

*The Reformation* 

# Messenger

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*Raquel surrounded with her students in Canaima, Venezuela*

## OVERCOMING SIN

Millions of professed Christians have tried to overcome sin in their lives and have failed. They have prayed to God for victory and have wished for perfection for years and have put out some efforts to it also, and finally, they come to the end of their lives and are still wishing for the victory which they never gained.

What went wrong? One visiting the church regularly, paying tithes and offerings following healthful living, reading Bible and praying to God, yet to be lost in the end. Because of some sin in their lives that they did not overcome or some duty that they did not fulfill.

The Pharisees seemed very faithful in their obedience to the laws and ceremonies. They fasted twice a week; every Monday and Thursday, They paid tithes from the mint and cumin; they gave money to the poor and did missionary work regularly. Yet Jesus called them “the children of the devil”, and said, “Except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven.” Matt. 5:20

“The Bible teaches that every besetting sin must be put away, that the warfare against evil must be waged until every wrong is overcome..” C.T 448

“We must aim at this perfection and overcome as He overcame, if we would have a seat at His right hand.” Test Vol. 3 p. 336

Jesus said, “Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation: the spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak.” Matt 26:41

When a person is converted his mind and heart are changed, but the flesh is not. Now begins the war against the fleshly lusts. The appetite, the lust of the eyes and the desires of the sinful flesh must be subdued and brought into the control of the mind. And this is where many fail and lose their salvation.

“The lower passions have their seat in the body and work through it. The words “flesh” or “fleshly” or “carnal lusts” embrace the lower, corrupt nature; the flesh of itself cannot act contrary to the will of God. We are commanded to crucify the flesh, with the affections and lusts. How shall we do it? Shall we inflict pain on the body? No; but put to death the temptation to sin. The corrupt thought is to be expelled, Every thought is to be brought into captivity to Jesus Christ. All animal propensities are to be subjected to the higher powers of the soul. The love of God must reign supreme; Christ must occupy an undivided throne. Our bodies are to be regarded as His purchased possession. The members of the body are to become the instruments of righteousness.” A. H. 127-128

There are great sins that people commit. Also there are bad habits which have been practiced for many years. Then there are also little sins which seem too small to many to pay attention to them. They think that they would not lose heaven for such trivial little sins. But the sin of Adam and Eve which seem small to many yet surely had terrible consequences.

“Sin, however small it may be esteemed, can be indulged in only at the peril of infinite loss.” S.c. p. 33

Many will be out of heaven for sins they thought too small to pay attention to. One sin indulged leads us to another sin, and next come greater sins and finally Satan takes over the whole being”

Jesus said, “He that is faithful in that which is least is faithful also in much: and he that is unjust in the least is unjust also in much.” Luke 16:10

This gives us hope for the complete victory over sin. If we are faithful in the small things of the law we will be faithful in greater things also.

This also explains why some have not overcome the great sins in their lives; it is because they have neglected the little sins. Sins that they think that they can put away anytime, since they are so small; yet by practicing them they fail to overcome the greater sins.

It is good to examine ourselves and make a list of all sins in our lives, even the smallest ones and then begin from the small ones and fight against them until you have gained the victory over them. Then the greater sins will follow and finally we gain victory over every besetting sin.

There is no easy way to overcome sin. It is a daily battle to keep us in obedience to God. To control the desires of our body.

“It will cost us an effort to secure eternal life; It is only by long and persevering effort, sore discipline, and stern conflict that we shall be overcomers. But if we patiently and determinedly in the name of the Conqueror who overcame in our behalf in the wilderness of temptation, overcome as He overcame, we shall have the eternal reward. Our efforts, our self-denial, our perseverance, must be proportionate to the - infinite value of the object of which we are in pursuit.” Test. Vol. 3 p. 324 - 325

“Satan offers to men the kingdoms of the world if they will yield to him the supremacy. Many do this and sacrifice heaven. It is better to die than to sin; better to want than to defraud; better to hunger than to lie.” Test. Vol. 4 p. 494

It is better to pluck out the right eye or cut off the right hand than to sin. If we would only understand the terrible evil nature of sin, we would put out greater efforts to overcome it.

To practice known sins grieves the Holy Spirit and there is a danger of crossing the line of no return. Many professed Christians have committed sins against the Holy Spirit and lost their chance of salvation forever.

But we don't need to despair. The victory over sin is possible to every person; even children can be victorious. Humanly it cannot be done, but with the help of God a sinless life is possible..

“Not even by a thought could our Saviour be brought to yield to the power of temptation. . . Satan could find nothing in the Son of God that would enable him to gain victory. He had kept His Father's commandments, and there was no sin in Him that Satan could use to his advantage. This is the condition in which those must be found who shall stand in the time of trouble.” G. C. 623

The standard is high. The sin must be overcome. The sooner we gain victory over every sin, the sooner the Lord will come.

Fasting and constant prayer are mediums for the victory. Missionary work will help us to overcome. By saving others we save ourselves. Sacrificing for the cause of God will benefit us spiritually. Attending every religious meeting whenever possible will give us greater knowledge of salvation.

Finally when you have gained the victory over sin, you can teach others how to do it. Your example will lead others to follow you to perfection.

May the Lord help us all in this is my wish and prayer. AMEN

*Timo Martin*

## THE WAY OF THE CROSS LEADS HOME

The road to heaven is a straight and narrow road; a road fraught with dangers and difficulties along the way; a road that requires a great battle against sin; a road that has sorrow and tears strewn along the pathway, with thorns and thistles at the sides and an enemy with fiery darts waiting to attack us at any available sign of weakness. In order to successfully travel this road we are to wear heavy armor- the armor that God has given to us. We are to carry heavy burdens - bear many responsibilities, deny ourselves so many of the things that seem so pleasurable in this life - and we must keep moving, there is little time to rest. This is the way of the cross that leads to heaven.

From the worldly person's viewpoint, it seems that there is no joy in the way of! righteousness, on the pathway to heaven. They view true Christians as a sorry lot of people who are going through some initiation process to receive their promised reward at the end of the journey, while they are reveling and having all the good things that life has to offer, with little thought as to what is at the end of their road. They are rich, they are famous, and they appear to be happy. They have all that the world has to offer.

Even from the modern-day Christian's point of view, the true followers of Jesus are taking upon themselves more than it seems necessary in order to meet God's approval. Why could a loving God, who loves His people so dearly, even think of imposing the kinds of "rules" that the true followers are obeying? Would God really ask them to deny their appetites, change their habits of dress, keep the Commandments - especially the 4th, and give their tithes to the church? No, they reason, that a God of love would not do this. This would not give happiness - there is too much self-denial involved. These people who keep these "rules" must be some sort of fanatics. All they talk about is over-coming sin, and the way of the cross. God wants happy - joyful people. And you walk into some of the churches of these false Christians and you see everyone so happy. They are joyfully singing and dancing in the aisle to wild music. Is this what God wants from His followers?

Is the Christian way really a way of sadness, sorrow and gloom as is often thought? Is it really too difficult to deny self that the majority are not willing and able to do so? Is it really difficult to be saved and reach salvation? Is it really an initiation process where the sorrow precedes the joy that is to come?

In the Bible we see that Asaph was troubled about this false accusation that is often brought to true Christians. "Truly God is good to Israel, even to such as are of a clean heart. But as for me, my feet were almost gone; my steps had well nigh slipped. For I was envious at the foolish, when I saw the prosperity of the wicked. . . . When I thought to know this, it was too painful for me.." But in seeking the Lord he found the answer, "Until I went into the sanctuary of God; then understood I their end. Surely thou didst set them in slippery places: thou castedst them down into destruction." Psalm 73:1-3, 16-18.

However the question still remains. Is the way of the cross only a way of sorrow and gloominess?

"He hath made everything beautiful in its time" (Ecclesiastes 3:11 R.V.); and true beauty will be secured, not in marring God's work, but in coming into harmony with the laws of Him who created all things, and who finds pleasure in their beauty and perfection." Ed 198.

Paul placed value on the ability to be happy. He encouraged us to "Rejoice evermore." 1 Thess. 5:8. Why should the Christian be happy under all these seemingly forbidding circumstances? It is because they value what is most important in life. They have a free conscience. They have been forgiven their sins and with a free conscience they have peace in their souls. Nothing else is of as great value. Nothing else can bring such supreme happiness that only the true Christian can experience.

"Those professed Christians who are constantly complaining, and who seem to think cheerfulness and happiness a sin, have not genuine religion. Those who take a mournful pleasure in all that is melancholy in the natural world, who choose to look upon dead leaves rather than to gather the beautiful living flowers, who see no beauty in the grand mountain heights and in the valley's clothed with living green, who close their senses to the joyful voice which speaks to them in nature, and which is sweet and musical to the listening ear - these are not in Christ. They

are gathering to themselves gloom and darkness, when they might have brightness, even the Sun of Righteousness arising in their hearts with healing in His beams.” MH 251.

Many condemn true Christianity from a lack of knowledge. How do they know that the way of the cross is only filled with self-denial and sorrow unless they have experienced for themselves? It is a mystery to worldly-minded people that true Christians can be happy and joyful in the midst of the most forbidding circumstances. They can be happy while denying themselves and adhering to the “rules” contained in the Ten Commandments. They are happy to give a day to the Lord, to give to the poor, to help the needy rather than using their time and means for themselves. They are happy to part with 10% of their income because it was not theirs in the first place - they acknowledge the fact that it belongs to God and would not dare to steal from God. Can there really be happiness in all of this? David gives encouragement, “O taste and see that the LORD is good: blessed is the man that trusteth in him.” Psalm 34:8. David wrote this in the midst of his flight from King Saul. His life of piety led him to the life of a fugitive for awhile, however he could still say that the Lord is good and encourages everyone else to give Him a try. Don’t take anyone else’s word for it.

