priest. Samuel was not merely looked upon as a child but as an offering unto God! It was here in

Ramah that he would serve as priest, prophet and judge. Samuel was weaned when 3 years old, before he was presented to the Lord, and commissioned when twelve years old, an exception, as normally such a commission from the Most High occurs at 25 years of age.

Samuel became the voice of God for Eli, the priest. Later he became the voice of God to the nation, especially to the two kings, Saul and David. He "makes" kings, and "breaks" kings!

The Lord had called Samuel as a child in the temple while with Eli. The Lord spoke to him; He called him, "Samuel! Samuel! There was no open vision, no prophesies or divine revelation, and for this reason Samuel did not understand when the Lord called. The Lord called Samuel again, Samuel! Samuel, three times! Still Samuel did not understand because he did not know the Lord. Eli perceived that the Lord called Samuel and told him to return, lie down and when He called again to answer, "Speak Lord, for thy servant heareth". When the Lord called again, Samuel answered, "Speak Lord, for thy servant heareth". (1 Sam 3:8,9.)

The Lord never speaks to us in a startling, alarming way, but in strange ways, that are easy for us to misunderstand, and we say, "I wonder if that is God's voice?" Isaiah said that the Lord spoke to him with a "strong hand," that is because of the pressure of circumstances or conditions.

There are many touching references to the beloved voice of God and the voice of Christ in the scriptures. The scriptures are the voice of God speaking to man. They should be read as the voice of God, and received as the voice of God speaking to His children. Regard the scriptures as the voice of God speaking directly to you; speaking to your soul. Then you will find inspiration and divine wisdom.(Fe 183, 133; GT 450; Gal 59; MI 283; 7T 205)

The conscience - your conscience is the voice of God which is heard in the pressing conflicts of our lives; the conflicts of powerful emotions, feelings, desires - love or hatred - suffering and passions.

When the voice of God is resisted or ignored, the Spirit of God is grieved (5T120). Hardening of the heart against the Spirit of God makes it impossible to recognize His voice (DA213), The Pharaoh's heart was hardened from one degree to another until he perished in the Red Sea. This is for our benefit. Just what took place in the Pharaoh's heart will take place in every soul that neglects the light and does not walk in its rays. God destroys no one. The sinner destroys himself by his own impenitence. (5T120)

What's the voice of God like? Like a shattering trumpet heard at Mt. Sinai, (PP340); a driving storm and rolling thunder (2SM315); a shaking of the powers of heaven(EW41); a shaking of the heavens and earth(EW34); the sun, the moon, and the stars, and the earth(EW41); it's an echo of the 10 commandments (EW598); and heard at the special resurrection of the righteous dead(EW285).

The voice of God will be heard coming through open space - in Orion, (where scientists have not been able to probe or enter) (EW41). The voice of God, like many waters, causes mighty earthquakes (ER272, 285), and delivers God's people, the saints.

His voice will not be understood by the wicked but supposed by them to be thunder and earthquake, but God's voice will proclaim the day and hour of Jesus' coming (ER15,34,41). His voice will make the saints mighty, and terrible as an army, but only after the 1000 years. {ER54}.

Then the voice of God will call forth the sleeping saints, clothed with glorious immortality (ER35). As the saints are about to enter the holy temple, above, He, Jesus Christ, will raise His lovely voice and say, "Only the 144,000 enter this place, and the saints will shout - "Alleluia"(EW19). Again, Jesus will say, "Come my people you have come out of great tribulation and done my will and suffered for me. Come into the supper and I will serve you" (EW19).

How can we discern or distinguish the voice of God in our lives? Well, it requires earnest attention; to recognize, separate, and to know His voice. (3T258). Those whom God calls upon, but wait for more evidence and more favorable opportunities will walk in oppressive darkness; the light will be withdrawn. If the evidence presented one day is rejected, it may never be repeated. There is a class that will not receive the message of reproof, yet Jesus Christ said, "As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten." (Heb 12:6:Rev 3:19). But, they will not receive the

message of heaven. They resist His Spirit by not hearing and obeying.

The Voice of God is heard in warnings, in counsels, in reproof. It's the Lord's voice and a message of life to His people. If we wait for louder calls we'll be left in utter darkness, or for better opportunities, also left in darkness!

