

A blue jay is perched on a wooden post, facing right. The bird has a blue crest, back, and tail, with white underparts and a black collar around its neck. The background is a blurred wooden fence.

The Reformation **Messenger**

VOLUME 19, NUMBER 2, FEBRUARY 2012

“In singing bird and opening blossom, in rain and sunshine, in summer breeze and gentle dew, in ten thousand objects in nature, from the oak of the forest to the violet that blossoms at its root, is seen the love that restores. And nature still speaks to us of God's goodness.” – *Child Guidance*, p. 47

WE BELIEVE: The all-wise loving God created all things in the universe by His Son, Jesus Christ. He is the Owner and Sustainer. He met the challenge to His loving leadership and authority by reconciling the world to Himself through the life, death, and resurrection of His Son, the Word made flesh. The Holy Spirit, Jesus' representative on earth convicts of sin, guides into truth, and gives strength to overcome all unrighteousness. The Bible is the record of God's dealings with mankind and the standard of all doctrine, the Ten Commandments are the transcript of His character and the foundation of all enduring reform. His people, in harmony with God's word and under the direction of the Holy Spirit call all men everywhere to be reconciled to God through faith in Jesus. Bible prophecy reveals that earth's history will soon close with the visible return of Jesus Christ as King to claim all who have accepted Him as the world's only Redeemer and their Lord.

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Inside Cover: Belize, Helen Marttinen

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The Laodicean Message



God loves His church even though He has been grieved by its poor spiritual condition throughout the years. He loves His church as a parent loves a wayward child. Message after message has been sent to counsel, reprove and encourage the believers to stand firm and be faithful. The Laodicean message describes the condition of God's church in the final years prior to His Second Coming. It also shows God's great love and what He is doing to bring healing and salvation to His people individually. The spiritual condition is this: "I know thy works, that thou art neither cold nor hot: I would thou wert cold or hot. So then because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spue thee out of My mouth." Revelation 3:15-16

Then the following verses more definitively describe this lukewarm condition. "Because thou sayest, I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing; and knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked: I counsel thee to buy of Me gold tried in the fire, that thou mayest be rich; and white raiment, that thou mayest be clothed, and [that] the shame of thy nakedness do not appear; and anoint thine eyes with eyesalve, that thou mayest see. As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten: be zealous therefore, and repent." Revelation 3:17-19

In these verses is described the mindset of the Laodiceans. These people think they are rich when they are actually poor. "The message to the Laodicean church reveals our condition as a people." *-The Review and Herald, December 15, 1904.* This was the condition of God's church in the year 1904. There was a shaking in God's church not too long after that time. Is it possible that some of those in the remnant church today have also become Laodicean

in spirit? Only you can answer for yourself. "To the idlers in the Lord's vineyard the Laodicean message is sent." *- Manuscript 26, 1905.* "The message to the Laodicean church is applicable to all who have had great light and many opportunities and yet have not appreciated them." *-The Review and Herald, March 11, 1902*

Let us compare the Laodicean mindset to the mindset of the church of Smyrna. The church of Smyrna suffered great persecution, especially in the time of Diocletian. At that time Christianity was outlawed as a sect and they were persecuted.

"And unto the angel of the church in Smyrna write; These things saith the first and the last, which was dead, and is alive; I know thy works, and tribulation, and poverty, (but thou art rich) and I know the blasphemy of them which say they are Jews, and are not, but are the synagogue of Satan." Revelation 2:8-9

The church of Smyrna was poor from outward appearances, however, God views them as rich. He considers them rich because they knew they were poor and realized they had a need of something which in turn would make them rich. Laodicea has the opposite experience. They think they are rich, when, in reality, they are poor. Also, Smyrna has no rebuke but only commendation from God whereas Laodicea has only rebuke and no commendation. This does not mean that God loved the Laodiceans any less. In fact He states very clearly that He loves them very dearly and because He loves them He rebukes and chastens them. Jesus does not leave these people alone in their sin. He says, "Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear My voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with Me." Revela-

tion 3:20

Jesus is shown to be on the outside, knocking to get in. If He was inside, He would not be knocking. He is knocking at the door of the heart of every person who claims to believe in Him. Unfortunately, some believe that Jesus is already in their heart when He is, in reality, still on the outside. This deception is Satan's masterpiece. He deceives people into thinking they do not need anything because they think they have Jesus when the truth is that Jesus is still on the outside, knocking.

It is important to recognize the voice of Jesus when He knocks. He is not using flattering words. No, the voice of Jesus says we are wretched, miserable, poor, blind, and naked.

There is a blessing promised to all those that hear His voice and open the door. "If any man hear My voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with Me." Revelation 3:20. If we will hear His voice in our hearts and open the door, Jesus has promised that He will come in to us personally. Thus the message to the Laodicean church is a personal message. It is not just a doctrinal theory, but a personal experience with Jesus. This is what is needed to be ready when Jesus returns to the earth to gather His people.

In the following quote is explained the purpose of Jesus sending the Laodicean Message: "I was shown that the testimony to the Laodiceans applies to God's people at the present time, and the reason it has not accomplished a greater work is because of the hardness of their hearts. . . . It is designed to arouse the people of God, to discover to them their backslidings, and to lead to zealous repentance, that they may be favored with the presence of Jesus, and be fitted for the loud cry of the third angel." – *Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 1, p. 186

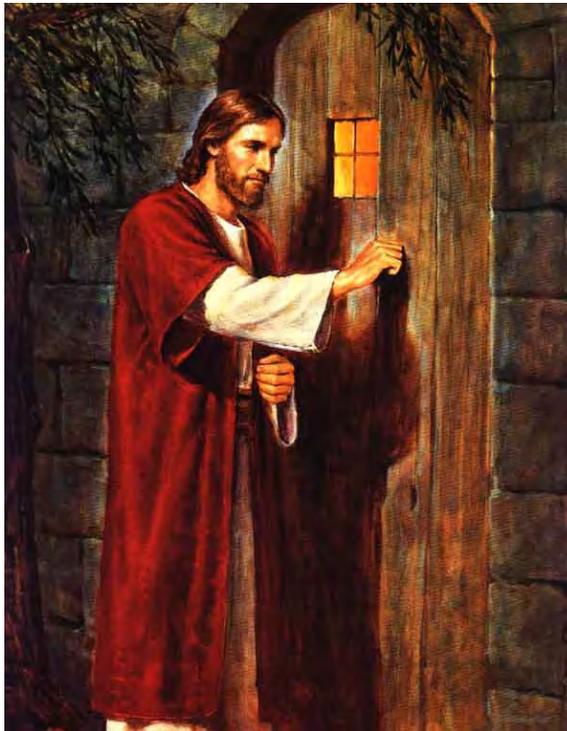
Jesus wants to come into each heart and make a positive change. His voice is heard from these sources: "Every warning, reproof, and entreaty in the Word of God, or through His delegated messengers, is a knock at the door of the heart; it is the voice of Jesus asking for entrance." – *The Review and Herald*, November 2, 1886

The Laodicean message is given to fit us for the presence of Jesus. It is the preparation needed for the loud cry. The Latter Rain is nothing short of the presence of Jesus. Jesus wants to come and abide in each one of us. This is the essence of the Laodicean message.

PRESENCE OF JESUS

"But the righteousness which is of faith speaketh on this wise, Say not in thine heart, Who shall ascend into heaven? (that is, to bring Christ down from above:) Or, Who shall descend into the deep? (that is, to bring up Christ again from the dead.) But what saith it? The word is nigh thee, [even] in thy mouth, and in thy heart: that is, the word of faith, which we preach." Romans 10:6–8

Jesus is very near. His presence is close by. No one needs to go to heaven or to the grave to find Him. He, the word of faith, can be in your mouth and your heart.



"In the beginning was the Word" (John 1:1); the Word is Jesus. Today we have the Bible, the Word of God, in our hands. It is not a theory or a book with just some interesting stories and counsels. It is the Word of God. This Word is to be put into the heart. The psalmist says, "Thy word have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against thee." Psalm 119:11. The natural Laodicean person has the truth but it is not in the heart because Jesus is shown to be outside, knocking to get in. The preparation for the latter rain is not the argumentation or debate of doctrine but the absorption of God's word as a person, as Him personally coming

into the heart.

In order for this to become a reality we will go through negative experiences, as mentioned, for reproof, warning and entreaty.

The truth is that we will appreciate Jesus more when we understand that we have a need of Him. When we feel we are rich and increased with goods, we feel that we have need of nothing. The words, "poor, blind, naked, wretched, and miserable" are not pleasant words to describe our spiritual condition, however, they are true. But if we will draw nigh to God then He will draw nigh to us and help us to overcome every negative character trait.

This is a painful process for some.

SUBMISSION

The Laodicean Message is a message of submission.

“Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. Draw nigh to God, and He will draw nigh to you. Cleanse your hands, ye sinners; and purify your hearts, ye double minded.” James 4:7–8

The Bible encourages us to draw nigh to God, and when we do so, we read that He has promised to “cleanse your hands, ye sinners.” The closer we come to Jesus the faultier we see ourselves. This is actually a positive experience. It is not beneficial if we do not see how sinful we really are. This would be actually very dangerous. There is nothing as dangerous as the deception of spiritual pride. It is the one sin that is at the root of many church, as well as individual, problems. When we submit to Jesus, He will show us the plague spots in our character and we will want to come to Him for healing. He has promised to help us to overcome.

SORROW

The Laodicean message is also a message of sorrow. Not sorrow in a worldly sense, but spiritual sorrow; sorrow for our poor and weak spiritual condition.

“Be afflicted, and mourn, and weep: let your laughter be turned to mourning, and your joy to heaviness. Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and He shall lift you up.” James 4:9–10

“Verily, verily, I say unto you, That ye shall weep and lament, but the world shall rejoice: and ye shall be sorrowful, but your sorrow shall be turned into joy.” John 16:20
The promise is that our sorrow will be turned into joy if we are faithful through the trying times. There is some close cutting work to be done in our character. Being sorrowful is essential for salvation. We cannot be saved without going through this type of experience.