Put the matter to the test yourself. The surest proof of religion is found in the personal experience. Without Christ the religion of Christ is only a theory and as a mere theory has no power.

“How shall we know for ourselves God’s goodness and His love? The psalmist tells us- not, to hear and know, read and know, or believe and know; but - “Taste and see that the Lord is good.” Instead of relying on the word of another, taste for yourself.. ..

“Some - yes, a large number - have a theoretical knowledge of religious truth, but have never felt the renewing power of divine grace upon their own hearts. These persons are ever slow to heed the testimonies of warning, reproof, and instruction indicted by the Holy Spirit. They believe in the wrath of God, but put forth no earnest efforts to escape it. They believe in heaven, but make no sacrifice to obtain it. They believe in the value of the soul and that ere long its Redemption ceased forever. Yet they neglect the most precious opportunities to make their peace with God.

“They may read the Bible, but its threatening do not alarm them or its promises win them. They approve things that are excellent, yet they follow the way in which God has forbidden them to go. They know a refuge, but do not avail themselves of it. They know a remedy for sin, but do not use it. They know the right, but have no relish for it. All their knowledge will but increase their condemnation. They have never tasted and learned by experience that the Lord is good. “ 5 T, p. 221. Such was the state of the Seventh-day Adventist church around the time of the 1888 conference in Minneapolis and may God help us not to follow in their footsteps, but to make earnest efforts to escape the destruction that is coming on this earth.

“While the Christian’s life will be characterized by humility, it should not be marked with sadness and self-depreciation; It is the privilege of everyones to live that God will approve and bless him. It is not the will of our heavenly Father that we should be ever under condemnation and darkness. There is no evidence of true humility in going with the head bowed down and the heart filled with thoughts of self. We may go to Jesus and be cleansed, and stand before the law without shame and remorse The Christian’s life should be one of faith, of victory, and joy in God.? GC 477. “The joy of the Lord is your strength.” Neh. 8:10.

Even though there is a cross placed before us, a life of self-denial we are promised that, “They that sow in tears shall reap in joy.” Ps. 126:6. All we have to do is step out by faith, believing the promises of God. “There are many who have the erroneous idea of the life and character of Christ. They think that He was devoid of warmth and sunniness, that He was stern, severe, and joyless. In many cases the whole religious experience is coloured by these gloomy views.

“It is often said that Jesus wept, but that He was never known to smile. Our Saviour was indeed a Man of Sorrows, and acquainted with grief, for He opened his heart to all the woes of men. But though His life was self-denying and shadowed with pain and care, His spirit was not crushed. His countenance did not wear an expression of grief and repining but ever one of peaceful serenity. His heart was a wellspring of life and wherever He went He carried

rest and peace, joy and gladness.” SC 124.

For that matter when the sinner claims that the life of a Christian is a gloomy life from his perspective he is correct. Adam and Eve enjoyed joyful communion with Jesus until the time they sinned. Then they ran away to hide when they heard His voice. “Such is still the condition of the unrenewed heart. It is not in harmony with God, and finds no joy in communion with Him. The sinner could not be happy in God’s presence; he would shrink from the companionship of holy beings. Could he be permitted to enter heaven, it would have no joy for him.” SC 14. Without Christ, there is no joy or happiness in the Christian life: Those who view it from the outside see only the self-denial and rigorous fight against sin, they do not see the sheer joy and peace that is offered. And also those who try to walk the Christian walk without Christ have a similar view. Often they will get discouraged under the heavy load and give up. For them, there is no joy and the sinner is correct in his view of the Christian life. Things change however when a person meets Jesus.

Why is there seemingly so much toil and sorrow on the life journey of the true Christian? They are battling at every step of the way. They are swimming up-stream against the strong current of all the powers of darkness. Their fight is against “spiritual wickedness in high places.” On their own they will utterly fail. What makes the uphill battle even more difficult is those occasional times when we try to fight on our own - we see how weak we are. We go our own way. “Jesus invites us to come to Him and He will lift the weights from our weary shoulders and place them upon His yoke, which is easy, and His burden, which is light.. The path which He invites us to walk would never had cost us a pang had we always walked in it. It is when we stray from the path of duty that the way becomes difficult and thorny. The sacrifices which we must make in following Christ are only so many steps to return to the path of light, of peace and happiness. Doubts and fears grow by indulgence, and the more they are indulged, the harder they are to overcome. It is safe to let go every earthly support and take the hand of Him who lifted up and saved the sinking disciple on the stormy sea.” 4T, p. 558. We can only make the way more difficult if we go on our own way. We then can only blame ourselves when the way gets more rough.

“Do you feel that it is too great a sacrifice to yield all to Christ? Ask yourself the question, ‘What has Christ given for me?’”

The Son of God gave all - life and love and suffering - for our redemption. And can it be that we, the unworthy objects of so great love, will withhold our hearts from Him? Every moment of our lives we have been partakers of the blessings of His grace, and for this very reason we cannot fully realize the depths of ignorance and misery from when we have been saved. Can we look upon Him whom our sins have pierced, and yet be willing to do despite to all His love and sacrifice? In view of the infinite humiliation of the Lord of glory, shall we murmur because we can enter into life only through conflict and self-abasement?” SC 45.

It takes great faith to let go of every earthly support and take the hand of Jesus. Many shrink from the prospect. They can see their earthly supports, while they must use their eyes of faith to see the heavenly support. Only those who have tasted and seen that the Lord is good will understand the true joy there is in walking the tear-stained narrow path to salvation. May God help us to have this kind of faith so that when the whole world is arraigned against God’s people, the joy in our hearts that comes from the assurances and promises that God has made to us in His Word, will see us through. All earthly supports will be taken away and we will have to have implicit trust in God who has never yet disappointed one of His true followers. The way of the cross leads home. AMEN.

*Wendy Eaton*

## FAITH & LOVE

Righteousness is love, and love is the light and the life of God. The righteousness of God is embedded in Christ. If we look at the glory of our Creator it is love and even his life is love. When Ellen G. White wrote in the Conflicts of the Ages series in the very first book, the Patriarchs and Prophets, the very first words starts like this "GOD IS LOVE." 1 John 4: 16. His nature and His la~ is love. It ever will be the high and lofty One that inhabited eternity whose ways are everlasting and changeth not With Him is no variableness neither shadow of turning. Isaiah 57: 15, ...

Every manifestation of creative power is an expression of infinite love. The sovereignty of God involves fullness of blessing to all created beings. The psalmist says; Strong is Thy hand, and high is Thy right hand. Righteousness and judgment are the foundation of thy throne: Mercy and truth go before Thy face. Blessed are the people that know the joyful sound: They walk O Lord, in the light of Thy countenance. In Thy name do they rejoice all the day: And in Thy righteousness are they exalted. For Thou art the glory of their strength: For our shield belongeth unto Jehovah: And our King to the Holy One. Psalm 89: 13-18.

The history of the great conflict between good and evil, from the time it first began in heaven to the final overthrow of rebellion and the total eradication of sin is also a demonstration of God's unchanging love." PP 1:33. The spirit of prophesy then explains the existence of the universal Being, how sin enters the universe, the creation of Adam, with all the events unfolding, then punishment for the transgressor and the reward for those who obey His commandments. Then in the last book, the Great Controversy it's stated thus "The great controversy is ended. Sin and sinners are no more. The entire universe is clean. One pulse of harmony and gladness beats through the vast creation. From Him who created all, flow life and light and gladness throughout the realms of illimitable space. From the minutest atom to the greatest world, all things animate and inanimate in their unshadowed beauty and perfect joy declare that GOD IS LOVE.

This is how it finishes. Everything that happens is because of His love. When love fails then selfishness take over our heart. For in Jesus Christ neither circumcision availeth any thing nor uncircumcision but FAITH WHICH WORKETH BY LOVE. Gal. 5:6.

When. you present your petitions to the Lord it should be in humility without boasting of superior attainments but with real soul hunger for the blessing of God. Christ always knows what is cherished in the heart. We must come in faith that the Lord will hear and answer our prayers for whatsoever is not faith is sin. Genuine faith is the faith that works by love and purifies the soul. A living faith will be a working faith. Should we go into the garden and there be no bursting buds or blooming flowers, no signs of life in stalk or branches we would say the plants are dead. Uproot them from the garden; for they are a deformity to the beds.

So it is with those who profess Christianity and have no spirituality. If there are no signs of religious vigor, if there is no doing of the commandments of the Lord, it is evident that there is no abiding in Christ, the living vine. Faith and Love are the essential powerful working elements of Christian character. Those who posses them are one with Christ, and continual learners and to work with His gifts of faith and love. We shall then wear Christ's yoke and lift His burdens and Christ wills laborers together with God. Without faith it is impossible to please God and it must be faith that works by love and purifies the soul. We cannot overestimate the value of simple faith and unquestioning obedience. It is by following in the path of obedience in simple faith the character obtains perfection.