The Lord requires us to obey the voice of duty when there are other voices all around us urging us to compromise or to pursue another counsel (5T69). God's spirit will pass by those who had their day of test and opportunity, but have not distinguished the voice of God or appreciated the movement of His Spirit. Then, thousands, one day soon at the eleventh hour, however, will see and accept the truth. "Behold the days come saith the Lord, that the plowman shall overtake the reaper, and the treader of grapes him that soweth seed; and the mountains shall drop sweet wine, and all the hills shall melt." (Amos 9:13). True conversions will happen with a rapidity that will surprise the church."(L TR45,1890)

Those that are most closely connected with God are the ones who know His voice when He speaks to them. Those who are spiritual will understand spiritual things. (5T682)

The voice of God that spoke to Christ at His baptism; spoke to Christ before His betrayal, speaks to every believing soul. (OA113,746,112-113)

Nothing touches our lives but it is God Himself speaking. Do we discern or recognize His voice, or hand, or only the thing or event that is happening at the time before us?

Brethren, get into the habit of saying "SPEAK LORD", as Samuel did, and life will become a joy for you! Every time circumstances are pressing you, say, "SPEAK LORD"; then wait and make time to listen.

Chastening by the Lord is more than just a way of discipline. It is meant for me... to get me to the place of saying, "SPEAK LORD, FOR YOUR SERVANT IS LISTENING".

Do you remember the time when God spoke to you? Did you forget what He said? Was it Luke 11 :13? ..."If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him? Or, was it 1Thess 5:23?.. "And the Very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of the Lord."

As we intently and piously listen, our ear becomes sharper, acute, and like Jesus, we shall hear God ALL THE TIME! AMEN

*John Theodorou USA/GREECE*

## THE FAITHFUL FEW

Two thousand years ago Jesus spoke a parable that is very, very important today. He said "**T**here was in a city a judge, which feared not God, neither regarded man; and there was a widow in that city; and she came unto him saying avenge me of mine adversary, and he would not for a while; but afterward he said within himself, though I fear not God nor regard man; yet because this widow troubleth me I will avenge her, lest by her continual coming she weary me. And the Lord said, hear what the unjust judge saith. And shall not God avenge His own elect, which cry day and night unto Him, though He bear long with them? I tell you that He will avenge them speedily. Nevertheless when the Son of man cometh shall He find faith on earth?"

Jesus asked the question: when the Son of man cometh shall He find faith on the earth? Will there be faithful people? When the Son of man (Jesus) comes the second time He will find faith on the earth. There will be faithful people.

Sis. E. White said, "**I**saw a company who stood well guarded and firm, giving no countenance to those who would unsettle the established faith of the body. God looked upon them with approbation. (Test. Vol. 6 pg. 17) But the true faith was not to become extinct. God has ever preserved a remnant to serve Him. (P.P. pg. 125)

The servant of God (John) saw 144,000 in heaven. When we compare this number to the billions of people on the earth you can see why Jesus asked the question: when the Son of man cometh shall He find faith on earth? How can we identify these people?

**“The little remnant who love God and keep His Commandments and are faithful to the end will enjoy this glory and ever be in the presence of Jesus and sing with the Holy angels.” (EW 66)**

**“God has a Church on earth who are lifting up the downtrodden Law and presenting to the world the Lamb of God that taketh away the sins of the world.” (T.M. pg. 50)**

The remnant people of God keep the commandments of God and have the faith of Jesus. They are also exalting the standard of righteousness in these last days. These people are known around the world as Seventh Day Adventist Reformers of the International Missionary Society. What a privilege to be in the Church of God!

All through the ages - from creation to the present time 2002 - God has had faithful witnesses, truehearted worshippers. Let's look at some of them.

**“Adam and Eve, at their creation had a knowledge of the Law of God ... its precepts were written upon their hearts.” (P.P. pg. 363)**

Adam taught His descendants the Law of God, and it was handed down from father to son through successive generations. In the time before the flood, God had a remnant. The Spirit of Prophecy says that **“God commanded Noah ‘come thou and all thy house into the ark, for thee have I seen righteous before me in this generation.’ Noah’s warnings had been rejected by the world, but his influence and example resulted in blessings to his family. As a reward for his faithfulness and integrity God saved all the members of his family with him. What encouragement to parental fidelity!**

After the flood God had a remnant (the faithful few) Shem and his descendants -- Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. The children of Israel were the people of God, the few of the nations. Even among the Israelites there were unfaithful people, many went after other gods and worshipped Idols.