DEPENDENCE

The description the faithful witness gives of our natural condition is not one of dependence. The Laodiceans naturally feel they have need of nothing. They cannot be helped in this condition. They are saying that they are independent or self-sufficient. The truth is that their strength is proportionate to the strength of their dependence on Christ. Without Christ we can do nothing. The natural mind does not realize this.

In Matthew 18 we read how the followers of Christ are to be converted and become as little children. “At the same



time came the disciples unto Jesus, saying, Who is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven? And Jesus called a little child unto Him, and set him in the midst of them, And said, Verily I say unto you, Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into

the kingdom of heaven. Whosoever therefore shall humble himself as this little child, the same is greatest in the kingdom of heaven.” Matthew 18:1–4

Little children are very dependent on their parents for all their physical, spiritual, and emotional needs. In the same manner we are dependent on our Heavenly Father. We cannot go to heaven unless we are dependent on our Heavenly Father as little children are dependent on their earthly parents. A little child is not only very dependent, but also very trusting of the leading of their parents. If they love their parents they are willing to obey without asking questions. This type of dependence we need to have in Jesus.

HOPE—A HELPER

Although the Laodicean people mentioned in this message appear to be self-sufficient and blinded by their own righteousness, there is a remnant who will realize their sinful condition. These few cling to the hope that is promised. They understand that they do not need to remain in this condition. There is a Counselor who has provided a remedy. He says, “buy of Me gold tried in the fire, that thou mayest be rich; and white raiment, that thou mayest be clothed.” Revelation 3:18. Jesus is a Wonderful Counselor. He makes no mistakes in His counseling. The Bible says, “Lean not unto thine own understanding. In all thy ways acknowledge Him, and He shall direct thy paths.” Proverbs 3:5–6

This is hard for many people to do. In fact it is impossible to be done without Christ. The challenge is to open the heart to Jesus when He knocks. Some do not want to open up to Jesus because they are afraid that He will show them how sinful they really are. Yes, this is true, He will. Jesus will reveal to us the things that separate us from God. Many are offended by God’s word. They only want to hear smooth sayings and thus they stay away from Christ. They have some cherished sin they do not want to give up. Jesus is endeavouring to prepare our

hearts, by breaking the self-righteousness and love of the world that many have been cherishing.

“Gather yourselves together, yea, gather together, O nation not desired; Before the decree bring forth, before the day pass as the chaff, before the fierce anger of the LORD come upon you, before the day of the LORD’S anger come upon you. Seek ye the LORD, all ye meek of the earth, which have wrought His judgment; seek righteousness, seek meekness: it may be ye shall be hid in the day of the LORD’S anger.” Zephaniah 2:1–3

Remember that Jesus has promised to be a true friend. He is calling all sinners, even those in that terrible condition described. He wants to come in and clean up, and hopes that we will be willing to permit Him to do so. He has promised to never leave us if we seek Him and open the door to Him; however, we must seek now, today, if we want to be hid in the day of the Lord’s anger.

“Are you in Christ? Not if you do not acknowledge yourselves erring, helpless, condemned sinners. Not if you are exalting and glorifying self. If there is any good in you, it is wholly attributable to the mercy of a compassionate Saviour. Your birth, your reputation, your wealth, your talents, your virtues, your piety, your philanthropy, or anything else in you or connected with you, will not form a bond of union between your soul and Christ.” – *Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 5, p. 48

It is not because we are good people that He loves us but it is because He is good that He loves us. We need to come to a place of absolute helplessness and know that He loves us regardless of our past experiences, or our present condition. He is willing to come in and clean our hearts if we will only open the door.

“Your connection with the church, the manner in which your brethren regard you, will be of no avail unless you believe in Christ. It is not enough to believe about Him; you must believe in Him. You must rely wholly upon His saving grace.” – *Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 5, p. 48

Hanging wholly upon His saving grace is the total dependence that we need to have. If it was not for Jesus we would be nothing. He is asking to come into our hearts to save us. This is the Laodicean message. When we dwell upon this thought joy springs up within us that no one can take away.

“For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, Nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of

God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.” Romans 8:38–39. When Jesus comes into our hearts, nothing can separate us from His love nor can anyone take away our peace.

TO BE IN CHRIST

Have you opened your hearts’ door to the knock of Jesus? Jesus will not force His entrance into your heart. You must be the one to open the door. If you have opened, then trust. He will come in and change your vile heart into a heart of flesh. You may not understand how it is done, but you must trust that because God said it, so it will be.

“A life in Christ is a life of restfulness. There may be no ecstasy of feeling, but there should be an abiding, peaceful trust.” – *Steps to Christ*, p. 70

We are not to expect to have some high emotional feeling to indicate that we are in Christ. Feeling or no feeling, we need to trust and believe. I have given myself to Jesus and He will work in and through me because He said He would.

“Your hope is not in yourself; it is in Christ. Your weakness is united to His strength, your ignorance to His wisdom, your frailty to His enduring might. So you are not to look to yourself, not to let the mind dwell upon self, but look to Christ. Let the mind dwell upon His love, upon the beauty, the perfection, of His character. Christ in His self-denial, Christ in His humiliation, Christ in His purity and holiness, Christ in His matchless love—this is the subject for the soul’s contemplation. It is by loving Him, copying Him, depending wholly upon Him, that you are to be transformed into His likeness.” – *Steps to Christ*, p. 70

“When the mind dwells upon self, it is turned away from Christ, the source of strength and life. Hence it is Satan’s constant effort to keep the attention diverted from the Saviour and thus prevent the union and communion of the soul with Christ. The pleasures of the world, life’s cares and perplexities and sorrows, the faults of others, or your own faults and imperfections—to any or all of these he will seek to divert the mind.” – *Steps to Christ*, p. 71

“Consecrate yourself to God in the morning; make this your very first work. Let your prayer be, ‘Take me, O Lord, as wholly Thine. I lay all my plans at Thy feet. Use me today in Thy service. Abide with me, and let all my work be wrought in Thee.’ This is a daily matter. Each morning consecrate yourself to God for that day. Surrender all your plans to Him, to be carried out or given up as His providence shall indicate. Thus day by day you

may be giving your life into the hands of God, and thus your life will be molded more and more after the life of Christ." –*Steps to Christ*, p. 71

This is the Laodicean message. "Christ in you, the hope of glory." Colossians 1:27. Daily we must give Him our plans and ask His counsel and be willing to follow what He says. Let Him live in and through you.

"The closer you come to Jesus, the more faulty you will appear in your own eyes; for your vision will be clearer, and your imperfections will be seen in broad and distinct contrast to His perfect nature. This is evidence that Satan's delusions have lost their power; that the vivifying influence of the Spirit of God is arousing you." – *Steps to Christ*, p. 64



You cannot grow unless you go through the sorrow of cutting away your sinful habits and character traits. One must leave behind every sin if one desires to stand before a Holy God and be counted worthy. However, this sorrow will end in joy for everyone who allows Jesus to work in him.

MEEKNESS

The Laodicean message will result in meekness in the people of God.

"Meekness in the school of Christ is one of the marked fruits of the Spirit. It is a grace wrought by the Holy Spirit as a sanctifier, and enables its possessor at all times to control a rash and impetuous temper. When the grace of meekness is cherished by those who are naturally sour or hasty in disposition, they will put forth the most earnest efforts to subdue their unhappy temper. Every day they will gain self-control, until that which is unlovely and unlike Jesus is conquered. They become assimilated to the Divine Pattern, until they can obey the inspired injunction, 'Be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath.'" –*The Review and Herald*, January 18, 1881

With the truly meek person, there is a continual waiting upon God, and a submission of the will to His. The understanding grasps every divine truth and the will bows to every divine precept, without doubting or murmuring. "True meekness softens and subdues the heart, and gives

the mind a fitness for the ingrafted word." –*The Review and Herald*, January 18, 1881

"It brings the thoughts into obedience to Jesus Christ." – *The Review and Herald*, January 18, 1881

"God wants you to let Him manage you, that you may be a lovable Christian." –*That I May Know Him*, p. 21. If we manage ourselves we will not be lovable at all. Open the door to your heart and Jesus will come in and be your manager, and you will be a lovable Christian.

"The Lord would have the natural and hereditary traits of character come under the pruning knife. Look steadfastly unto Jesus, that you may catch His spirit and cherish the qualities of Christlike character. Then it will be recognized by all who have any connection with you, that you have learned of Christ, His meekness, His affection, His tenderness, His sympathy. Never rest satisfied until you possess a loving and lovable spirit. Your words may come from the good treasure of the heart to strengthen, help, bless, and win all around you. . . . Others catch your spirit. The seeds we sow will bear a harvest in goodness, patience, kindness, and love, or exactly the opposite." –*That I May Know Him*, p. 218

We must have an intelligent understanding of the Laodicean message if we want to be united with Christ and be prepared for the latter rain. When we open the door to Jesus He will work in us. There are some Christians who take this to mean that you only need to believe in Jesus and you will be saved. You do not need to do any works. This is a fallacy. If we do not work we do not believe in Jesus. It is a work of cooperation between man and God. (See *Acts of the Apostles*, p. 482)

When we allow Jesus an entrance, He begins a work in us and we must cooperate with this work. If Jesus is living within us, we will not do any evil works. Also the good works we do are not from us alone, but from Christ dwelling in us. It must be Christ personally in you and in me just as the Father was in Christ. As the Father was in Christ so He wants to be in us also.

