

“WHAT MANNER OF SPIRIT YE ARE OF?”

There are two different spirits in the world— God’s Spirit and Satan’s spirit, and often people do not know of which spirit they are of. Jesus and His disciples came to the village of the Samaritans, but they did not receive them, therefore James and John became angry and said to Jesus, “Wilt thou that we command fire to come down from heaven and consume them? But Jesus rebuked them and said, Ye know not what manner of spirit ye are of.” (Luke 9:52-55)

“There can be no more conclusive evidence that we possess the spirit of Satan than the disposition to hurt and destroy those who do not appreciate our work, or who act contrary to our ideas.” DA 487.

This disposition to hurt may not be manifested in physical harm but in criticizing, evil speaking and putting down a person’s reputation.

On another occasion, Peter rebuked Jesus about the suffering and death that He told His disciples would come upon Him. Jesus said unto Peter, “Get thee behind me, Satan: for thou art an offence unto Me.” Matt. 16:23.

Humanly thinking, Peter had good intentions. He loved Jesus and did not want any harm to come upon Him. Peter did not understand that if Jesus would not suffer and die, he himself and the whole world would perish in their sins. It was Satan inspiring Peter to speak this way.

These disciples were chosen by Jesus to continue His work, but at times Satan could ‘use them in order to defeat the work of salvation. “Satan was trying to discourage Jesus, and turn Him from His mission; and Peter, in his blind love, was giving voice to the temptation. The prince of evil was the author of the thought. His instigation was behind the impulsive thought.” DA 416.

How often it happens among us that ideas are presented and plans made which are not in accordance to God’s will. If these ideas and plans would be accepted and carried out the work of God would suffer.

Satan can hinder the work of God more successfully by the members and the leaders of the church than by outside enemies. Human wisdom goes against the divine wisdom of God. Even the committees can think humanly, using human logic in their decisions, which really comes from Satan.

Spirit of Persecution

One of the most Satanic characteristics is the spirit of persecution. It can be often seen among Christians even. Jesus and His disciples were persecuted by His own church. Jesus spoke about the last days and said, “The brother shall betray the brother to death.” Mark 13:12.

Jesus also said, “Whosoever shall say, thou fool, shall be in danger of hell fire.” Matt. 5:22.

The spirit of persecution kills the love to others. This spirit is manifested in faultfinding and evil speaking, yet those who manifest it call it a zeal for good.

Sister White writes, “We should be the last people on the earth to indulge in the slightest degree of persecution against those who are bearing the message of God to the world. This is the most terrible feature of unchristlikeness that has manifested itself among us since the Minneapolis meeting. Sometime it will be seen in its true bearing, with all the burden of woe that has resulted from it.” GCB 1893, p. 184.

Jesus said to love our enemies even. He prayed for His murderers that God would forgive them. So vastly different is Satan’s spirit and God’s Spirit.

Bitterness

Bitterness and dissatisfaction come from Satan. Even a little root of bitterness can defile many, Paul writes. He also said, “I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses for Christ’s sake: for

when I am weak, then am I strong.” 2 Cor 12:10.

It was not possible to make Paul miserable and bitter. The more people hated him and persecuted him, the more he enjoyed it. He actually took pleasure in it. This kind of attitude comes from the Holy Spirit only.

Power

One with God’s Spirit is a strong Christian, he can move mountains and nothing is impossible to him. He can overcome sin and his weakest point becomes his strongest point. But one with Satan’s spirit is weak. He does that what he does not want to do, and does not that what he wants to do. This kind of weak Christian is not a preacher of righteousness. He cannot from his own experience tell how to overcome sin. He falls into the category of lukewarm Christians whom the Lord will spue out of His mouth.

When two Christians meet and both are of God’s Spirit, automatically there is a bond between them. They feel that they belong together. But if one of them has Satan’s spirit, then there is no unity nor harmony between them. The church can never be united and ready for the latter rain until all members with Satan’s spirit are shaken out. This is a painful process, but it is necessary.

“His Spirit ruling in the heart will create harmony, love, and unity. The opposite of this is seen among the children of Satan. It is his work to stir envy, strife and jealousy.” Test Vol. 5, p. 28.

“They must by constant prayer seek the guidance of the Holy Spirit, which would lead them to love and unity.” Test. Vol., p. 243.

Joy in the Lord

Only a truly happy person, filled with constant joy is one with the Comforter in him. With the Spirit of God even the dying moment can be peaceful.

The constant smile and cheerfulness are the rewards that God gives to the faithful servants through His Spirit.

Joy that the world is seeking by riches, entertainment and luxury is nothing compared to the joy that we receive by the Holy Spirit. The fruit of the Spirit is visible in every person who has the Holy Spirit. It is not possible to feel miserable and unhappy with the Comforter with us.

May the Lord help that not one of us would be under the influence of Satan’s spirit but pray for the Spirit of God to fill us. AMEN.

Timo Martin

FOR THE LOVE OF SELF

(Part 2)

They say that over half of the world’s population goes to bed hungry every night. Due to drought, famine and economic instability in many countries, the citizens are extremely poverty stricken. There is no recourse of Social Services providing financial support to those that have nothing in many of these poorer countries. You simply starve. In the Western World, the poor are very well taken care of. The welfare system tries to make sure that everyone has food and shelter; however, even with the best of systems there are always some who fall through the gaps and have nothing. While this system was originally created for a good purpose, today many have found ways to cheat the system by collecting “free money” from government agencies when they really are capable of working as in the case of some people fraudulently collecting disability pension while being in perfect health. I have also known some people who have found ways to collect two welfare cheques. People have found many ways to take a good system and abuse the kindness of the benefactors. Unfortunately,

due to the abuse, this system has also created many very lazy people, who see a way to do nothing And still get money to live on. They are not familiar with Paul's counsel of, "If any would not work, neither should he eat." 2Thess. 3:10. Many of these people have no self-respect left as their whole life revolves around how to cheat the system. Even if they don't cheat, they simply are too lazy to look for work any more and they live from one welfare payment to the next. The free money may not be very much, but it is sufficient to keep them alive. They have no aim or purpose in life other than to eat, sleep, watch TV, play computer games, or engage in some other meaningless activity in their lives. One day merges into the next. They lose real track of time as the days and years continue on in their endless cycle. Once a person gets to this point, there is little anyone can do to help them other than take away the source of the problem - the free money. These people are completely self-centred. They have no care or concern for any one else around them. All they want is their own comforts and pleasures as the days pass them by. This is not the true ideal that God created man for. When God created man, He put him in the Garden of Eden to "dress it and to keep it." Gen. 2:15. He gave him useful work.

In Part 1, last month, we saw how selfishness is manifested in many negative ways in the Christian life. However we are encouraged to "love our neighbour as ourselves" and therefore we are to love what Jesus can do in and through us. Our righteousness is as filthy rags, but Jesus wants to put His robe of righteousness around us because He sees some value in us.

We are instructed to lay our glory in the dust. Also "to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God." Romans 12:1. "We must fall upon the Rock [Jesus Christ] and be broken before we can be uplifted in Christ. Self must be dethroned," DA 57. Once we have completely emptied ourselves of our own selfish, human desires and plans, then God can do mighty works in us. There are many positive things that Jesus wants to do through us.

Although the religion of Christ may look to unbelievers as a road fraught with pain, misery and sorrow, this is really not true religion. While it is true that the road to heaven is a "strait and narrow" road, with dangers and temptations along the way, true Christians will not be found gloomy and morose. Our hearts can be filled with peace and joy. And although we deny ourselves all earthly pleasures, Jesus has something more fulfilling for us. He picks us up, and wraps His robe of righteousness around us and gives us self-respect. He makes something of us.

Now we will look at some positive aspects of "self. We will see what God values in a person's self and what He wants to develop in each of His followers through His Spirit. A lot of these are not natural in the heart of man. Man is naturally selfish.

The process of sanctification is compared to a journey along a strait and narrow road and also to a race that must be run. (1 Cor 9:25-27)

Chi this road to heaven we are to dethrone ourselves. Give up our selfishness. We are to pray like David, "Lay mine honour in the dust." Ps 7:5. We must realize that we can't malic one step in the right direction without Jesus so we may as well give up trying on our own. Self abasement

- to reduce or lower, as in rank, office, estimation.

One of the first steps is to lower our rank in our own estimation. We are not as good as we perhaps have thought we were.

"The conditions of salvation for man are ordained of God. Self-abasement and cross bearing are the provisions made by which the repenting sinner is to find comfort and peace. The thought that Jesus submitted to humiliation and sacrifice that man will never be called to endure, should hush every murmuring voice." 3T481.

Self distrust

- to not rely on ourselves or some quality or attribute we possess, or on our talents

Once we have lowered our rank in our estimation we will not dare to trust in ourselves. Who would trust in filthy rags? They are fit for nothing more than to be burned. We would not dare to trust in anything in our natural man. We see that without Christ we are as the unconverted man in Romans 7:19 who says, "For the good that I would do I do not: but the evil which I would not, that I do." Who would trust this sort of man? That is what we are without Christ. We must not trust ourselves no matter how many talents we may have.