In our time there occurred a great tragedy to the British Empire. One of its great Princess' perished in a car accident in the Paris express lanes. Princess Diana died. She was remembered not only by her countrymen but by many nations. Why then so many mourned for her? Because she has done something no Royals had done before. She helped the poor, she was with the AIDS patients, and the first to touch them without any gloves. She had love for not the great in society but to the very poor. Even today the God of heaven has some in high society who worship Him without knowing Him, like King Nebuchadnezzar or King Cyrus or some in the government who will join us when the Sunday law comes to effect.

That is why then the Prime Minister Tony Blair when asked to say something at her funeral, read from the

Bible these verses “Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, and have not love I am become as sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal. And though I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries, and all knowledge and though I have faith, so that I could remove mountains and have not love I am nothing and though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor and though I give my body to be burned and have not love it profiteth me nothing. Love never faileth but whether there be prophecies, they shall fail; whether there be knowledge it shall vanish away And now abideth faith hope love these three but the greatest of these is love. 1 Cor. 13:1-13.

What inspired him to read these verses? I think without doubt he felt that she possessed this virtue. But when I heard these verses I was startled when he read: the greatest faith a man can possess is that he can remove a mountain but now this faith is useless unless I have love. In this we understand love is the cornerstone of everything we do; everything stands on this. Our faith, hope, prophesy, longsuffering, etc. Like Christ is the cornerstone of His church, love is the cornerstone of our being.

In His parting conversation with His disciples on the night before the crucifixion the Saviour made no reference to the suffering that He had endured and must yet endure. He did not speak of the humiliation that was before Him, but sought to bring to their minds that which would strengthen their faith, leading them to look forward to the joys that await the overcomer. He rejoiced in the

consciousness that He could and would do more for His followers than He had promised; that from Him would flow forth love and compassion, cleansing the soul temple, and making men like Him in character; that His truth, armed with the power of the Spirit, would go forth conquering and to conquer. In this scene you could wonder how much love our Saviour should have had not to mention anything about His sorrow but to comfort His disciples in the tiring time which was ahead of them. What a self-sacrificing love. It is not conclusive evidence that a man is a Christian because he manifests spiritual ecstasy under extraordinary circumstances. Holiness is not rapture: it is an entire surrender of the will to God; it is living by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God; it is doing the will of our heavenly Father; it is trusting God in trial, in darkness as well as in the light; it is walking by faith and not by sight; it is relying on God with unquestioning confidence, and resting in His love.

When I was small my mother would tell us a story about a widower who had a son whom she loved very much. Her only possession was her son. But she was a very honest lady. She worked hard morning and evening and with blood, sweat and tears she fed her son. When her son was bigger she sent him to the best school so that he wouldn't suffer like her. He studied up to college and she thought, now he is going to go to the university but he didn't. To her surprise he joined with bad companions and became a terrorist and he hated his mother because she was poor. But whenever he came home the poor mother always fed him with good food and shelter.

One day because of his bad companions he murdered his own mother. He cut her heart out and put it in a bottle so that he could watch her. But one day to his surprise he was drunk and came home and he fell on the floor and broke his nose. He was bleeding and he didn't have a mirror so he took the bottle where he had put his mother's heart to fill it with water so that with the reflection he could see his wound. But when he pulled his mother's heart out of the bottle it was crying, are you o.k. my son? That heart didn't cry for all the cruelty he had done to her but only was concerned for his good being. This is just a story to portray the true love of a mother.

But our heavenly Father is greater than the woman who is pictured in this story. With so much love He gave us His only begotten “For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.” John 3:16. Without the cross, man could have no union with the Father. On it depends our every hope. From it shines the light of the Savior's love, and when at the foot of the cross the sinner looks up to the One who died to save him, he may rejoice with fullness of joy, for his sins are pardoned. Kneeling in faith at the cross, he has reached the highest place to which man can attain. Paul's epistle gave, new hope and strength, and a firmer faith in, and a deeper affection for, the One who through His death had brought life and immortality to light. Especially important to the church in our time are the teachings of the apostle upon this point. To those living so near the great consummation, the words of Paul should come with telling force: “Let us, who are of the day, be sober, putting on the breastplate of faith and love; and for a helmet, the hope of salvation. For God hath not appointed us to wrath, but to obtain salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ, who died for us, that, whether we wake or sleep, we should live together with Him.

One of the strongest evidences of true conversion is love to God and man. Those who accept Jesus as their Redeemer have a deep, sincere love for others of like precious faith. Thus it was with the believers at Thessalonica.

“As touching brotherly love,” the apostle wrote, “ye need not that I write unto you: for ye yourselves are taught of God to love one another. And indeed ye do it toward all the brethren which are in all Macedonia: but we beseech you, brethren, that ye increase more and more; and that ye study to be quiet, and to do your own business, and to work with your own hands, as we commanded you; that ye may walk honestly toward them that are without, and that ye may have lack of nothing.

In his second letter Paul sought to correct their misunderstanding of his teaching and to set before them his true position. He again expressed his confidence in their integrity, and his gratitude that their faith was strong, and that their love abounded for one another and for the cause of their Master. He told them that he presented them to other churches as an example of the patient, persevering faith that bravely withstands persecution and tribulation, and he carried their minds forward to the time of the second coming of Christ, when the people of God shall rest from all their cares and perplexities.

The philosopher turns aside from the light of salvation, because it puts his proud theories to shame; the worldling refuses to receive it, because it would separate him from his earthly idols. Paul saw that the character of Christ must be understood before men could love Him or view the cross with the eye of faith. Here must begin that study which shall be the science and the song of the redeemed through all eternity. In the light of the cross alone can the true value of the human soul be estimated.

The apostle’s words of warning to the Corinthian church are applicable to all time and are especially adapted to our day. By idolatry he meant not only the worship of idols, but self-serving, love of ease, the gratification of appetite and passion. A mere profession of faith in Christ, a boastful knowledge of the truth, does not make a man a Christian. A religion that seeks only to gratify the eye, the ear, and the taste, or that sanctions self-indulgence, is not the religion of Christ. No matter how high the profession, he whose heart is not filled with love for God and his fellow men is not a true disciple of Christ. Though he should possess great faith and have power even to work miracles, yet without love his faith would be worthless. He might display great liberality; but should he, from some other motive than genuine love, bestow all his goods to feed the poor, the act would not commend him to the favor of God. In his zeal he might even meet a martyr’s death, yet if not actuated by love, he would be regarded by God as a deluded enthusiast or an ambitious hypocrite.

When Paul sent Titus to Corinth to strengthen the believers there, he instructed him to build up that church in the grace of giving, and in a personal letter to the believers he also added his own appeal. “As ye abound in everything,” he pleaded, “in faith, and utterance, and knowledge, and in all diligence, and in your love to us, see that ye abound in this grace also,” “Now therefore perform the doing of it; that as there was a readiness to will, so they may be a performance also out of that which you have. For if there be first a willing mind, it is accepted according to that he hath not.” “And God is able to make all grace; abound toward you; that ye, always having all sufficiency in all things, may abound to every good work: . . . being enriched in everything to all bountifulness, which causeth through us thanksgiving to God.” 2 Corinthians 8:7, 12; 9:8-11

It is not God’s will that His ministers should seek to be rich. Regarding this, Paul wrote to Timothy: “The love of money is the root of all evil: which while some coveted after, they have erred from the faith, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows. But thou, o man of God flee these things and follow after righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, meekness.” By example as well as by precept, the ambassador for Christ is to “charge them that are rich in this world, that they be not high-minded, not trust in uncertain riches, but in the living God; who giveth us richly all things to enjoy; that they do good, that they be rich in good works, ready to distribute, willing to communicate; laying up in store for themselves a good foundation against the time to come, that they may lay hold on eternal life.” 1 Timothy 6:10, 11, 17-19

When William Miller was preaching the gospel of the soon return of Christ around 50,000 people joined with him. Not only that, but they sold their houses and farms and supported the work. But when Christ delayed, His coming these people, who supported his work now turned against him. If Christ would have come to these people; according to our standard they should have been given eternal life. But Christ didn’t do that. He, just put them to a test and most of them were found wanting. Why? Because they didn’t love the Lord, but loved themselves, so that they thought it’s better to sell and buy salvation. Their hearts was not with the Lord. Only 50 continue the journey up to the 3-rd Angel. All the rest 49,950 people were hypocrites. They didn’t have the true love for God.

That's why every deed we do, God sees the motive of the heart. Maybe the people can't see, but He who sees everything, from His eyes nothing can be hid. He sees' the end from the beginning, we can't fool Him.

In the Gospel John was called the disciple of love. Certain times Christ called His disciples to behold certain manifestations only three were chosen, but only one was permitted to see His suffering on the cross. It was John. Maybe he had the love to His Redeemer that he could endure this big trial.

There is a story about John when he became old. One time when he was traveling to one of the island's on the way to Rome to encountered a young man. He truly like this son. He tough him the gospel of Christ, then he left the young man in the care of the elder's of the church and left to Rome. After few years he return to this island. He didn't see this young man so he inquired as to what had happened to him. They told him that he had joined the robbers and he was now a thief. The Apostle insisted that they to take him to meet this young man. But all of them refused, saying if we go, they are going to rob us and kill us. The Apostle started to go himself, alone. Then one of them accompanied him then they found the young man. John prayed for him and told him about the matchless love of Jesus. Seeing the old man and his yearning heart, the young man came back with the Apostle and joined the church again and become one of the best disciples.

In this story we can see the love for his fellow man even when his life was in danger, he went and save a life. If you look at the ten commandments in its real form it's written:

1) If you love Christ, you will have no other gods before Him.

