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*Richard and Sharon singing at the
old peoples home in Vancouver*

Christ's Righteousness part 14

High Priest Joshua

From Zechariah chapter three we learn that the Lord defends the guilty. It is easy to be a defense lawyer for the innocent; but our defense lawyer, Jesus defends the one deserving the death sentence. He defends the guilty sinner who has nothing good to say of himself. In silence the high priest Joshua listened to the accusations of Satan. Satan was not lying. The accusations were true. Therefore, Joshua could not defend himself.

Satan is called "the accuser of our brethren". Rev. 12:10. First he tempts people to do sin, and then he turns to God and to His angels accusing them of their sins.

Although the high priest Joshua had been all his life in religion, with the highest possible education in the doctrines and commandments of God yet he was not sinless. Satan knew accurately the sins that Joshua had committed and made a claim that Joshua cannot take his place in heaven for that reason.

Then, a surprising thing happened. The Lord rebuked the accuser instead of the accused. The Lord defended Joshua, saying, "Is not this a brand plucked out of the fire"? This is not a picture of the judgment day but an event that took place during the high priest Joshua's lifetime.

"Now Joshua was clothed with filthy garments and stood before the angel." Zech 3:3. The filthy garments signify the defilement of sin, and self righteousness. "But we are all as an unclean thing, and all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags." Isa 64:6.

Righteousness means right doing, obedience to the law. But, what makes this righteousness to be like filthy rags? It is the motives behind the seemingly good deeds. The motives can be self glory, praise of men or to appease God in order to receive favours and eternal life.

A commandment was given, "Take away the filthy garments from him". This was an act of justification. His sins were forgiven. Now the angel who was Christ Himself said: "I will clothe thee with a change of raiment". Jesus offered His own righteousness to the high priest Joshua. This transaction took only a moment. It was not a character change, but the beginning of it. The Holy Spirit baptized him and the power to live a righteous life was given him.

Now the Lord said to him., "If thou wilt walk in My ways, and if thou wilt keep My charge, then thou shalt also judge My house, and shalt keep My courts, and I will give thee places to walk among these that stand by". Zech 3:7. This was not the end of His walk with God but the beginning. The promise to him to judge the Lord's house and to keep His courts depended on his faithfulness.

After we have been justified and granted the garment of Christ's righteousness, Satan will not give up on us but on the contrary, he will double his efforts to deceive, to tempt and to discourage us. Sister White tells of this ongoing struggle especially in these last days. "Zechariah's vision of Joshua applies with peculiar force to the experience of God's people in the closing scenes of the great day of atonement. The remnant church will then be brought into great trial and distress. Those who keep the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus will feel the ire of the dragon and his hosts. Satan numbers the world as his subjects; he has gained control even of many professing Christians. But here is a little company who are resisting his supremacy. If he could blot them from the earth, his triumph would be complete. As he influenced the heathen nations to destroy Israel, so in the near future he will stir up the wicked powers of earth to destroy the people of God...

"The tempter stands by to accuse them, as he stood by to resist Joshua. He points to their filthy garments, their defective characters. He presents their weakness and folly, their sins of ingratitude, their unlikeness to Christ, which has dishonoured their Redeemer... The assaults of Satan are strong, his delusions are subtle, but the Lord's eye is upon His people. Their affliction is great, the flames of the furnace seem to consume them, but Jesus will bring them as gold tried in the fire...

"As the people of God afflict their souls before Him, pleading for purity of heart, the command is given, 'Take away the filthy garments', and the encouraging words are spoken, 'Behold, I have caused thine iniquity to pass from thee, and I will clothe thee with change of raiment'. The spotless robe of Christ's righteousness is placed upon the tried, tempted, faithful children of God...

"And it shall come to pass, that he that is left in Zion, and he that remaineth in Jerusalem, shall be called holy, and everyone that is written among the living in Jerusalem'." PK 587-592.

There is a saying, "When the end is good, all is good". The end is not far and Satan knows it. We may be as a brand in the fire. While there is little solid wood we can be pulled out and saved. But if we let the fires of sin consume us then one day there is nothing to salvage. Our faith is gone and all is lost. Then Jesus cannot defend the guilty sinner anymore.

We can still today have the experience of Joshua, but it can be wrought about only by deep soul searching, self humiliation and fervent prayer and confession. AMEN.



