



The Reformation **Messenger**

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“The church is as a garden in which is a variety of flowers, each with its own peculiarities. Though in many respects all may differ, yet each has a value of its own.” —*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 6, p. 333–334

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.

ABOUT THE COVER

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Volume 20, Number 5, May 2013

- 3 As Transparent as the Sunlight**
- 6 A Dangerous Time for God's People**
- 10 The Lighthouse of Prophecy**
- 12 Who is Hopeless?**
- 16 Am I Saved?**
- 17 Step Aside**
- 18 More than Socrates and Plato!**
- 22 Ours is Not to Reason Why**
- 24 Children's Corner: Living Water**
- 26 Asleep in Jesus: Mary Bescec**

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As Transparent as the Sunlight

“The high priest then asked Jesus of His disciples, and of His doctrine. Jesus answered him, I spake openly to the world; I ever taught in the synagogue, and in the temple, whither the Jews always resort; and in secret have I said nothing. Why askest thou Me? ask them which heard Me, what I have said unto them: behold, they know what I said. And when He had thus spoken, one of the officers which stood by struck Jesus with the palm of his hand, saying, Answerest Thou the high priest so? Jesus answered him, If I have spoken evil, bear witness of the evil: but if well, why smitest thou Me?” John 18:19–23

What does this mean to you—transparent as the sunlight? Well, that is how Jesus was, wasn't He? He didn't insist on His own way. He didn't manipulate or even clamor for His own rights. He just said, “everyone knows what I have said, I have said nothing in secret.” Furthermore, if He originated something that was true, He didn't insist that people recognize that He owned that truth, for truth we never really own, as humans, do we? But rather, truth has to own us. Jesus though, was so selfless, that He gave all honour and glory to God, as being the source of truth—this even though all the Bible mentions Jesus as the source of truth for humanity. And indeed, the Father Himself acknowledges Jesus as God, also, and the source of truth for human beings.

In Proverbs chapter 8, Jesus is wisdom personified, in Colossians chapter 1, He is the hope of glory within the believers, and in John chapter 1, He was the word made flesh and we beheld His glory. So, what does all this mean for you and I? How do we stand in relation to the truth? Jesus clearly stated that He had done nothing in secret—all His teachings and what He stood for was a matter of public record, so they didn't have to question Him about any of it. How we stand in relation to truth, well, that is how we will stand in eternity. People can say this in many ways—have

you noticed? How do you stand in relation to the cross of Christ? How do you feel about the atonement? Who is Jesus to you? We, as Christians, are more than anything to be purveyors, agents of truth.

In this same context, Jesus saying to Pilate, “Those that are of the truth, hear My voice.” Do you hear His voice this morning? Then you will follow that voice. What if someone says something different than what is truth? Then, appeal to the rightful authority, that one of God's voices here on Earth will end up saying the truth. For remember, please—how we stand in relation to the truth, is how we will stand in eternity. As transparent as the sunlight, remember?

“We must study the truth for ourselves. **No living man should be relied upon to think for us. No matter who it is, or in what position he may be placed, we are not to look upon any man as a perfect criterion for us.** We are to counsel together, and to be subject to one another; but at the same time we are to exercise the ability God has given us to learn what is truth. **Each one of us must look to God for divine enlightenment. We must individually develop a character that will stand the test in the day of God. We must not become set in our ideas, and think that no one should interfere with our opinions.** –*The Review and Herald*, June 18, 1889.” –*Counsels to Writers and Editors*, p. 45 (emphasis mine)

“**Everything that Christians do should be as transparent as the sunlight. Truth is of God; deception, in every one of its myriad forms, is of Satan.** . . . It is not a light or an easy thing to speak the exact truth. We cannot speak the truth unless we know the truth, and how often preconceived opinions, mental bias, imperfect knowledge, errors of judgment, prevent a right understanding of matters with which we have to do! We cannot speak the truth unless our minds are continually guided by Him who is truth.

“Through the apostle Paul, Christ bids us, ‘Let your speech be always with grace’ (Colossians 4:6). ‘Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth, but that which is good to the use of edifying, that it may minister grace unto the hearers’ (Ephesians 4:29). In the light of these Scriptures the words of Christ upon the mount are seen to condemn jesting, trifling, and unchaste conversation. They require that our words should be not only truthful, but pure.

“Those who have learned of Christ will ‘have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness (chap. 5:11). In speech, as in life, they will be simple, straightforward, and true; for they are preparing for the fellowship of those holy ones in whose mouth ‘was found no guile’ (Revelation 14:5). —Thoughts From the Mount of Blessing, p. 66–69.” —*Reflecting Christ*, p. 71

“The Word of God does not repress man’s activity, but guides it in pure, holy channels. All the vigor of mind and soul is needed in the work of God, but it must be sanctified by His grace. All the confederacy of Satan, with his masterly intelligence, and with all the skill of thousands of years of practice, is engaged in luring men, even professed Christians, to follow his maxims. He will insinuate his own reasoning into human minds, leading men to believe that the worldly maxims and policy are correct, that when the objects to be gained are worthy in themselves, it is admissible to employ pretense, hypocrisy, and deceit in securing them.” —*Manuscript Releases*, vol. 20, p. 384

“All their business transactions, whether with believers or unbelievers, should be as transparent as the sunlight. The fact that one is never detected in deception or fraud does not make him less guilty in the sight of God. That which God testifies of us when character is weighed in the golden scales of the sanctuary is to stand fast forever, unless the sad decision, ‘wanting’ is changed because of soul-repentance and transformation of character. Then pardon is written, and the promise is fulfilled, ‘a new heart will I give you.’” —*Manuscript Releases*, vol. 20, p. 384 (emphasis mine)

“The evil that led to Peter’s fall [in denying Christ at His trial] . . . is proving the ruin of thousands today. There is nothing so offensive to God or so dangerous to the human soul as pride and self-sufficiency. Of all sins it is the most hopeless, the most incurable.

“Peter’s fall was not instantaneous, but gradual. Self-confidence led him to the belief that he was saved, and step after step was taken in the downward path, until he could deny his Master. Never can we safely put confidence in self or feel, this side of heaven, that we are secure against temptation. Those who accept the Saviour, however sincere their conversion, should never be taught to say or to feel that they are saved. . . .