2) If: you love Christ you will not make unto thee any graven image, or any likeness [ of any things] that [is] in heaven above, or that [is] in the water under the earth: you shall not bow down thyself to them, nor serve them: for I the LORD thy God [am] a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third, and forth [generation] of them that hate me; And showing mercy unto thousands of them that love me, and keep my commandments. .

3) If you love Christ, you will not take the name of the LORD thy God in vain; for the LORD will not hold him guiltless that take his name in vain.

4) If you love Christ, you will Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy. Six days shall you, labor, and do all thy work: But the seventh day [is] the Sabbath of the LORD thy God: [in it] you shall not do any work you, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, thy manservant, nor thy maidservant, nor thy cattle, nor thy stranger that [is] within thy gates: For [in] six days the LORD made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them [is], and rested the- seventh day: wherefore the LORD blessed the Sabbath day, and hallowed it.

5) If you love your parents, you will Honor your father and your mother: that thy days may be long upon the land which the LORD thy God giveth thee.

6) If you love your neighbor you will not kill.

7) If you shall love your wife you will not commit adultery.

8) If you love your neighbor you will not steal

9) If you love your neighbor, you will not bear false witness against him.

10) If you love 'your neighbor you will not covet thy neighbor's house;, you will not covet your neighbor's wife, nor "his manservant, nor his maidservant, nor his 04' nor his ass, nor any thing that [is] thy neighbor's

Now if you sum it up these Ten Commandments it becomes two only. First: Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the first and great commandment. And' the second: [is J. like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets. If we have true love we will obey His voice but naturally our heart is cold so what to do in that case. We can't buy love in a supermarket nor produce it in a laboratory.

One time the world famous musicians, the Beatles wrote a song called "Money can't buy me love". So what are

we suppose to do, sit and cry until we die? No, we have the answer in the Bible “Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money; come ye, buy, and eat; yea, come, buy wine and milk without money and without price. Wherefore do ye spend money for [that which is] not bread? And your labour for ;[that which] satisfieth not? Hearken diligently unto me, and eat ye [that which is] good, and let ‘your soul delight itself in fatness. Incline your ear, and come unto me: hear, and your soul shall live; and I will make an everlasting covenant with ‘You’5Isaiah 55:t, “(counsel thee to buy of me gold tried in the fire, that thou mayest be rich” Rev: 3:18. We have to buy it from Christ for free, it’s given to us.

Gold is the richest element in the earth like spiritually {faith & love) is the richest grace man can have. In 1 Tim 6: 18 “rich in good works.” Gal 5:22 “But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance. It’s a gift of God now “For brethren ye have been called unto liberty only use not liberty for an occasion to the flesh, but by love serve one another. For all the law is fulfilled in one word, even in this; Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. But if ye bite and devour one another take heed that ye be not consumed one of another. Ga15:13-15.:the last verse is “AS THE FATJWR HATH LOVED ME SO HAVE I LOVED YOU CONTINUE YE IN MY LOVE. If ye keep My commandments ye shall abide in My love even as I have kept My father’s commandments arid abide in His love. John 15:9- 10.

AMEN.

*Augustus Ratneiya, Montreal, Canada*

## **THE PILLARS OF OUR FAITH PART 1**

In the time of the Old Testament, rocks or pillars were used to determine the limits of a property. These rocks or pillars determined as a visual sign the length and width of the property of the owner. Many times dishonest acts were done when an individual would buy the property. The individual would move the pillar to obtain a little more property from his neighbor.

God gave specific instructions about the pillars in a property to the nation of Israel. “Thou shall not remove thy neighbors landmark...”Duet.19:14. God is saying don’t dare to remove the pillar of thy neighbor. “Remove not the ancient landmark which thy fathers have set”Prov.22:28. “Remove not the old landmark; and enter not into the fields of the fatherless” Prov.23:10. They couldn’t even take the property from the poor! It was God’s command. Furthermore in the chapter of the blessings and curses, there is a curse for the one who would remove the pillars of his or her neighbor. “Cursed be he that removeth his neighbor’s landmark” Deut.27: 17.

From these verses we can confirm that the pillars would mark a property. Let us apply this knowledge to a spiritual term. Have you heard the term “The Old Landmarks”, “Ancient Pillars” or the Foundations of our Faith. How many of us know, study, or put in practice the foundations of our faith? Can we defend them against those that want to change or relocate them?

“Let none seek to tear away the foundations of our faith,-the foundations that were laid at the beginning of our work, by prayerful study of the word and by revelation”.GWp..307

What is the foundation of our faith? The spirit of prophecy writes “The correct comprehension of the ministry of Jesus in the Heavenly Sanctuary is the foundation of our faith”. The knowledge, and study of the Sanctuary is important, it’s a foundation, a Pillar of our faith. Satan attacks the pillars of the Adventist faith. He wants to make big holes, he would like the building to collapse. One of the pillars the enemy attacks since the beginning of the Adventist Movement is the Sanctuary.

Let us read an interesting vision. “I was shown three steps, .the first, second and third angels message. Said my

accompanying angel, woe to him who shall move a block or stir a pin of these messages. The true understanding of these messages is of vital importance.”EWp.259

The First Angel’s message says “Fear God and give glory to him; for the hour of his judgment is come:” Look at this verse. The Sanctuary is mentioned in the First Angel’s message with the words, the hour of his judgment is come! Under the Three Angel’s message are found at least 7 pillars of the Seventh Day Adventist Faith.

Let us read more from the vision...; “God had led them step by step, until He had placed them upon a solid, immovable platform. I saw individuals approach the platform and examine the foundation. Some with rejoicing immediately stepped upon it. Others commenced to find fault with the foundation. They wished improvements made, and then they would be more perfect, and the people much happier. Some stepped off the platform to examine it and declared it, to be laid wrong. But I saw that nearly all stood firm upon the platform and exhorted those who had stepped off to cease their complaints: for God was the Master Builder: and they were fighting against him.”

Have you heard people say sometimes let us change some things from the doctrine (relocate the pillars) ,so more people may join the Church. They wish to make improvements to the pillars but the Spirit of Prophecy states “they are fighting against God”, remember “Woe to him who shall move a block or stir a pin of these messages”. To say that the foundations of our faith are established wrong, is raising ourselves against God.

Let us not try to change the pillars of our faith. Can you name at least seven pillars of the Adventist faith? In the next article we will learn which are some of those pillars that make us as S.D.A. Reformers so peculiar and special to God.

*Joshua Martinez, Washington D.C. USA*

## **PRAYER**

Prayer is the answer to every difficulty, every problem of life. It puts us in tune with divine wisdom which knows how to adjust everything perfectly.

So often we do not pray because from our standpoint the outlook is hopeless. But nothing is impossible with God. ... Nothing is so tangled that it cannot be remedied; no habit so deep rooted that it cannot be overcome; no one so weak that he cannot be strong. No one is so ill that he cannot be healed. No mind is so dull that it cannot be made brilliant.

Whatever we need, if we trust GOD, HE will supply it. If anything is; causing worry or anxiety, let us STOP rehearsing the difficulty and trust GOD for healing, love, and power.

*Sister Kathleen Ross, Alberta, Canada*

## **SURRENDER OR DIE!**

**(James 4:7)**

A commanding American General in the war on terrorism was recently asked what was behind the meaning of a major military operation against the enemy forces named Anaconda. Anaconda is a very long, heavy South American snake that encircles its victim in its coils and crushes it until it dies. The General answered simply, "we surround the enemy forces and slowly press in on them until they - surrender or die.

Christian believers, today, are squarely faced with much the same position in their spiritual warfare against crushing evil forces, surrounded on every side, pressing ever closer, daily, to the point that a conscious effort must be made; an ultimate choice in the working out of their individual salvation - and eternal survival - or die.

Surrender! But, what does it really mean? Surrender! The Bible has many other words that can be confusing. For some it is a wilderness of strange new words and ideas. One can easily get lost in an unexplored wilderness of jungle territory. No signs, no landmarks. Confusion and perplexity is the result. Many can get lost when they read the Bible.

What are we to do in this wilderness of words? For many newcomers the language of the Bible can be foreign. New words, new thoughts, new roads, new concepts, new sudden dramatic experiences - a new life! Many are first surprised, maybe then confused in this wilderness of words, and their experiences with them.

What are saints, wisdom, heaven, hell, spirit, stewards, apostles, righteousness, sanctification, justification, consecration, fools for Christ, and now - surrender, then resist? It is another language - Biblical terms. You may have some ideas of many of these words, but does that mean that you understand what they meant to James, and other Biblical writers? They wrote these letters a long time ago, in another era.

After a while many find that these words and other words used in the Bible begin to look alike. To a lost traveler, the trees, mountains, shrubbery, even people, all look the same.

We live in two different worlds that are completely apart; completely foreign, two remote deserts, two languages, two lives - distinctly different. A mammoth gap exists between God and the world. Where do you stand?

The desert, or wilderness, however, was for ancient Israel - and to us today a secret training school in which He molded the character of man. The desert seemed to be a favorite training place in the mind of God - for whom? For those whom He wished to speak with special clearness to His world - for those then and us today - in another language.

From Elijah, "listening to the sound of a gentle stillness" (1 King 19: 12) to John the Baptist, to whom the people flocked to in the wilderness (Matt, 3:5); to Jesus spending those developing forty days, sent by the Holy Spirit, into the wilderness (Matt. 4:1): and many other desert fathers, pioneers, prophets of the past - and today, in addition, the Spirit of Prophecy.