*Yes, it does snow
sometimes in
Vancouver.
Here a brave
group of
courageous
canvassers
have just come
back from a
successful
outing.
They are (l to r)
Patrick Hemerka
Sharon Eaton
Xavior Chelliah
Eliseo Santos*

PRAYER FOR HEALING

"And I say unto you, Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you. For every one that asketh receiveth; and he that seeketh findeth; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened." Luke 11:9, 10

"The church may be composed of those who are poor and uneducated; but if they have learned of Christ the science of prayer, the church will have power to move the arm of Omnipotence." ST Sept. 11, 1893

"The children of God are not left alone and defenceless. Prayer moves the arm of Omnipotence. Prayer has "subdued kingdoms, wrought righteousness, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions, quenched violence of fire: -- we shall know what it means when we hear the reports of martyrs who died for their faith -- "turneth to flight the armies of the aliens." Hebrews 11:33 " COL p. 172

"He who marshals the stars in order in the heavens, whose word controls the waves of the great deep, the same infinite Creator will work in behalf of His people if they call upon Him in faith. He will restrain the forces of darkness until the warning is given to the world and all who heed it are prepared for the conflict." T5, p. 452

"Our heavenly Father waits to bestow upon us the fullness of His blessing. It is our privilege to drink largely at the fountain of boundless love. What a wonder it is that we pray so little! God is ready and willing to hear the sincere prayer of the humblest of His children, and yet there is much manifest reluctance on our part to make known our wants to God. What can the angels of heaven think of poor, helpless human beings, who are subject to temptation, when God's heart of infinite love yearns toward them, ready to give them more than they can ask or think, and yet they pray so little and have so little faith?" SC p. 95

I hope that you dear reader are not this soul mentioned in the paragraph above. There is so much power available to us in prayer if we would only use it in faith. The Lord is just waiting to bestow great blessings upon His followers; His church. All we have to do is ask in faith. Have you ever given deep thought to the phrase, "...move the arm of Omnipotence"? and all that it entails. What a privilege we have to have this available to us.

I recently read an article that caught my interest. It is entitled, *Does Prayer Heal?* (from the *Reader's Digest*, Canadian Edition, p. 27-32) It was written by a doctor. (Dr. Larry Dossey, M.D. - in the USA). Today he is editor of *Alternative Therapies in Health and Medicine*, and also co-chairman of the Office of Alternative Medicine, U.S. National Institute of Health. He wrote in the article about the time he was in doing his residency training at Parkland Memorial Hospital in Dallas. He had his first patient with terminal cancer in both lungs. This man was so ill that Dr. Dossey just informed him of the available therapies but also told the man what little it would do. The man decided to forgo the treatment. Whenever he stopped by the man's bedside to see him, he was surrounded by visitors from his church, singing and praying. Dr. Dossey just thought in his mind, "Good thing . . . because soon they'll be singing and praying at his funeral." A year later he was working elsewhere but he had a colleague still working at Parkland. This colleague asked him if he wanted to see his old patient. "See him?" He couldn't believe that the man was still alive. He studied the X rays and was stunned. "The man's lungs were completely clear. There was no sign of cancer." "His therapy has been remarkable," the radiologist said, looking over his shoulder. "Therapy,?" thought Dr. Dossey, "There wasn't any - unless you consider prayer." "

Dr. Dossey was not a Christian at this point. He had given up his childhood faith many years ago, as he says, "Now I believed in the power of modern medicine." He just put the incident out of his mind. Years passed and he became the chief of staff at a large hospital. He noticed that many of his patients used prayer, but he refused to trust in it. Then in the late '80s he came across actual studies done in laboratories that showed how prayer brought about significant changes in a variety of physical conditions.

"Perhaps the most convincing study, published in 1988, was done by cardiologist Dr. Randolph Byrd. A computer assigned 393 patients at the coronary-care unit of San Francisco General Hospital either to a group that was prayed for by prayer groups, or to a group that was not remembered in prayer. No one knew which group the patients were in. The prayer groups were simply given the patients' first names, along with brief descriptions of their medical problems. They were asked to pray each day until the patient was discharged from the hospital - but

were given no instructions on how to do it or what to say. When the study was completed ten months later, the prayed-for patients benefited in several significant areas:

- *They were five times *less* likely than the unremembered group to require antibiotics
- *They were 2 1/2 times less likely to suffer congestive heart failure.
- *They were less likely to suffer cardiac arrest.