"The first thing to be learned by all who would become workers together with God is the lessons of self-distrust; then they are prepared to have imparted to them the character of Christ. This is not gained through education in the most scientific schools, it is the fruit of wisdom that is obtained from the divine Teacher alone." DA 250. And therefore Jesus chose unlearned fishermen as some of His disciples because they had not been schooled in the traditions and erroneous customs of the Jewish leaders of their day. They had no great wisdom of their own that they could trust. They trusted solely in Jesus.

Joshua was a successful leader of Israel in their conquest of Canaan due to his great anxiety and self-distrust. His fears were removed when Jesus came to him with the assurance from God that, "As I was with Moses, so I will be with thee: I will not fail thee, nor forsake thee." Joshua 1:5.

Self humiliation

- to lower the pride and self-respect

The definition here implies a humiliation that is brought upon one's self. We need to keep ourselves humble rather than others doing it for us. If we get proud and lifted up, the Lord will find ways to humble us and we may

not like the ways He brings. The lessons will be humiliating and may be more exposed than we would like, however it would be much better if we would pray and ask the Lord to help us humble ourselves.

“Every day we need the discipline of self-humiliation, that we may be prepared to receive the heavenly gift, not to hoard it, not to rob God’s children of His blessings, but to give it in all its rich fullness to others.” 7T 273.

Self renunciation

-the formal abandoning of a right.

As soon as we have sinned, we have lost all rights to life. “For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God.” Rom. 3:23. Yet there are people alive still on this earth, and there are also people who have been translated to heaven after living on this earth. Why? It is nothing within a person - only by the love and mercy of Jesus who shed His blood for our sins. We have no rights at all to life, “He was treated as we deserve, that we might be treated as He deserves. He was condemned for our sins, in which He had no share, but 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. ‘With His stripes we are healed.’” DA 25. Our punishment that we deserve that we may have the life that He deserves. When we contemplate such love, who would not be willing to give up all their rights? Our only right is death. Yet Jesus reached down to lost humanity with a love that is greater than death. He gave us something that we had no right to have.

“Every individual, by his own act, either puts Christ from him by refusing to cherish His spirit and follow His example, or he enters into a personal union with Christ by self-renunciation, faith, and obedience.” 5T 46

“Man’s great danger is in being self-deceived, indulging self-sufficiency, and thus separating from God, the source of his strength... It is not only at the beginning of the Christian life that this renunciation of self is to be made. At every advance step heavenward it is to be renewed. All our good works are dependent on a power outside of ourselves; therefore there needs to be a continual reaching out of the heart after God, a constant earnest confession of sin and humbling of the soul before Him. Perils surround us; and we are safe only as we feel our weakness and cling with the grasp of faith to our mighty Deliverer.” MH 455.

Self sacrifice

-to dispose of, regardless of profits

“I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service.” Romans 12:1.

What do we have to dispose of? A sinful, polluted heart.

Many do not want to sacrifice their selfish heart - they love the things of this world and should they give their hearts to the Lord it would mean sacrificing worldly pleasures. There is no place in heaven for them.

Some don’t dare trust in God for their material comfort. They hoard their goods to themselves - only to find them burn in hell fire in the end. Much better to sacrifice on this earth to gain treasure in heaven - treasure that will last forever.

“God calls for self-sacrifice. This will bring not only financial but spiritual prosperity. Self-denial and self-sacrifice will work wonders in advancing the spirituality of the church.” 6T 102.

“Few appreciate all that Christ is to them. If they did, the great love of many would be expressed, the anointing would be freely bestowed. The expensive ointment would not be called a waste. Nothing would be thought too costly to give for Christ, no self-denial or self-sacrifice too great to be endured for His sake. DA 565.

“Perfection of character cannot possibly be attained without self-sacrifice.” 9T 53.

Self surrender

-to yield to the possession or power of another. To give oneself up to the power of another.

“He who would build up a strong, symmetrical character, he who would be a well-balanced Christian, must give all and do all for Christ; for the Redeemer will not accept divided service.” AA 483

Jesus asks us to trust Him. Give ourselves to Him. We must be careful who we surrender to. We must surrender to Jesus — not to anything or anyone else on this earth. We will have one power controlling us or another. Either we are fully on the Lord’s side or we are against Him. There is no middle ground - we will be led and controlled by one power or another and the choice is ours to whom we want as our leader and in control of our lives.

“Christ has given us His life as a pattern, and we dishonour Him when we become jealous of every slight, and are ready to resent every injury, supposed or real. It is not an evidence of a noble mind to be prepared to defend self, to preserve our own dignity. We should better suffer wrongfully a hundred times than wound the soul by a spirit of retaliation, or by giving vent to wrath. There is strength to be obtained of God. He can help. He can give grace and heavenly wisdom. If you ask in faith, you will receive but you must watch unto prayer. Watch, pray, work, should be your watchword.” 2T 426/7.

“God has given us intellectual and moral power, but to a great extent everyone is the architect of his own character.” CT 222.

Self denial

Refusal

Once we have decided who we want as the leader of our life, we must refuse the other, “Resist the devil, and he will flee from you.” James 4:7. The enemy will come to us over and over again with his enticements to worldly honour, gain and comfort. We must refuse him every step of the way and choose to follow Jesus.

“We are not safe for one moment in cherishing indifference and carelessness in regard to our soul’s salvation. Many will have to arouse and change their course of action if they are saved. The perils of the last days are upon us. Connection with divine influence through a strong, living, working faith, can alone make us to be labourers together with God. Those who would shun the self-denying, self-sacrificing part of religion, will never be partakers with Christ in His glory. There must be prayerful study and determined effort on the part of all who shall win the crown of life.” 2SM 212.

“As our first parents lost Eden through the indulgence of appetite, our only hope of regaining Eden is through the firm denial of appetite and passion. Abstemiousness in diet and control of all the passions will preserve the intellect and give mental and moral vigor, enabling men to bring all their propensities under the control of the higher powers to discern between right and wrong, the sacred and the common. All who have a true sense of the sacrifice made by Christ in leaving His home in heaven to come to this world that He might by His own life show man how to resist temptation will cheerfully deny self and choose to be partakers with Christ of His sufferings.” 3T 491.

When we deny self, all we are denying is that which is harmful to us anyway, whether it is diet or worldly pleasures. Jesus has given us a better way and the way of the cross leads home.

“Do you talk of self-denial? What did Christ give for us? When you think it hard that Christ requires all, go to Calvary, and weep there over such a thought. Behold the hands and feet of your Deliverer torn by the cruel nails that you may be washed from sin by His own blood!” IT 160.

When “the Lord sees their self-denial and He gives them success and victory.” 2SM 180.

Now that we’ve laid our glory in the dust - God can use us because He sees value in us.

Often God will test a person before giving him an honourable position as in the case of Joseph. He had to endure the humility of prison life that he was totally undeserving of, before he could be a humble ruler in Egypt.

King David had to live the life of a fugitive from his own father-in-law, King Saul, before he was crowned king of Israel. He would be a more effective ruler after suffering the humility of life on the run. Death was haunting him around every comer. He had to learn complete trust in God. Now he was exalted to the position of king and for the most part he was a humble and successful ruler. Although he made mistakes along the way, he came to the Lord in humble confession. He saw his need of Jesus.

Also Moses was very skilled after learning much in Pharaoh’s court, but he did not learn the most important lesson and that was the lesson of humility. This took him forty years to learn by tending sheep in the wilderness. Now he was ready to take his position at the head of the nation of Israel and lead them to the Promised Land.

God often leads us through humble and trying situations before raising us up. He wants us to see that there is nothing good within us, and we need to put our whole trust in God. He says to us now, “Shake thyself from the dust; arise,” Isa 52:2.

“he that humbleth himself himself shall be exalted.” Luke 18:14. I will cause thee to ride upon the high places of the earth, and feed thee with the heritage of Jacob thy father: for the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it.” Isa.58:14.

Self appreciation

- to increase in value.

God does not create trash. He creates beautiful people, marred by sin, but He came to correct the problem by giving His Son to die for us. When we see that we are nothing without Christ, and we truly seek to understand God’s will in our lives, we will start to appreciate what He can and will do through us.

“A student may go through all the grades of the schools and colleges of today. He may devote all his powers to acquiring knowledge. But unless he has a knowledge of God, unless he obeys the laws that govern his being, he will destroy himself. By wrong habits he loses his power of self-appreciation.” COL 108

Self development

-to bring out the capabilities and possibilities of. To bring to a more advanced and effective state.

Once we’ve been brought down to nothing in our own estimation, we are not to remain there. Jesus wants to see growth. Not that we grow in pride and self-esteem, no, we grow up to a new creature in Christ. Just like the seed dies when it is planted and comes up as a beautiful plant - Jesus wants us to grow up to be a beautiful plant in His vineyard, bearing fruit.