Are you looking, today, for the landmarks, developing clues, watching for signs, contrasts, in the desert world of scriptural wilderness -- for meaning - understanding - comfort? Wisdom and understanding comes to those who are called together in Christ. The world's standards are often inadequate and mistaken. If you follow the world's standards of what is wise, or light, or strong, or spiritual, you will miss the great gift of God's redemption in Christ, as surely as did the early Israelis.

What then, can we, today, or for our little ask ourselves, "what may be the two most important Biblical words in our lives, in the spiritual wilderness, to clearly understand and to live by" - SURRENDER, and then RESIST!

But wait a moment! Here's an apparent contradiction! We must surrender in order to be able to resist"(Jam 4:7).

We cannot reverse the order; saying “resist” and then “surrender.” Surrender means, yielding, giving oneself up to another’s influence, or power. Does this mean to merely just give up? Yes! In part, or in a way. Does this mean “giving up the fort” to the enemy? No! Because, we surrender ourselves to God’s influence, His power. Our hope is in Him. We don’t give up, but give OURSELVES up by yielding to Him. Then we can resist the devil... the wily devil.

Are you struggling, resisting in vain to overcome? Do you constantly fail? Are you fighting a losing battle? Would you like to know the secret of your failure? Do you want to know the secret of success!” If it were freely offered to you, would you accept and keep the key to complete, continual, eternal victory in every ‘temptation, over every sin, over every trial? It is a secret so simple that all may have it... now. Listen very closely now! It is in the one, blessed, consoling word... “SURRENDER”

But, you say, “I have surrendered!” Maybe so, but your surrender is not complete or your victory over sin would be complete. You probably know of something in your life you feel is wrong, or maybe doubtful. You have never been willing to surrender this “thing” to God, that He might take it away from you completely and forever.

You cannot resist God and the devil at the same time. “God resists the proud, but gives grace unto the humble.” (Jam 4:6) The proud, the unsubmitive, resists the appeals, the pleading of the Holy Spirit, and God RESISTS! Think about this a moment. God resisting us! What a numbing thought! If you resist God on any one point, you cannot successfully resist the devil. He who submits all to God receives the power of God.

Do you wish to win the fight against sin and Satan? Then you must surrender ALL; every sin, every doubtful thing, every power of body and mind, every purpose, and every plan, wholly and unreservedly to God. You will never, never, never have the power to win, to stand firm as a rock against the fierce assaults of the treacherous enemy, until you have toward God, an absolutely passive, submissive, yielding spirit.

What a combination of the perfectly passive and of the unconquerable determination was seen in Jesus! When He came into the world He “emptied Himself”; surrendered Himself to God. He said, “I can of mine own self do nothing.” (John 5:30) At the last, when all the waves of hell were beating madly against His frail human nature, he cried out in agony that no man can ever fathom., “O Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me.” (Mat 26:39) But, the absolute surrender of Jesus to the will of the Father was shown in the word; “Nevertheless, not as I will, but as Thou wilt.” (Math 26:39)

What did this surrender mean to Jesus? It was to Him...VICTORY! To us... SALVATION! On the shameful tree of Golgotha, when Satan was making his utmost effort to overwhelm the dying Christ with despair, and to blot out every ray of light and hope, the Saviour uttered these despairing words, “My God, My God, why hast thou forsaken Me?” (Math 27:46) (Mark 15:34)

Upon Him, as He was dying in our place, had fallen the same despairing agony, as will fall upon the lost soul in the final judgment. Yet, with all the agony of ,the .lost, concentrated in one awful hour upon His breaking heart, hear His final words of submission and surrender: “Father, into Thy hands I commend my Spirit..” (Luke 23:46) The one secret of His sinless life and of His final victory in the hour of temptation was His absolute an4 utter surrender!

The submissiveness of Jesus to the Father made Him against Satan, inflexible, unbending, determined, steadfast, the very Rock of Ages, against which all the surges of sin beat in vain! What contrast! The tenders, meekest, most humble, most yielding man who ever lived, yet the bravest, boldest, mightiest warrior that ever fought a desperate fight, winning gloriously at the end... the Lamb against the Lion... Victorious.

If we surrender our lives to His service, we can never be placed in a position for which God has not made some provision for our good. Whatever may be our situation, we have a Guide to direct our way; Whatever our perplexities, we have a sure Counselor, whatever our sorrow, bereavement, or loneliness, we have a sympathizing Friend. If, in our ignorance, we make missteps, Christ does not leave us.. His voice, clear and distinct, is heard,

saying, "I came". The Lord of our race is by the eternal throne. He looks upon every soul who is running his race toward Him as the Saviour. He knows by experience what are the weaknesses of humanity, what are our needs.

"What are the results, then, of surrendering our soul to Christ? A new power takes possession of the new heart. A change comes over man that he could not accomplish for himself. It's a supernatural work, which brings a supernatural element (change) into human nature. The soul, yielded to Christ becomes fortress, which he holds in a revolted world. The soul then is impregnable to the attacks of Satan. If we don't yield control to Christ we're dominated by the wicked one. The only defense is Christ in our heart through Faith in His righteousness. Without a vital connection with Jesus Christ through surrender of ourselves we'll be overcome by Satan." (DA 324)

Yet, many continue to be lamentably worried. Peace cannot be found without a full surrender to Christ, as Judas Iscariot experienced in his broken life. Worry is blind, and cannot see the future, but Jesus sees the end from the beginning to the end Alpha to Omega. In every difficulty, He has His way (not our way) to bring relief and comfort to 'our lives.. He says "Learn of Me, for I am meek and lowly in heart, and ye shall find rest." (Math 11 :29) We are to enter the school of Christ. The training means a knowledge of Christ. It means freedom, escape from ideas, practices, habits, that were learned in the school of darkness. But, many who profess to follow Christ have an anxious, troubled heart, because they are afraid to trust themselves with God... Not only with God, but to trust "THEMSELVES"! They do not make complete surrender to Him. They shrink away from the consequences (result) that such a surrender may involve. Unless they make this surrender, they cannot find peace." (DA 330; MH 480- 481)

Still, many are listlessly asking, "How can I surrender myself to God?" You desire to give yourself to Him, but you're weak in moral power, doubting, controlled by your habits. Your promises are like ropes of sand. You can't control your thoughts, impulses, affections. These things cause you to lose confidence in yourself and your sincerity. It causes you to feel that God cannot accept you; But don't worry or despair; Do not be troubled. What you need to understand is the true force of the will. This is the governing power in the nature of man; The power of decision of choice. Everything depends on the right action of the will... The conscience. . . Attitude. The will or conscience is the power of choosing one's own actions, purpose, determination to have the will to succeed (stubborn determination); Also, a disposition to one another, whether good or bad. This power of choice, God's given to man, is theirs to exercise, to use or abuse. For many it's called the "freedom of conscience", which can often be carried to extremes, or misinterpreted. You cannot change, your heart, or give to God its affections. But, you can choose to serve Him, and you can give Him your will. "He will then work in you to will and to do according to His good pleasure." (Phil 2:13)

Thusly, your whole nature will be brought under the control of the Spirit of Christ; your affections will be centered on Him. Your thoughts will be in harmony with Him.

Your desires for goodness, and holiness are right, as far as they go, and it's natural; But, if you stop here, they will help or do nothing. Many will be lost while hoping and desiring to be Christians. Why? Here's a serious question. Well, it's because they do not come to the point of yielding their will to God. They do not "choose" to be Christians.

By exercising your will, an entire change may be made in your life. You will have strength from above to hold you steadfast and thus through constant, daily surrender to God, you can live the new life, even the life of faith. (SC 47,48).

John Calvin, a theologian and reformer in Switzerland, and leader in the Reformation, pointedly said, "submission is more than obedience; it involves humility." What's the way to humility? Christ set the example.. His way is our way, "surrender yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you." God will give you His grace of humility and will then exalt you. (DA 649). It's a painful, difficult lesson to learn, but God can work with your efforts if you walk in humility of mind. (7T88) (4T488) Finally, the secret of perfect rest, in His love and His will is. . . entire surrender!

SURRENDER OR DIE! Amen. *John Theodorou USA/Greece*

## GOD'S BENEFITS # 2

Another benefit I would like to praise God for is the gift of music.

When I was young my dear mother used to sing joyful songs. My parents arranged guitar lessons and the teacher taught me the fundamentals of rhythm and notes. I enjoyed the guitar greatly and worked until I had thick callouses on my left hand fingers. One day I was meditating on what I would rescue if there was only one thing I could take if the house burned down. I decided it would be my guitar; it brought me such joy and happiness.

“I will sing unto the Lord as long as I live: I will sing praise to my God while I have my being. My meditation of Him shall be sweet: I will be glad in the LORD.” Ps. 104:33,34

“Praise ye the LORD. Praise God in His Sanctuary: Praise Him in the firmament of His Power.

Praise Him for His mighty acts: Praise Him according to His excellent greatness.  
Praise Him with the sound of the trumpet: praise Him with the psaltery and harp  
Praise Him with the timbrel and pipe: praise Him with stringed instruments and organs.” Ps. 150: 1-4

Several years ago my mother's cousin died and bequeathed to me a small portable organ. When I was in college at Canadian Union College, I was privileged to take piano lessons for one year. I had secretly wished that I had one available to me so I could practice daily. The LORD answered my hidden desire - how good He is!