If the medical technique being studied had been a new drug or surgical procedure instead of prayer, it would probably have been heralded as a breakthrough. Even hard-boiled sceptics like Dr. William Nolen, who had written a book questioning the validity of faith healing, acknowledged: "If this is a valid study, we doctors ought to be writing on our order sheets, 'Pray three times a day.' If it works, it works.... There are studies that suggest that prayer can have a beneficial effect on high blood pressure, wounds, headaches and anxiety."

He ends the article with mention of another patient who lay dying in his bed. The day before his death, his wife and children were by his bedside and, although he was not a religious man, he told them he had begun to pray. "What do you pray *for*?" Questioned, Dr. Dossey, who had stopped in on him. "It isn't 'for' anything," he said thoughtfully. "It simply reminds me that I am not alone." This man had the right idea. Perhaps he should have started sooner in life though. Isn't that what true prayer is? Companionship. Opening your heart as to a friend. Prayer should not be always asking '*for*' things. God is not just a storage room waiting to give us what we ask. We must become acquainted with Him as our best friend. (Above Quotes from *Reader's Digest*)

I found it interesting to see how medical science is finding out what we have known for has been possible since the foundation of the world. How many miracles of healing do we find in the Bible occurred because of prayer? All throughout the writings of E. White you also find many instances of healing because of prayer. Also in our day and age we have seen the miracles of God through prayer.

But we have further light on the subject of divine healing and answer to prayers. The men of the world are just learning the 'milk' while we have the 'meat' available to us.

"If, after so much light has been given, God's people will cherish wrong habits, indulging self and refusing to reform, they will suffer the sure consequence of transgression. If they are determined to gratify perverted appetite at any cost, God will not miraculously save them from the consequences of their indulgence.... Those who choose to be presumptuous, saying, "The Lord has healed me, and I need not restrict my diet; I can eat and drink as I please," will ere long need, in body and soul, the restoring power of God. Because the Lord has graciously healed you, you must not think you can link yourselves up with the self-indulgent practices of the world. Do as Christ commanded after His work of healing -- "go, and sin no more." John 8:11" T4, p.164

"In letters received from our brethren, the questions are asked, "Why do we expect so much effort in establishing sanitariums? Why do we not pray for the healing of the sick, instead of having sanitariums? There is more to these questions than is at first apparent. In the early history of our work, many were healed by prayer. And some, after they were healed, pursued the same course in the indulgence of appetite that they had followed in the past. They did not live and work in such a way as to avoid sickness. They did not show that they appreciated the Lord's goodness to them. Again and again they were brought to suffering through their own careless, thoughtless course of action. How could the Lord be glorified in bestowing on them the gift of health? When the light came that we should begin sanitarium work, the reasons were plainly given. There were many who needed to be educated in regard to healthful living. As the work developed, we were instructed that suitable places were to be provided, to which we could bring the sick and suffering who knew nothing of our people and scarcely anything of the Bible, and there teach them how to regain health by rational methods of treatment without having recourse to poisonous drugs, and at the same time surround them with uplifting spiritual influences...." CH, p. 469

"If we regard iniquity in our hearts, if we cling to any known sin, the Lord will not hear us; but the prayer of the penitent, contrite soul is always accepted." SC p. 95

Healing by prayer is usually a last resort. When a person has tried everything else, they turn to prayer. Even then, "...Those who seek healing by prayer should not neglect to make use of the remedial agencies within their reach. It is not a denial of faith to use such remedies as God has provided to alleviate pain and to aid nature in her work of restoration. It is not denial of faith to co-operate with God, and to place themselves in the condition most favourable to recovery. God has put it in our powers to obtain a knowledge of the laws of life. We should employ every facility for the restoration of health, taking every advantage possible, working in harmony with

natural laws. When we have prayed for the recovery of the sick, we can work with all the more energy, thanking God that we have the privilege of co-operating with Him, and asking His blessing on the means which He Himself has provided." MH, p. 231, 232 We need prayer and action together.