From their deliverance from Egypt to the first advent of Christ, God had a remnant (faithful few) that stood firm and kept the commandments and have the faith of Jesus. After Jesus went back to heaven in A.D. 31, His disciples continued to be the faithful few. On the day of Pentecost it was only 120 disciples who have received the Holy Spirit and then 3000 more accepted the message. Shortly after the death of the Apostles, the membership of the Church increased but the faith of Jesus decreased, and the falling away took place and “the man of sin (the Pope) was revealed, the son of perdition - who opposeth and exalteth himself above God, or that is worshipped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God shewing himself that he is God.” What a treachery!

In spite of this treachery, God's remnant people continued to keep His commandments and have the faith of Jesus.

A.D. 538 the Roman Church started to rule the world, this so-called Christian church with the pope as its head - not Christ. This church, which was and is the Ambassador of Satan, the Dragon of Revelation 12, the Beast of Revelation 13 and the Whore of Revelation 17, did everything in her power to kill the faithful few who kept the commandments of God and had the faith of Jesus. During the 16th to the 18th century, this power continued to persecute God's faithful people. The great reformers of this era were the objects of merciless and relentless persecution, but God took care of His people.

In 1844 He raised up the Advent Movement. These people preached that Jesus would come in that year. When this did not happen they experienced what we now know as the great disappointment. Where at the beginning over 50,000 had accepted the message, now only 50 of that number remained faithful.

In 1863 the Seventh Day Adventist Church was organized. The Lord continued to bless His people and give them light on issues concerning Health Reform, war, etc, but many of the people and leaders became proud and when in 1888 the message of Christ our Righteousness was given - the only message that can save us, the message that will enable us to keep the commandments, it was rejected by the leaders. With the rejection of the Christ our Righteousness message, the Church was not able to make a right decision in 1914 when the First World War began. But thanks to God He preserved a Remnant of only 2% of the existing church, and this 2% is known today as Reformers (International Missionary Society Seventh Day Adventist Reform Movement)

This faithful few have gone through many trials and tests and many have sealed their faith with their blood. Yet there remain many more trials to go through and many more who will seal their faith with their blood. Will they remain faithful always? Only the Lord knows.

There are many who have asked, “Will you (the few) finish the work of God on the earth? My answer is yes. Not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit, says the Lord.

My Brothers and Sisters allover the world, let us look in our hearts, ask the Lord to wash and make us clean. The Lord Jesus is coming; now is the time to be ready because in an hour when you think not the Son of man cometh. We are living in the time of judgment and very soon Jesus will call our names. How are you with the Lord? Have you made it right with God?

The world is full of wickedness but God has a remnant - the faithful few, who will stand to the end. May God help us that we remain faithful. Amen.

**George Gowie Jamaica**

*A Medallion of Gold Presented to the Pope By Dr, Bert Beach in Behalf of the SDA Church.*

## **ANOTHER PARABLE “FOR HE HATH MADE HIM TO BE SIN FOR US”**

“And he spake this parable unto them, saying,”<sup>1</sup> A certain Man had a Son, His only Son, “the only-begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth.”<sup>2</sup> “This Saviour was the brightness of His Father’s glory and the express image of His person. He possessed divine majesty, perfection, and excellence.”<sup>3</sup> “For it pleased the Father that in Him should all fulness dwell.”<sup>4</sup>

“All things were made by Him; and without Him was not any thing made that was made.”<sup>5</sup> “For by Him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by Him, and for Him.”<sup>6</sup> “From the be~inning He had shown that His delights were with the sons of men.”<sup>7</sup> (“Since He made all things, He made the Sabbath.” “Hence it is a constant witness to His existence and a reminder of His greatness, His wisdom, and His love.”<sup>9</sup>

“From the place of His habitation He looketh upon all the inhabitants of the earth. The Lord looketh from heaven; He beholdeth all the sons of men.”<sup>10</sup> “Oh, pitiable sight! ... What path so dark for human feet to tread as that chosen by one who has persisted in having his own way, resisting the holy influences of the Spirit of God! What bondage so terrible as that of him who is given over to the control of the worst of tyrants-himself!”<sup>11</sup> “Bewildered and deceived, they were moving on in gloomy procession toward eternal ruin-to death in which is no hope of life, toward night to which comes no morning.”<sup>12</sup>