Jesus sees much capability in a person that has yielded himself to Him. This is not the natural state a person is born in, all this must be developed, and the earlier it is started the better it is. Never should we be satisfied with our spiritual condition as it is. “Aids to self-development must be given to the youth; they must be drawn out, stimulated, encouraged, and urged to action.” 4T 426.

Self improvement

- to bring a more desirable or excellent condition.

“Do something every day to improve, beautify, and ennoble the life that Christ has purchased with His own blood.” MH 591.

Jesus wants to bring us into a more excellent condition and therefore He will put His robe of righteousness

around any one who is willing to yield himself to His service. The choice is ours.

It begins with our children. They need constant guidance and direction to continue improving. Never are we too old to learn. Parents should “improve every means within their reach for the intellectual and moral improvement, that they may be qualified to improve the minds of their children.” CG72.

“Those who are called of God to labour in word and doctrine should ever be learners. They should constantly seek to improve, that they may be ensamples to the flock of God and do good to all with whom they are brought in contact. Those who do not feel the importance of advancement and self-improvement will not grow in grace and in the knowledge of Christ.” 5T 573.

Self help

-to cooperate effectively with, aid; assist.

“In acquiring an education, many students would gain a most valuable training if they would become self-sustaining. Instead of incurring debts, or depending on the self-denial of their parents, let young men and young women depend on themselves. They will thus learn the value of money, the value of time, strength, and opportunities, and will be under far less temptation to indulge idle and spendthrift habits. The lessons of economy, industry, self-denial, practical business management, and steadfastness of purpose, thus mastered, would prove a most important part of their equipment for the battle of life.” Thus important is the lesson of self.” Ed 221

The Lord can do great things for those who are willing to co-operate with Him. We cannot do it on our own, yet the Lord will not perform a miracle to change us if we are not willing. He will not take a man’s cigarettes and flush them down the toilet - the man must choose not to buy them and then God will give him grace to deal with the withdrawal symptoms. Neither will God take some money and put it in your mailbox daily if you are not willing to go out and look for employment. God is willing to help those who help themselves.

Self respect

-to hold in esteem or honour. To treat with consideration.

“Banish no longer your self-respect; for I have bought you with the price of My own blood.” TM520,

“Never forfeit your self-respect by hasty, thoughtless words. See that your words are pure, your conversation holy. Give your children an example of that which you wish them to be.” CG 219,

“He who wishes to preserve his own self-respect must be careful not to wound needlessly the self-respect of others.” GW 122

Jesus has much respect for us and we are to have respect for what He can do through us by avoiding things like the appearance of evil. Also we should be careful to respect others.

Our glory is laid in the dust. God has picked us up and given us purpose and direction in our lives - now He wants us to continue to grow in grace; to improve

Self knowledge - know yourself

-to be cognisant or aware of a situation, fact or truth.

“To know oneself is great knowledge. True self-knowledge leads to a humility that will open the way for the Lord to develop the mind and mould and discipline the character.” CT 419

“Self-knowledge leads to humility and to trust in God, but it does not take the place of efforts for self-improvement.” CT 67.

“Self-knowledge will save many from falling into grievous temptations, and prevent many an inglorious defeat. In order to become acquainted with ourselves, it is essential that we faithfully investigate the motives and principles of our conduct, comparing our actions with the standard of duty revealed in God’s word.” 2T 517.

It is important to understand our character, with the sins that easily beset us and the temptations that easily overcome us, and then to avoid those situations that would expose ourselves to temptations of that nature. Don’t be foolish - just because you have overcome an alcohol habit that has plagued you for years, does not mean that you can safely spend time with worldly family and friends frequently who are constantly drinking alcohol in your presence. Sooner or later you may fall.

Self reliance

-confident, trustful.

“Men of power are those who have been opposed, baffled, and thwarted. By calling their energies into action, the obstacles they meet prove to them positive blessings. They gain self-reliance. Conflict and perplexity call for the exercise of trust in God and for that firmness which develops power.” MH 500.

People who shun responsibilities because they feel they are deficient in ability to perform well, are not learning self-reliance. I have heard many excuses for missionary work, teaching lessons, preaching etc. such as “I don’t have a talent for this kind of work - this other brother is much better at it than I am.” How did this other brother become better? Perhaps they had a talent in that regard, but they also developed that talent and became self-reliant. Not that they don’t depend on the Lord any more, but they are able to perform the task that God gives them to do rather than deferring the duty to a more “experienced” brother or sister.

Help the poor not to always expect handouts constantly but to become self-reliant... “Instead of encouraging the poor to think that they can have their eating and drinking provided free or nearly so, we

should place them where they can help themselves. We should endeavour to provide them with work, and if necessary teach them how to work. We are to educate the poor to become self-reliant. This will be true help, for it will not only make them self-sustaining, but will enable them to help others." 6T 279

Also the youth need to be taught self-reliance from (their earliest years. Their parents are not servants to them and the sooner they learn this the better it will be for them. In the family we all work together. "If they would stand in a position where they shall influence others they must be self-reliant." CG 157.

We can become conquerors through Jesus Christ.

Self control

-to exercise restraint or direction over;

Especially in raising children there is need of self-control. "You should possess perfect control over yourself; then you can have better success in controlling your children when they are unruly." 2T 702. The work starts with the parent. "Teach your children from the cradle to practice self-denial and self-control." CT 127. .

"There was a decided failure in your education and discipline during childhood and youth. You now have to learn the great lessons of self-control, which ought to have been mastered in earlier days. God brought you where your surroundings would be changed and where His Holy Spirit could discipline you, that you might acquire moral powers and self-control to make you a conqueror. It will require the strongest effort, the most persevering and unflinching determination, and the strongest energy to control self." 4T 92.

"Strength of character consists of two things - power of will and power of self-control. Many youth mistake strong, uncontrolled passion for strength of character; but the truth is that he who is mastered by his passions is a weak man. The real greatness and nobility of the man is measured by his power to subdue his feelings, not by the power of his feelings to subdue him. The strongest man is he who, while sensitive to abuse, will yet restrain passion and forgive his enemies." 4T 656.

Jesus learned self-control after fasting for 40 days in the wilderness. "In man's behalf, Christ conquered by enduring the severest test. For our sake He exercised a self-control stronger than death.... We have nothing to bear that He has not endured." DA 117. It is possible for us to learn self-control but it is not an easy task, especially if we have not been taught self-control from our childhood.

Self restraint,

To hold back from action. To keep in check under control.

Often people, especially young people get tired of the self-restraint that comes with serving the Lord. Ancient Israel many times were led astray by copying the way of life of the heathen around them who had no self-restraint. After many years of having God at the head of their nation they began to demand a king to rule them as the other nations had. "The simplicity and self-restraint essential to the highest development they sought to exchange for the pomp and self-indulgence of heathen peoples. To be 'like all the nations' was their ambition. God's plan of education was set aside, His authority disowned." Ed 49-50. There is danger today that youth will make the same mistake and think that their higher education at school is of more value than God's plan of education.

If you feel weak and simply can't gain control over certain areas of your life, don't give up. Jesus has promised strength but as with physical health so also with spiritual health. Exercise is essential and it will cause more strength to be obtained "The power of self-restraint strengthens by exercise. That which at first seems difficult, by constant repetition grows easy, until right thoughts and actions become habitual. *If* we may turn away from all that is cheap and inferior, and rise to a high standard; we may be respected by men and beloved by God." MH491

Self restriction

To confine or keep within limits "The walls of self-control and self restriction should not in a single instance be weakened and broken down." 4T 574. Paul writes, "I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection: lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway." 1 Cor. 9:27.

"Those who do not overcome in little things will have no moral power to withstand greater temptations." 4T 574. It is important to restrict ourselves from any and all temptations, whether large or small. Avoid those things and places that cause you great temptations. Keep yourself within the limits of God's love.

We've finally allowed Christ to complete!) control of our lives. All decisions we make are for Him. We have mastered our sinful natures, and have learned what is important in life. We now will follow principle rather than our feelings and worldly desires. We will begin to forget ourselves and live for others.

Self-forgetful

-to cease to remember “It was not enough for the disciples of Jesus to be instructed as to the nature of His kingdom. What they needed was a change of heart that would bring them into harmony with its principles. Calling a little child to Him, Jesus set him in the midst of them; then tenderly holding the little one in His arms He said, “Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven.” The simplicity, the self-forgetfulness, and the confiding love of a little child are the attributes that Heaven values. These are the characteristics of real greatness.” DA 437.

“We should be self-forgetful, ever looking out for opportunities, even in little things, to show gratitude for the favours we have received of others, and watching for opportunities to cheer others and lighten and relieve their sorrows and burdens by acts of tender kindness and deeds of love.” 3T 539. We need to open our eyes and look around us and see others that need our help rather than busily going about our daily schedule, ignoring the needs of others around us thinking that “I’m in a rush, surely someone else will stop and help them.” Once we’re converted this thought won’t even enter our mind. We WILL stop to help.