It is my prayer that we understand the Laodicean message and let Jesus come into our hearts to cleanse us from all our filthiness or lukewarmness. When we look to Jesus' character traits and dwell upon His Word we will become more like Him. Then we will be ready when the Latter Rain is poured out upon God's people and we will be found to be faithful workers in the cause of Christ. Amen

Wendy Eaton



Purpose of Life

People have many different purposes for their lives. They have goals that they try to achieve. The scientists and philosophers have tried to come up with a reason for life, but until now they have not come up with one. People live for a while, and try hard to gain wealth, and then suddenly it is over, and what riches they have accumulated they leave behind. Others live for pleasure and entertainment. One movie-maker who had done over 150 movies said that he feels that he has wasted his life in wrong things. Some are fighting for a high position, thinking that that will make their lives worthwhile. Again, there are people who have no goals that they want to achieve. They just live from day to day, and are satisfied with the necessities for survival. There are also people who see no purpose for their lives and commit suicide.

The only real purpose for human life comes from the Creator, who made man and placed him to live on this earth. Jesus spoke to the disciples on how to have a perfect, happy life. "These things have I spoken unto you, that My joy might remain in you, and that your joy might be full." John 15:11

David said, "Thou wilt shew me the path of life: in Thy presence is fullness of joy; at Thy right hand there are pleasures for evermore." Psalm 16:11

Misery and unhappiness came to this world when the first human pair lost their righteousness and became sinners. They lost the chance for an eternal, happy life, which was the purpose of God for them.

But in His mercy and love toward the lost human race, God decided to give man a second chance, but with the infinite sacrifice of His Son Jesus Christ.

Angels of God were rejoicing, thinking that every human being will eagerly take hold of this second chance

and return to the original way of living. But to their great disappointment they saw that so few were interested in this offer from God. And even many of those who showed interest put out only a half-hearted effort to gain it.

The main purpose of this life, even to most of the professed Christians, is to provide the necessities of life for themselves. When Jesus saw this He gave counsel to His disciples, "Therefore take no thought, saying, What shall we eat? or, What shall we drink? or, What Where-withal shall we be clothed? (For after these things do the Gentiles seek:) for your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things. But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you." Matthew 6:31–33

Now here Jesus revealed the real purpose of life on this earth, which is to seek the lost kingdom of God and also to seek the lost righteousness, which is the secret of a happy, peaceful life. God is freely offering these to everyone who seeks them above all other things.

He said, "So likewise, whosoever he be of you that forsaketh not all that he hath, he cannot be My disciple." Luke 14:33

This second chance that God has given us is with a purpose to prove that we love Him and trust His promise to care for us. Also we prove that we enjoy a righteous life, the life that is practiced in heaven.

"God has a work, a purpose, in the life of each of us. Every act, however small, has its place in our life experience." —*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 3, p. 541

There is a refining process going on throughout our whole lifetime. God has to remove rubbish and impurities from us.

“And He shall sit as a refiner and purifier of silver: and He shall purify the sons of Levi, and purge them as gold and silver, that they may offer unto the Lord an offering in righteousness.” Malachi 3:3

To change a sinner into a saint is the work that God is doing in our lifetime on this earth. The righteousness which was lost in the beginning will be gained by ourselves and God working together. This will certainly make this lifetime very important, so, no time is to be wasted in vanity.

“To restore in man the image of his Maker, to bring him back to the perfection in which he was created, to promote the development of body, mind, and soul, that the divine purpose in his creation might be realized—this was to be the work of redemption. This is the object of education, the great object of life.” —*Education*, p. 15–16

“Life is not given us to be spent in idleness or self-pleasing; before us are placed great possibilities.” —*Counsels to Parents, Teachers, and Students*, p. 278

“Here in this life is the testing, trying time. The angels of God are watching the development of character, and weighing moral worth. The whole question is settled in this, Is he obedient or disobedient to the commandments of God? has the sinner been transformed in this world, through the merits of Christ, to an obedient servant, so that he is fitted to join the heavenly society?” —*Sons and Daughters of God*, p. 50



We must not ignore our great enemy, Satan, who is out to destroy our happiness and our real life purpose. He has experience in deceiving people out of salvation for 6000 years, and he has been very successful in it. In heaven he deceived one-third of the angels to change their life purpose away from serving God. In the time of Noah, almost the whole world rejected the second chance that God so graciously had offered to them.

Also in the time of the end in which we live today, Jesus said, “When the Son of Man cometh, shall He find faith on the earth?” Luke 18:8

“But as the days of Noe were, so shall also the coming of the Son of man be.” Matthew 24:37

Jesus also said, “Now the brother shall betray the

brother to death, and the father the son, and children shall rise up against their parents, and shall cause them to be put to death. And ye shall be hated of all men for My name’s sake: but he that shall endure unto the end, the same shall be saved.” Mark 13:12–13

“Even so ye also outwardly appear righteous unto men, but within ye are full of hypocrisy and iniquity. Wherefore, behold, I send unto you prophets, and wise men, and scribes: and some of them ye shall kill and crucify; and some of them shall ye scourge in your synagogues, and persecute them from city to city.” Matthew 23:28, 34

This hatred and persecution are also in the plan of God. The millions of martyrs prove it. Paul said, “Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution.” 2 Timothy 3:12. Paul did not say that some shall suffer persecution, but all. This persecution will separate the lukewarm, half-hearted Christians from the true children of God, who have chosen the plan of God as the only purpose for their lives.

“Of all the gifts that heaven can bestow upon men, fellowship with Christ in His sufferings is the most weighty trust and the highest honour. Not Enoch, who was translated to heaven, not Elijah, who ascended in a chariot of fire, was greater or more honoured than John the Baptist, who perished alone in the dungeon.” —*Ministry of Healing*, p. 478

The knowledge that we will be in heaven, that we are saved gives us strength to suffer the persecution that is brought against us.

Paul was sure of his salvation. He said, “Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness which the Lord, the righteous Judge, shall give me in that day.” 2 Timothy 4:8

We cannot rejoice and be full of joy and happiness until we know that we will have eternal life. And to be sure of this reward is the purpose of our lives; all other things are not as important. May the Lord help us to fulfill the part that we must do—the Lord surely will do His part—that our salvation may be complete. AMEN.

Timo Martin



Mene, Mene, Tekel

THE GREAT FEAST

“Belshazzar the king made a great feast to a thousand of his lords, and drank wine before the thousand.” Daniel 5:1

“In his pride and arrogance, with a reckless feeling of security Belshazzar ‘made a great feast to a thousand of his lords, and drank wine before the thousand.’ All the attractions that wealth and power could command, added splendor to the scene. Beautiful women with their enchantments were among the guests in attendance at the royal banquet. Men of genius and education were there. Princes and statesmen drank wine like water and reveled under its maddening influence.” – *Prophets and Kings*, p. 523

“With reason dethroned through shameless intoxication, and with lower impulses and passions now in the ascendancy, the king himself took the lead in the riotous orgy. As the feast progressed, he ‘commanded to bring the golden and silver vessels which . . . Nebuchadnezzar had taken out of the temple which was in Jerusalem; that the king, and his princes, his wives, and his concubines, might drink therein.’ The king would prove that nothing was too sacred for his hands to handle. ‘They brought the golden vessels; . . . and the king, and his princes, his wives, and his concubines, drank in them. They drank wine, and praised the gods of gold, and of silver, of brass, of iron, of wood, and of stone.’” – *Prophets and Kings*, p. 523

THE UNSEEN WATCHER

While they were praising their gods in drunkenness, the same hour came forth the finger of a man’s hand and wrote on the plaster of the wall of the king’s palace. They saw what the hand had written, but they could not read the writing. Belshazzar called for the wise men

of Babylon but they could not read and interpret the writing, so they called for a Hebrew man called Daniel, who read and interpreted the writing of the unseen watcher.

THE WRITING READS AS FOLLOWS: MENE, MENE, TEKEL, UPHARSIN.

“This is the interpretation of the thing: MENE; God hath numbered thy kingdom, and finished it. TEKEL; Thou art weighed in the balances, and art found wanting. PERES; Thy kingdom is divided, and given to the Medes and Persians.” Daniel 5:26–28



These words were to inform King Belshazzar of the danger before him. On the same night, the king of the Chaldeans was slain, because he did not heed the warning, so that he could escape.

PRIDE AND ARROGANCE

So, in like manner, God sends His messengers to warn the people of the danger which is before them (Amos 3:7). The same warning was given to the antediluvian world through Noah, but the people did not heed the

message. Why? Like Babylon they employed the gold and silver, precious stones and the choice wood to glorify themselves rather than their Creator.

“God bestowed upon these antediluvians many and rich gifts; but they used His bounties to glorify themselves, and turned them into a curse by fixing their affections upon the gifts instead of the Giver. They employed the gold and silver, the precious stones and the choice wood in the construction of habitations for themselves, and endeavored to excel one another in beautifying their dwellings with the most skillful workmanship. They sought only to gratify the desires of their own proud hearts, and reveled in scenes of pleasure and wickedness. Not desiring to retain God in their knowledge, they soon came to deny His existence. They adored nature in place of the God of nature. They glorified human genius, worshiped the works of their own hands, and taught their children to bow down to graven images.” –*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 90–91

“By faith Noah, being warned of God of things not seen as yet, moved with fear, prepared an ark to the saving of his house; by which he condemned the world, and became heir of the righteousness which is by faith.” Hebrews 11:7

“Had the antediluvians believed the warning, and repented of their evil deeds, the Lord would have turned aside His wrath, as He afterward did from Nineveh. But by their obstinate resistance to the reproofs of conscience and the warnings of God’s prophet, that generation filled up the measure of their iniquity, and became ripe for destruction.” –*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p.97

What about Sodom and Gomorrah? Is it the same pride that caused her destruction?