“This is misleading. Every one should be taught to cherish

hope and faith; but even when we give ourselves to Christ and know that He accepts us, we are not beyond the reach of temptation. God’s Word declares, ‘Many shall be purified, and made white, and tried’ (Daniel 12:10). Only he who endures the trial will receive the crown of life (James 1:12).” —*A New Life*, p. 40–41

“Those who accept Christ, and in their first confidence say, I am saved, are in danger of trusting to themselves. They lose sight of their own weakness and their constant need of divine strength. They are unprepared for Satan’s devices, and under temptation many, like Peter, fall into the very depths of sin. We are admonished, ‘Let him that thinketh he standeth, take heed lest he fall’ (1 Corinthians 10:12). Our only safety is in constant distrust of self, and dependence on Christ. —*A New Life*, p. 41

“And with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish; because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved. And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie: That they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness.” 2 Thessalonians 2:10–12. **The love of the truth=salvation. Living up to the light=christian maturity.**

“There are many who profess Christ, but who never become mature Christians. They admit that man is fallen, that his faculties are weakened, that he is unfitted for moral achievement, but they say that Christ has borne all the burden, all the suffering, all the self-denial, and they are willing to let Him bear it. They say that there is nothing for them to do but to believe; but Christ said, ‘If any man will come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me’ (Matthew 16:24). Jesus kept the commandments of God. . . .

“We are never to rest in a satisfied condition, and cease to make advancement, saying, ‘I am saved.’ When this idea is entertained, the motives for watchfulness, for prayer, for earnest endeavor to press onward to higher attainments, cease to exist. No sanctified tongue will be found uttering these words till Christ shall come, and we enter in through the gates into the city of God. Then, with the utmost propriety, we may give glory to God and to the Lamb for eternal deliverance. As long as man is full of weakness—for of himself he cannot save his soul—he should never dare to say, ‘I am saved.’

“It is not he that putteth on the armor that can boast of the victory; for he has the battle to fight and the victory to win. It is he that endureth unto the end that shall be saved.” —*A New Life*, p. 41–42

“Just here we might distinguish between genuine and false sanctification. Sanctification does not consist in merely professing and teaching the Word of God, but in living in conformity to His will. Those who claim to be sinless, and make

their boast of sanctification, are self-confident, and do not realize their peril. They anchor their souls upon the supposition that having once experienced the sanctifying power of God, they are in no danger of falling. While claiming to be rich and increased in goods, and in need of nothing, they know not that they are miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked.

“But those who are truly sanctified have a sense of their own weakness. Feeling their need, they will go for light and grace and strength to Jesus, in whom all fullness dwells, and who alone can supply their wants. Conscious of their own imperfections, they seek to become more like Christ, and to live in accordance with the principles of His holy law. This continual sense of inefficiency will lead to such entire dependence upon God that His Spirit will be exemplified in them. The treasures of heaven will be opened to supply the wants of every hungering, thirsting soul. All of this character have the assurance of one day beholding the glory of that kingdom which as yet the imagination can only faintly grasp.

“Those who have felt the sanctifying and transforming power of God must not fall into the dangerous error of thinking that they are sinless, that they have reached the highest state of perfection, and are beyond the reach of temptation. The standard the Christian is to keep before him is the purity and loveliness of Christ's character. Day by day he may be putting on new beauties, and reflecting to the world more and still more of the divine image.—*Bible Echo*, Feb. 21, 1898.” —*Ye Shall Receive Power*, p. 66 (emphasis mine)

“For there is no respect of persons with God. For as many as have sinned without law shall also perish without law: and as many as have sinned in the law shall be judged by the law; (For not the hearers of the law are just before God, but the doers of the law shall be justified. For when the Gentiles, which have not the law, do by nature the things contained in the law, these, having not the law, are a law unto themselves: Which shew the work of the law written in their hearts, their conscience also bearing witness, and their thoughts the mean while accusing or else excusing one another;). Romans 2:11–15. Do you notice here what the Apostle Paul is saying regarding salvation and what it is? It is letting God write the Ten commandments in our hearts and minds, for by it we will be judged. Also, we must live up to the light—for walking in the light is what salvation is.

“This then is the message which we have heard of him, and declare unto you, that God is light, and in him is no darkness at all. If we say that we have fellowship with him, and

walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth: But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin.” 1 John 1:5–7. Do you remember how Jesus answered the High Priest's questions about His disciples and His doctrine?

“Jesus answered him, I spake openly to the world; I ever taught in the synagogue, and in the temple, whither the Jews always resort; and in secret have I said nothing. Why askest thou Me? ask them which heard Me, what I have said unto them: behold, they know what I said.” John 18:20–21. Jesus was completely transparent—just as you and I are supposed to be. May the good Lord help us to be truly transparent, for only in this way can He be our righteousness. May we live up to the light by walking in the light, then we can become one with Him who is the Light of the world. Then, as we trust in Him, we won't be found saying, “I am saved,” but rather, “I am trusting Christ.” This means being completely transparent about our weakness, as we live up to every ray of light that the Lord has been pleased to place on our pathway. We will not ever say, or even



think, that we are perfect, for as soon as we say this, we show ourselves to have left Christ behind. “If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. If we say that we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us.” 1 John 1: 8–10

“God lives, and I am so glad of it. Our Saviour is not in Joseph's tomb. He has risen, and has proclaimed over the rent sepulchre, ‘I am the resurrection and the life.’ Let us show by our actions that we are living by faith in him. We can call upon him for assistance. He is at our right hand to help us. Each one of you may know for yourself that you have a living Saviour, that he is your helper and your God. You need not stand where you say, ‘I do not know whether I am saved.’ Do you believe in Christ as your personal Saviour? If you do, then rejoice. We do not rejoice half as much as we should. This entire congregation should be filled with rejoicing because of the way in which God has been revealing himself in this meeting. God's power has been seen, and his salvation is still to be revealed to his people. I see in Jesus a wonderful power and strength, and I want you to see this. Then your hearts will be as humble as the heart of a little child. Then you will not quarrel over who shall have the highest place or the highest wages. Your question will be, ‘How can I best serve my Lord?’” —*General Conference Bulletin*, April 10, 1901

Jerry Eaton



A Dangerous Time for God's People

If there ever was a time, in which one must ask the question; “what shall I do best in order to meet Jesus and be at peace with Him when He comes?” now is that time my dear brother, my dear sister. “The storm is coming, the storm that will try every man's faith, of what sort it is. Believers must now be firmly rooted in Christ or else they will be led astray by some phase of error. —*Evangelism*, p. 361

“The only defence against evil is the indwelling of Christ in the heart through faith in His righteousness. Unless we become vitally connected with God, we can never resist the unhallowed effects of self-love, self-indulgence, and temptation to sin. We may leave off many bad habits, for the time we may part company with Satan; but without a vital connection with God, through the surrender of ourselves to Him moment by moment, we shall be overcome. Without a personal acquaintance with Christ, and a continual communion, we are at the mercy of the enemy, and shall do his bidding in the end.” —*The Desire of Ages*, p. 324

“Christ and Him crucified should be the theme of contemplation, of conversation, and of our most joyful emotion.” —*Steps to Christ*, p. 103

Anyone of us who has accepted Jesus as his personal Saviour and by faith in Him, lives according to the Scriptures' teaching, should develop a character that represents Jesus. This is all about genuine Christianity. We should always remember our covenant with the Lord and if it has been broken, we should go back and re-make our covenant with a contrite heart and genuine confession; when we do that there is mercy and acceptance from God.