Self-government

-the authoritative direction and restraint exercised over the actions of some people in communities or societies.

We all need to learn to develop habits of self-government so that our thoughts may be brought into subjection to the Spirit of Christ. Let Jesus be the ruler of our lives and together with Him we can have a government that will exercise restraint when faced with temptations. Our deeds will be guided and directed by One who will act in our best interest.

It is a great disservice that parents do to their children if “they do not teach them self-government, stability of character, and the necessity of a resolute, well directed will. Most children ... are not taught the necessity of developing their physical and mental powers for some good purpose, to bless society with their influence, to be well qualified to adorn the Christian life, and to perfect holiness in the fear of God.” 2T648.

Self-mastery

-to conquer, subdue

“The requirements of God must be brought home to the conscience. Men and women must be awakened to the duty of self-mastery, the need of purity, freedom from every depraving appetite and defiling habit. They need to be impressed with the fact that all their powers of mind and body are the gift of God, and are to be preserved in the best possible condition for His service.” MH 130. In order to walk on the sea of glass we must have conquered and subdued our sinful, selfish human nature. Only through Christ is this possible - and He has promised to be with us through every trial and difficulty. Through Christ we can overcome every sin that easily besets us. Nothing is impossible for God. Let Him be your master as you learn to master every temptation that comes your way. You do not have to be controlled by sin, self and Satan. You can be controlled by Jesus and He has a great work for you to do - go and do it

You need a balance in your opinion of yourself.

“If you form too high an opinion of yourself, you will think that your labours are of more real consequence than they are, and you will plead individual independence which borders on arrogance. If you go to the other extreme and form too low an opinion of yourself, you will feel inferior and will leave an impression of inferiority, which will greatly limit the influence that you might have for good. You should avoid either extreme. Feeling should not control you; circumstances should not affect you. You may form a correct estimate of yourself, one that will prove a safeguard from both extremes. You may be dignified without vain self-confidence; you may be condescending and yielding without sacrificing self-respect or individual independence, and your life may be of great influence with those in the higher as well as the lower walks of life.” 3T 506.

“At the cross of Calvary, love and selfishness stood face to face. Here was their crowning manifestation. Christ had lived only to comfort and bless, and in putting Him to death, Satan manifested the malignity of his hatred against God. He made it evident that the real purpose of his rebellion was to dethrone God, and to destroy Him through whom the love of God was shown.” DA 57. If we continue to retain our selfishness we have left off from following Christ. Satan’s selfishness began in heaven and it led him to crucify Christ. We are partakers of this sin if we do not overcome and we crucify “the Son of God afresh, and put him to an open shame.” Heb. 6:6.

May God help us to maintain our self-respect but not become selfish and arrogant. We must examine ourselves daily to see if we are selfish or not because Jesus is coming soon, to take all His faithful unselfish followers home.

AMEN

Wendy Eaton

144,000 Comparison Study continued

In this next comparison we turn to events that happen after the special resurrection. To establish the context of these events we again use the passages from Great Controversy and Early Writings but this time comparing them with Testimonies Volume 1.

After the special resurrection the Israel of God are present. They hear the voice of God declaring the day and hour of Jesus' coming. They are glorified, their faces are lighted up with the glory of God as was the face of Moses when he came down from Sinai. Exactly alike the 144,000 hear the voice of God declaring the day and hour of Jesus' coming. Exactly alike they are glorified, their faces lighted up with the glory of God as was the face of Moses. It is one and the same event, one and the same company, the Israel of God who are the 144,000.

The 144,000 are described as, "living saints, 144,000 in number" ¹ The words "in number" mean a literal number. For example in Testimonies Volume 3 Jezebel's prophets are described as "eight hundred and fifty in number" ² And as the Scriptures show this is a literal number of prophets, "Now therefore send, and gather to me all Israel unto mount Carmel, and the prophets of Baal four hundred and fifty, and the prophets of the groves four hundred, which eat at Jezebel's table."³

Turning back to the train of events in our study we see that once the 144,000 are glorified, the wicked wish to do them violence but fall at their feet helpless. Then appears the sign of the Son of man, Jesus comes in all his glory, the heavens are rolled together, the wicked hide themselves in the dens and in the rocks, the saints cry out "who shall be able to stand" and Jesus replies: "my grace is sufficient for you."

The next event to take place is the general resurrection where all the sleeping saints are called to life. The sleeping saints are raised immortal while the living saints, the 144,000, are not yet immortal but will be changed in the twinkling of an eye. In Testimonies Volume 1 it says, "hi the same moment we [the 144,000] were changed."⁴ And in 1 Corinthians we read that, "In a moment, hi the twinkling of an eye . . . we shall be changed."⁵ The change that takes place is termed translation.

Now consider this statement, "At the voice of God they [the 144,000] were glorified; now [at the general resurrection] they are made immortal." ⁶ The living saints were glorified when they heard the voice of God declaring the day and hour of Jesus' coming. But it is not until the general resurrection that they are made immortal. Therefore saints who are raised in the special resurrection are raised glorified but still mortal. In other words they could still die.

In the light of that we can explain the following statement. "Elijah, who was translated to Heaven without seeing death, represented those who will be living on earth at the time of Christ's second appearing, and who will be changed from mortal to immortal, and be translated to Heaven without seeing death."⁷ Now we ask: who will be living on the earth at the time of Christ's second coming? It is the 144,000 that will be living on the earth. Some of them have been specially raised but all are still mortal. In other words they could still die. They could die in the destruction of the seventh plague. They could die when the wicked would "lay hands on us [the 144,000] to thrust us into prison" ⁸ for the purpose of carrying out the death decree. But the living saints will not see death. During this period of time the angels protect them from death until they can be translated and made immortal.

"Satan wished to have the privilege of destroying the saints of the Most High; but Jesus bade His angels watch over them. God would be honored by making a covenant with those who had kept His law, hi the sight of the heathen round about them; and Jesus would be honored by translating, without their seeing death, the faithful, waiting ones who had so long expected Him." ⁹ The making of the covenant between God and His people takes place when the 144,000 are glorified. At that time the heathen round about them would destroy them but they will "fall helpless to the ground."¹⁰

God will not allow the saints to be destroyed for there would be no purpose in their death. The saints, although mortal, will live through this time without seeing death. "God would not suffer the wicked to destroy those who were expecting translation and who would not bow to the decree of the beast or receive his mark. I saw that if the wicked were permitted to slay the saints, Satan and all his evil host, and all who hate God, would be gratified."
"AMEN"

Glendon Higgins, Australia

References:

1. Testimonies for the Church, vol. 1, p. 59.1.
2. Testimonies for the Church, vol. 3, p. 279.4.
3. 1 Kings 18:19

4. Testimonies for the Church, vol. 1, p. 60.2.
5. 1 Corinthians 15:52
6. Great Controversy, p. 645.1.
7. The Spirit of Prophecy, vol. 2, p. 337.
8. Testimonies for the Church, vol. 1, p. 59.2.
9. Early Writings, p. 282.2.

10. Testimonies for the Church, vol. 1, p. 59.2.
11. Early Writings, p. 284.1.

THE SECRET OF STRENGTH

Psalms 46:1; Proverbs 10:29

Strength is the one necessary thing in this wordly-world. It is the all necessary and all seeking element for the Christian today. When we simply think of strength, physical strength; we immediately think of Samson, Hercules, Achilles, Agathocles, Mitrades, Atlas, the Vikings, and others. When we search for a definition and deeper meaning, we find an array of common words and their equivalents; strong, resisting force, source of power, ability to withstand stress, moral courage and integrity. It goes on and on, into tangents and bizarre applications and diversions; the magnificent history and tradition which is the “strength” of the church, a quality of flour that determines volume and texture of the loaf dependent on the amount of protein in it, etc., etc. (Random House Diet. 2nd Ed., 1987)

But, here we are not speaking of the power of the world; the power of wealth, nor the power of force, but the power of God. Well, how is it revealed then? It’s revealed in and through His everlasting love to men. This is the mainspring or principle basis of all His authority and power. So, who is the power for? The power of the spirit is for all, but where love is wanting and this heavenly principle is not in the heart, all our works are but “sounding brass, and our works profit nothing.” (1 Cor. 13:1).

If we could but wield, or exercise the strength of God, and so be able to do the works of God, we must take hold of this power by faith. Then how does it work? “... but faith which worketh by love.” (Gal. 5:6) Intellectual, and moral, yes, also physical strength will then be given by God according to His promises. Paul tells us: “Now unto him that is able to do exceeding Abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us.” (Eph. 3:20).