(“Man was originally endowed with noble powers and a well-balanced mind.”<sup>13</sup> “It was through disobedience to God’s requirements that these powers were perverted; the affections were misplaced, and turned from the high and holy purpose to a lower aim and to meet a lower standard.”<sup>14</sup>)

“And it repented the Lord that He had made man on the earth, and it grieved Him at His heart.”<sup>15</sup> “But when He saw the multitudes, He was moved with compassion on them, because they fainted, and, were scattered abroad, as sheep having no shepherd.”<sup>16</sup> “Though corruption and defiance might be seen in every part of the alien province, a way for its recovery was provided.”<sup>17</sup>

And the Son said to His Father, “Father, give Me the portion of goods that falleth Me.”<sup>18</sup> “All things Christ received from God, but He took to give.”<sup>19</sup> “In giving up His Son, He has poured out to us all heaven in one gift.”<sup>20</sup> “He gave Him not only to bear our sins, and to die as our sacrifice; He gave Him to the fallen race. To assure us of His immutable counsel of peace, God gave His only-begotten Son to become one of the human family, forever to retain His human nature.”<sup>21</sup> “Thanks be unto God for His unspeakable Gift!”<sup>22</sup> (“The provisions of redemption are free to all; the results of redemption will be enjoyed by those who have complied with the conditions.”<sup>23</sup>)

“And not many days after” the Son “gathered all together, and took His journey into afar country,” and there spent His substance on the riotous living. “The Majesty of heaven, the King of glory, left His riches, His splendor, His honour and glory, and, in order to save sinful man, condescended to a life of humility, poverty, and shame.”<sup>24</sup> “He was clothed with light and glory, and was surrounded with hosts of heavenly angels waiting to execute His commands. Yet He put on our nature and came to sojourn among sinful mortals.”<sup>25</sup> “Nothing could have induced Christ to leave His honour and majesty in heaven, and come to a sinful world, to be neglected, despised, and rejected by those He came to save, and finally to suffer upon the cross, but eternal, redeeming love, which will ever remain a mystery.”<sup>26</sup> “Such love is without a parallel.”<sup>27</sup> “And He went and joined Himself to [the citizens] of that country; and [they] sent Him into His fields to feed the swine.”<sup>28</sup> “He was in the world, and the world was made by Him, and the world knew Him not.”<sup>29</sup> “The field,” Christ, said, “is the world.”<sup>30</sup> “He went about doing good and healing all that were oppressed by Satan. There were whole villages where there was not a moan of sickness in any house, for He had passed through them and healed all their sick. His work gave evidence of His divine anointing. Love, mercy, and compassion were revealed in every act of His life; His heart went out in tender

sympathy to the children of men.”<sup>31</sup> “Blessings [flowed] from His lips as the gushing forth of a long-sealed current of rich life.”<sup>32</sup>

“And when He had spent all, there arose a mighty famine in that land; and He began to be in want.”<sup>33</sup> “He was realizing His Father’s frown. He had taken the cup of suffering from the lips of guilty man, and proposed to drink it Himself, and in its place give to man the cup of blessing. The wrath that would have fallen upon man was now falling upon Christ.”<sup>34</sup> “He was treated as we deserve, in order that we might be treated as He deserves. He was condemned for our sins, in which He had no share, that we might be justified by His righteousness, in which we had no share. He suffered the death which was ours, that we might receive the life which was His.”<sup>35</sup> “The sense of the withdrawal of His Father’s love pressed from His anguished soul these mournful words: My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death. If it be possible’, let this cup pass from Me. Then with entire submission to His Father’s will, He adds: Nevertheless not as I will, but as Thou V/ilt.”<sup>36</sup>

“It was to save us from the very pride and love of vanity and pleasure which we now indulge, and which crowds out the love of Jesus, that those tears were shed and that our Saviour’s visage was marred with sorrow and anguished more than any of the sons of men.”<sup>37</sup> “Follow Him on His way to the judgment hall, while He is derided, mocked, and insulted by that infuriateq mob. Behold Him clothed in that old purple kingly robe. Hear the coarse jest and cruel mocking. See them place up on that noble brow the crown of thorns, and then smite Him with a reed, causing the thorns to penetrate His temples, and the blood to flow from that holy brow.”<sup>38</sup> “Surely He hath borne our grief’s, and carried our sorrows: yet we did esteem Him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted.”<sup>39</sup>