“Behold, this was the iniquity of thy sister Sodom, pride, fullness of bread, and abundance of idleness was in her and in her daughters, neither did she strengthen the hand of the poor and needy. And they were haughty, and committed abomination before Me: therefore I took them away as I saw good.” Ezekiel 16:49–50

“The profusion reigning everywhere gave birth to luxury and pride. Idleness and riches make the heart hard that has never been oppressed by want or burdened by sorrow. The love of pleasure was fostered by wealth and leisure, and the people gave themselves up to sen-

sual indulgence. ‘Behold,’ says the prophet, ‘this was the iniquity of thy sister Sodom, pride, fullness of bread, and abundance of idleness was in her and in her daughters, neither did she strengthen the hand of the poor and needy.’” –*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 156

God warned Sodom during the time of Lot’s sojourn in Sodom. “At the time of Lot’s removal to Sodom, corruption had not become universal, and God in His mercy permitted rays of light to shine amid the moral darkness. When Abraham rescued the captives from the Elamites, the attention of the people was called to the true faith. Abraham was not a stranger to the people of Sodom, and his worship of the unseen God had been a matter of ridicule among them; but his victory over greatly superior forces, and his magnanimous disposition of the prisoners and spoil, excited wonder and admiration. While his skill and valor were extolled, none could avoid the conviction that a divine power had made him conqueror. And his noble and unselfish spirit, so foreign to the self-seeking inhabitants of Sodom, was another evidence of the superiority of the religion which he had honored by his courage and fidelity.” –*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 157

WHAT WARNINGS DID GOD GIVE HIS PEOPLE BEFORE THEIR CAPTIVITY?

“And Jesus said unto them, See ye not all these things? Verily I say unto you, there shall not be left here one stone upon another that shall not be thrown down.” Matthew 24:2

“Hear this, I pray you, ye heads of the house of Jacob, and princes of the house of Israel, that abhor judgment, and pervert all equity. They build up Zion with blood and Jerusalem with iniquity. The heads thereof judge for reward, and the priests thereof teach for hire and the prophets thereof divine for money: yet will they lean upon the LORD, and say, Is not the LORD among us? None evil can come upon us.” Micah 3:9–11

“These words faithfully described the corrupt and self-righteous inhabitants of Jerusalem. While claiming to observe rigidly the precepts of God’s law, they were transgressing all its principles. They hated Christ because His purity and holiness revealed their iniquity; and they accused Him of being the cause of all the troubles which had come upon them in consequence of their sins. Though they knew Him to be sinless, they had declared that His death was necessary to their safety as a nation. ‘If we let Him thus alone,’ said the

Jewish leaders, 'all men will believe on Him: and the Romans shall come and take away both our place and nation.' John 11:48. If Christ were sacrificed, they might once more become a strong, united people. Thus they reasoned, and they concurred in the decision of their high priest, that it would be better for one man to die than for the whole nation to perish." —*The Great Controversy*, p. 27

Why are all these written?

"Now all these things happened unto them for ensamples: and they are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come." 1 Corinthians 10:11

"This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come. For men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, Without natural affection, trucebreakers, false accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers of those that are good, traitors, heady, high-minded, lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God; Having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof: from such turn away." 2 Timothy 3:1–5

"Watch ye therefore . . . lest coming suddenly He find you sleeping." Mark 13:35–36. "Perilous is the condition of those who, growing weary of their watch, turn to the attractions of the world. While the man of business is absorbed in the pursuit of gain, while the pleasure lover is seeking indulgence, while the daughter of fashion is arranging her adornments—it may be in that hour the Judge of all the earth will pronounce the sentence: 'Thou art weighed in the balances, and art found wanting.' Daniel 5:27." —*The Great Controversy*, p. 491

This is a time for us to wake up from sleeping and keep watch so that we can escape for our life in the final destruction of the earth's history.

"And as it was in the days of Noe, so shall it be also in the days of the Son of man. They did eat, they drank, they married wives, they were given in marriage, until the day that Noe entered into the ark, and the flood came, and destroyed them all. Likewise also as it was in the days of Lot; they did eat, they drank, they bought, they sold, they planted, they builded; But the same day that Lot went out of Sodom it rained fire and brimstone from heaven, and destroyed them all. Even thus shall it be in the day when the Son of man is revealed."

Luke 17:26–30

"For he that will love life, and see good days, let him refrain his tongue from evil, and his lips that they speak no guile: Let him eschew evil, and do good; let him seek peace, and ensue it. For the eyes of the Lord are over the righteous, and His ears are open unto their prayers: but the face of the Lord is against them that do evil." 1 Peter 3:10–12

"For when they shall say, Peace and safety; then sudden destruction cometh upon them, as travail upon a woman with child; and they shall not escape. But ye, brethren, are not in darkness, that that day should overtake you as a thief. Ye are all the children of light, and the children of the day: we are not of the night, nor of darkness. Therefore let us not sleep, as do others; but let us watch and be sober. For they that sleep, sleep in the night; and they that be drunken are drunken in the night. But let us, who are of the day, be sober, putting on the breastplate of faith and love; and for an 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." 1 Thessalonians 5:3–10

WAKE UP – ESCAPE!!

AMEN!

**John Nkhoma, Malawi
Student—Berea Adventist Missionary Institute (BAMI),
Kenya**



Give Me a Mountain

Caleb Inherits Hebron

“Then the children of Judah came unto Joshua in Gilgal: and Caleb the son of Jephunneh the Kenezite said unto him, Thou knowest the thing that the LORD said unto Moses the man of God concerning me and thee in Kadesh-barnea. Forty years old was I when Moses the servant of the LORD sent me from Kadesh-barnea to espy out the land; and I brought him word again as it was in mine heart. Nevertheless my brethren that went up with me made the heart of the people melt: but I wholly followed the LORD my God. And Moses sware on that day, saying, Surely the land whereon thy feet have trodden shall be thine inheritance, and thy children's for ever, because thou hast wholly followed the LORD my God. And now, behold, the LORD hath kept me alive, as he said, these forty and five years, even since the LORD spake this word unto Moses, while the children of Israel wandered in the wilderness: and now, lo, I am this day fourscore and five years old. As yet I am as strong this day as I was in the day that Moses sent me: as my strength was then, even so is my strength now, for war, both to go out, and to come in. Now therefore give me this mountain, whereof the LORD spake in that day; for thou heardest in that day how the Anakims were there, and that the cities were great and fenced: if so be the LORD will be with me, then I shall be able to drive them out, as the LORD said. And Joshua blessed him, and gave unto Caleb the son of Jephunneh Hebron for an inheritance.” Joshua 14: 6–13

Caleb was eighty-five years old when he climbed that mountain and he said “I felt my strength the same as if I were forty years old.” In our daily life our problems, struggles, and difficulties can seem like big mountains. Sometimes it seems that the more I climb, the farther away I seem from the top. I complain, saying, “I can't reach the top!” Perhaps it is because I want to do it by myself; also because I feel tired of those rocks that someone mischievously throws on my back and hides in their hands. Those little obstacles keep me away from reaching the top. I'm not perfect yet. My pride hurts and fixing my character is one of the hardest tasks for me to do. I often cry to the Lord: “Please teach me to forget and forgive. I feel discouraged when the devil comes and tempts me saying ‘you are a poor little sinner; you are not going to be able to reach the top. Heaven is too far from you.’” We should reply right

away saying, “Leave me alone. Go away.” For it is written: “For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus.” 1 Timothy 2:5

The following paragraph is an answer to one of my prayers to God, and it is more like talking to God.

If I ask God for a mountain, He will answer, “Yes. I have a mountain for you, and for all of you if you ask for a mountain, also. And it comes with a starting point, a plan, and a map. I will give you hope when you are discouraged. I will give you peace when you are in trouble. I will dry your tears when you feel that you are letting your body go, and when you feel that you are falling, I will hold you.” When you feel proud of yourself for reaching the top, you have to learn to submit yourself to God and be humble and obedient. That is one of the hardest tasks. You have to practice what you have learned on your way up, and when you feel ignorant and lost, because you are not finding the way, God will give you wisdom and His words to lead you to the top. “I am the way, the truth and the life.” John 14:6. If you are weak, I will give you strength. And if your soul is mortified, I will give you the Holy Spirit to comfort you. And if you are thirsty, I will give you the living water. If you are hungry, I will give you the Bread of life; and if you feel that you are dying without salvation, I will give you My Son Jesus Christ. Believe and you will receive salvation free. Keep going to reach Me and you will see My grace.

Jesus is giving us a mountain to climb, but not only for climbing, but to reach the top and to stay there. Sometimes I feel that in this world there is no place for sinners who dream, but I'm sure that there is a place in heaven for my family, all of you, and me. In the same way Jesus loves me I want to love all of you, to forgive and forget. In our busy lives, trying to reach God, we don't submit humbly, asking for help from Jesus. In our lives and in our occupations, we don't really give ourselves completely to Jesus. Keep your eyes upon Jesus, and don't let Him go! Keep going! Then we will be able to come to the cross and sit at Jesus' feet. That is my wish and prayer for all of us.

Lucia Flores



No Such Thing as Failure

How many types of races are there? There are all the track events: the 100m, 200m, 400m, 800m, 1000m, etc. Then there are cross country events such as the 3km, 5km, 8km, and so on. Then there are marathons, the 10km, 21km, and finally the full one, 42km. There are even ultra-marathons which are anything longer than a regular marathon and they have no limit. The Bad Water Ultra Marathon, which is allegedly one of the hardest ultra-marathons in existence is 135 miles long (217km); it takes place around mid-July of every year in California's Death Valley, where the temperatures are over 120F (49C). As a result of the difficulty level of this race very few runners are even capable of finishing such a race. What does the Bible compare our Christian life to? A race. "Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us." Hebrews 12:1. LET US RUN WITH ENDURANCE THE RACE THAT IS BEFORE US. What sort of race requires endurance? Perhaps an ultra-marathon would best describe our journey as Christians. And to run an ultra-marathon, one would need not only endurance but determination, discipline, willpower, grit. I mentioned earlier that many runners are not even able to finish an ultra; they were not well enough prepared and they were forced to quit. In the Christian life, many are not able to finish either, many are not prepared, and so, many quit and fall into a life of sin.