All of this is very nice, one might say, but why does He not do it then? He continues, “Yes, Lord, let it come home to me with all thine force!” Why is He not working in me according to His glorious power?” Profound questions arise. Is He slack concerning His promises? No. A respecter of persons? No. (Acts 10:34, 35). Biased, prejudiced? No. His word a failure? No. Is He unconcerned about the salvation of men? Not at all. Now, then, what is the matter? “Jesus said unto him, If thou canst believe, all things are possible to him that believeth.” (Mark 9:23). Furthermore, “For we are the circumcision, which worship God in spirit, and rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh.” (Phil. 3:3). We are progressing here in strength: “all things are possible to him that believeth,” and “have no confidence in the flesh.” If we are indifferent or of unbelief, then what? The Lord says about these things, “Cursed be the man that trusteth in man, and maketh flesh his arm, and whose heart departeth from the Lord.” (Jer 17:5).

But, ye are to do what, then? Trust in the Lord and His everlasting strength. What is it then? Where is this strength? Simply, we do not trust Him; we do not believe His word; we do not roll ourselves upon the Lord; in a way to take hold of His promise.

We get strength from two sources; the temporal and spiritual. We eat for strength. “Princes eat for strength.”

(Eccl. 10:17). Saul was told, “eat, that thou mayest have strength.” (1 Sam 28:22). There are many among us, I imagine, that if it were not for the temporal bread, “we would die”, and no doubt they would indeed die. They just do not roll their life upon the Lord to that point to get or claim... physical strength. Then, when they are brought down with sickness, their faith is not up to that level or point to be healed. So then, what’s your level of faith? Well, the measure now of faith is the measure of Christ’s gift to you today and will be tomorrow also.

Faith is not merely hope. Surprised? Let me explain further. We may hope the Lord will work for us. But, it is our privilege to know He will do it for us and walk in that faith and grace day by day.

We are invited to trust the Lord for His everlasting strength to be given us and to make Him your strength. (2T 48). Now, again, if there is such a vast reservoir of strength that may be had, if we will only bring our lives into harmony with God, why are we not taking hold upon it fully; so, in the time of trouble we shall know the source from which help comes? Furthermore, we do not believe that “prayer is the source of Christian strength.” (7T 43); another dreadful mistake.

The often quoted text of Isa. 40:28-31 makes this very relevant. “Hast thou not known? Hast thou not heard, that the everlasting God, the Lord, the Creator of the ends of the earth fainteth not, neither is weary? There is no searching of his understanding. He giveth power to the faint, and to them that have no might he increaseth strength.” The faint are those lacking courage or spirit, the weak, feeble, dejected, and yes, the cowardly. The Lord increases strength, for, “Blessed is the man whose strength is in thee; in whose heart are the ways of them. They go from strength to strength, every one of them in Zion appear before God.” (Ps. 84: 5,7). “In the struggles with powers of evil”, (3TT 430-1), “Seek the Lord and His strength, seek His face continually...”(IChr. 16:11)

“Even the youth shall faint and be weary and the young men shall utterly fall: But they that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles, they shall run, and not be weary; and they shall walk, and not faint.” (Isa. 40:30, 31).

When is this “rockbound” strength made perfect, then? The Apostle Paul says, “My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness. Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me.” (2 Cor. 12:9). The prophet Amos on one hand has a vision of a famine in hearing the words of the Lord, and foretells, “In that day shall the fair virgins and young men faint for thirst.” (Amos 8:13). The Apostle Peter, in the healing of the lame man from birth, “took him by the right hand and lifted him up: immediately his feet and ankle bones received strength. And he leaping up stood and walked, and entered with them into the temple, walking, and leaping, and praising God.” (Acts 3:7,8). What remarkable strength! What divine power!

To those who have no might he increases strength if they will... “wait on the Lord: be of good courage, and he shall strengthen thine heart: wait, I say, on the Lord.” (Ps. 27:14). But, no, we have so long trusted in the strength of the arm of flesh. It’s like throwing ourselves into the “jaws” of the lion and merciless destruction to have temporal sustenance taken from us. Hence, we do not venture to rely upon the unseen. Nor, to “seek the Lord, and His strength: to seek His face evermore.” (Ps. 105:4). Why must we persistently and faithfully “seek the Lord”? Because “...thou also shalt seek strength because of the enemy.” (Nah 3:11). Even the youths in the daring and foolish pride of their strength shall fall! “They will be accountable for their use of strength.” (IT 178).

But, he who takes the strength of God, shall “change” his strength, putting off weakness, and putting on God’s power. “They shall run and not be weary.” (Isa 40:31). Are you experiencing weariness? Perhaps you have lost your connection with God, or violated a law of nature. Can you identify with God? Have you purposely lost your touch with the Saviour? And are weary in God’s work? Weariness in God’s work is nonexistent. God’s service should be a joy and Christian activity, an edifying strength, abounding in zeal and energy. There are grand men and women although who get where Elijah was—under the juniper tree and it comes very soothingly to such to hear the words of the Master: “The journey is too great for thee, and I am going to refresh you.” (1 Kings 19:7). The physical needed to be cared for. Let us not confound physical weariness with spiritual weakness. If weariness sets in, however, then return to the Lord; rely on his strength, and treasure your time for it’s God’s time.

Let your prayer be, “O Lord, my strength, and my fortress, and my refuge in the day of affliction... “(Jer. 16:19); and, “now is come salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of His Christ.” Rev. 12:10). This is “The Secret of Strength”! AMEN.

John Teodorou USA/Greece

WORDS FROM THE CROSS (7)

“Father, into Your hands I commend my spirit.” Luke 23:46

Jesus spoke the seventh and last time. The first part of the plan of salvation had reached its end. He had faithfully fulfilled His duty of teaching, preaching the word, healing the sick. Up until the last moment He had been calling those who were tired, heavy laden, to find rest in Him, and the harvest at the foot of the cross was not small. Many of those wicked men who surrounded the cross were pierced to the heart during those six hours that the Son of God had been hanging there and they experienced a deep conversion.

Jesus saw that His sacrifice was not in vain. He had already saved many people. He was saving others and He would save many others in the future, just by the power of His word and work that would transcend time and space. For the end, there was reserved a group of 144000 that would escort Him wherever He would travel, from planet to planet, in eternity, to give testimony of His love and infinite grace. They would be priests and kings in the new earth. They would go through hard trials, through tribulations, as we read in Daniel 12:1: *“There shall be a time of trouble, such as never was since there was a nation.”* But they would overcome through faith because they would run the race, *“looking unto Jesus, the Author and finisher of our faith.”* (Hebrews 12:2)

Jesus had walked humbly upon the earth, giving an example to all the persons who entered in contact with Him or had heard about Him in all times. He had bore the insults and offences in silence, He had poured out blessings, had healed the sick and had brought peace to the hearts of repented sinners whom He had reconciled with God. He had taught all man needed to know, He had given all He had and was, and now He was giving His own life, the most precious gift God has given man, He was voluntarily sacrificing it. He, the Son of God who had become the Lamb of God was dying on the cross in order to preserve life in man who in such a naive way and at such a low price had sold it in Paradise as he was induced to covetousness.

Abraham had had a revelation of His sacrifice when a ram appeared the very moment he was about to sacrifice his son Isaac; Enoch had walked with Him for three hundred years, and when the Lord gave him a son, he better understood the relationship we have the privilege to have with Him, that relationship of total dependency like the one He has with the Father. Enoch had also seen Him coming in the clouds of heaven to look for his chosen ones. All those who performed sacrifices in the sanctuary had the opportunity to see, by faith, the vicar sacrifice of Christ, and we can also see it when the Holy Spirit reveals to us our sinfulness nailed to the cross in the beautiful person of Jesus and His blood washing off our sins so that we may be presented before the Father as if we had never sinned.

There was the Lamb, silent, humble, docile, meek, hanging on the cross, the Lamb that had been sacrificed since the foundation of the world, a sacrifice that Adam and Eve had accepted by faith as they received from the hands of the Father the skin of two animals to cover their nakedness as death entered Paradise.

His heart was torn because the sin He had taken upon Himself separated Him from the Father. But His mission on earth was over. He had overcome the enemy forever, so He spoke a seventh and last time and said: *“Father, into Your hands I commend my spirit.”*

He was resurrected on the third day and ascended to heaven to present His sacrifice to the Father and take with Him the first fruits, and we read: *“and the graves were opened, and many bodies of the saints who had fallen asleep were raised; and coming out of the graves after His resurrection, they went into the holy city and appeared to many.”* (Matthew 27:52) They are the guarantee that if we sleep in the Lord, we shall meet Him in heaven. For 2000 years He has been serving as mediator between God and man. Each sin we commit and confess is presented by Him to the Father as He lifts His hands and shows Him the scars of the nails that pierced His flesh for our sins and forgiveness is granted to us immediately. Century after century, one man after the other who has approached the throne of grace with a contrite heart, confessing his iniquities, has left with peace in his heart as he was justified by faith.