I have met people in my journey with the Lord, playing with their salvation. People who say in their heart “my Lord delays”—thinking they can do whatever they

want—even if they are so-called Christians. Let us consider some important things in this context. Think for a moment, what was your life like before you met Jesus, and what is your life after receiving Him? Is there any difference? Can we say that the Lord has been merciful unto us and forgave us all our sins? Do you really feel that? Do other people see the difference in your life before and after your conversion? Let us consider these questions and deal with them in this study.

Let us take for example the life of John, the disciple of Jesus. John and his brother James, another disciple of Jesus, were fishermen on the Sea of Galilee when Jesus called them to follow Him. They later became part of Christ's inner circle, along with the Apostle Peter. These three were privileged to be with Jesus at the raising of Jairus' daughter from the dead, at the transfiguration, and during Jesus' agony in Gethsemane. But what I want to mention in the life of John is not only his biography, but also how John was before his conversion, before his complete transformation by Jesus' love.

After Jesus called His disciples away from their jobs and professions and into a new way of life, for 3½ years, John and the other disciples lived their lives together. Jesus was teaching and training them to become apostles—the ones He would send after His resurrection to preach the Gospel of God's Kingdom to the world. On one occasion, when a Samaritan village rejected Jesus, James and John asked if they should call down fire from heaven to destroy the place. That earned them the nickname *Boanerges*, or “sons of thunder.” John's example should teach us a lesson. Before God called us, as Jesus mentioned in John 6:44, we walked “according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air (Satan), the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience.” Ephesians 2:2.

You see, my friend, John was not always the disciple of

love, patience and endurance. He wanted supremacy; he was proud and arrogant in many circumstances in his life; he was selfish, ambitious and greedy, and as we know, the Bible describes those defects and traits of character as being the results of sin, sinful flesh that we were born with. But he became a man thirsty after God's infinite love towards humanity. We meet a man that was absorbed by Jesus' kindness and mercy. We see in Jesus' disciple a desire for something better. Wasn't that your desire when you first came to Jesus? Don't you remember how hours of study seemed to be minutes? How you absorbed the words from the preacher's lips as coming from Jesus? Do you still have the same desire? Maybe 10, 15 or even 30 years have passed since that time, but the question still remains: what's your attitude now regarding your salvation? Do you and I still have the same desire to study God's word and apply it to our personal life in order to form our characters? My friend, let's see from John's life, the disciple whom Jesus loved, what the secret was that made him so successful in his spiritual life?

TAUGHT AND TRAINED BY JESUS

The Bible depicts the disciples as a close-knit group. John was especially close to Christ; in his own Gospel account he refers to himself repeatedly as the "disciple whom Jesus loved." John 21:7. Jesus' example of love for His disciples and all people would so affect His immediate followers that they eventually taught and practiced the same love. The godly love Jesus advocated eclipsed any human understanding of love. The Greek of the original New Testament refers to three categories of love: *eros* for sexual love; *phelos* for friendship or brotherly love; and *agape* for a godly, outgoing love for others, a love that sacrifices itself for others. This is the love (*agape*) that Jesus had for humanity while He was on the earth. Many people confuse that kind of love, as we see today in mass media. Families are broken just because there is a misunderstanding of what love means in the light of the Bible. John's early life perhaps prepared him for his later life's service to God and humanity. Little is written about the disciple's early years, except that he worked closely with his father (Matthew 4:21) and that his mother Sa-



lome, manifested an earnest desire for the welfare of her sons (Matthew 20:20).

OPPORTUNITIES TO SHARE GOD'S LOVE

Jesus gave John, along with James and Peter, special opportunities for involvement in certain activities and plans. The Gospel writers all mention John's presence in the accounts of Christ and His works. They followed the instructions given by their Master and they succeeded in their lives. We should contemplate the love of Jesus, His mission and His work in reference to us as individuals. We are to say, "Jesus so loved me that He gave His own life to save me. The Father loves me." "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life." John 3:16.

God's love manifests itself in right attitudes and actions. A person who expresses God's love is a person

who is becoming like God. As we read earlier, God has called us to follow Christ's example: "Beloved, let us love one another: for love is of God: and everyone that loveth is born of God, and knoweth God. He that loveth not knoweth not God; for God is love." 1 John 4:7-8. Who could write such beautiful promises if he had not experienced them in his personal life? The disciple John whom Jesus loved is an example of what Jesus can do through a person who really wants to be saved.

John shows us that God's love is directly tied to the gift of the Holy Spirit: "If we love one another, God dwelleth in us, and His love is perfected in us. Hereby know we that we dwell in Him, and He in us, because He hath given us of His Spirit." 1 John 4:12-13. John was passionately devoted to the proclamation of truth. No one in Scripture, except the Lord Jesus, had more to say about the concept of truth. His joy was in proclaiming the truth to others and then watching them walk in it. His strongest condemnation was for those who perverted the truth and led others astray, especially if they claimed to be believers (1 John 2:4).

So, should we be less interested in walking in the truth and seeing others walking with Jesus? I think not; first

of all because God called us to be His ambassadors to represent His kingdom. Secondly, we are debtors to the world for what God put in us through His Holy Spirit concerning salvation. Let us examine ourselves, brethren and ask, "Do we represent God's kingdom correctly? Do we really love people for whom Christ shed His blood on that cross at Calvary?" I said in the beginning that we live in a dangerous time, a time when prosperity in a worldly sense is called by many Christians, a blessing from the Lord; a time in which our young people are looking for pleasures instead of godliness, forgetting the importance of their preparation for heaven. My dear co-worker, what are you doing for them when you see this spiritual degradation? Are you and I crying to the Lord to open their eyes to see the danger in following practices that are not according to the Bible?