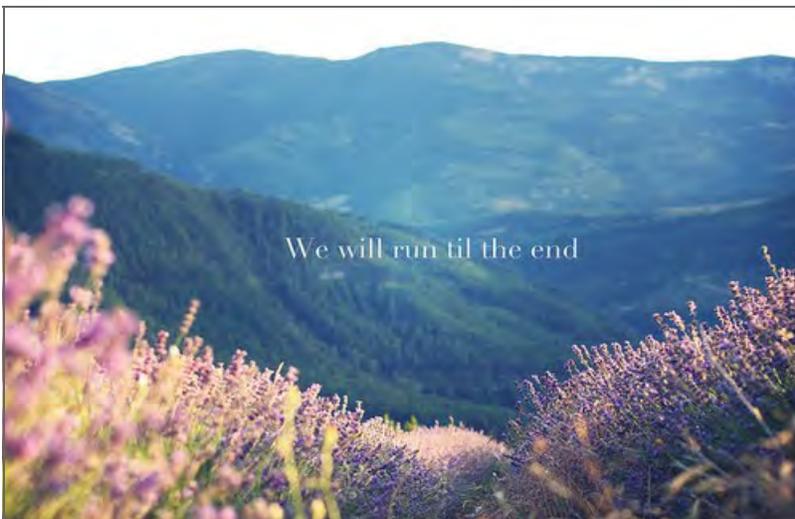
The former New York Yankees catcher, Yogi Berra, once said: "It ain't over 'till it's over." Unknowingly he expressed one of the greatest principles in the Christian life. It matters little to have the lead at the beginning; what matters is how you finish. Victory is won at the finish line, not at the starting blocks. Moreover, the Christian life is not a race of 100m; it is a marathon that requires endurance and a lifetime commitment to keep

running with the intent of finishing strong. The cliché, "It ain't over 'till it's over" also serves to remind you and me that even if we have fallen far behind in the Christian race there is still time to finish well. In 1 Corinthians 10:1–13, the apostle Paul warns us about the dreadful and severe consequences of sin. He also challenges us to avoid sin and persevere in our Christian lives. Paul will argue that there is a very real possibility that many Christians will not finish their Christian lives well. In the book of 1 Corinthians 9:24–27, Paul shares with us that he was constantly striving to keep himself in check because he didn't want to end up being disqualified from the prize of God's approval. And in verse 25 it says: "And every man that striveth for the mastery is temperate in all things. Now they do it to obtain a corruptible crown." Paul is speaking about all the training and discipline that an athlete must undergo; if they are willing to give their all, how much more should we put our all into winning that incorruptible crown. In 1 Corinthians 10:12–13, again Paul gives an important warning and a hopeful word of encouragement and grace. In light of all that Paul has said, he challenges the Corinthians with these words in 10:12: "Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall." Those who have great beginnings may still fall and ruin the last days of their lives. The child of God who thinks that he has succeeded is being set up by the devil to be knocked down. Those on the mountain top are the most vulnerable to attack. Those who are shorter have a lower center of gravity and therefore it is harder to knock them over. The taller you are, the easier it is to get knocked over. This is similar to the saying, "The higher you are, the farther you have to fall." Elijah was on the mountain when he defied the prophets of Baal. The next day he ran across Israel as fast as he could, away from Jezebel. He went from one magnificent, climatic victory to dismal defeat. There he sat under the juniper tree, defeated and discouraged. God came to

him and said, "What are you doing here, Elijah?" He went from bravery to shrinking cowardice. And just like Elijah, it could happen to anyone of us.

Fortunately, we can choose to avoid disqualification and finish well. Paul closes this passage in 1 Corinthians 10:13 with inspirational words: "There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it." Before we look at this verse, we must keep in mind that the Greek word translated "temptation" (*peirasmos*) can also be translated "testing." Practically speaking, this term could be translated "temptation and testing." Every temptation is a test; and every test is a temptation. But despite the temptations and tests God may place in our way and no matter how hard our race might be, we should always remember that there is no such thing as failure, only quitting. You can never fail if you do not quit; mistakes do not constitute as failure. Christ died so that we could rise above our sins and keep going through Him. Recently my mother sent an email out to the some of the youth, about a runner in a track event; during his race he tore a hamstring and could not keep running. He fell to the ground because of the great pain he was experiencing. But instead of stopping he continued, and though he could not run, he limped. And as he was walking, his father ran out to help him finish his race. When we fall down in sin, when we make mistakes, we shouldn't allow them to keep us there. We should let our heavenly Father help us finish our race that we may say as Paul did: I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith." 2 Timothy 4:7. Amen.

Nidia Romero



Give God The Glory

"John Henry Jowett wrote: 'At the beginning of the service in a camp meeting I was called to conduct, prayer was offered for me, and the prayer opened with this inspired supplication: "O Lord, we thank Thee for our brother. Now blot him out!" And the prayer continued: "Reveal Thy glory to us in such blazing splendor that he shall be forgotten." It was absolutely right, and I trust the prayer was answered. But, gentlemen, if we ourselves are gazing upon the glory of the Lord, we shall be blotted out in our own transparency. If we are seeking the glory of the Lord, there will be about us a purity, and a simplicity, and a singleness of devotion which will minister to the unveiling of the King, and men will see no man, save Jesus only.'" – *New Century Leader*.

From the Book, "*The Early and Latter Rain*, by Francis McLellan Wilcox, Review and Herald Publishing Assoc., 1938 edition, p. 153

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Sow What?!

“For he that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting.”

Galatians 6:8

A MYSTERY

When I think of fishing, I immediately think of hardy Greek fishermen, their nets, the deep blue sea and quaint, vividly-coloured fishing boats. But when we think of sowing, we think of scattering, as seeds, upon, over, or in the land or earth, for growth, as in a green field. We may think, further of farming, husbandry, plowers, sowers, and reapers.

Sowing also means to disperse, spread, or disseminate; to sow distrust or dissension, to spread rumors, or disagreement.

But for the children of God our Lord has brought us into contact with nature, so that we might listen to the voice that has created all things.

One of the greatest and most precious lessons taught related to growth, is the parable of the growing seed. (Mark 4:26–28). The seed is the Word of God (Luke 8:11; Isaiah 61:11). Christ, the heavenly Flower came as the sower of Truth (*Christ’s Object Lessons*, p. 35–36, 71). The sower also represents God’s people who labour in Christ’s service; we’re His substitutes on earth. (*Christ’s Object Lessons*, p. 63)

As in the natural sowing of the seed, so it is in the spiritual sowing of the seed. The power to produce life is from God (*Education*, p. 105). God is this life, and there is life in the seed.

The work of God’s sower is a work of faith. The germination of growth of the seed is a mystery. The sower cannot understand it. The good seed may be unnoticed in the heart, however, it lies quietly there. But, after the Holy Spirit breathes on the soul it brings forth fruit.

We can see, thereby, that if we speak to the earth and

its seed, it will teach us, answer us.

QUESTIONS, QUESTIONS, QUESTIONS!

In our lifetime we don’t know which, or if we shall prosper in . . . this or that thing or effort. Or, which direction to take . . . here or there. Questions, questions, questions!! These questions, however, are not for us to settle. But, “in the morning sow thy seed, and in the evening withhold not thine hand.” Ecclesiastes 11:6

Furthermore, they that sow in tears shall reap in joy, singing (Psalms 126:5–6; *Education*, p. 105–106). These are lessons of life! “The wicked worketh a deceitful work: but to him that soweth righteousness shall be a sure reward.” Proverbs 11:18. But the cry reverberates throughout the world—“When, Lord? Where, Lord?” Ah! The harvest will come in due season. One may faint if he expects to see the harvest immediately. (Galatians 6:8–9)

You see, the germination of the seed represents the beginning of spiritual life. When did yours begin . . . or end? It also represents the development of the plant; this is the development of character! How is your character, its profile?

GROW OR DIE!

There can be no life without growth. The plant either grows or dies. We grow or die. Are you growing or dying? The plant, however, grows silently, but continuously without being perceived. So is the growth of character. Our life may be perfect as we grow, but if we don’t fulfill God’s purpose for us, we don’t advance. We are like a stagnant pool, a dead sea (*Education*, p. 105–106; Hosea 6:3; 14:5, 7; Malachi 4:2). When man exalts himself above the influence of the Holy Spirit, he reaps a harvest of iniquity, and sows disobedience.

He gradually ignores warnings and gradually loses his fear of God. He sows to the flesh and reaps corruption and has contempt for the commandments of God, and stands on the side of Satan, the sower of error (*Christ's Object Lessons*, p. 37,71). His heart of flesh becomes a heart of stone. He resists the truth with his heart of resistance. His resistance has produced its harvest. . . . the soul is destroyed!

MOCKERY—A SHAM!

It is because men sow seeds of evil, that wars, lawlessness, crime, violence and terror prevailed in the antediluvian world, and prevail in the world again today (*SDA Bible Commentary*, vol.6, p. 481). We read on from Galatians 6:7, "Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap." The word for "mockery" is "turning up one's nose."

Ah! But no man can successfully snub God or escape or evade His decree that, "whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap"—the unchangeable law of life, a rule of God, a principle of nature. He that soweth on the principle of blessings shall reap. (2 Corinthians 9:6; Proverbs 11:24; Luke 6:30)

Man cannot be entertaining any vain hope of enjoying its rewards while they live in the neglect of its duties. Many might make a show of the work of religion, though at the same time they make a show and profession of it; but He assures them that this, their way, is their folly, for, though hereby they may possibly impose upon others, yet they do but deceive themselves if they think to impose upon God, who is perfectly acquainted with their hearts as well as actions; and He cannot be deceived, so He will not be mocked, so He lays down as a rule again to ourselves, "That whatever a man soweth that shall he also reap." So will our account be in the great day!

LIFETIME OPPORTUNITIES

Moreover, Galatians 6:10 reveals further to us, "as we have therefore opportunity, let us do good unto all men, especially unto them who are of the household of faith." We have two groups here. . . . All men and them of the household of faith. The latter group, household of faith, is especially the obligation of the children of God to do good **towards** . . . especially to believers.