"There are cases where God works decidedly by His divine power in the restoration of health. But not all the sick are healed. Many are laid away to sleep in Jesus. John on the Isle of Patmos was bidden to write: "Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth: Yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labors; and their works do follow them." Revelation 14:13. From this we see that if persons are not raised to health, they should not on this account be judged as wanting in faith." Ibid p. 230

"In praying for the sick, we are to pray that, if it is God's will, they may be raised to health; but if not, that He will give them His grace to comfort, His presence to sustain them in their suffering." CH p. 376

"All that can be done in praying for the sick is to earnestly importune God in their behalf, and in perfect confidence rest the matter in His hands....It is better for us that God does not always answer our prayers just when we desire, and in just the manner we wish. He will do more and better for us than to accomplish all our wishes, for our wisdom is folly." T2, p. 148

So let us put more faith and trust in prayer and "Pray without ceasing." 1Thess.5:17. Especially as we near the close of this earth's history. There is a crisis before us - a time of trouble awaiting us greater than came upon God's people at any other time in history. We will have had to develop a strong prayer life before that time if we wish to be sustained by the grace of God. Prayer is free. That power of Omnipotence is available for the asking. Mighty miracles can be wrought through the prayer of faith and the greatest miracle is the change of a sinful polluted heart into a Christlike, loving heart of flesh. All things are possible to him who believes. ".The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much." James 5:17 How many blessings we have forfeited in the past through our neglect of prayer? Only we know. But we must leave the past and press forward, toward the goal that is set before us. We are earnestly waiting for the Latter Rain to be poured out on God's people and it will be poured out upon His waiting, *praying* people. But as we read earlier we must put our faith into action. We must co-operate with God after we pray. So it is my desire and prayer that we would all spend more time on our knees so that the Spirit of the Lord can be poured out on His church in a mighty manner, in preparation for the Latter Rain - so that soon we can go home with Jesus. AMEN

By Wendy Eaton

"For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of *his* good pleasure." Philippians 2:13 "Both to will and to do. The use of the word "both" shows that God provides the stimulus for our initial determination to accept salvation and our power to make the decision effective. This does not mean that we are completely passive entities, subject only to God's disposal, but that God provides the stimulus that awakens our desire to be saved, and He enables us to make the decision to attain salvation, and that He supplies us with the energy to make the decision effective so that salvation is accomplished in our lives. Redemption is thus figured as a cooperative work between God and man, and God furnishing all the needful powers for man's use." SDA Bible Commentary Volume 7, page 158

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NATURALLY WISE CREATURES

"All things bright and beautiful, All Creatures great and small, All things wise and wonderful, the Lord God made them all." Cecil F. Alexander

Today we are truly living in a very technologically advanced age. The scientists are daily discovering things to make our lives more comfortable, manageable and interesting. We can learn many new interesting from their discoveries.

We can learn many incredible things from the animal kingdom also. Oh, the animals are not discovering things, but they are teaching many lessons and showing incredible wisdom to mankind continually. "What is it they are teaching us?", you might ask. First of all, though man has his machines everywhere here in the developed west, if you go to countries like India, Burma, Sri Lanka and just about anywhere in the whole continent of Africa, you will see men and animals working together every day. Mankind not only benefits from the menial labor of these beasts of burden but can learn many lessons from the way that they respond to God's will in their own lives.

What are some of these creatures? "There be four things which are little upon the earth, but they are exceeding wise: The ants are a people not strong, yet they prepare their meat in the summer; The conies are but a feeble folk, yet make they their houses in the rocks; The locusts have no king, yet go they forth all of them by bands; The spider taketh hold with her hands, and is in kings' palaces." Proverbs 30:24-28 "But ask now the beasts, and they shall teach thee; and the fowls of the air, and they shall tell thee. Who knoweth not in all these that the hand of the LORD hath wrought this?" Job 12:7-9.

Certain animals have become mankind's non-speaking tutors and we can find great lessons in looking at them a little closer. Can we really benefit from considering the traits of certain animals? Well, Jesus Christ compared His followers to sheep, serpents, doves, and even locusts. What did He have in mind when He compared His followers to these creatures? Let us see.