“Even doubts assailed the dying Son of God. He could not see through the portals of the tomb.. Bright hope did not present to Him His coming forth from the tomb a conqueror and His Father’s acceptance of His sacrifice... The displeasure of the Father for sin, and its penalty, which is death, were all that He could realize through this amazing darkness. He was tempted to fear that sin was so offensive in the sight of His Father that He could not be reconciled to His Son.”<sup>40</sup> “In His dying agony, as He yields up His precious life: He has by faith alone to trust in Him whom it has ever been His joy to obey. He is not cheered with clear, bright rays of hope on the right hand nor on the left. All is enshrouded in oppressive gloom. Amid the awful darkness which is felt by sympathizing nature; the Redeemer drains the mysterious cup even to its dregs. Denied even bright hope and confidence in the triumph which will be His in the future, He cries with a loud voice: Father, into Thy hands I commend My spirit. He is acquainted with the character of His Father, with His justice, His mercy, and His great love, and in submission He drops into His hands.”<sup>41</sup>

“And He arose, and came to His Father. But when He was yet a great way of His Father saw Him, and had compassion, and ran, and fell on His neck, and kissed Him.”<sup>42</sup> “Notwithstanding all the marks of His degradation the Father discerned His own image.”<sup>43</sup> “And sent His servant at supper time to say to them that were bidden.. Come; for all things are now ready.”<sup>44</sup> And the Son said unto Him, “I arm Him that liveth, and was dead; and, behold, tam alive for evermore; Amen; and have the keys of hell and of death.”<sup>45</sup> “But the Father said to His servants, Bring forth the best robe, and put it on Him; and put a ring on His hand, and shoes on His feet; and bring hither the fatted calf, and kill it; and let us eat, and be merry: for this My Son was dead, and is alive again; He was lost, and is found. And they began to be merry.”<sup>46</sup> Amen. “And again, when He bringeth in the firstbegotten into the world, He saith, And let all the angels of God worship Him.”<sup>47</sup>

AMEN

*Chester Cosby Detroit*

1 Luke 15:3

2 John 1:14

3 2T 200

4 Colossians 1 :19

5 John 1:3

6 Colossians 1 :16

7 PK 211

8 DA 288 9 PP 336

10 Psalm 33:14,13

11 PP 676

12 DA36

13 SC17

14 R&H 3-1-87

15 Genesis 6:6

16 Matthew 9:36

- 17 DA 37
- 18 Luke 15:12
- 19 DA21
- 20 SC 21
- 21 DA 25
- 22 2 Corinthians 9:15
- 23 PP 208
- 24 2T 490, 491
- 25 2T 215
- 26 2T207
- 27 SC 15
- 28 luke 15:15
- 29 John 1:10
- 30 Gal 70
- 31 SG 11,12
- 32 7T 269
- 33 Luke 15:14
- 34 2T 203
- 35 8T 208, 209
- 36 2T 206
- 37 3T 379, 380
- 38 1T 240-241
- 39 Isa. 53:4
- 40 2T 209, 210
- 41 2T 210, 211
- 42 Luke 15:20
- 43 3T 102
- 44 Luke 14:17
- 45 Revelation 1: 18
- 46 Luke 15:22-24
- 47 Hebrews 1:6

## DIGESTION

The habit of eating too much of the right things, of eating things that have no food value, and of eating too frequently is the cause of much of the ills in the world. Gluttony fills the hospitals, the asylums, the graveyards; it leads to mental, moral and physical degeneration, and results in national decay.

Most people have lost the sense of natural hunger and have developed an abnormal sense of what is called appetite. There is a vital difference between genuine hunger and false appetite. The former is a natural sign that the system requires food for the repairing of bone, muscle, nerve, etc. The latter is an artificially cultivated sense which is impossible to satisfy.

The feelings in the stomach such as emptiness, cravings, gnawing or faintness generally are not indications that more food is needed, but the unnatural cravings of an abused, overused, inflamed stomach. REAL HUNGER is not confined to the stomach; it is felt allover the body. Most of us have developed perverted feelings in the stomach because of years and years of abuse.