Ellen G. White wrote, "Christ's ministers are the spiritual guardians of the people entrusted to their care. Their work has been likened to that of watchmen. In ancient times, sentinels were often stationed on the walls of cities, where, from points of vantage, they could overlook important points to be guarded, and give warning of the approach of an enemy. Upon their faithfulness depended the safety of all within. At stated intervals they were required to call to one another, to make sure that all were awake, and that no harm had befallen any. The cry of good cheer or of warning was borne from one to another, each repeating the call till it echoed round the city. —*Gospel Workers*, p. 14

I remember 20 years ago while I was doing my military service in Romania, the country that I came from. It was obligatory at that time, not an option as it is today, to go into the military service. I was appointed to be a guard during all my term there of one year and sixteen days. I was standing watch at an ammunition warehouse. For three hours on duty, three hours doing house work and then three hours of sleep—the same thing continued all year. To be caught sleeping, according to the rules of the military service, was to be put in prison. It was a very difficult time for me because I was only 20 years old, without experience and many times even being afraid of being attacked by the enemy. I remember how drastically those soldiers were punished who were caught sleeping by the officer. We were sixteen men and I remember how many of them had been punished just because they were sleeping while on duty. I was not in the faith at that time; I did not have faith in Jesus or trust Him. I was in the world, as we usually say. I was ambitious, and I said to myself, "well," while laughing to my colleagues, telling them

that this won't happen to me. But one day, while I was on duty after one night of watching television and playing games instead of sleeping, I was caught by surprise to see the officer climbing up the ladder to the place where I was standing in the watchtower, and almost taking away my gun. Of course, I woke up immediately but too late. The officer reported me, and the time came for me to be chastened for one week, and in such a way that was sufficiently enough that the lesson was not to be forgotten and never repeated again.

God allowed this to happen to me in order to give me an idea of what it means to sleep only for a moment, or doing something else in our preparation time for eternity while we are on duty. Not a duty as I had in the military service, but a duty that is much more important, probably the most important in our lives, if you allow me to say. I believe it is our duty to warn people of the danger approaching them because, if they pay attention to it, they will save their lives.

Are we giving a clear sound? Are we watching over God's flock? Do we see any danger approaching? Listen to these Testimonies and the words from Ezekiel 33. This is for us, my dear co-worker, brother and sister. Let it day and night instil in you and me the solemnity of this calling. We are not doing a common job; we are not employed by a common man; we are not accountable before men; we are not to be afraid of what they will say when we bring the truth before them, but rather we should be aware and be ready to listen to God's voice instead of man's voice. Of course, I totally agree with the fact that we need collaboration and support; we need to respect each Minister and Bible Worker. I do not mean to disregard God's messengers but rather to pay attention to God's warnings through them. If you look carefully, the way God dealt with His people in the Bible and the way He turned the hearts of the wicked to Him, you will soon notice that God had a message for them through His prophets, servants that would rather die than to give a false message. False prophets do not discourage sinners from sinning, they give the assurance that the sinner is forgiven no matter what he does—only confess and that's it. Today many pulpits preach this message, a false justification. Let us take heed of what God's servant says to us today.

"To every minister the Lord declares: 'O son of man, I have set thee a watchman unto the house of Israel; therefore thou shalt hear the word at My mouth, and warn them from Me. When I say unto the wicked, O wicked man, thou shalt surely die; if thou dost not speak to warn the wicked from his way, that wicked

man shall die in his iniquity; but his blood will I require at thine hand. Nevertheless, if thou warn the wicked of his way to turn from it, . . . thou hast delivered thy soul.' [Ezekiel 33:7-9.]

"These words of the prophet declare the solemn responsibility resting upon those who are appointed as guardians of the church, stewards of the mysteries of God. They are to stand as watchmen on the walls of Zion, to sound the note of alarm at the approach of the enemy. If for any reason their spiritual senses become so benumbed that they are unable to discern danger, and through their failure to give warning the people perish, God will require at their hands the blood of those who are lost.

"It is the privilege of the watchmen on the walls of Zion to live so near to God, and to be so susceptible to the impressions of His Spirit, that He can work through them to tell sinners of their peril, and point them to the place of safety. Chosen of God, sealed with the blood of consecration, they are to rescue men and women from impending destruction. Faithfully are they to warn their fellow-men of the sure result of transgression, and faithfully are they to safeguard the interest of the church. At no time may they relax their vigilance. Theirs is a work requiring the exercise of every faculty of the being. In trumpet tones their voices are to be lifted, and never should they sound one wavering, uncertain note. Not for wages are they to labour, but because they cannot do otherwise, because they realize that there is a woe upon them if they fail to preach the gospel." – *Gospel Workers*, p. 14–15

We live in the last days, my friends. We are approaching the end of time with such a speed that even we do not realize it. We get tired while we are on duty, or maybe we tend to lower the standard God is requiring from each one of us as a member or gospel worker. Could this be the reason why people forsake the congregation so often? Could it be the reason our young people are looking for amusement and entertainment instead of preparing themselves to meet the Saviour, Jesus? Could it be the reason our churches are not



working in unity to accomplish God's purpose? I believe the answer is yes, my brother, my sister, my friend. I believe with all my heart that there is a way back to our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. Come with me to the place where you and I can have a new beginning; if that is what you desire, then you still have an open door. "Seek ye the LORD while He may be found, call ye upon Him while He is near: Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts: and let him return unto the LORD, and He will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for He will abundantly pardon." Isaiah 55:6–7

According to the Bible, we live in the time of the Laodicean church. We have the understanding that we live in the time of judgement, such an important time, we must be aware of the meaning of this time. Jesus has a description of this last church in Revelation 3:14–17. The condition of the church is that its members became lukewarm and they feel they have need of nothing. Although they think this, Jesus gives us a remedy in