Sheep are mentioned in the Bible over 200 times. The sheep is an example of meekness, patience, and submission. Did you know that there is nothing a sheep can do to cleanse itself? If they fall into briars, thorns or thistles, there is nothing it can do to get these things out of their beautiful, woolly coat. The shepherd has to come along and take pity on the poor sheep to pull them out and clean them. Likewise, we can not make ourselves better, or cleanse ourselves without the help of the Lord Jesus Christ, our loving Shepherd. In Isaiah 53, Jesus Himself was prophetically compared to a sheep. How fitting that He should compare His followers to the same animal. But which particular characteristic of sheep did Jesus have in mind? "My sheep hear My voice, and I know them and they follow Me", said Jesus in John 10:27.

Here He highlights the meekness of His disciples and their eagerness to follow Him. Literal sheep listen to their shepherd and willingly follow Him. The shepherd also has a very close attachment to the flock. A flock may be scattered across a meadow when grazing, but each sheep keeps in contact with the group as a whole. When the animals feel insecure or frightened, they will hurriedly gather together. If sheep run away to escape danger, they do so as a flock, stopping at times to reassess the situation. What can we learn from this behavior?

Yes, true Christians today are scattered among the denominations and sects of the Christian world today - but you and I have a great privilege of being a part of God's visible remnant church that are upholding all of God's commandments. Each true Christian feels a personal attachment to this flock of God, and this contributes to the real unity of our organization. Wherever a person needs help or Bible study, or perhaps is seriously ill, where does each worshipper seek guidance and protection? Of course, primarily to our brothers, sisters and leaders in God's church. Also, we have a great blessing to have such good literature coming out in the form of the *Sabbath Watchman*, the *Canadian Union Messenger*, etc. These things offer us spiritual security, a sense of wholeness and direction together in God's church, don't they? And as we see

false doctrine multiplying in the Christian world, we are to draw closer to our brothers and sisters in our most precious faith. We are to flee from those heresies, but continually reassess the situation as to how we can better present a united front to those who are trying to find their way out of the darkness of unbelief and apostasy. "Feed the flock of God which is among you, taking the oversight thereof, not by constraint, but willingly; not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind." 1 Peter 5:2

Coming to the way that Jesus used a serpent to illustrate wisdom: He said, "...Be ye therefore wise as serpents, but harmless as doves." Matt. 10:16 Jesus was giving instruction about preaching and teaching here. The disciples could always expect a mixed reception for their words. A few would show interest, but others would reject the good news of the kingdom. Some would even persecute these true servants of God. (Please read Matt. 10:17-23)

What about you and Me? When I was canvassing in the Vancouver area, so many times I was condemned and rejected by people. One day though, a lady cheered and encouraged me, she said she appreciated my work. That made my work more pleasant, but then on another day an Indian man tried to assault me after I knocked at his door. Even through these negative experiences, I know God is working and I must not get faint-hearted just because of a few difficult circumstances. In these very different situations, how necessary truly to be wise as a serpent, but harmless as a dove.

What can God's modern-day servants learn from Jesus words? "I send you forth as sheep in the midst of wolves: be ye therefore wise as serpents, and harmless as doves"

Today people react to the good news in much the same way that they did in the first century. When faced with persecution, true Christians need to combine the wisdom of the serpent with the purity of the dove. Christians never employ deceit or dishonesty but are uncorrupted, genuine and honest in declaring the three angels' messages to others. You may be on your job, in school or at home amongst members of your own family - and what would happen if you heard them make caustic remarks about your new beliefs in the Bible and Spirit of Prophecy? Sometimes they will condemn your new principles and doctrines, but it is exactly at that time that you must act wisely without getting into an argument.

Now on to the locusts. The largest locust horde ever recorded in history covered an area of about 200 square miles, which is about 5 times the size of Hong Kong. The locusts destroyed and made heavy damage on all of the vegetation in that whole area. "At the noise of the tumult the people fled; at the lifting up of thyself the nations were scattered. And your spoil shall be gathered like the gathering of the caterpillar; as the running to and fro of locusts shall he run upon them." Isaiah 33:4,5. "Blessed are ye that sow beside all waters, that send forth thither the feet of the ox and the ass." Isaiah 32:20 We are to sow beside all waters and go everywhere uplifting the truth just as locusts cover the whole area wherever they go. The little locust is 2 inches in length and it commonly travels between 60-120 miles per day. In the desert, locusts may even stretch this distance to 600 miles. It has wings that wave 18 times per second and for up to 17 hours a day. No other insect has the stamina of this little dynamo. What an immense task for such a tiny creature.