We are living in the time of the end. Wherever we look we see the signs of his imminent coming, as He foretold His disciples. We are in the threshold of eternity and very soon the same words that were pronounced on the earth, before He expired on the cross of Calvary, will be pronounced in the heavenly temple: *“It is finished.”* The last part of the plan of salvation will reach its end. Soon we shall be able to say: *“This is the Lord, we have waited for Him, and He will save us.”* (Isaiah 25:9) Let us wait for Him every moment, let us sleep with a heart that wakes (Songs 5:2) and keep our lamps trimmed. Let us look at Jesus alone and remember that *“Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love Him.”* (1 Corinthians 2:9) . Amen Teresa Corti - Greece

WORLD ASSEMBLY JULY 25-28/02 IN ARNHEM, HOLLAND

After five years we gathered together again to enjoy the spiritual feast at the General Conference. There were an estimated 500 brothers and sisters and visitors come together from over 90 different countries. The conference was held outside the city of Amsterdam, Holland in a beautiful country setting amongst trees and green fields.

For the 2002 General Conference session we were warmly welcomed by Rudi Guldemester, leader of the Dutch field.

Motto: “Time to Seek the Lord” Hos. 10:12 Thursday, July 25

Br. DiFranca formally opened the conference by welcoming us all with peace and joy. It is a very serious time to seek the Lord in holy communion. A very important motto has been chosen, “time to seek the Lord”. How important that in this time in the world’s history we unite together. Our sins have separated us from God like the prodigal son. But the Lord is calling us back. There are still many things that people allow to separate themselves from the Lord. It is time to seek the Lord, time to think seriously about eternity.

Some people are like Lot. Their interests are for this world. Their choice has not helped them spiritually. John says not to love the world because these things will pass away. It is time to seek the Lord, to have a wonderful reformation in our private lives so that the church can grow spiritually. Make your decision today. God is not far away. He has never separated from us. We left Him and now He invites us to come back.

Sin has changed many things in us. We are no longer in the image God created us in.

we are tempted to think God can’t love us anymore, but God sent His Son to bring us back. How long will we resist such love? No man can save himself. Only in the sacrifice of Jesus can we find salvation. It is time to go back to the Lord. What will happen if we don’t heed the call of Jesus? We sometimes hear, many voices but need to ignore the rest and listen to the Lord. Seek holiness, righteousness and communion with God. Be a messenger of light to others while it is day. If you are hearing His voice, open your heart.

Gary Foster titled his message, “The time is come”. He told a story of some people who were stranded in the Arctic. They gave up hope of rescue when suddenly they saw a flurry of activity on the horizon. Rescue had come. God always is prepared for an emergency. Many people are also waiting for a spiritual rescue.

Suppose God never sent a message of rescue? What about in Noah’s time? God told Noah to prepare the people. Noah preached that the flood is coming and to repent. The majority rejected the message. God hoped that thousands would listen. What a pity that so few accepted.

In the time of Joseph and in the time of Noah, God sent unique messages, calling the people to make a change in their lives. Noah’s message was adapted to his day.

Today we have a unique message. God wants us to be established in the present truth. It needs our attention. There is a vital message for you. It is a message of life and death. The message for today is in the book of Revelation. The most vital truths were given to man in this book. It is for us today. Revelation was written to transform our thinking and to change our lives.

Revelation 14:14-20 gives a description of Christ’s second coming. Do you want to be among these who are harvested by the Lord? The time has come for us to make our decision to follow the Lord.

The three angels have been sent with a message for us today in Rev. 14:6-12. There is a specific message to preach today. Are we preaching it? Will we stand as God’s people today? The time of this message has come. Are you preaching today? The time has come to give our hearts and lives to the Lord. He is preparing a people to preach the message. Are you assisting the Lord?

Br. Gutknecht presented the officers and gave them counsel and encouragement to perform their duties well. They have been given a solemn responsibility before God and man.

Br. Henry Dering gave a slide presentation along with his subject “Countdown to Eternity”. 8,000 flyers had been distributed in the neighbourhood for this meeting. This meeting was his evangelistic meeting on the second coming of Christ. There is much speculation in the world as to how the world will end. Many people fear that the world will be destroyed by a disaster such as an act of terror or uncontrolled disease, i.e. AIDS. Then there are others who are living for pleasure who don’t think the world will ever end. Many have no hope for the future. But Jesus said it will end and the Bible tells us clearly how, so there will be no mistake. He gives us hope for the future. He wants to take us there.

Friday, July 26

Br. Kang from Korea spoke from Luke 18:1. “And he spake a parable unto them to this end, that men ought always to pray, and not to faint.”

There will be many things that trouble us and we should pray always to see us through. In 1 Tim. 1:15 we are told that Jesus Christ came to save sinners. Many people wonder how they can be saved. A young ruler came to Jesus asking what he can do to inherit eternal life. Many are searching. The Bible shows us how we can receive salvation (1 Tim 1:15). Jesus came to save sinners. The righteous have no need of salvation but Christ came to save sinners.

Romans 3:10 tells us that all have sinned, so all have the qualification to be saved. Paul considered himself the chief of sinners. Let us praise God for the gospel so that we can be saved. We fkm’t go to heaven only with the qualification, though. Jesus promised to take our sins. We have to give them up. This is salvation by faith. We all can believe and use the way that God has prepared for us.

Br. Jose Giner’s talk was entitled “Time to Sow: And Will Be a Blessing”. When God called Abraham, He had a great plan for him. It was not only to separate him from worldly friends and associates, but also to spread the gospel. Although it was a great struggle to Abraham to go, he obeyed the call of God and went, sowing the word of God, preaching the gospel. Abraham was a great missionary in the broadest sense of the word as he also had his household worshipping God.

Wherever he went he set up an altar. When he moved, the altar remained as a testimony for others. Abraham’s work was not in vain. Heathen’s were converted.

The altar represents prayer. In our spiritual lives we also need an altar—prayer. We cannot grow spiritually or be a blessing for others without the altar. Jesus called Abraham His friend. He wants to make us His friend also. From Abraham’s life we learn many lessons and we have a great example for us. There have been many great men in the Bible through whom the Lord worked-Joseph, Moses...

In the story of Ancient Israel we see many examples of the patience and love of God. Israel received many blessings. If they had been faithful, the whole world would have heard the gospel, however they refused to share the gospel and became a closed society.

Back to Abraham, through the sacrifice of his son, we have an example of what God went through when Jesus was sent to redeem mankind. Jesus came to preach the gospel. He lived, died, and rose again for man’s redemption. He has come to bring peace to man’s troubled soul. Not outward, political peace— but internal peace.

If Christ is hiding in the heart, it is impossible to hide your light. The madman from Gadarenes was healed and went away praising the Lord and spreading the light. Although he had no theological training, he was a great missionary. We also can share the light by sharing our experiences. The best training is our experience with Jesus. When sowing is done in a receptive heart, fruits will be seen. We are all called to sow the seed, spread the word. The power of the Word can’t be kept—it must be spread. The world must be made aware of the great event of Christ’s second coming. Our message is a message of freedom—freedom from sin. We can do a great work if we wake up from our spiritual lethargy and go and preach the word

News from the Departments

Ministerial Department: Br. Gutknecht

The only kind of life that makes sense is a life for Christ. Then Christ has given us a commission to preach the gospel. This work requires sacrifice but Jesus is our example. Br. Gutknecht shared his experiences in the past, especially the training of the youth to be workers for the Lord. One soul is more important than the whole world. We need to cooperate in this great goal of saving souls.

Education Department Sis. Racquel Orce

“The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom.” Prov. 15:33. She showed us a diagram of our education institutions world wide. Most of our education systems are in Africa, followed by Asia, America, Europe. None in Oceania. One of the main objectives of this department is religious education for adults and children. Also in primary and secondary schools to have religion in the curriculum. Also, doctrinal education is given to reinforce the beliefs of our church.

The Berea Correspondence Course was made for those who are unable to attend our schools. The course consists of three levels.

Idel Suarez presented a health lecture. God often allows disease so that we will turn to the Lord and so that those around us also will seek the Lord. Disease will also strengthen the family and the church, as well as to reveal His glory. (John 9:3). God is the only restorer of health. Benjamin Franklin said, “God cures and the doctor takes the fee.” God is the healer. The primary healing agents are spiritual and natural.

God gives everyone a certain amount of vital energy. It is like a bank account. It is up to you what you do with your vital energy—your internal doctors. Patience and perseverance is needed as it is a slow, long process. Today people are seeking quick answers for healing, like drugs, but God wants us to learn patience.

Evangelism Department: Gerhart Hunger

Some objectives were set. Make missionary plans, create evangelism groups, provide material for evangelism. He gave us an overview of the seminars and training plans—mostly in eastern Europe, central and South America. We’ve also had much success through the Internet. All the evangelism information is on this web site. Also radio evangelism is done. Our purpose is to preach the gospel in many different ways.

Publishing Department: Barbara Watts

Work in the publishing department has been mainly internal in the last five years: lessons, Sabbath Watchman, Week of Prayer, in four languages— English, Spanish, French, German. Also the web site of the General Conference lists all these publications and a list of church headquarters around the world.

Last year IMS Publications was formed as an arm of the General Conference to produce canvassing literature. Their products are offered for sale over the Internet in three languages.

www.imspublications.com. The idea is that IMS Publications can make books to be sold so that they can support themselves.