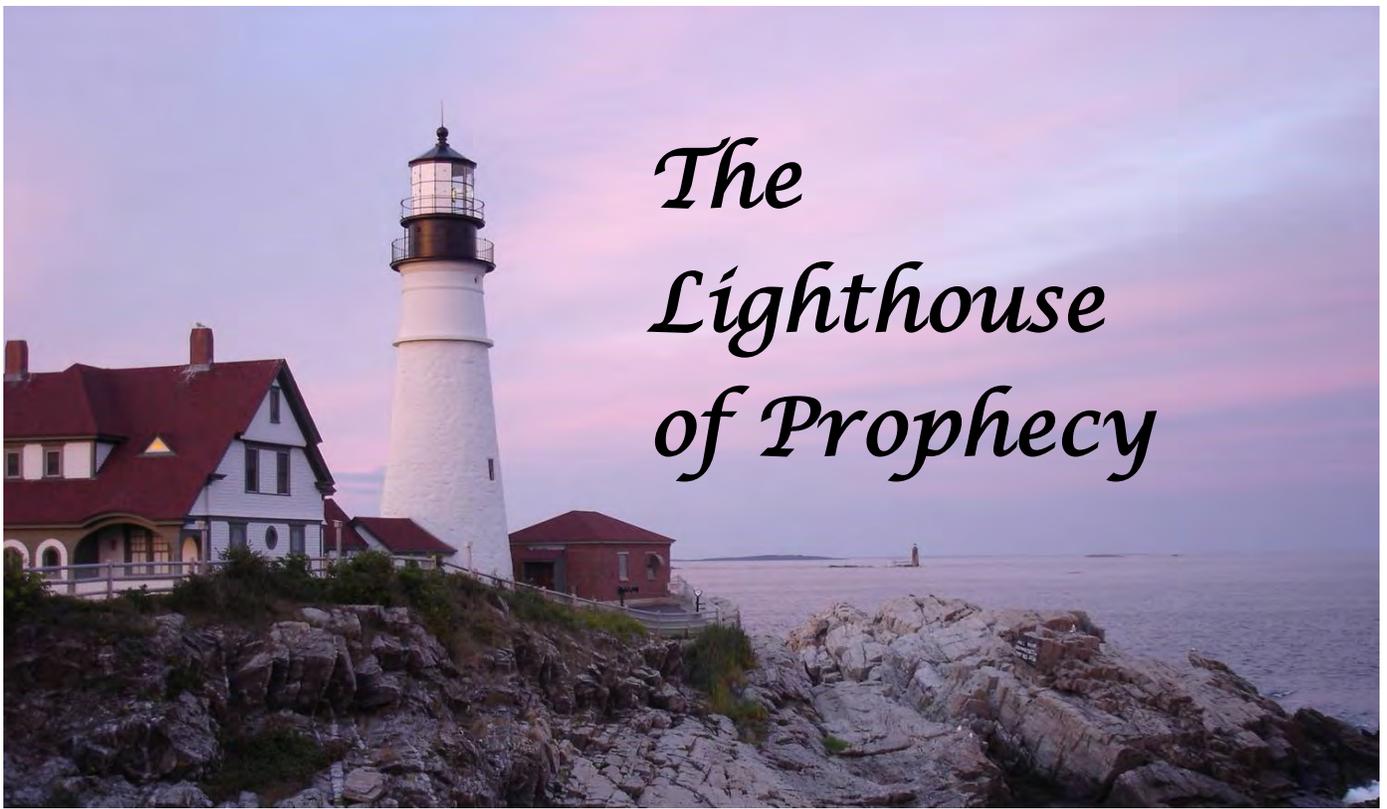
verses 18 and 19. The question is: will we recognize our spiritual condition, according to Jesus description, and receive His counsel in order to get rid of this situation? There is no other way, my friends, to come to God, except through repentance. David had a deep sense of this when he sinned against God; and from his life we learn something, namely that God rejoices when His children repent and come back to Him for healing.

Do you feel that the burdens are too heavy and that you cannot bear them anymore? Do you want power in your spiritual life? Remember, the Bible has the way and the answer to all your problems. Why not ask Jesus right now to forgive and heal your wounds produced by sin. He is there to listen to you.

May our heavenly Father richly bless us in our journey towards heaven. He will come; it is very soon, my friend. We are almost home, so do not lose hope. Amen

In Christ,

Nicholas Anca



The Lighthouse of Prophecy

"We have also a more sure word of prophecy; whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the day star arise in your hearts." 2 Peter 1:19

In the eventful and turbulent times in which we live, many thinking people are concerned about the present world condition and the secrets of the future. Those who see the world polarized between the forces of good and evil want to know what will happen next in the great battle between light and darkness. We thank God that He has not left mankind in ignorance about the course of the conflict and its outcome.

Like a great searchlight shining across the centuries, the sure word of prophecy focuses its beams upon our day. In this light we see clearly the trend of events and may understand what is coming next in the program of history-fulfilling prophecy.

The Bible speaks to us of events of the past that have a lesson for the present and for the future. Prophecy is God's challenge to the infidel. One of the distinguishing characteristics of divinity is the remarkable power to foretell and record the course of history many years before the events come to pass.

In olden times, God's challenge to false religious systems was this: "... Declare us things for to come. Show the things that are to come hereafter, that we may know that ye are gods. ..." Isaiah 41:22-23. There is no god or person that can accurately reveal the future except the living God in heaven, who is able to tell the

end from the beginning. "Remember the former things of old: for I am God, and there is none else; I am God, and there is none like Me, Declaring the end from the beginning, and from ancient times the things that are not yet done. . . ." Isaiah 46: 9-10. By unveiling future events, the Lord has borne witness of Himself through the ages that it might be known that He rules from above all the kingdoms of men. Men thus have the opportunity to recognize His divine purpose in their lives. Besides manifesting His omnipotence in unraveling the mysteries in world affairs, God desires to shed light on His plan for man's salvation.

The fulfillment of the word of prophecy in history is a fascinating story. It is seen in matters pertaining to individuals, as well as in the affairs of cities and the great world empires. Let us examine a few examples of Bible prophecies and their unerring fulfillment.

In the dream divinely given to *Joseph*, it was revealed that his brothers would one day come as suppliants before him. His father was not pleased with the dream and said, "Shall I and thy mother and thy brethren indeed come to bow down ourselves to thee to the earth?" Genesis 37:10. Twenty years later, his brothers presented themselves before Joseph, completely unaware of his identity, and "fell before him on the ground." Genesis 44:14

Turning our attention to *Tyre*, the greatest maritime city of antiquity, we learn that the Phoenicians traded in all the ports of the known world. All countries trad-

ed in its markets and contributed to its wealth and prosperity. Unfortunately, this majestic city was to come to a downfall. It was predicted by the prophet Ezekiel thus: "Therefore thus saith the Lord GOD; Behold, I am against thee, O Tyrus, and will cause many nations to come up against thee, as the sea causeth his waves to come up. And they shall destroy the walls of Tyrus, and break down her towers: I will also scrape her dust from her, and make her *like the top of a rock*. It shall be a place for the *spreading of nets* in the midst of the sea. . . ." Ezekiel 26:3–5 (emphasis mine)

This prophecy was literally fulfilled. Travelers bear witness that the site of the island city is a "rock whereon fishermen dry their nets." There is nothing to even suggest the departed glory of this once mighty metropolis.

The powerful, wealthy and apparently invincible *Babylon the Great* was doomed to be overthrown and to pass into oblivion. God foretold what nations would march against Babylon and destroy it (Jeremiah 51:11, 28). Fifty-seven years before Babylon fell, Jeremiah wrote two chapters of prophecy concerning its downfall. (Jeremiah 50–51.) In the prophecy recorded in Isaiah 45:1–3, it was foretold that Cyrus would be the man who would lead the armies against Babylon. One hundred and thirteen years before he was born, the Lord called him by name!