“Daily abused, the digestive organs cannot do their work well. A poor quality of blood is made, and thus, through improper eating, the whole machinery is crippled. Give the stomach less to do. It will recover if proper care is shown in regard to the quality and quantity of food eaten.

Many eat too rapidly. Others eat at one meal varieties of food that do not agree. If men and women would only remember how greatly they afflict the soul when they afflict the stomach, and how deeply Christ is dishonored when the stomach is abused, they would deny the appetite and thus give the stomach opportunity to recover its healthy action. While sitting at the table we may do medical missionary work by eating and drinking to the glory of God.” *Counsels on Health*, pg. 577

Appetite is a hard and merciless tyrant, whose victims number is the billions around the world. The more one yields to demands, the more inflamed and enlarged the stomach becomes, until it finally increases to twice its natural size, and then usually sags in a very unbecoming manner. Instead of emptying itself and contracting after

each meal, the stomach loses the power to expel its contents as it should.

The fermentation, decaying food, constantly present in the folds and pockets of a dilated stomach, causes irritation and stomach pains which are mistaken for hunger. To relieve this distress by taking more food only aggravates the problem. Indigestion is soon followed by many kinds of gastritis and dyspepsia or catarrhal conditions (mucous) and stomach ulcers. It is through this process that a suitable seedbed is provided for eternal growths including cancer.

The stomach is the battleground for almost every human being. What man puts into his stomach either nourishes him or destroys him. Man fills his stomach with seemingly harmless substances, but when mixed during digestion, causes gases that poison and permeate throughout the whole body. Unwise combinations of even good food cause fermentation in the digestive tract that have disagreeable and untimely results which can prove to be very serious. Nerve exhaustion and digestive incompetence are very intimately bound up together.

## CHILDREN'S CORNER

### CLINTON'S STRENGTH

When Clinton was eleven years old, he became very sick with pneumonia. During his period of recovery, he suffered an unexpected relapse, and his mother and the doctor worked hard to keep him alive.

"There is a one in ten chance for him to get well," said Dr. Bemis, shaking his head. "If he does, he will never be very strong."

Mrs. Stevens smoothed Clinton's pillow even more tenderly than before. Poor Clinton! He had always been such an energetic, rosy-cheeked young boy. Surely this must be difficult to bear.

The long winter days in March dragged slowly along, and it was mid-April before he could sit at an open window and watch the grass growing green on the front lawn. He looked frail and delicate. He had a cough, too, a troublesome "bark," that he always kept back as long as he could.

The bright sunlight poured steadily in through the window, and Clinton held up his hand to shield his eyes. "Why, Mother" he said, after a moment, "just look at my hands! They are as thin and white as a girl's, and they used to be regular paws. It does not look as if I would pull many weeds for Mr. Carter this summer does it?"

Mrs. Stevens took his thin hands into her own patient ones: "Never mind, dear," she said, "they will grow plump and brown again, I hope." A group of school children were passing by shouting and frolicking. Clinton leaned forward and watched them until the last one was gone. Some of them waved their caps. but he did not seem elated.

"Mother", he said, presently, "I believe I will go to bed if you will help me. I guess I am not quite so strong now as I used to be."

Clinton did not pull weeds for Mr. Carter that summer, but he rode around with the milkman, and he did a little outdoor work for his mother, which helped him to mend. One morning in the middle of summer he surprised the village by riding out on his bicycle; but he overdid the matter, and it was several weeks before he again appeared. His cough still continued, though not so severe as in the spring, and it was decided to let him go to school in the fall.

Dr. Bemis told Mrs. Stevens that the schoolroom would be a good place to test Clinton's strength. And he was right. In no other place does a young person's strength develop or debase itself so readily, for honour or dishonour. Of course the doctor had referred to physical strength; but moral strength is much more important.

Clinton was a bright lad for his years; and, although he had not looked at his schoolbooks during the summer, he was placed in the same grade he had left when he became sick. He did not find much difficulty in keeping up with any of his studies except for spelling. Whenever he received a perfect mark on a test, he felt a real victory had been won.

About Christmas-time the regular examinations were held. The teacher offered a prize to each grade, the student receiving the highest average in all studies to receive the prize. Much excitement, and a great deal of studying began. Clinton felt fairly confident over all his studies except spelling. So he carried his spelling book: home every night, and he and his mother spent the evenings in wrestling with the long and difficult words.