Spirituality, therefore, is shown by doing good! We read on with this scary statement; If one neglects to care for his own and fellow believers—the family of God, he is worse than an unbeliever. This failure to provide is a denial of faith (1 Timothy 5:8).

Ah! But therefore, to be right in this manner of opportunity, we must not, as too many do, neglect it in our lifetime, and defer it till we come to die, under a pretence of doing something of this nature then; for, as we cannot be sure that we shall then have an opportunity for it, so neither, if we should, have we any ground to expect that what we do will be so acceptable to God.

Much less that we can atone for our past neglects by leaving something behind us for the good of others when we can no longer keep it ourselves. But, we should take care to do good in our lifetime, yes, to make this the business of our lives!!

Be ready, also, to improve every opportunity for it; we should not content ourselves in having done some good already, but, whenever fresh occasions offer themselves, as far as our capacity reaches we should be ready to embrace them too, for we are directed to "give a portion to seven, and also to eight." Ecclesiastes 11:2. God always furnishes us with opportunities; the poor we have always with us (Mathew 26:11). None, however, who stand in need of us are to be wholly overlooked, yet there is a difference to be made between some and others.

PLOWERS, SOWERS, AND REAPERS

There is another consideration and message for us in Galatians 6:7; "whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap." These words our Lord spoke referred to Himself also, and are true of every seed that is sown. Unless a grain of wheat falls into the ground and dies, it remains alone; but if it dies it produces much grain. (John 12:24)

For all Christians, if their work is spiritual it must follow this law also, because it is the only way God's fruit can be brought forth.

Upon all of this, what needs to be done in our lives? Well, for one thing—to be endlessly patient! There is nothing more abusive or insulting than our dull, ignorant, gross, unfaithfulness to God! If He does not make us plowers, sowers, and reapers all at once we lose faith in Him! Isn't that so? Our patience—and faith—is exhausted! Many give up—apostate!

The ministry, often, and modern evangelism make the mistake of thinking that a worker or servant of God must plow the field, sow the seed, and reap the harvest in one hour! Our Lord, however, was never in a hurry with the disciples— and those of today. Jesus kept on sowing the seed and paid no attention to whether they understood Him or not. He spoke the Word of God, and

by His own life produced the right atmosphere for it to grow, and then left it done and good. Why? Because He knew very well that the seed had in it all the germinating power of God and would bring forth fruit after its kind when it was put in the right “soil.”

BESIDE ALL WATERS!

We are never the same after listening to the Truth. Ah! We may forget it for a term, but we will meet it again. Sow the Word of God, and no matter when, and whom-ever, and everyone who listens will get to God—sooner or later, but sometime. . . . will eventually believe it!!

Err, ahh, but if you sow promises, hopes, resolutions or opinions, emotions, feelings, attitudes, desires, or ambitions, you will reap nothing but disappointment, stress and exhaustion. . . . “ye shall sow your seed in vain, for your enemies shall eat it.” Leviticus 26:16. But, sow the Word of God, and as sure as God is God, and Christ is Christ, it will bring forth fruit. A person may not understand all that is said, but something is intuitively at work to still hold onto. See that you sow the real seed of the Word of God, “beside all waters.” (*Messages To Young People*, p. 217)

We learned, consequently, this day, the important message of sowing to the spirit; and that the new life in Christ is presented under the figure or picture of farming; and that it is easy for a believer to be deceived. The believer is not to forget that the unchangeable, unyielding law of sowing and reaping applies to him as either spiritual or carnal.

It applies also to the saved and unsaved; “do not err, my beloved brethren.” James 1:16. Every man’s work will be tested by fire (1 Corinthians 3:10–13). Remember too, we must be of one accord, one mind, one affection! If we look at exceptions we lose the blessings!

FATIGUE SYNDROME

The children of God, the spiritual believers are, therefore, not to become weary in the work of faith, in well doing. “And let us not be weary in well doing: for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not.” Galatians 6:9. (*Ministry of Healing*, p. 548; 1 Corinthians 15:58; 2 Thessalonians 3:13). They will reap at the time of harvest (James 5:7–8) if they don’t faint or despair, be unloosed or exhausted spiritually. (Hebrews 12:3, 5)

We are not to excuse ourselves from any part of our duty, so neither should we grow weary in it. There is in all of us too great a proneness to this; we are very apt

to flag and tire in duty, yes, to fall off from it, particularly that part of it to which the apostle has here a special regard— **that of doing good to others.**

He gives a very good reason for it, because “in due season we shall reap, if we faint not,” where He assures us that there is a reward in reserve for all who sincerely employ themselves in well doing; that this reward will certainly be bestowed on us in the proper season—if not in this world, yet undoubtedly in the next, but on the supposition that we faint not in the way of our duty.

But, if we grow weary of it and withdraw from it, we shall not only miss out of this reward, but lose the comfort and advantage of what we have already done. But, if we hold on and hold out in well-doing, though our reward may be delayed, yet it will surely come, and will be so great as to make us an abundant reward for all our pains and constancy.

Note this that: perseverance in well-doing is our wisdom and interest as well as our duty, for to this only is the recompense or reward promised.

THE SHEAVES OF LIFE

All of life is sowing time! But, now especially is your sowing time (*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 2, p.31, 330). Every day we are planting by thought, word, and deed for a future reaping. Although a period of waiting usually separates the reaping from the sowing, the harvest is sure. Some sheaves will be gathered before we die, and others will be reaped in eternity.

What do you do if you have neglected your sowing time? Eh? First, give yourself wholly and unreservedly to God. “Come unto Me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me. . . . for My yoke is easy, and My burden is light.” Matthew 11:28–30

If you have allowed God-given opportunities to pass, and are only self-pleasing, full of selfish pride, and self exalting, then empty yourself of these traits and impediments on your journey. Repent before it is too late. Redeem the time!

Demonstrate selflessness, by becoming lowly and obedient. Empty selfish pride, enter a submissive position, expand on a selfless perspective, emulating Jesus Christ as a pattern for living.

Use your talents in the Master’s service. Surrender entirely! You can’t afford to lose one day—one minute!

Put away your unbelief, doubts, envy, and evil thinking and go to work in humble faith, and with earnest prayers to the Lord to pardon you for your years of unconsecration and neglect.

Ask the Lord for help—seek Him. If you seek Him, you will find Him and He will strengthen and bless you. (*Counsels on Health*, p. 47)

A rich man who had grown old deeded all of his property to his only son and planned to live with him the rest of his life. But, after awhile the daughter-in-law got tired of having him around and told her husband that his father would have to leave. The son, unwilling to part with the vast wealth he had received, decided to put his father into the cheapest nursing home he could find.

About a week later, the two men walked slowly down the road to the place where the elderly gentleman was to live. Stopping to rest for a few moments, the father began to weep profusely.

The son's conscience started to bother him, so he made some weak excuses for what he was doing. Finally the rejected man controlled himself enough to say, "My dear son, I'm not crying because you're sending me to this old rundown, rat infested home for senior citizens. I'm crying because of my own sins!

"Forty years ago I walked down this same road with my

father and took him to this same place you're taking me. I am only reaping what I sowed."

Are you scattering deeds of kindness, or are you living solely for selfish ends? Examine your life in the light of God's Word and eternity. It will tell you what kind of a harvest to expect.

He who plants thorns must not expect to gather flowers.

Sow today what you want to reap tomorrow!

SOW WHAT!?!

Be careful what you sow!! A hearty AMEN!

John Theodorou



New Year's Resolutions In Toronto Church

RICHARD – To do more canvassing and Bible Studies

TINA – To make more time to read

TIFFANY – To submit an article and picture
for the Reformation Messenger

MIGUEL – To be baptized and never give up.

JOAQUIN – To study God's will and teach it to others

JERRY – To draw closer to God

CINDY – To read the Bible more

DAVID – To start my own business

RICARDO – To be a good Samaritan for El Salvador

INET – To be baptized

JIM – To serve the Lord as never before

JOVEL – To obey God more than before

TITO – To be a good boy

MARIA OLIVEIRA – To spend more time with
God and read more

FANNY – To read the Bible

PACITA – To read more

RANDY BARRACK – To stay alive and in good health

RUTH – To read the nine volumes of the Testimonies

RAFAEL – To be in the house of God and do His will

AMALIA – To die for Christ

TIMO – To do greater sacrifices for the Lord

CYRUS – To read the Bible more

ISAAC – To behave better

STEVEN – To do more missionary work

INEZ – To help my mother

MARIA – To overcome negative thoughts
and to bring my son to Christ

As we read the resolutions made by the Toronto church believers, I pray that we all would make similar resolutions for the year 2012, to draw closer to God and to be missionaries to the world.



Jesus' Continuing Love For Us Throughout all Eternity

As fallen human beings with limited knowledge, we can only marvel at what we know about our faith: the Creator, the most exalted Being in the universe, the One greater than the universe, the One who stood over it, became the

lowest of the low and suffered the pain of the death in order that no repentant sinner would have to face that eternal death themselves. The One who is equal with God, the One who is God, the One who is the highest and most exalted in all Creation, becomes at the cross the lowest, even “a curse for us” (Galatians 3:13) in order that we would never have to face that curse ourselves. The apostle Paul wrote about Jesus: “Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.” Philippians 2:6-8. The One who made everything “made Himself nothing” so that we could have the promise of eternal life.

Yet there’s incredibly more, a point that we don’t often dwell on but that makes Christ’s work for us even more amazing. Ellen White wrote, “By His life and His death, Christ has achieved even more than recovery from the ruin wrought through sin. It was Satan’s purpose to bring about an eternal separation between God and man; but in Christ we become more closely united to God than if we had never fallen. In taking our nature, the Saviour has bound Himself to humanity by a tie that is never to be broken. Through the eternal ages He is linked with us. . . . To assure us of His immutable counsel of peace, God gave His only-begotten Son to become one of the human family, forever to retain His human nature. . . . God has adopted human nature in the person of His Son, and has carried the same into the highest heaven. It is the ‘Son of man’ who shares the throne of the universe.” —*The Desire of Ages*, p. 25

Not only did the Lord take upon Himself humanity, but He will retain that humanity forever; humanity, in the

person of Christ, will share the throne of the universe for eternity. As if the life and death manifestations of Christ weren’t more than enough for our fallen minds to grasp, we now add this.