The downfall of Babylon was accomplished by a stratagem, when it could not be done by force. It was a unique method of attack—diverting the river Euphrates which ran through the city, thus making the natural channel of the river fordable. Cyrus then was able to pass into the city without the use of battering rams or other weapons to break the mighty walls. Fifty-seven years before, God's prophet stated that this would be the method of the enemy's attack on the city. It was predicted that Cyrus would make his attack on the night of a certain Babylonian festival when the whole city would be given up to drinking and reveling (Daniel 5). One hundred seventy-five years before this time, Isaiah had foretold that Babylon would be given up to debauchery (Isaiah 21:5). Jeremiah had pointed out how the city would come to its end during the celebration (Jeremiah 51:39, 57).

On the night of the feast day, Cyrus was able to go through the river gates, because the Babylonians left the lower gates open. One hundred seventy-five years before this, God had said that the gates would not be shut, and that this would contribute to success in the capture of Babylon. "Thus saith the Lord to His anoint-

ed, to Cyrus, whose right hand I have holden, to subdue nations before him; and I will loose the loins of kings, *to open before him the two leaved gates*; and the gates shall not be shut." Isaiah 45:1 (emphasis mine). One more point of interest is the prediction that Babylon would never be rebuilt or inhabited, nor would the Arabian pitch his tent there, but the wild beasts of the desert would be there. Up to this very day, the magnificent Babylonian city remains in ruins; scarcely enough is left to mark the spot where once stood the largest, richest, and proudest city of the ancient world. Thus the history of Babylon shows us how accurately God fulfills His word. It is a positive proof of the truthfulness and reliability of the Bible.

The fulfillment of prophecy was no mere coincidence or just guesswork on the part of the writers of the Holy Word. The prophets who bore messages from God to Tyre and Babylon spoke messages also for our day. The prophetic Word has much to say about events still in the future, the course of history in these last days. Rapidly the prophecies are being fulfilled, declaring the end of the world and the blessed hope of our Saviour's return to earth.

Let us give heed to what that Word speaks concerning our own time and thus be prepared for what is coming upon the earth.

Henry Dering

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What is HOPE? Hope is believing that something will come to pass. Sometimes our hope is solid; without a doubt. Other times our hope may be a bit anxious, when we hope that something will happen, but it is not guaranteed.

For many, salvation is this second type of hope mentioned. They hope for salvation, but do not feel it is guaranteed.

Although we do not say that we are saved, we can have hope in Christ. He has promised us salvation and shall we doubt His promise? The promise is, “the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.” Romans 6:23. Do you believe it? With such blessed assurances as these, why do we doubt God? Why bring dishonour upon His holy name?”

“Those who accept Christ, and in their first confidence say, I am saved, are in danger of trusting to themselves. They lose sight of their own weakness and their constant need of divine strength.” —*Christ’s Object Lessons*, p. 155. Yet we are assured of eternal life if we only trust in Christ.

“We have the assurance of a Saviour who has come, a Saviour who has been crucified, who has risen, and over the rent sepulcher of Joseph has proclaimed, ‘I am the resurrection and the life.’ . . . By the messengers of God are presented to us the righteousness of Christ, justification by faith, the exceeding great and precious promises of God’s word, free access to the Father by Christ, the comfort of the Spirit, the well-grounded assurance of eternal life in the kingdom of God.” —*Christ’s Object Lessons*, p. 317

Jesus has given us hope. We just need to trust in Him, “which is Christ in you, the hope of glory.” Colossians 1:27. “Now our Lord Jesus Christ Himself, and God, even our Father, which hath loved us, and hath given us everlasting consolation and good hope through grace.” 2 Thessalonians 2:16

GOD READS THE HEART

Since this wonderful hope has been given to us, we are so thankful that we hope others also will receive this salvation that has been so graciously promised to us. In our work for others, it is very easy to let the human element come in and make a judgement as to who will and who will not respond to the call of the Holy Spirit. Some look so outwardly promising, and yet in the end turn out to be base metal. Others seem so unpromising, but yet in the end turn their lives over to Christ.

“But the LORD said unto Samuel, Look not on his countenance, or on the height of his stature; because I have refused him: for the Lord seeth not as man seeth; for man looketh on the outward appearance, but the LORD looketh on the heart.” 1 Samuel 16:7

Who is hopeless? Only God can judge. Who has gone beyond the limit of God’s mercy? Only God can judge. Who has simply no interest in religion and appears, to human sight, that they will continue in that pathway until the end? Only God knows.

OUTWARDLY HOPELESS

In the Bible we can read of different ones who appeared so hopeless outwardly. Their lives were so full of evil that it seemed that there was no hope of them ever turning to the Lord. I will mention the case of two murderers:

The first one is King Manasseh. He was the son of good King Hezekiah, and you would think that he had a good spiritual upbringing; however, King Manasseh refused to follow in his father’s footsteps.

“**Manasseh** made Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem to err, and to do worse than the heathen.’ 2 Chronicles 33:9. The glorious light of former generations was followed by the darkness of superstition and error. Gross evils sprang up and flourished—tyranny, oppression, hatred of all that is good. Justice was perverted; violence prevailed. . . . ‘Manasseh shed innocent blood very much, till he had filled Jerusalem from one end to another.’ 2

Kings 21:16

“One of the first to fall was Isaiah, who for over half a century had stood before Judah as the appointed messenger of Jehovah. ‘Others had trial of cruel mockings and scourgings, yea, moreover of bonds and imprisonment: they were stoned, they were sawn asunder, were tempted, were slain with the sword: they wandered about in sheepskins and goatskins; being destitute, afflicted, tormented; (of whom the world was not worthy:) they wandered in deserts, and in mountains, and in dens and caves of the earth.’ Hebrews 11:36–38

“Some of those who suffered persecution during Manasseh’s reign were commissioned to bear special messages of reproof and of judgment. The king of Judah, the prophets declared, ‘hath done wickedly above all . . . which were before him.’ . . . 2 Kings 21:11. . . . Faithfully the prophets continued their warnings and their exhortations; fearlessly they spoke to Manasseh and to his people; but the messages were scorned; backsliding Judah would not heed.” –*Prophets and Kings*, pp. 381–382

Repentance: Who would have thought that this evil man would ever repent and turn to the Lord? Yet repent he did. “Train up a child in the way he should go: and when he is old, he will not depart from it.” Proverbs 22:6. This promise held true for King Manasseh. He remembered the God that his father worshipped when he was taken prisoner to Babylon and the Lord honoured his prayer of repentance and restored him once more to be King in Judah.