As a group of committed Christians who know and believe the three angels' messages, we must be first in stamina spiritually. Today God's church is preaching the present truth in over 100 countries. As a part of this great work, God's servants have to face many difficulties, sorrows and opposition. Yes, there are many prejudices, language barriers, legal restrictions, financial problems, and lack of workers to name a few. But nothing has managed to stop the steady advance of the truth, when God's workmen act according to principle.

Yes, Jesus likened His true followers to sheep, serpents, doves and locusts. This is truly fitting for our day today, isn't it? Why? Because the end of all things as we know in this world is at hand. "For the creature was made subject to vanity, not willingly, but by reason of him who hath subjected the same in hope, Because the creature itself also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God. For we know that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now. And not only they, but ourselves also, which have the firstfruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body." Romans 8:20-23. Even

the creatures are awaiting Christ's second coming. How much more should you and I be looking for and hastening that day by sharing this wondrous hope with our friends and loved ones?

True Christians stick very closely to the flock of God and meekly accept counsels and even reproof from their brothers and sisters. We must be on guard just like a very famous creature mentioned in 2 Sam. 17:8 "For, said Hushai, thou knowest thy father and his men, that they be mighty men, and they be chafed in their minds, as a bear fobbed of her whelps in the field:...". How protective is a mother bear? Very protective. So much so that they are about the most dangerous creatures in all of North America. We should be on our guard against any false teaching or circumstance that would lead us astray from God's holy will. We must go forward in doing God's will in the face of disappointments and obstacles. And then we can rise above circumstances to make them our servants rather than our masters.

Finally in Rev. 4:7 we read, "And the first beast was like a lion, and the second beast like a calf, and the third beast had a face as a man, and the fourth beast was like a flying eagle." What do you think the meaning of these 4 beasts are? Actually, there is much meaning here for us as Christians in the late 20th century. Here we see that God Himself even talks about living Creatures and has them in heaven. The Lion is the king of beasts. The banner of the tribe of Judah had a lion on it and this corresponds to the gospel of Matthew in the New Testament. The calf is the symbol of service and strength. The banner of Ephraim had a calf on it. This also corresponds to the Gospel of Mark, written for the Romans. The Man shows sensitivity, intelligence and feeling. Reuben's banner had the face of man. This corresponds to Luke, written for the Greeks. The Eagle shows sharp eyesight, the eye of God, protective care and the connection between heaven and earth. The banner of Dan had the face of an eagle on it and this corresponds to the gospel of John, written for all. (Matthew wrote about the King. Mark wrote about the kingdom. Luke, the doctor, wrote about the wisdom and tender love of God. 20 times in Luke, the phrase "the Son of man" is used. John wrote for all, covered generally, and connected all people with heaven.)

"Yea, the stork in the heaven knoweth her appointed times; and the turtle and the crane and the swallow observe the time of their coming; but my people know not the judgement of the LORD." Jer. 8:7. Doesn't this verse show so definitely that it is only man that has the problem doing God's will here on this planet in rebellion? In fact, it is only mankind that is rebellious, because all of the creatures which God has created follow His will by the instincts that the Lord has placed in them. The rest of this chapter in Jeremiah clearly shows the rebellion of Israel in comparison with the obedience and submission of God's creatures.

Let us continue to learn incredible wisdom and insight from these wise creatures like the sheep, serpent, the dove, locusts, the burly bear and even the living beings in God's throne.

Let us then bow before God's authority and be placed under it today. We then can aspire to the exercise of true authority in whatever responsibility life shall entrust to us. We have a mind, heart and will to be energized by God's Holy Spirit. We can rise far above the level of instinct or inclination, only as we choose God's way in our lives. May the Lord help us to do that daily, picking up our crosses and following Him.

By Xavior Chelliah

"Each one has a personal battle to fight. Each must win his own way through struggles and discouragements. Those who decline the struggle lose the strength and joy of victory. No one, not even God, can carry us to heaven unless we make the necessary effort on our part." Testimonies for the Church, Volume 5, page 345

Spiritual Lessons from Nature

by Reina Conde

Galatians 1:4,5

“Who gave himself for our sins, that he might deliver us from this present evil world, according to the will of God and our Father: To whom be glory for ever and ever, Amen.”