Examination day came finally and in the afternoon the time for the seventh-grade spelling test had arrived. The words were to be written, and handed in. Across the aisle from Clinton sat Harry Meyers. Several times when the teacher pronounced a word, Harry looked slyly down into the palm of his hand. He had the words written there. Clinton watched him, his cheeks growing pink with shame. Then he looked around at the others. Man of them had

some dishonest device for copying the words. Clinton swallowed something in his throat, and looked across at Billy Matthews, who just nodded, as if he understood. What chance did Clinton have of getting the highest score when many of the children were cheating?

The papers were handed in, and the school was dismissed. Clinton went home with a heavy heart. On Monday, after the morning exercises, Miss Brooks gave out the prizes to the three grades under her care. "I have now to award the prize for the highest average to the seventh grade," she said. "But first I wish to say a few words on your conduct during the recent spelling examination. I will not single anyone out. No one spelled all the words correctly- Clinton Stevens got the lowest score, making his average quite low; yet the prize goes to him. I will tell you why." The students gasped in surprise. "Spelling is Clinton's hardest subject, but he could have easily spelled more words right if he did not have great strength to resist the dishonest methods used by some of you in order to claim this prize."

As Clinton went up the aisle for his prize, he felt like crying, but he managed to smile instead. A few days before, Harry Meyers had ridiculed him because he was not strong enough to throw a snowball from the schoolhouse to the road: now the teacher had said he was strong!

Clinton's Aunt Jennie came to visit the family in December, bringing her little daughter Grace with her. Now Grace had a bad habit of pulling other people's hair, but there was no one who she loved using this bad habit on as much as on Clinton. She began on him cautiously, then aggressively. Clinton stood it for a while and then asked her, politely but firmly, to stop. She stopped for half a day.

One night Clinton came home from school pale and tired. Some of the boys had been taunting him about his thin body, and imitating his cough, which had grown worse as the winter progressed. Sitting down by the window, he looked out at the falling snow. Grace slipped up behind him and gave his hair a sharp pull. He struck out, hastily, and hit her. She was not hurt, - only very much surprised, - but she began to cry lustily, and Aunt Jennie came hurrying in, and took the child in her arms.

That night after supper Clinton went into the living room, and called Grace to him. "I want to tell you something," he said. "I am sorry that I hit you, and I ask your forgiveness. Will you forgive me?" Grace agreed quickly, and said, shyly, "Next time I want to pull any one's hair, I will pull my own."

Aunt Jennie was in the next room and overheard the conversation. "It strikes me, Sarah," she said to Mrs. Stevens, later, "that Clinton is a remarkably strong boy for one who is not so strong. Most boys would not have taken the trouble to ask a small girl to forgive him. even if they were very much in the wrong. But Clinton has a strong character."

The year Clinton was thirteen, the boys planned to have a corn roast, one summer night. "We will get the corn in old Mr. Carter's farm during the night," said Harry Meyers. "He has just acres of it and he won't miss a bushel or two. Will you come with us Clinton?"

Clinton hesitated. "No," he said, "I will not and I think if you want to roast some corn, you could get it out of your own gardens. But if Mr. Carter's corn is better than anyone else's, then can't you simply go up to him and ask him for some?"

"0, come, now," retorted Harry, "don't let it worry you! Half the fun of roasting corn is in - in taking it."

"You mean stealing it," added Clinton.

"Oh then don't com~ We don't want you with us anyway. You are too nice, Mr. Cough."

Clinton's cheeks flushed red, but he turned away without a word. When Mr. Carter asked Billy Matthews, and found out all about it, Clinton was made very happy by the old man's words: "It is not every chap that will take the stand you took. You ought to be thankful that you have the strength to say No."

In the fall, when Clinton was fifteen, his health began to fail noticeably, and Dr. Bemis advised a little wine "to build him up."

"Mother," said the boy, after thinking it over, "I am not going to touch any wine. I can get well without it, I know I can. I do not want liquor," he continued. "'Wine is a mocker,' you know. Did you not tell me once that George Hastings, over in East Bloomfield, became a drunkard by drinking wine when he was sick?"

"Yes, Clinton, I believe I told you so."

"Well, then, I do not want any wine. I have seen George too many times."