“The Lord permitted their king to be captured by a band of Assyrian soldiers, who ‘bound him with fetters, and carried him to Babylon,’ their temporary capital. This affliction brought the king to his senses; ‘he besought the Lord his God, and humbled himself greatly before the God of his fathers, and prayed unto Him: and He was entreated of him, and heard his supplication, and brought him again to Jerusalem into his kingdom. Then Manasseh knew that the Lord, He was God.’ 2 Chronicles 33:11–13” –*Prophets and Kings*, p. 381

The **Apostle Paul** was also a murderer that found salvation. None of the Christians in that day ever had any inclination that this man would one day be a champion in the cause of Christ. “Saul had an abundance of energy and zeal to work out an erroneous faith in persecuting the

saints of God, confining them in prisons, and putting them to death. His hand did not do the work of murder; but he had a voice in the decisions, and zealously sustained them. He prepared the way, and gave the believers of the Gospel into the hands that took their lives.” – *The Signs of the Times*, November 10, 1898

After his encounter with Jesus, Paul became a great missionary and ended his life as a martyr for the cause he once was destroying.

You can read of many other outwardly hopeless cases in the Bible such as the demoniacs of Gergesa. “The encounter with the demoniacs of Gergesa had a lesson for the disciples. It showed the depths of degradation to which Satan is seeking to drag the whole human race, and the mission of Christ to set men free from his power.” –*The Desire of Ages*, p. 341

If God can save these types of people can He not save you and I? Where do we fit in? “Wherefore He is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by Him, seeing He ever liveth to make intercession for them.” Hebrews 7:25

MOST PROMISING

Then there are those who appear most promising from outward appearance.

Who can He not save? Those that trust in themselves as did **the rich young ruler** who was confident that he had kept the commandments of God from his youth. “But he was not ready to accept the Saviour’s principle of self-sacrifice. He chose his riches before Jesus. He wanted eternal life, but would not receive into the soul that unselfish love which alone is life, and with a sorrowful heart he turned away from Christ.” –*Christ’s Object Lessons*, p. 393

Judas was so sure that he was greatly needed and of great benefit to the cause of God.

“When Jesus presented to the rich young ruler the condition of discipleship, Judas was displeased. He thought that a mistake had been made. If such men as this ruler could be connected with the believers, they would help sustain Christ’s cause. If Judas were only received as a counselor, he thought, he could suggest many plans for the advantage of the little church. His principles and methods would differ somewhat from Christ’s, but in these things he thought himself wiser than Christ.” –*The Desire of Ages*, p.719

Yet his life ended in suicide. He had no righteousness in himself to boast about. Many of the Scribes and Pharisees in Christ’s day were in this condition. **Is there dan-**

ger that we have become confident in our own good works? Remember, our righteousness is as filthy rags (Isaiah 64:6).

JUDGE NOT

Since we cannot read another person's heart therefore we are counselled to "Judge not, that ye be not judged. For with what judgment ye judge, ye shall be judged: and with what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you again." Matthew 7:1-2



Although we are not to judge "Christ has plainly taught that those who persist in open sin must be separated from the church, but He has not committed to us the work of **judging character and motive**. He knows our nature too well to entrust this work to us. Should we try to uproot from the church those whom we suppose to be spurious Christians, we should be sure to make mistakes. Often we regard as hopeless subjects the very ones whom Christ is drawing to Himself. Were we to deal with these souls according to our imperfect judgment, it would perhaps extinguish their last hope. Many who think themselves Christians will at last be found wanting. Many will be in heaven who their neighbours supposed would never enter there. Man judges from appearance, but God judges the heart. The tares and the wheat are to grow together until the harvest; and the harvest is the end of probationary time." –*Christ's Object Lessons*, p. 71

"The Master-worker is God, and not finite man; and yet He calls upon men to be the agents through whom He can impart light to those in darkness. God has jewels in all the churches, and it is not for us to make sweeping denunciation of the professed religious world, but in humility and love to present to all the truth as it is in Jesus. Let men see piety and devotion, let them behold Christ-likeness of character, and they will be drawn to the truth. He who loves God supremely and his neighbour as himself will be a light in the world. Those who have a knowledge of the truth are to communicate the same. They are to lift up Jesus, the world's Redeemer; they are to hold forth the word of life. . . .

"There are many who are treated as tares and hopeless subjects, whom Christ is drawing to Himself. Men judge from the outward appearance, and think they



discern the true measurement of a man's character; but they make many blunders in their judgments. They put a high estimate upon a man whose appearance is as an angel of light, when in thought and heart he is corrupt and unworthy. On another whose appearance is not so favourable, they pass criticism, make him an offender for a word, and would separate him from the church because of his supposed defective character, when it may be that He who reads the heart, sees true moral worth in the man. Human judgment does not decide any case; for the Lord's thoughts are not our thoughts, neither are His ways our ways. He whom we would separate from the church as altogether unworthy, is the object of the Lord's solicitude and love. All heaven is engaged in doing the appointed work of drawing souls to God. . . .

"Then since the Lord is working through His own divine agency upon the hearts of those whom we would term hopeless subjects, let not man be officious, let him stand out of the way of God's work; for His word that goeth forth from His mouth, will accomplish its appointed work, and prosper in the thing whereunto it is sent. Let not man set himself up as judge of his brethren; for God 'hath appointed a day in the which He will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom He hath ordained; whereof He hath given assurance unto all men, in that He hath raised Him from the dead.'" – *The Review and Herald*, January 17, 1893

"Every soul is the object of the loving interest of Him who gave His life that He might bring men back to God. This earnest, persevering interest expressed by our heavenly Father teaches us that the helpless and outcast are not to be passed by indifferently. They are the Lord's by Creation and by redemption. If we were left to ourselves to judge, we would regard many who are degraded as hopeless. But the Lord sees the value of the silver in them. Though they do not look for help, He regards them as precious. The One who sees beneath the surface knows how to deal with human minds. He knows how to bring men to repentance. He knows that if they see themselves as sinners, they will repent and be converted to the truth. This is the work we are to engage in. It lies before us in this locality, and in every place around us." – *Manuscript Releases*, vol. 11, p. 369