If I were asked to choose a bird to represent Jesus, I wouldn't choose the eagle or the dove, instead I'd choose the blue jay. My choice isn't based on its beautiful colour, nor on its ability to sing, even though these characteristics represent the Saviour very well. The reason for choosing the blue jay to represent the Creator is very simple: This bird demonstrates such devotion to his family and the neighbouring families even unto death.

One of the blue jay's prime enemies is the sparrow. These sparrows can make their nests anywhere, but it seems that they like to invade the blue jay's nest and throw him and his family out of their habitation. If there are eggs, the sparrows rip open the eggs with their beaks and if there are baby sparrows they peck them on the head and kill them.

The father blue jay doesn't stay still while the sparrows kill his babies. Without any fear he fights back. But, he is at a disadvantage because although sparrows are small they are stronger and they peck the blue jay to death.

Our Saviour chose to come to this world to save His children. He gave his life for us. But he triumphed over Satan and arose victorious from the tomb.

We can learn many spiritual lessons by watching the nature around us. If we watch the ants work, we can see that they are good workers and never give up. They'll keep on trying until they succeed.

In the Bible, there are also many spiritual lessons in the form of parables.

Matthew 24:33-35. When the branches of the fig tree are tender as you can see, and when leaves start to appear you also know that summer is near. So, when you see these things know also that the King of Kings is near at the doors, and pray for He is sure not to delay.

A sower went out to sow when the sun was sinking low. As he sowed, seeds fell by the wayside, some were thin others wide and they were soon devoured by birds. Some fell on stony places and they were scorched when the sun came up. Some fell among thorns and were choked up by them. But, others fell on good ground and yielded a crop: Some a hundred fold, some sixty fold and some thirty. He who has ears to hear, let him hear. Matthew 13:3-9, 18-23.

This parable reminds me of a saying that says, “You reap what you sow because what you plant is what you grow”. “Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth that shall he also reap”. The youth should go out and enjoy nature and have close communion with God. Walks should be taken “for without physical exercise no one can have a sound constitution and vigorous health”. Ministry of Healing.

GENTLE STRETCHING BEST FOR BACK PAIN

For several decades, long-term bed rest was the treatment of choice for people who suffered from back pain. Over the past few years, however, health-care professionals have come to realize that, for the most patients, bed rest can do more harm than good.

Gentle stretching, begun as soon as possible after a back injury, is a far better bet. A few weeks later, more strenuous physical activity should be added to the regime, but very gradually.

One of the reasons activity works better than bed rest has to do with the way injured tissue goes about repairing itself. If you remain still, the new tissue that forms at the site of your injury will be less flexible than tissue that's gently stretched during the healing process.

For instance, when you injure soft tissue—a disc, a muscle, a ligament—the human body's repair system gets right to work. Within minutes, a clot begins to form. Within 24-48 hours, scar-tissue cells begin to develop.

In order to understand the importance of gentle stretching, it helps to be able to visualize how scar-tissue cells form.

If you throw a hundred pieces of straw on the ground, one at a time, the pile that gathers will not be orderly. On the contrary, it will be higgledy-piggledy. That's, in fact, how a group of scar-tissue cells look. They don't look like normal cells organized in neat rows. (Think about how scarred skin looks compared with normal skin.)

The key to understanding what this means is to realize that normal tissue is flexible. "Elastic" is the word that health-care professionals like to use. Flexible tissue works well because it is strong and resistant to injury. Tight, inflexible tissue is much more susceptible to strain.

But can scar tissue become flexible?

Yes. As strange as it may seem, movement—gentle stretching to begin with—can actually stimulate disorganized scar-tissue cells to reorganize themselves into neat rows. But movement must begin as soon as possible, hopefully within a few days of the injury. Six months down the road is far too late.

So, imagine a man with a back injury who is told to stay in bed for a couple of months. By the time he gets out of bed and goes back to work, his injury will have healed. But the new tissue—that is, the scar tissue—will be tight rather than flexible. Even the slightest movement will cause him pain.

Now imagine that, instead of being told to stay in bed, the man is instructed to stretch his back gently after a couple of days.

To begin with, he can't move very well. But he keeps at it and eventually he discovers that he can do more without increasing his pain.