Canvassing Department: Br. Giner

The most important activity the department has done was to produce teaching aids, the canvassing handbook, and the correspondence course to instruct canvassers has also been produced. They produced varieties of other instructional publications for canvassing work.

On Friday evening Br. Larry Watts spoke on Unity. Why is there no more unity among various factions of Seventh Day Adventists? People are looking for unity. Why are people seeking for unity? It is important? We know that when the disciples were one that the Holy Spirit came upon them as the Early Rain. Are we united today? Being here physically does not necessarily mean unity. Today we pray for the Holy Spirit but we need to be united first. Why are we not united today? But the real question is, “Why is there division?” This is why it is time to seek the Lord. Soon there will be no time.

God is glorified as we draw nearer each other in spiritual unity. But unity of Christ is unity in diversity. God has given different gifts to the church as a body has different members. These gifts are to lead to unity.

Man was created in the image of God with a well-balanced mind. Satan came along and unbalanced the mind. All who sin have an unbalanced mind.

What would you give for the Holy Spirit? How much? There is a price—not in money—we must come into unity. We must first have individual unity. We must wake up and come alive from the dead. To come alive you must die. Do you want the Holy Spirit? First we must come into unity. In unity there is power. The power of unity is to put self aside and let God work.

Br. Petkov spoke for Sabbath opening. Jesus used the wedding feast to speak about His coming. It will be a wonderful feast. But in His parable of the wedding feast they had a problem. One man had no wedding garment. He was given one but refused to wear it, thus offending the king, the king gave an order to cast the man out.

On Sabbath, to enter the house of the Lord, we also must have special Sabbath clothes. But this parable is not talking about physical clothes, but Christ's robe of righteousness. We may have nice physical clothing but not have Christ's robe. Are we entering Sabbath with filthy garments of hatred, envy, lust? When we enter the presence of God we need to not only have our best physical clothes but have your spiritual clothes, Christ's righteousness, then we can keep the Sabbath day holy. Many don't want to give up their filthy garments and would rather die than exchange their clothing for Christ's. To have true Sabbath peace we must give all to the Lord.

Sabbath, July 27

Br. Shirima from Tanzania had morning worship and spoke about the importance of thanking God. This subject is often taken very lightly. God has given us many physical and material blessings but His greatest gift is the gift of salvation. Often when we pray we bring our grievances only, our pain, troubles and sorrows. We need to give thanks more, especially for the gift of salvation. And when we truly appreciate this gift, we will commit our lives completely to Christ, turning away from the things of this world. Someday we will have the privilege of participating with Him in the heavenly kingdom.

The divine service was brought to us by **Br. Cholich**. When Jesus saw Jerusalem He wept. They didn't know the time of their visitation. Time is very important as well as your place and duty. These three are important—time, place, work. What about us? Do we know the time of our visitation? What do we have to do about our visitation?

He shared a few examples from the Bible to illustrate these principles such as Moses. He knew his duty and place, but the time was wrong. He had to wait for God's time to do his duty.

We have to ask ourselves these questions also. Satan is not happy when we work hard, but we are called to work. When attacked by Satan, raise the standard, the word of God and work. Our work is to be fisher's of men—preach the word. If we don't know the time in which we live, we will be lost as was Ancient Israel. We are very near the close of time and Br. Cholich gave us some timely counsel regarding this time and what our duty is. This is a serious time and we must be praying and asking God what our personal duty is. It is not to run and hide when the Sunday Law first comes. It is to raise the standard of truth.

On Sabbath afternoon we heard many songs and a few testimonies from believers all over the world, we heard about the missionary work among the deaf people in Peru. Also from the Philippines we heard about the miracles the Lord has been doing recently in the lives of the people, it is truly a blessing to hear the reports from different parts of the world, to hear how God is touching hearts. The family of God is growing.

Br. Gutknecht

Our Inheritance-Part 1

God had done so much for Ancient Israel and they still forsook Him and served other gods. Finally God sent King Nebuchadnezzar to take them into captivity to teach them a lesson. For 70 years they were there. It was here in Babylon that God revealed the future by visions, first to King Nebuchadnezzar and later to Daniel. With the use of slides we were presented with our spiritual inheritance, touching on the major prophecies in Daniel and Revelation regarding the time in which we live.

Br. Gerhard Hunger spoke on the topic “As For Me and My House, We Will Serve the Lord”. Joshua was 110 years old when he spoke these words. He had reminded Israel of God’s leading in the past, then he asked the people to choose between the false gods of the heathen or the true God. But he chose to follow the Lord. God places before us two ways. The way of life and the way of death. We all must decide for Christ, to have a thorough reformation. We are living in the time of the sealing of the 144,000. It is time to seek the Lord.

Many households in our church have become too permissive and this has caused the children to become lazy spiritually. They lose their way. When we choose our home, we must not do as Lot and go to the cities, but go where it is the best place for your children to grow spiritually. It is best to have less worldly prosperity and save your children. God holds the parents responsible if their children stray. Unless God works a miracle your children will never go beyond you.

To serve the Lord is to serve from love and give ourselves to Him. We were slaves of sin but we were freed in Jesus Christ. We should have worn the crown of thorns. We should have been nailed to the cross. But Jesus paid for our guilt. This is the great argument that should lead us to love. So make the decision today. Start with yourself. “As for me and then, “and my house, we will serve the Lord.”

Much counsels were given concerning the home and family. Our whole families should serve the Lord. Families are the cornerstone of the church.

In the evening we were blessed by listening to songs and testimonies by the young people. The youth are the future of our church and need our prayers so that they will remain on the strait and narrow way and give their hearts to the Lord.

Sunday, **July 28**

Department News

Youth Department: Larry Watts

The youth are the future of our church. Let’s take more time and energy in training and educating them. Br. Watts gave a brief review of activities by the youth department.

Foreign Missions Program: Larry Watts

This program is officially finished now from the General Conference level and has been transferred to local regional representatives. This program is still alive so pray that it will continue to be a success.

Good Samaritan: Santina Macera

Many poorer countries have benefited from this department which has been up and running for ten years. And our next goal is to be self-supporting. Our objective is: we’ve been able to respond to 90% of requests we receive. We not only help the poor and needy with clothes and food. We also help on a monthly basis for example: medicines and financial aid to widows and orphans. Also we try to help some to find sources of income so that they can help themselves. In Brazil we bought land and six families live and work it to provide food for themselves. In Africa we’ve also bought a few small pieces of land, seeds and tools. We’ve also bought sewing machines. Our newest program is to help those where natural disasters occur. We started with Hurricane Mitch in Nicaragua.

All this help we’ve provided has put us in a deficit. It is impossible to postpone some of these requests, so the Lord provides. Rather than travel the leader prefers to send the money to those places we need. So let us help support this very worthwhile department.

Br. Gutknecht

Our Inheritance-Part 2

1861- The history of God’s people proving faithful in their first test of war was shown in a tasteful multimedia

display. 1863-The major health vision and its great blessing influencing God's people to have better health. 1888-Br. Gutknecht showed the importance of not only hearing but experiencing the Christ Our Righteousness message and the sad history of leaders in the SDA church rejecting the message - -The Kellogg crisis was discussed and how God intervened in the destruction of the Sanatorium and the Publishing House. Kellogg's pantheism was a subtle error not discerned by many. 1905-The way God's people got through the crisis because of Sis. White's guidance. 1914-5-God's prophet was being laid to rest, and in the terrible crisis of war only a tiny remnant of 2% proved faithful. But from the spiritual ruins rose a reform people. May God help us to be truly the Reform people that have been prophesied in this movement of destiny.

Br. Gustavo Castellanos, Austria

"Who Will Go For Us?" When this question was asked to Isaiah, he readily answered, "Here am I, send me." There were many problems in Ancient Israel that needed correcting and Isaiah willingly went as God's spokesman. We must be just as willing to sacrifice our own ease in order to fulfill the Word of the Lord. There are five things that will kill our church: Religion that consists only of forms, strife in church, wrong worship, threats from outside, pride. God's solution is Isaiah's response. God forgives our sins. Then sends us on a mission, but we must be willing. Closing thoughts were given by the new president, **Br. Cholich**, the new treasurer, **Br. Giner**, and the new secretary, **Br. Petkov**. An appeal was made for prayer and support and unity in our work. We face our enemy. Our enemy will war against us and we must be strong. As in the days of Gideon, those that are weak will be sent home. We need to be brave.

Our goal for the future is to move headquarters from Germany to U.S.A. Initially it looked difficult, but if it is God's will, He will make sure it is easy. The second goal is to pay debts (the Sabbath School offerings owing). Also to strengthen the fields for the preaching of the gospel, help them financially.

The army sends out soldiers without equipping them for battle. Also we need to strengthen our clinic in Elim. Our missionary school will open by Elim, so students can help out there. We need new mission schools in Africa and Asia, as well as a publishing house on these continents.

We've opened a new era in Reform Movement. We need to Reform. Forget the past and go forward to fulfill these plans.