With something so incredible presented to us, the question is:

What does the Bible say about the humanity of Christ after the cross?

IN THE FIERY FURNACE

One of the most well-known stories in the Bible is that of the three Hebrews thrown into the fiery furnace for their refusal to break one of the Ten Commandments, and, in this case, the commandment against idolatry. Look at what happened: “Then these men [Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego] were bound in their coats, their hosen, and their hats, and their other garments, and were cast into the midst of the burning fiery furnace. . . . Then Nebuchadnezzar the king was astonished, and rose up in haste, and spake, and said unto his counsellors, Did not we cast three men bound into the midst of the fire? They answered and said unto the king, True, O king. He answered and said, Lo, I see four men loose, walking in the midst of the fire, and they have no hurt; and the form of the fourth is like the Son of God.” Daniel 3:21–25. In this story, centuries before the cross, Jesus is depicted as “the Son of God.”

A few chapters later, in Daniel 7, the prophet is presented with a vision of the great pre-Advent judgment, a judgment that takes place prior to the Second Coming of Christ, a judgment that seems to lead right to His coming itself. Notice: “I beheld till the thrones were cast down, and the Ancient of days did sit, whose garment was white as snow, and the hair of his head like the pure wool: his throne was like the fiery flame, and his wheels as burning fire. A fiery stream issued and came forth from before him: thousand thousands ministered unto him, and ten thousand times ten thousand stood before him: the judgment was set, and the books were opened. . . . I saw in the night visions, and, behold, one like the Son of man came with the clouds of heaven, and came to the Ancient of days, and they

brought Him near before Him. And there was given Him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all people, nations, and languages, should serve Him.” Daniel 7:9–14

Unlike the earlier manifestation of Christ, which was centuries before the cross, this event, which occurs long after the cross, depicts Jesus as “the Son of man,” a phrase commonly understood to emphasize the humanity of Jesus. Thus, Christ is depicted with an image that points out His human nature long after His death and resurrection.

IN THE CLOUDS OF HEAVEN

Numerous times while here in the flesh, Jesus referred to Himself as the “Son of man”—again a reference to His humanity and His ties to the human family. “When Jesus came into the coasts of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, saying, Whom do men say that I the Son of man am? Matthew 16:13. See also Matthew 17:12; Mark 14:41; Luke 9:58. All these pre-cross, pre-Resurrection references to Himself make sense when we consider how important and central Christ’s humanity is to the plan of salvation. He had to become human, He had to take upon Himself our humanity, in order to be our substitute and example.

Notice, however, the following few texts: “For as the lightning cometh out of the east, and shineth even unto the west; so shall also the coming of the Son of man be.” Matthew 24:27. “And then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven: and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory” (verse 30). “Ye shall see the Son of man sitting on the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of heaven.” Mark 14:62

All these are unmistakable references to the second coming of Jesus, and all of them include the phrase “the Son of man.” If, somehow, after the cross and resurrection, Christ had forfeited His humanity (since His work on earth was done), why use the phrase “Son of man”—a clear reference to His humanity—when talking about the Second Coming? These texts point to His human nature long after His earthly incarnation.

HANDS AND FEET

Then there are Christ’s appearances after His resurrection, in which the reality of His human body is emphasized. When first appearing to His disciples, who

thought He was some sort of apparition, Jesus said to them: “Why are ye troubled? and why do thoughts arise in your hearts? Behold My hands and My feet, that it is I myself: handle Me, and see; for a spirit hath not flesh and bones, as ye see Me have. And when He had thus spoken, He shewed them His hands and His feet. And while they yet believed not for joy, and wondered, He said unto them, Have ye here any meat? And they gave Him a piece of a broiled fish, and of an honeycomb. And He took it, and did eat before them.” Luke 24:38–43

Jesus’ hands and feet were obviously to show them His scars (see also John 20:26–28); the eating showed them the reality of His humanity, of His human flesh. Again, this is all after His death and resurrection. Though the emphasis here was that He truly was risen, He used the physical fact of His human body, His flesh, bones, and scars, along with the eating, to make His point.

STEPHEN’S TESTIMONY

Acts 7 tells of Stephen before the religious leaders of Israel, to whom he had been brought concerning his faith in Christ. Stephen then launches into a long speech about the history of the Hebrew nation, which he ends by condemning those who resist the Holy Spirit, an act that leads to his martyrdom. Before he is killed, the Bible gives the following account of what happened: “But he [Stephen], being full of the Holy Ghost, looked up stedfastly into heaven, and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing on the right hand of God, And said, Behold, I see the heavens opened, and the Son of man standing on the right hand of God.” Acts 7:55–56

Stephen clearly calls Jesus “the Son of man,” as he sees a vision of Him in heaven alongside the Father. Again, why not “the Son of God” as opposed to “the Son of Man,” which indisputably points to Christ’s humanity?

Taken together, these verses provide ample evidence of the humanity of Christ after His death and resurrection. Thus the humanity that He acquired in the act of becoming a human being, a “Son of man,” stayed with Him even after His work on earth was finished.

A HUMAN MEDIATOR

The book of Hebrews, with its emphasis on Christ as our High Priest in heaven, makes a powerful case for the continued humanity of Christ, even after He returned to heaven. In fact, these texts give the idea that His con-

tinued humanity is crucial to His work of mediation.

Notice: “Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, He also Himself likewise took part of the same; that through death He might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil; And deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage. For verily He took not on Him the nature of angels; but He took on Him the seed of Abraham. Wherefore in all things it behoved Him to be made like unto His brethren, that He might be a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people. For in that He Himself hath suffered being tempted, He is able to succour them that are tempted.” Hebrews 2:14–18

Not only did Jesus take upon Himself human nature, He needs that nature to be a “merciful and faithful High Priest” in heaven. The humanity of Christ is the bond through which He has linked Himself with us, a link that He kept long after His work on earth had finished, a link that is crucial to the work He is doing for us in heaven as our High Priest.

If all this isn’t clear enough, Paul makes the point unambiguously: “Who [God] will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth. For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus.” ¹ Timothy 2:4–5. The man Christ Jesus: Jesus, though still divine, still retains the humanity that He first took upon Himself when He was born into this world. The Greek word for “man” in that text, *anthropos*, is the common Greek word used for “humanity” in general. Thus, after the cross, even after the resurrection, Christ—who took upon Himself our humanity—has taken that humanity with Him into heaven, and in that humanity He ministers in our behalf.

IN THE HOUSE OF MY FRIENDS

One might argue that once Christ’s mediation was done, perhaps there would no longer be any need for Him to retain that humanity. Maybe so, except we have looked at numerous texts that point to His second coming (an act that follows the work of mediation), and in all those texts the humanity of Christ is emphasized. These prove that His human nature stayed with Him,

even when His mediation was finished. Unless something in the Bible teaches that after the Second Coming, Christ’s humanity were to disappear (and nothing in Scripture does), we have to believe that this humanity will never leave Him. In other words, the Bible gives us powerful reasons to believe that Christ is “forever to retain His human nature,” the nature that He took with Him to heaven after His work on earth was done.

Many scholars over the centuries have seen the words of Zechariah 13:6—“And one shall say unto him, What are these wounds in thine hands? Then he shall answer, Those with which I was wounded in the house of my friends”—in messianic terms. They apply it to Jesus and



the scars of His crucifixion. With that interpretation, these words of Ellen White become even more powerful. Writing about the end of sin and the final destruction of the lost and the beginning of a new heaven and a new earth, she wrote: “One reminder alone remains: Our Redeemer will ever bear the marks of His crucifixion. Upon His wounded head, upon His side, His

hands and feet, are the only traces of the cruel work that sin has wrought. . . . And the tokens of His humiliation are His highest honour; through the eternal ages the wounds of Calvary will show forth His praise and declare His power.” —*The Great Controversy*, p. 674

No question: grasping the incredible truth of the cross, of the Creator dying in our humanity for humanity’s sins, is hard enough. Add to that truth this other revelation: that Jesus not only has taken this acquired humanity with Him to heaven but will forever retain that humanity—then all we can do (as did Job when God revealed Himself to him) is abhor ourselves and “repent in dust and ashes” (Job 42:6). We thank God that there is a door to salvation and that if we are willing to make a complete commitment of our lives to Jesus Christ, He will give us the Holy Spirit so that we may receive a new heart, a new spirit, a new mind, and a new life.

So may our heavenly Father help us to have our Lord’s example before our eyes always and walk accordingly is my wish and prayer. AMEN!

*With brotherly love,
Brother Nicholas Anca*



CHILDREN'S CORNER



Always Be Honest

Some years ago a father who had lost his companion lived in the slums of one of our large cities. With him lived his little son, whom people nicknamed "Fred." Daily this man tried to do both a father's and a mother's duty in building into his boy's heart a faith in eternal things. They lived in very meager quarters, and there was not a square foot of grass on which, or a tree under which, the child could play.

Usually Fred had to stay home and amuse himself while his father was away working here and there at odd jobs. But one day his father took him along. As they were passing a pretty home with a spacious lawn where grew shrubs, trees, flowers, and green grass, the little boy tried to pull away from his father's hand. "What is wrong, son?" he asked.

"I want to go on that nice green grass and play until you come back, Father," he said.

"Those people will not let you play on that lawn, son. That is their yard. They keep it very nice, don't they?" he explained to the little boy.

Fred sighed, and as they walked on, he kept looking back. The man felt keenly the lack of the temporal blessings for which the boy longed.

Upon returning to their dingy, slum home, Fred asked, "Daddy, why can't we have some grass and flowers and trees where Johnny, Mac, and I sometimes play?"