“Praise Him upon the loud cymbals: Praise Him upon the high sounding cymbals.

Let everything that has breath praise the LORD. Praise YE the LORD.” Ps. 150: 5,6

“And the Levites, of the children of the Kohathites, and of the children of the Korhites, stood up to praise the LORD God of Israel with a loud voice on high. And they rose early in the morning, and went forth into the wilderness of Tekoa: and as they went forth, Jehoshaphat stood and said, Hear me, O Judah, and ye inhabitants of Jerusalem; Believe in the LORD your God, so shall ye be established; believe His prophets, so shall ye prosper.

And when he had consulted with the people, he appointed singers unto the LORD, and that should praise the beauty of holiness, as they went out before the army, and to say, Praise the LORD; for His mercy endures forever.

And when they began to sing and to praise, the LORD set ambushments against the children of Ammon, Moab, and mount Seir, which were come against Judah; and they were smitten...

And on the fourth day they assembled themselves in the valley of Blessing; for there they blessed the LORD: therefore the name of the same place was caned, the valley of Blessing unto this day.

Then they returned., every man of Judah and Jerusalem, and Jehoshaphat in the forefront of them, to go again to Jerusalem with joy; for the LORD made them to rejoice over their enemies.”

“And they came to Jerusalem with psalteries and harps and trumpets unto the house of the LORD. And the fear of God was on all the kingdoms of those countries, when they had heard that the ~ORR., fought against “,the enemies of Israel.” II Chron. 20:19-22, 26-29.

Heavenly music makes Satan and all his helpers flee away. It can bring sunshine and happiness to the deepest gloom and brighten up the darkest day.

Let us learn to praise God now in the shadows, because there are densely dark days ahead when we will need every happy influence to see us through. Just a few days ago I attended anniversary celebration with my mother. The family was very musical and not much of the music was very heavenly, however you could not help, but love the people and so could have been easily drawn to unite in some of their foolishness. However I had been

practicing and singing “Leaning on the Everlasting Arms” and the soothing rhythm and words kept playing inside my head during the whole program and enabled me to keep my sanity and spirituality.

When we begin to learn to sing and praise in every situation entered upon prayerfully, God will begin to use us to reach, souls where they are and bring them out of their gloomy prison houses of sin into the sunshine and peace and rest and hope of His love. ..And God knows there are thousands of hungry, thirsty, fearful, perplexed souls right close around us.

May God help us to work fast while it is daylight; the night comes quickly when no man can work. AMEN

*Sister Kathleen Ross Alberta Canada*

## **THE TRUE MISSIONARY SPIRIT** **ELLEN G. WHITE**

“The true missionary spirit is the spirit of Christ. The world’s Redeemer was the great model missionary. Many of His followers have laboured earnestly and unselfishly in the cause of human salvation; but no man’s labour can bear comparison with the self - denial, the sacrifice, the benevolence, of our Exemplar.

“The love which Christ has evinced for us is without parallel. How earnestly He laboured! How often was He alone in fervent prayer, on the mountainside or in the retirement of the garden, pouring out His supplications with strong crying and tears. How perseveringly He urged His petitions in behalf of sinners! Even on the cross He forgot His own sufferings in His deep love for those whom He came to save. How cold our love, how feeble our interest, when compared with the love and interest manifested by our Saviour! Jesus gave Himself to redeem our race; and yet how ready are we to excuse ourselves from giving all that we have for Jesus. Our Saviour submitted to wearing labour, ignominy, and suffering. He was repulsed, mocked, derided, while engaged in the great work which He came to earth to do.

“Do you, my brethren and sisters, inquire: What model shall we copy? I do not point you to great and good men, but to the world’s Redeemer. If we would have the true missionary spirit we must be imbued with the love of Christ; we must look to the Author and Finisher of our faith, study His character, cultivate His spirit of meekness and humility, and walk in His footsteps.

“Many suppose that the missionary spirit, the qualification for missionary work, is a special gift or endowment bestowed upon the ministers and a few members of the church and that all others are to be mere spectators. Never was there a greater mistake. Every true Christian will possess a missionary spirit, for to be a Christian is to be Christlike. No man liveth to himself, and “if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of His.” Everyone who has tasted of the powers of the world to come, whether he be young or old, learned or unlearned, will be stirred with the spirit which actuated Christ. The very first impulse of the renewed heart is to bring others also to the Saviour. Those who do not possess this desire give evidence that they have lost their first love; they should closely examine their own hearts in the light of God’s word, and earnestly seek a fresh baptism of the Spirit of Christ; they should pray for a deeper comprehension of that wondrous love which Jesus manifested for us in leaving the realms of glory and coming to a fallen world to save the perishing.

“There is work for everyone of us in the vineyard of the Lord. We are not to seek that position which will yield us the most enjoyment or the greatest gain. True religion is free from selfishness. The missionary spirit is a spirit of personal sacrifice. We are to work anywhere and everywhere, to the utmost of our ability, for the cause of our Master.

“Just as soon as a person is really converted to the truth there springs up in his heart an earnest desire to go and tell some friend or neighbour of the precious light shining forth from the sacred pages. In his unselfish labour to save others he is a living epistle, known and read of all men. His life shows that he has been converted to Christ and has become a colaborer with Him.

“My brethren and sisters, do you desire to break the spell that holds you? Would you arouse from this sluggishness that resembles the torpor of death? Go to work, whether you feel like it or not. Engage in personal effort to bring souls to Jesus and the knowledge of the truth. In such labour you will find both a stimulus and a tonic; it will both arouse and strengthen. By exercise your spiritual powers will become more vigorous, so that you can with better success work out your own salvation. The stupor of death is upon many who profess Christ. Make every effort to arouse them. Warn, entreat, expostulate. Pray that the melting love of God may warm and soften their icebound natures. Though they may refuse to hear, your labour will not be lost. In the effort to bless others your own souls will be blessed...

“We are to be as men waiting for the Lord, not in idle expectancy, but in earnest work, with unwavering faith. It is no time now to allow our minds to be engrossed with the things of minor importance. While men are sleeping, Satan is actively arranging matters so that the Lord’s people may not have mercy or justice. The Sunday movement is now making its way in darkness. The leaders are concealing the true issue, and many who unite in the movement do not themselves see wither the undercurrent is tending. Its professions are mild and apparently Christian, but when it shall speak it will reveal the spirit of the dragon. It is our duty to do all in our power to avert the threatened danger. We should endeavor to disarm prejudice placing ourselves in a proper light before the people. We should bring before them the real question at issue, thus interposing the most effectual protest against measure to restrict liberty of conscience. We should search the Scriptures and be able to give the reason for our faith.

“Still you soothe your conscience by saying you cannot undo the past, and gain the vigour, the strength, and the skill which you might have had if you had employed your powers as God required. But remember that He holds you responsible for the work negligently done or left undone through your unfaithfulness. The more you exercise your powers for the Master, the more apt and skilful you will become. The more closely you connect yourself with the Source of light and power, the greater light will be shed upon you, and the greater power will be yours to use for God. And for all that you might have had, but failed to obtain through your devotion to the world, you are responsible.

“Remember that your responsibility is measured, not by your present resources and capacities, but by the powers originally bestowed and the possibilities for improvement. The question which each one should ask himself is not whether he is now inexperienced and unfit to labour in God’s cause, but how and why he is in this condition, and how it can be remedied. God will not supernaturally endow us with the qualifications which we lack; but while we exert the ability we have, He will work with us to increase and strengthen every faculty; our dormant energies will be aroused, and powers which have long been palsied will receive new life.

“So long as we are in the world, we must have to do with the things of the world. There will ever be a necessity for the transaction of temporal, secular business; but this should never become all- absorbing. The apostle Paul has given a safe rule: “Not slothful in business; fervent in spirit; serving the Lord.” The humble, common duties of life are all to be performed with fidelity; “heartily,” says the apostle, “as to the Lord.” Whatever our department of labour, be it housework or field work or intellectual pursuits, we may perform it to the glory of God so long as we make Christ first and last and best in everything. But aside from these worldly employments there is given to every follower of Christ a special work for the upbuilding of His kingdom - a work which requires personal effort for the salvation of men. It is not a work to be performed once a week merely, at the place of worship, but at all times and in all places.

“Everyone who connects himself with the church makes in that act a solemn vow to work for the interest of the church and to hold that interest above every worldly consideration. It is his work to preserve a living connection with God, to engage with heart and soul in the great scheme of redemption, and to show, in his life and character,

the excellency of God's commandments in contrast with the customs and precepts of the world. Every soul that has made a profession of Christ has pledged himself to be all that it is possible for him to be as a spiritual worker, to be active zealous, and efficient in his Master's service. Christ expects every man to do his duty, let his be the watchword throughout the ranks of His followers.

"We are not to wait to be solicit to give light, to be importuned for counselor instruction. Everyone who receives the rays of the Sun of Righteousness is to reflect its brightness to all about him. His religion should have a positive and decided influence. His prayers and entreaties would be so imbued with the Holy Spirit that they will melt and subdue the souls. Said Jesus, "Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven." It would be better for a worldling never to have seen a professor of religion than to come under the influence of one who is ignorant of the power of godliness. If Christ were our pattern, His life our rule, what zeal would be manifested, what efforts put forth, what liberality exercised, what self-denial practiced! How untiringly should we labour, what fervent petitions for power and wisdom would ascend to God! If all the professed children of God would feel that it is the chief business of life to do the work which He has bidden them to do, if they would labour unselfishly in His cause, what a change would be seen in the hearts and homes, in churches, yea, in the world itself" Testimonies for the Church, Volume 5, pages 385-387, 452, 458-460.