In December Aunt Jennie and Grace made their annual visit. With them came uncle Jonathan, who took a great liking to Clinton.

"My boy," he said one day, placing a big hand on the boy's shoulder, "Early in the new year Aunt Jennie and I will move to the Pacific Coast. Would you like to come with us? I believe it will greatly improve your health to get away from here to the warmer temperatures in California."

"Well, I am sure I will gladly join you," gasped the surprised boy, clasping his hands joyfully.

"Very well, then, you shall go," returned Uncle Jonathan, "and your mother, also."

Clinton began to feel better before they were outside of Pennsylvania. When they had crossed the Mississippi and reached the prairies, his eyes were sparkling with excitement. The mountains put new life into him. Uncle Jonathan watched him with pleasure. "Tell me," he said one day, when they were winding in and out among the Rocky Mountains, "What has given you so much strength of character?"

"Why, it was this day," said Clinton, bringing his eyes in from the beautiful scenery outside, "one day when I was beginning to recover from that attack of pneumonia, I saw a lot of the boys running along, and I felt pretty bad because I could not run and play with them; then I thought that if I could not be strong that way, I could have the strength to do right; so I began to try, and—"

"You succeeded admirably," said Uncle Jonathan, approvingly. "And, really, my boy, I see no reason why you should not run and play to your heart's content in a few months. Perhaps the Lord allowed this illness to come to you in order for you to find this inner strength."

And Uncle Jonathan's words proved true; for Clinton, in the warm sunny climate of the California valley, grew well and strong in a few months. But through all his life he will have reason to be thankful that he learned the value of the strength that is gained by resisting temptation, controlling one's spirit, and obeying the commandments of the Lord. A strength that is of much more value than physical strength.

## THE WORSHIPERS 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.*

### The Winter Solstice

Recall the prophecy of Jeremiah." and be not dismayed at the signs of heaven; for the heathen are dismayed at them."

Before Man learned to measure time in twelve month cycles time was measured by seasons. They celebrated the seasons with feasts and festivals to make the gods happy. But then Man began to gear the beginning of seasons and cycles to fixed astronomical phenomenon--that is, to the position and movement of the sun, moon, and stars. The heathen did worship the entire solar system.

December 25 is the winter solstice. It is the time when the sun after having been at the lowest point in the heavens, begins to rise over the world with renewed vigor and power. It was the time of heathen festivities in worship of the sun. The vernal equinox is the point where the sun crosses the celestial equator, about March 20, making day and night of equal length everywhere. This was the time of pagan spring festivals.

The day of December 25 acquired a new significance under the rule of Emperor Aurelian. He proclaimed this day as "Dies Natalis Invicti Solis," or the Birthday of the Unconquered Sun. This was because of a strange Eastern religion, Mithraism, whose god Mithras was identified with the Unconquered Sun. During the Saturnalia work of every kind ceased. Schools were closed.

The Roman Saturnalia was boisterous. But whatever the behavior of some Romans, others were simply merry. They ate big dinners, visited their friends, etc. The halls of the Romans were decked with boughs of laurel and of green trees? with lighted candles and with lamps—for the hovering spirits of darkness were afraid of light. Bonfires were lit in high places to strengthen the reviving sun in his course. Candles and green wreaths were given as presents, the streets were crowded with noisy processions of men and women carrying lighted tapers, and public places were decked with flowers and shrubs. The practice of giving and receiving presents was almost as common then as it is now at Christmas. Our present day "Christmas spirit" is actually the spirit of this old Roman festival.

During the Kalends of January, which lasted for three days, Roman houses were adorned With lights and greenery, and presents were given to friends and children and to the poor.

We can see how that the exchanging of gifts was an important feature of this Roman festival from the writings of Libatius, an ancient Sophist. He might be writing about Christmas in the ,modem world from the way it reads: The festival of the Kalends is celebrated everywhere as far as the limits of the Roman Empire extend.. The impulse to spend seizes everyone... People are not only generous towards themselves, but also towards their fellow men. A stream of presents pours itself out on all sides... The Kalends festival banishes all that is connected with toil, and allows men to give themselves up to undisturbed enjoyment From the minds of young people it removes two kinds of dread: the dread of the schoolmaster and the dread of the stern pedagogue.. Another great quality of the festival is that it teaches men not to hold too fast to their money, but to part with it and let it pass into other hands.