Fred's father was a faithful reader of the Holy Scriptures. He sat down in his chair and told the lad about the beautiful things he would be able to enjoy in the better world to come if he would be a good boy. In describing that eternal home, he said, "Listen, sonny, when we get to that better land, we also will have a beautiful home. There we will have all kinds of lovely flowers, trees, and green grass for you to enjoy."

"Will the birds sit in our trees and sing for us, too? Will Jesus let me have a little doggie to play with?" he

asked. "And will there also be a nice Shetland pony for me?"

"Yes," came the assuring answer. "I am sure Jesus will give you all the lovely things you need to be completely happy. Perhaps He will even have a nice Shetland pony for you and a fine swing in one of the trees."

Fred never grew weary of hearing of this beautiful home. One night his father returned late. He had had a hard, long day. But little Fred crawled up into his daddy's lap as usual and pleaded, "Daddy, please tell me again about heaven. When can we go there? How much does it cost to go there? I will go and sell some papers so that we can get the money quickly. May I, Daddy?"

Thus came the questions, one after another. The father pressed his little boy to his heart as he began, "No, my son, you are too young to sell papers. You can help me later, but not now. If you will be a good boy and always be honest and do right, then you will someday be able to go to that beautiful home, and you will not have to pay your fare."

The boy listened very attentively, and all the while other questions arose in his anxious little heart. His father always stressed the thought that only right living would give him a home in heaven. The child was deeply impressed by what he heard.

One evening the father came home very, very tired. Not able to eat supper, he lay down on his hard bed and sighed.

"Don't you feel good, Daddy? I will rub your feet. I know they are tired," said Fred as he tried to rub his father's aching feet. Then he lay down beside him and soon was sound asleep.

But the man was ill. The next day he told Fred to call the neighbour. He was now almost too ill to speak. But when the neighbor arrived, the father said, "I am wor-

ried about my little boy. If something should happen to me, would you please take care of him? He is a good boy. He will help you when he has a few more months on him. Please, will you do that for me?" But the neighbor made no promise, for she too was poor.

The sick man's fever rose rapidly. He pressed his little boy to his heart, and admonished him once more, "Dear son, I may have to leave you, but God will always be near you. He will care for you if you will talk to Him often in prayer and always be honest. Never take anything that does not belong to you, son. Someday you and mother and I will meet in that beautiful home which I have told you about."

With these words he fell asleep. Before morning he became delirious, and four days later the world looked very dark to little Fred. The house seemed dreadfully empty; but it was home, and he hoped to continue there. However, this was not to be, for shortly after he had suffered his greatest loss, he was put on the street with his few belongings. Fred could think of only one thing, and that was to find a corner where he might sell newspapers. At last he located a small nook between two buildings. He packed his few things there, then went to look for a newsboy. Finally he spied one. He ran over and gathered from him some information regarding his future work. As soon as he could get some papers he, too, stood at the street corner calling out, "Newspaper! Buy a newspaper, please."

The days were long and lonely. He hardly sold enough to supply himself with food.

One day a little dog came sniffing along. He looked starved and homeless. Fred talked to him and even gave him some of the dry bread he had in his pocket. Soon the nervous creature sat down and leaned against his new friend's legs. This pleased the boy very much.

When evening came, Fred started for the little spot he now called home. The dog followed and crawled in with him. The two became fast friends. They slept together and were seen together day after day. Fred shared his meager meals with this his only friend, who helped to keep him warm at night.

One day, when Fred was standing at his usual place and

calling out his papers, a well-dressed lady dropped her purse as she stepped into her beautiful, shiny car and drove away. Fred picked it up and looked into it. There he saw many shiny dollars. Would he take some?

"Oh, no," he said to himself. "They are not mine. I will run after the car. Perhaps I can catch up with it at the stoplight at the end of the block."

Off he went, with his little dog right at his heels. He ran up to the car, waving the purse at the lady. "Oh, thank you!" she said, and tossed him a tip.

The lady was greatly pleased with the little newsboy's honesty. She felt that she ought to do something for him. After much meditation, she was impressed to adopt him if she could do so. She began procedures at once.

A number of weeks later, she drove up to the corner where stood the dirty, weary, freckle-faced newsboy. She called him to her car and asked to buy some papers. He had about a dozen under his arm. She bought them all. Fred was happily surprised.

"Come, get into my car. I want to give you a ride. You have no papers to sell now," the lady suggested.

Fred hesitated a bit as he looked at her beautiful clothes and lovely car. Then he said, "Thank you, Madam, but I am only a newsboy. I do not have nice clothes. Besides, I have a little partner. I call him Nip, and myself I call Tuck, because with us it is nip and tuck to make a living." He continued with a smile, "He goes with me where I go. He is the only friend I have."

"I am glad you have a friend. Let Nip come in too," she replied.

Fred and Nip entered and settled down as the lady drove off. Soon they were out of the busy business district and were winding around in an attractive residential section. Fred was wishing his father could be enjoying the ride with him, seeing the pretty houses and clean streets. Suddenly they were driving up a long hill. When they reached the top, they drove into a beautiful yard. As they neared the house he saw a swing in a tree, and beside the tree stood a Shetland pony.

The car stopped, and the lady opened the door. "Step out, son, and enjoy yourself! This is your home. That Shetland pony will be yours, and Nip may stay too," she said.

Fred looked around nervously and excitedly; then taking hold of the lady's hand and looking into her face, he



asked, "Is this heaven? If it is, please take me to my father."

Tears filled her eyes, as she answered the boy's question. "I will do my best to make this a little heaven for you until Jesus comes to take us all to His great heaven. I hope that when we shall enter into that beautiful place, you will see your father and mother again. Jesus will be there too. Won't that be wonderful?"

"But, but, my father told me that heaven was a beautiful place like this; and that, that. . . well, it is just like he told me. Please tell me, is this heaven?" he continued.

The kind woman took the lad into the house, washed him, and put new clothes on him. Then she said, "Fred, my boy, you do not have to go back to selling papers. I

am going to adopt you, and you will be my little boy."

"Oh! You talk just like my daddy did. How did you know that I prayed for a home? I was very lonesome after my father died," said Fred.

"Shall I tell you how I knew?" she asked.

Fred looked rather surprised while he listened to his new mother as she read, "The eyes of the Lord are upon the righteous, and his ears are open unto their cry." Psalm 34:15. "The righteous cry, and the Lord heareth, and delivereth them out of all their troubles." Psalm 34:17. Then she added, "God heard your cries; and because you were honest, I was impressed to bring you home and adopt you as my boy."

A Refuge in Times of Trouble

While most of the world was celebrating a pagan holiday on the 25th of December, the second annual winter conference was held in Toronto, Canada from December 23–25, 2011. The theme of the conference was "The LORD also will be a refuge for the oppressed, a refuge in times of trouble." Psalm 9:9

The aim of the conference was to provide a refuge for God's people from the pagan festivities that were taking place around them. The reality is that Jesus was not born on December 25. And using the guise of Christianity, Christmas is really a pagan holiday, beginning with the tree (Jeremiah 10:2–4). It seems that almost all races and religions are now celebrating this holiday.

Times of trouble will get worse on this earth and we need to find our refuge in Jesus. There will be more physical trouble (earthquakes, floods etc.) and spiritual trouble for God's people, and in these times of trouble the only refuge they will find will be in Jesus. We have many examples from the Bible of people who were faithful in troublous times, such as Job, David, and Moses. Their example is an encouragement for us not to give up when trouble surrounds us. In the case of Job, even his wife was discouraged and encouraged her husband to curse God and die, however, Job would not. "Though He slay me, yet will I trust in Him," was Job's response.

Paul said, "All things work together for good to them that love God." Romans 8:28. And "Our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory." 2 Corinthians 4:17. Today is the day of preparation. We are running

with the footmen today, but will someday need to contend with horses (Jeremiah 12:5), and if we do not learn to run well with the footmen, we will fail miserably when contending with horses. Let us make Jesus our refuge so we will not become weary because of the battle that is taking place. Satan is not happy to control only sinners. He wants to control all the religious people as well, therefore he creates counterfeits that closely resemble the real. There will always be a remnant who recognize the genuine. God's people have always been few.

The true Christian must learn to walk with God as did Enoch, never looking back. Our only hope is to pray without ceasing and we can have the privilege of God's continued presence.

In Ancient Israel, God instructed the nation to construct six cities of refuge. These cities were to have roads that were clearly marked, and in good repair. We need to find in Jesus our "city of refuge". The way to find Jesus is clearly marked out in the Bible. We need to not only know that a way exists, but we must travel on that way.

All the trouble on earth began from Lucifer when he was still in heaven. He created a rebellion and won supporters to his side, who were eventually expelled from heaven. Although we are buffeted, tempted, and troubled by the enemy, we can thank God for the great sacrifice He made for us so that we can find our way back to Him. Through Christ we can overcome. May God help us all to make Jesus our refuge in these troublous times in which we live. AMEN



A Refuge in Times of Trouble



Choir

**Wedding of
Olivette
(Hildon
Mbogla's
daughter) to
Ben**

School (Right)



Dar es Salaam, Tanzania



BELIEVERS IN SPAIN



ARUSHA, TANZANIA



Church Choir

**Emmanuel,
Bible worker
with (L to R)
James,
Tiffany and
John Bescec
and Leila
McTavish**



Children's Choir



Another Choir

“Behold the fowls of the air: for they sow not, neither do they reap, nor gather into barns; yet your heavenly Father feedeth them. Are ye not much better than they?” Matthew 6:26



“The Great Teacher is here leading out minds to understand the parental care and love which God has for His children. He directs them to observe the birds flitting from tree to tree, or skimming upon the bosom of the lake, without a flutter of distrust or fear. God's eye is upon these little creatures; He provides them food; He answers all their simple wants. . . . If God cares for and preserves the little birds, will He not have far greater love and care for the creatures formed in His image?” -*In Heavenly Places*, p. 114