"No church can flourish unless its members are workers. The people must lift where the ministers lift. I saw that nothing lasting can be accomplished for churches in different places unless they are aroused to feel that a responsibility rests upon them: Every member of the body should feel that the salvation of his own soul depends upon his own individual effort. Souls cannot be saved without exertion. The minister cannot save the people. He can be a channel through which God will impart light to His people; but after the light is given, it is left with the people to appropriate that light, and in their turn, let it shine forth to others. The people should feel that an individual responsibility rests upon them, not only to save their own souls, but to earnestly engage in the salvation of those who remain in darkness." Testimonies for the Church, Volume 2, p. 120/121.

## **THE WORSHIPPERS of THE SUN,**

### **The Xmas Story Part 4**

#### **CHRISTMAS AND PAGANISM - The Winter Solstice**

Why did the Catholic Church choose December 25 for the birth date of Christ? It was chosen in order to compete with the pagan winter solstice festivals. It was not chosen because it is the correct historical date for the birth of Jesus. When was Jesus born? No one knows. There seems to have been too many calendar errors for anyone to be exact. The traditional date of the year 1 A.D. for his birth stands greatly in need of correction. Before the mode of reckoning time "by the year of our Lord," or A.D., which was introduced by Dionysius Exiguus, a Roman, time was computed from the founding of the city of Rome, usually designated by A. V. C. Dionysius made his New Era to begin on the first day of January in the 753rd year from the building of Rome; because in that year he supposed Christ to have been born. St. Matthew says Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea in the days of Herod the King. According to the best authorities this monarch died a short time before the Jewish Passover 750 V.V.C. Some place the birth of Jesus between the years 748 and 747 A.V.C., this is, 5 and 6 B.C. Others go as far back as 8 B.C.

But the Season in which he was born definitely was not winter. The Gospels tell us that at this time Caesar Augustus

had decreed that all the world should be taxed. We may be assured that Rome would not order a census to be taken at the worst possible period for travel; but Luke's account that the shepherds were abiding in the field keeping watch over their flocks by night lets us know that Jesus was born in summer or early fall. Since December is cold and rainy in Judea, it is likely the shepherds would have sought shelter for their flocks at night. So December 25 is no more the correct historical date for the birth of Jesus Christ than any other date.

December 25th was sacred, not only to the pagan Roman~, but to the religion from Persia, Mithraism, whose followers worshipped the sun and celebrated its return to strength on that day. Mithras had attained such popularity and favor in the eyes of the emperors that Aurelian proclaimed the cult of Sol Invictus the Roman Empire's official state religion. December 25 fell between the weeklong feast of the Saturnalia and the Kalends of January, and it coincided more or less closely with all those mid- winter festivals at which the primitive peoples of Europe and Asia had celebrated, from time immemorial, the sun's rebirth at the Winter Solstice.

To the pagans, the Saturnalia were fun. To the "Christians" the Saturnalia were an abomination in homage to a disreputable god who had no existence anyway. The "Christians" were now dedicated to the slow task of converting the pagan Romans. There were many immigrants into the ranks of the Church by this time, but the Church Fathers discovered that they were facing an invasion of pagan customs. Christianity and Paganism began contending, and for a while Mithraism was Christianity's greatest contender. But how did the Catholic Church convert the pagans with their December 25th sunworship festival? It became the policy of the church to "transform" pagan festivals wherever possible instead of trying to abolish them and give the ancient practices a "christian" significance.

The Church, in choosing December 25th to celebrate the birthday of Christ, would persuade the followers of Mithras to forsake him and turn to Christ as the true "light of the World." The Catholic Church chose this date to celebrate the rising of the sun of Righteousness that she should thus strive to draw away to His worship the adorers of the god whose symbol and representative was the earthly sun. The Church Fathers sought to point the pagan festival in worship of the sun toward the "christian" Sun of Righteousness, and if these could be done then the festival in its turn must of necessity grow worthy of him it celebrated. The Church finally succeeded in taking the merriment, the greenery, the lights, and the gifts from Saturn and given them to the babe of Bethlehem.

By choosing December 25th, she simply made the old heathen festival of the sun analogous to the birth of the "sun of Righteousness" The birth of Christ as the "Light of the World" was linked to the rebirth of the sun. The Church by making the pagan festival also the Feast of the Nativity, "sanctified" it, and thus as Christianity gained ground slowly but surely changed its ancient worship of the material sun into that of the true Light of the World.

That the new festival should not be lacking in splendor and appeal the days between December 25 and January 6 (the days between the Saturnalia and the Kalends of January) were caught up into one "holy" season, with the birth of the divine Child at the beginning and the coming of the Magi (the three Wise Men) at the end. The days between Christmas and Epiphany became known as the Twelve Nights of Christmas.

The word, "Christmas, If came into use through the medieval custom of celebrating mass at midnight on Christmas Eve, the only time in the year when this was permitted. Because of the opposition to the traces of paganism surviving in the Christmas customs, the church created special masses to be performed at midnight, daybreak, and morning. Hence, the word, Christmas.

*By Denise Snodgrass  
Submitted & edited by Michael Newby*

## CHILDREN'S CORNER

### AT 18, I THOUGHT GOD HATE ME

When I was 13 years old I stop listening to the preacher in church. When I was 14 years old, I decided to have my ears pierced. At 15, I began skipping Sabbath School and just sitting outside with some friends. When I was a teenager, I thought church didn't offer me anything. I knew several Bible verses and all the words for the Lord's Prayer. I knew the title to the hymns sung regularly during each church service, and I knew that. God loved me. When I was 15, I thought I knew all there was to know about the Bible doctrines the church taught. When I reached 16, I quit going to church. At 17 I learned to dance. At 18 I almost lost my mother. The minute I received the phone call from the hospital, I knew God was punishing me. While Mom struggled to hold on to her life, I sat blaming God for being "unfair." Since I had not attended church in almost two years, I knew God was after me; for just like the pastor had warned, "God always smites the heathen." At 18, I thought God hated me.

If wasn't fair. I had spent all my life proving that I loved God; after all, I had obeyed His Ten Commandments, loved most of my neighbours, sung to the elderly in the nursing homes, and given up a tenth of my allowance each week for tithe. What didn't r do?

Ok, so I had stopped attending church. Big deal. I figured I knew enough about loving God that I didn't really need to go anymore. No one wanted me there anyway. I was a rebel. I wore the wrong clothes, said the wrong things, dated the wrong guys.

If I couldn't be like the rest of the church members, I might as well leave. So I did. And I was happy. At least I tried to convince myself I was.

When my mother almost died, I realized I wasn't very happy. I felt alone, and for the first time in my life I had no one to turn to, nowhere to go.

Before, I had believed God would always be there to comfort me. After all, I didn't quit believing in Him; I just quit believing in the church. But this time He wasn't there for me. This time He was the enemy taking away my mother because I was a bad Christian. At 18, I knew I was alone.

I thought about praying, but to whom? Since God was punishing me 'for my attendance record, He surely wouldn't listen to me now. So I left it up to my family to do the begging and bargaining. Certainly God could not be scolding all of them, since they regularly warmed the pews.

The whole ordeal infuriated me. Why was my mother's health being jeopardized because of something I had done? Could it be possible that God was really angry with me for not going to church? Was it really that important for me to go to church for God to love me? These were questions I could not answer.

It wasn't until I started college that I found the answers I was looking for. One day when cramming for a quiz in my religion class, I was startled by the professor, who, instead of passing out the normal 10 questions, abruptly asked the class, "How many of you attend church regularly?"

About a third of the hands slowly rose above the class.

After a quick glance around the room, the professor shot out, "What about the rest of you? Why don't you go to church?"

"I go to the beach!" shouted a brave heathen from the back of the row. "That's where I can really worship God." The rest of us just sat there, looking around from one blank face to another. No one wanted to make a fool out of himself by revealing any personal reasons for skipping church. Likewise, I remained silent, but slowly others started to divulge the all-too familiar grounds that "the church members were too old-fashioned, too judgmental, too patronizing." Like me, many felt they had been driven away because they did not "act" like proper young Christians.

After class I decided to ask my teacher privately about God and His rules for churchgoing. "Dr. Masters," I asked when the classroom emptied, "does God really get upset when someone quits going to church - I mean, enough to want revenge?"

"Well, I don't know if He'd get that upset, Jen," he replied with an understanding smile.

"Well, does, He hold a grudge? You know, like punishing someone who hasn't been to church in years?"

"No," he replied with some hesitation. "God does not hold grudges. He doesn't punish anyone for not being happy with the church. After all, He established the church as a place for people to grow in Him. It's like a home for His flock. And if people can't feel at home, He's not angry with them - just disappointed."

“Well, what does He want I us to do, then, if we don’t like t church?”

“Do you suppose He expects us to try to change the things we don’t like - to change the church into a better place for Christian growth?” he asked just before he headed out the door.

He left me with a lot to think about. In fact, I pondered on the subject for many days, trying to rationalize my feelings. My professor had been able to convince me that it was not God who was punishing me, but me punishing myself. God had not made my mother sick because I had stopped going to church, and her recovery hadn’t happened because the rest of my family still attended. Feeling guilty for not going to church, I had been blaming God for my misery when it wasn’t His fault.