May God help us to work in unity to fulfill some of these goals. We need prayer and financial support.

The spiritual blessings and fellowship were tremendous. It has been good to be here. We look forward to a new General Conference session, not in 2007, but in heaven. In order for this to happen, we all need to be working together in earnest. May God help us to fulfill our commission.

Newly Elected Officers for the General Conference

President - Branko Cholich

Secretary - T.Petkov

Treasurer (temporary) - Ben Takens

Vice President - A. Di Franca

Vice President - T. Petkov

Missionary Department Leader - Henry Dering

Publication Department Leader - Raquel Orce-Petkov

Canvassing Department Leader - Joel Barnado

Youth Department Leader - Pablo Hunger

Health Department Leader - Idel Suarez (junior)

Good Samaritan Dept. Leader - S. Mascera

Education Department Leader - S. Samdoya

Ministerial Sabbath School Department Leader - A. Di Franca

CHILDREN'S STORY

JACK'S FAITHFULNESS

Many years ago a young boy, named Jack had a great desire to learn to read. He was a slave and in those days slaves were not permitted to learn to read. It was more equitable for the owners if they remained ignorant. They were treated as animals. Their whole purpose in life was to do their master's bidding. However Jack wanted more from life and he had a friend named William who started him on his road to legibility. It all started one day when Jack found William with a book.

"What's that, William?"

"That's a spelling book, Jack."

"What's a spelling book for?"

"To learn to read."

"How do you do it?"

"We learn those things first"

And so Jack learned ABC, etc. mastered the spelling book, and then learned to read a little, though the law forbade any slave person to read.

One day William brought home a little black book.

"What's that, William?" asked his friend Jack.

"That is the New Testament, that tells about Jesus."

And before long, Jack learned to read the New Testament, and when he read that "God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life," and that he really loved us and died for us, and that "if we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins," his heart went out in love to Jesus. He believed in Him, his sins were forgiven, his heart was changed, and he became a happy Christian.

Though still young, he at once began to tell others of Jesus' love. When he became a young man, he was still at work for the Lord. He used to go to the neighbouring plantations, read His Bible, and explain it to the people.

One day the master said to him, "Jack, I am told that you go off preaching every Saturday."

"Yes, master, I must tell sinners how Jesus died on the cross for them."

"Jack, if you go and preach on Saturday, I will tell you what I will do on Sunday."

"What will you do on Sunday, master?"

"I will tie you to that tree, take this whip, and flog all this religion out of you."

Jack knew that his master was a determined man, but when he thought of Christ's sufferings for us, and heard his Lord saying to him, "Be though faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life," he resolved to

continue his work for the Lord the next Sabbath.”

With his New Testament in hand, he went down to the plantation and told them that his master might whip him half to death the next day, but if he did, he would not suffer more than Christ had suffered for us.

The next morning his master said, ‘Jack, I hear you were preaching again yesterday.’

‘Yes master. I must go and tell sinners how Jesus was whipped that we might go free.’

“But, Jack, I told you that if you went off preaching on Saturday, I would whip you on Sunday, and now I will do it”

Blow after blow fell upon Jack’s back, while cursing came from the master’s lips. Then he said: - ‘There, Jack, I don’t believe you will preach next Saturday. Now go down to the cotton-field and go to work.’

When next Sabbath came, Jack could not stand straight for his back was covered with sores and scars. But, with his New Testament in his hand, he stood before the people of the plantation, and said, “Master whipped me almost to death last Sunday, and I don’t know but he may kill me tomorrow, but if he does, I shall not suffer more than Jesus did when He died on the cross for us.”

Sunday morning the master called him and said, “Jack, I hear you have been preaching again.”

“Yes, master. I must go and tell sinners how Christ was wounded for our transgressions, how He sweat drops of blood for us in the garden, and wore that cruel crown of thorns that we might wear a crown of joy when He comes.”

“But I don’t want to hear your preaching. Now bare your back, and take the whipping I told you I would give you if you went off preaching.’

Fast flew the cruel lashes, until Jack’s back was covered with wounds and blood.

“Now, Jack, go down to the cotton-field and go to work. I reckon you’ll never want to preach again.”

When Sabbath came, Jack’s back was in a terrible condition. But, hobbling along, he found his friends in the neighbouring plantation and said: -

“My master whipped me almost to death last Sunday, but if I can only get you to come to Jesus and love Him, I am willing to die for your sake tomorrow.”

If there were scoffers there, do you not think they were led to believe there was a reality in religion? If any were there who were inclined to think that ministers preach only when they get money for it, do you not think they changed their minds when they saw what wages Jack got? Many were in tears, and some gave themselves to that Saviour for whose sake Jack was willing to die the death of a martyr.

Next morning the master called Jack, and said, “Make bare your back again; for I told you that just as sure as you went off preaching, I would whip you until you gave it up.”

The master raised the ugly whip, and as he looked at Jack’s back, all lacerated, he could find no new place to strike, and said:

“Why do you do it, Jack? You know that as surely as you go off preaching on Saturday, I will whip you almost to death the next day. No one pays you anything for it. All you get is a terrible flogging, which is taking your life from you.”

“You ask me master, what I am doing this for? I will tell you master. I am going to take all those stripes and all those scars up to Jesus when He comes again, because he loves you and me master and He bled and died on the cross for your and my sins.”

The whip dropped, and the master could not strike another blow. In a subdued tone he said:

“Go down in the cotton-field.”

Do you think Jack went away cursing his master, saying, “O Lord punish him for all his cruelty to me?” No, no! His prayer was, “Lord forgive him, for Jesus Christ’s sake.”

Ab out three o’ clock, a messenger came down to the cotton-field, crying: “Master is dying! Master is dying! Come quickly, Jack. Master is dying!”

In his private room, Jack found his master on the floor in agony, crying, “O Jack, I’m sinking down to hell! Pray for me! Pray for me!”

‘Tve been praying for you all the time, master. You must pray for yourself.”

“I don’t know how to pray, Jack. I know how to curse, but I don’t know how to pray.”

“You must pray, master.”

And finally they both prayed, and God revealed Christ on the cross to him, and then and there he became a changed man.

A few days after, he called Jack to him and said, “Jack, here are your freedom papers. They give you your liberty. Go and preach the gospel wherever the Lord leads you and may the Lord’s blessing go with you.”

The master lived only a few more days, but he died with the hope of seeing Jesus when he comes again.

If we show love to others who hate us and persecute us, our witness may change their hearts. Jesus said, “Blessed are those who are persecuted for my sake - great is their reward in heaven” Pray for those who despise you and persecute you.”

FORGIVENESS

“Then came Peter to him, and said, Lord, how oft shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? Till seven times? Jesus saith unto him, I say not unto thee, until seven times: but, until seventy times seven.” Matthew 18:21,22

“Peter had come to Christ with the question, ‘How oft shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? Till seven times?’ The rabbis limited the exercise of forgiveness to three offences. Peter, carrying out, as he supposed, the teaching of Christ, thought to extend it to seven, the number signifying perfection. But Christ taught that we are never to become weary of forgiving. Not ‘Until seven times/ He said, ‘but, until seventy times seven.’

“Then He showed the true ground upon which forgiveness is to be granted and the danger of cherishing an unforgiving spirit. In a parable He told of a king’s dealing with the officers who administered the affairs of his government. Some of these officers were in receipt of vast sums of money belonging to the state. As the king investigated their administration of this trust, there was brought before him one man whose account showed a debt to his lord for the immense sum often thousand talents. He had nothing to pay, and according to the custom, the king ordered him to be sold, with all that he had, that payment might be made. But the terrified man fell at his feet and besought him, saying, “Have patience with me, and I will pay thee all. Then the lord of that servant was moved with compassion, and loosed him, and forgave him the debt.

“But the same servant went out, and found one of his fellow servants, which owed him an hundred pence; and he laid hands on him, and took him by the throat, saying, Pay me that thou owest. And his fellow servant fell down at his feet, and besought him, saying, have patience with me, and I will pay thee all. And he would not; but went

and cast him into prison, till he should pay the debt. So when his fellow servants saw what was done, they were very sorry, and came and told unto their lord all that was done. Then his lord, after that he had called him, said unto him, O thou wicked servant, I forgave thee all that debt, because thou desiredst me: shouldest not thou also have had compassion on thy fellow servant, even as I had pity on thee? And his lord was wroth, and delivered him to the tormentors, till he should pay all that was due unto him.” Christ’s Object Lessons, p. 243, 244.

Jesus, when saying that we are to forgive others seventy times seven, did not mean that we are to count our brother’s sins against us and when he has reached 490, then to start paying him back. He meant that we are to be forgiving always. Not just forgiving a minimum amount but that we are to forgive him everything.

“Be ye therefore merciful, as your Father also is merciful.” Luke 6:36 We are just to go on forgiving and forgetting our brother’s sins and forget about counting them. We are to be merciful even as God is merciful with us and forgives us our sins. AMEN.