After a couple of weeks, he is delighted to find that his range of movement has increased. At this point, he starts to do more strenuous activity—very gradually.

All the while, of course, his movements have been stimulating the new cells to line up like little soldiers. As a result his scar tissue will function almost as well as it did before the injury.

When the man returns to work, normal movements won't cause him much discomfort. Even better, he will not have a high risk of injuring his back again.

NOTE: To relieve back pain, some have found that a good method is to apply a poultice of a mixture of honey and hot ground peppers to the sore spot and leave it on for 1 & 1/2 hours.



Baptism in Dominican Republic.

How to Spice up Your Heart

A spicy topic in nutritional research, the medically active chemical in cayenne, capsaicin, performs some marvelous cardiovascular feats.

Cuts cholesterol. Cayenne causes the body to dramatically increase its excretion of cholesterol.

Thins the blood. Cayenne, according to research in the American Journal of Clinical Nutrition, decreases blood levels of fibrin, which thickens the blood. Lowering fibrin in turn reduces the risk of blood clot formation.

Eases blood pressure. Lab experiments show that cayenne lowers hypertension. Researchers believe that much of the trick behind this bit of therapeutic magic is cayenne's ability to dilate blood vessels which helps to lower blood pressure. And the widened passageways allow more oxygen and nutrients to flood the most distant cells of your body.

Fights fatigue. Animals given cayenne a day before physical test, went on to perform at a higher level.



A group of singers at Vancouver old peoples home.

CHILDREN'S CORNER...

THE LITTLE GIRL AND THE BALLOON

By Claire Alagy, Greece

"And all things, what soever ye shall ask in prayer, believing, ye shall receive."

Matthew 21:22

About 70 years ago in Switzerland lived two little sisters. They had also elder brothers and sisters and baby brothers and sisters as well. Altogether they were eight children.

One day their mother took the youngest of the two to the city to buy her a new pair of shoes. In those days when buying a pair of shoes the lady in the shop gave away a lovely balloon to every child.

So this little girl happily returned home with her new shoes and of course the beautiful balloon. At that time, children didn't have so many toys as today so the balloon was quite a treat.

When Hulda saw the balloon she said to Alice, "Oh! Please let me play with it too."

"No it's mine," said Alice the younger one.

"Please," said Hulda, "I promise I'll take care of it."

"No," said Alice, "the lady at the shop said that I musn't let go of the string, that's why she tied it to my wrist."

"But," Hulda went on, "I'm older than you and I promise it will be safe."

Well, Alice played for some time in the courtyard but she grew tired and turned to her sister and said, "you can have the balloon for a while but hold tight to the string."

How happy Hulda was, she ran around with the balloon, her eyes never losing sight of it. Suddenly she was changing hands the string slipped through her fingers and up and away with the balloon. Oh!.....

The balloon went straight up and over the roof. Poor Hulda, she received a big lump in her throat and tears in her eyes. Oh dear, oh dear!... Then she remembered Jesus and she called to Him for help. "Dear Lord Jesus please bring back the balloon. It isn't mine, it belongs to my little sister Alice."

Now you can believe this or not but I now that this is a true story and I know sister Hulda who still lives in a small village in Switzerland.

Our dear Lord Jesus heard this little girl's prayer and He sent a strong gust of wind that brought back the balloon over the roof top, down into the courtyard, right into Hulda's hands!

"Thank you Jesus, thank you" Hulda cried, so happy and relieved to see the balloon again. From that day onwards she never doubted for one second that Jesus hears and answers our prayers.

This was Hulda's first experience with her Lord. She grew up believing that Jesus is a real Being up there in Heaven caring for His little ones on earth.

WHAT WE GIVE AWAY

THE MORE WE GIVE, THE MORE WE GET;
THE MORE WE LAUGH, THE LESS WE FRET;
THE MORE WE DO UNSELFISHLY,
THE MORE WE LIVE ABUNDANTLY;
THE MORE OF EVERYTHING WE SHARE,
THE MORE WE'LL ALWAYS HAVE TO SPARE;
THE MORE WE LOVE, THE MORE
WE'LL FIND THAT LIFE IS GOOD
AND FRIENDS ARE KIND;

FOR ONLY WHAT WE GIVE AWAY
ENRICHES US FROM DAY TO DAY.