Still, I wasn’t sure if I wanted to go back to church. What if the things I disliked about it never changed? What if the members interrogated me, or condemned me, saying “We told you so”? What if the minister made me stand up during the morning welcome and asked me where I had been?

Besides, I felt alone there; I was different. I didn’t fit the more rigid members mold of Miss Pentecost Christian. I had holes in my ears. I went to movies. I listened to rock music. I knew the members didn’t want me at church, even if God did.

After weeks of intense contemplation, I stifled my “what ifs” and decided to visit just once, Just one visit couldn’t hurt. And I could always leave if I started to feel uncomfortable. It didn’t mean I would have to go again.

The week I mustered up enough nerve, I dressed in one of my more “conservative” outfits (I didn’t want to stand out in the crowd) and headed off to church. Arriving before the service started, I took a seat in the back row just in case I needed to make a mad dash for the car. However my escape plan proved unnecessary, for I soon found myself absorbed in a discussion that would change my whole perspective of the church.

Ironically, in place of the usual “lullabying lecture,” the pastor spent the entire 45 minutes personally asking the congregation, “Where have all our members gone?”

Instead of jumping to answer his question, I just sat and listened. The congregation’s responses shocked me. Many of the “pious, hypocritical” members whom I loathed professed that some of their “friends” had left to find a church where they could feel they “belonged.” Some confessed that they had pushed members away by being too “judgmental and traditional.” Even cranky Mrs. Owens, the old organist, admitted that she missed seeing “the sea of smiling young faces every week.”

After that discussion, my attitude changed. Seeing those members whom I had thought were so mean and uptight express so much love and concern for those, like me, who had left “home” made me realize that I was wanted. I also noticed that I was just like all those church members I despised: I was just as naive, just as judgmental, and just as lonely. And like the rest of the members, I needed a place where I felt wanted, a place for fellowship, a place to call home.

That day I realized that God’s church is my home, not just a holy building with cushioned pews, stained-glass windows, and pompous members. Instead, it is a refuge, a family, a home. And like every other home, one can expect disputes and disagreements. However, if the family stays together, its members can work with each other to solve their problems. That day I learned that my family needs me, and I need my family.

Although I still hurt, I started attending church regularly. i still had holes in my ears and still listened to rock music, but I no longer felt alone. I was home. After a few months, the holes in my ears were empty, bearing no jewelry and the rock music was replaced by more wholesome music.

At 19, I went back to church.

At 20, I was baptized,

At 21, I know that God really loves me.

## “ARISE, SHINE”

*“ARISE, SHINE; FOR THY LIGHT IS COME, AND THE GLORY OF THE LORD IS RISEN UPON THEE.”  
ISA. 60: 1*

Jesus said, “Ye are the light of the world... Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven.” Matt. 5: 14,16

NOW is the high time to let our light shine before the world. Does the lamp know that it is shining light? No, it does not know it. And the same way, we shine light without knowing it, but others see the light and give thanks, not to us, but to our heavenly Father.

“Arise, shine; for thy light is come.” We ourselves have no light, but it comes to us. We ourselves alone cannot shine, even if we tried our best. As a lamp cannot shine without oil or electric current, so we need the Holy Spirit to shine in us, which makes us mediums for spreading light. Therefore we are not to receive thanks for our light but our heavenly Father who sent it to us.

Jesus said, “Without Me ye can do nothing.” John 15:5 The Pharisees did good works, in order to get the praise of men, but the true Christians will not receive praise which belongs to God alone.

Sister White writes, “that many ministers preach themselves to the people in place of God. True ministers of the gospel preach Christ so vividly that they themselves will disappear from the scene. This is possible only through the aid of the Holy Spirit.

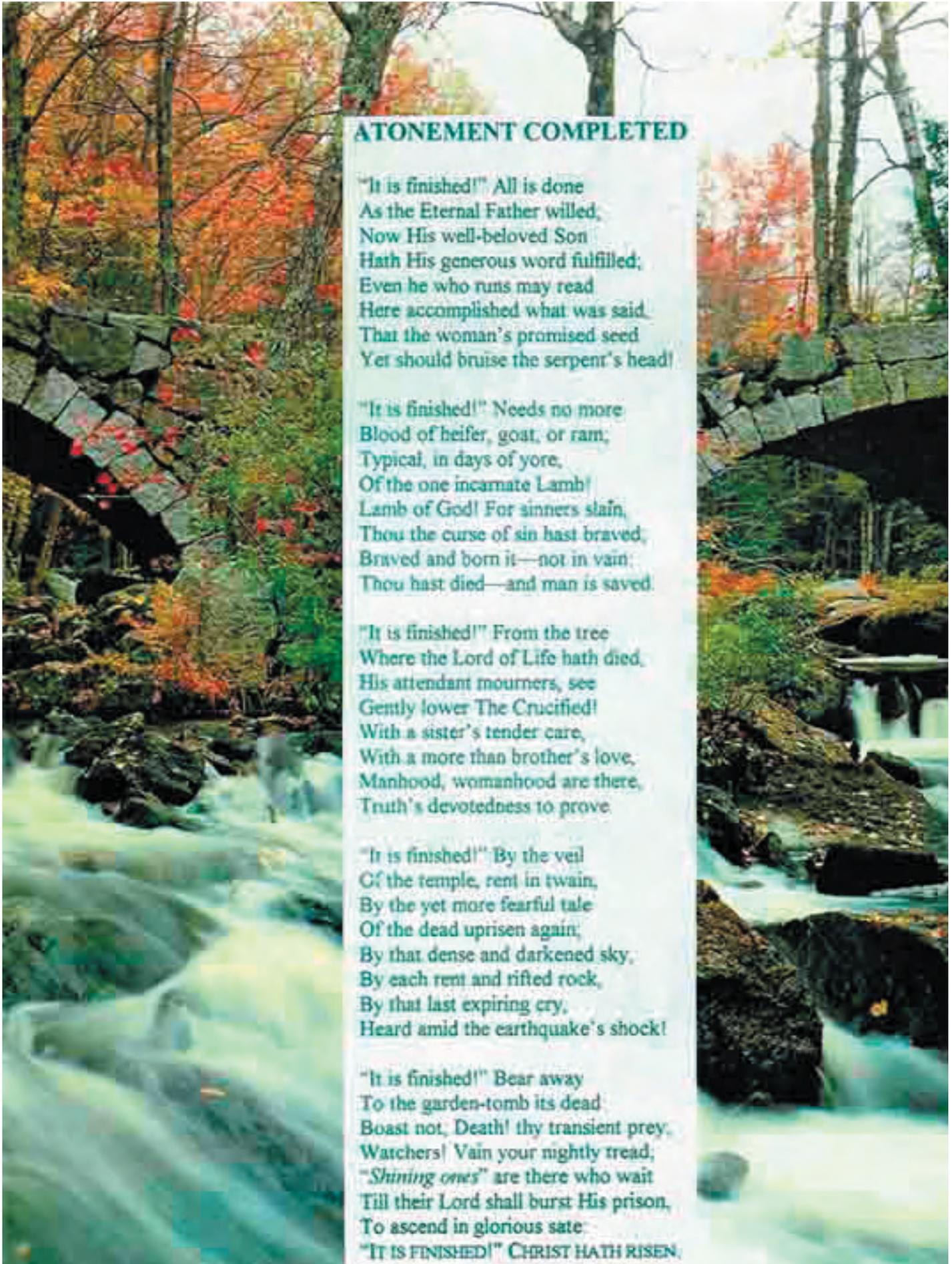
Jesus said, “For it is not ye that speak, but the Spirit of your Father which speaketh in you.” Matt 10:20

Paul said, “I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me.” Gal 2:20

Our own self must die that Christ may live in us. Dead people do not commit sin, neither does a dead person seek praise to himself. When our own self is dead and Christ lives in us, then we are sinless and seek the honor of Christ only. A messenger does not have his own message, but the message of Him who sent him. He is not permitted to change the message nor add to it. We all are God’s messengers and we must faithfully proclaim the message which we have received from God, and then all honor comes to God only.

AMEN

*TEUVO MARTTINEN*



## ATONEMENT COMPLETED

"It is finished!" All is done  
As the Eternal Father willed,  
Now His well-beloved Son  
Hath His generous word fulfilled;  
Even he who runs may read  
Here accomplished what was said,  
That the woman's promised seed  
Yet should bruise the serpent's head!

"It is finished!" Needs no more  
Blood of heifer, goat, or ram;  
Typical, in days of yore,  
Of the one incarnate Lamb!  
Lamb of God! For sinners slain,  
Thou the curse of sin hast braved,  
Braved and born it—not in vain;  
Thou hast died—and man is saved.

"It is finished!" From the tree  
Where the Lord of Life hath died,  
His attendant mourners, see  
Gently lower The Crucified!  
With a sister's tender care,  
With a more than brother's love,  
Manhood, womanhood are there,  
Truth's devotedness to prove.

"It is finished!" By the veil  
Of the temple, rent in twain,  
By the yet more fearful tale  
Of the dead uprisen again,  
By that dense and darkened sky,  
By each rent and rifted rock,  
By that last expiring cry,  
Heard amid the earthquake's shock!

"It is finished!" Bear away  
To the garden-tomb its dead,  
Boast not, Death! thy transient prey,  
Watchers! Vain your nightly tread;  
"Shining ones" are there who wait  
Till their Lord shall burst His prison,  
To ascend in glorious state:  
"IT IS FINISHED!" CHRIST HATH RISEN.