DRY BONES

"The hand of the LORD was upon me, and carried me out in the spirit of the LORD, and set me down in the midst of the valley which was full of bones, And caused me to pass by them round about: and, behold, there were very many in the open valley; and, lo, they were very dry. And he said unto me, Son of

man, can these bones live? And I answered, O Lord GOD, thou knowest. Again he said unto me, Prophecy upon these bones, and say unto them, O ye dry bones, hear the word of the LORD. Thus saith the Lord GOD unto these bones; Behold, I will cause breath to enter into you, and ye shall live: And I will lay sinews upon you, and will bring up flesh upon you, and cover you with skin, and put breath in you, and ye shall live; and ye shall know that I am the LORD. So I prophesied as I was commanded: and as I prophesied, there was a noise, and behold a shaking, and the bones came together, bone to his bone. And when I beheld, lo, the sinews and the flesh came up upon them, and the skin covered them above: but there was no breath in them. Then said he unto me, Prophecy unto the wind, prophesy, son of man, and say to the wind, Thus saith the Lord GOD; Come from the four winds, O breath, and breathe upon these slain, that they may live. So I prophesied as he commanded me, and the breath came into them, and they lived, and stood up upon their feet, an exceeding great army. Then he said unto me, Son of man, these bones are the whole house of Israel: behold, they say, Our bones are dried, and our hope is lost: we are cut off for our parts. Therefore prophesy and say unto them, Thus saith the Lord GOD; Behold, O my people, I will open your graves, and cause you to come up out of your graves, and bring you into the land of Israel. And ye shall know that I am the LORD, when I have opened your graves, O my people, and brought you up out of your graves, And shall put my spirit in you, and ye shall live, and I shall place you in your own land: then shall ye know that I the LORD have spoken it, and performed it, saith the LORD.” Ezekiel 37:1–14

Is this vision about evil men or Christians? “The souls of those whom we desire to save are like the representation which Ezekiel saw in vision,—a valley of dry bones. They are dead in trespasses and sins, but God would have us deal with them as though they were living. . . . We are in no wise to be deterred from fulfilling our commission by the listlessness, the dullness, the lack of spiritual perception, in those upon whom the word of God is brought to bear. We are to preach the word of life to those whom we may judge to be as hopeless subjects as though they were in their graves. Though they may seem unwilling to hear or to receive the light of truth, without questioning or wavering we are to do our part. We are to repeat to them the message. ‘Awake, thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light.’” —*The Review and Herald*, January 17, 1893

The Bible itself tells us that “These bones are the whole house of Israel” (v. 11) (God’s church). “But not only does this simile of the dry bones apply to the world, but also to those who have been blessed with great light; for they

also are like the skeletons of the valley. They have the form of men, the framework of the body; but they have not spiritual life. But the parable does not leave the dry bones merely knit together into the forms of men; for it is not enough that there is symmetry of limb and feature. The breath of life must vivify the bodies, that they may stand upright, and spring into activity. **These bones represent the house of Israel, the church of God, and the hope of the church is the vivifying influence of the Holy Spirit.** The Lord must breathe upon the dry bones, that they may live.” — *The Review and Herald*, January 17, 1893 (emphasis mine)

Yet those bones came back to life. “And ye shall know that I am the LORD, when I have opened your graves, O my people, and brought you up out of your graves.” Ezekiel 37:13

NEAREST TO CHRIST

Who will be nearest to Christ when we all get to heaven? Those that have lived closest to Him their entire lives on this earth? Does “time in service” bring “higher rank” in heaven? “Wherefore I say unto thee, Her sins, which are many, are forgiven; for she loved much: but to whom little is forgiven, the same loveth little.” Luke 7:47

“Nearest the throne are those who were once zealous in the cause of Satan, but who, plucked as brands from the burning, have followed their Saviour with deep, intense devotion. Next are those who perfected Christian characters in the midst of falsehood and infidelity, those who honoured the law of God when the Christian world declared it void, and the millions, of all ages, who were martyred for their faith. And beyond is the ‘great multitude, which no man could number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues, . . . before the throne, and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands.’ Revelation 7:9. Their warfare is ended, their victory won. They have run the race and reached the prize. The palm branch in their hands is a symbol of their triumph, the white robe an emblem of the spotless righteousness of Christ which now is theirs” —*The Great Controversy*, p. 665

May God help us to be instruments of righteousness to help very person that may cross our paths and not to bypass those that may appear hopeless to us as did the priest and Levite in the parable of the Good Samaritan. To receive salvation in the end is to be like Christ and Christ came to seek and save **all** that are lost. Amen

Wendy Eaton



This is a question that many professed Christians are asking. Their happiness and their peace of mind depend on the correct answer to this question. It is like a man who buys a lottery ticket, hoping to win a million dollars. He cannot start planning how to spend this money until he is sure that



Am
I
Saved?

he has won the prize. There is also a false security. Many believe that there is a God in heaven, they believe that the Bible is His word, they also believe that Jesus died for their sins and they leave it at this, without further investigation, but what they are lacking is the peace in their hearts and the joy of heaven.

The happiest person is he who knows that he is saved, that his sins are forgiven. The most miserable and unhappy person is a lukewarm professor of religion. He does not enjoy the peace of heaven, nor the joy that comes from God, neither the pleasure that the world is offering. Satan is the most unhappy being in the world. He cannot give true happiness to his followers, because he does not have it.

David writes, "Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered. Blessed is the man unto whom the LORD imputeth not iniquity, and in whose spirit there is no guile." Psalm 32:1-2

This blessing gives us happiness and joy, also a perfect peace, something that the world can never give us.

When we confess our sins to God, what will He do for us at that same time? "If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." 1 John 1:9

At that time we are justified and there is nothing in the books of heaven against us. Now sanctification begins in us. You know that your sins are forgiven because you have received power from God not to sin anymore. Now you know that you are saved; but if you, for some reason, fall back into sin, then you are not saved any more.

Then you need to go back to repenting your sin and

confessing it and making a promise to God that you will not sin anymore; then you are saved again. If you would die at that moment you would be saved to eternal life. Satan will double his temptations to everyone who is in a saved condition, and receiving sanctification. In this condition we are to rejoice and be in per-

fect peace.

Sister White writes to us, "You need not stand where you say, 'I do not know whether I am saved.' Do you believe in Christ as your personal Saviour? If you do, then rejoice. We do not rejoice half as much as we should." —*General Conference Bulletin*, April 10, 1901

The Apostle Paul was sure of his salvation. He said, "I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith: Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love His appearing." 2 Timothy 4:7-8

The only happy life is when we know that our sins are forgiven and we have a crown of life waiting for us in heaven.

The Apostle Paul tells us, "Rejoice evermore." 1 Thessalonians 5:16. Not only sometimes, but always. "Rejoice in the Lord alway: and again I say, Rejoice." Philippians 4:4

Jesus said, "Blessed are ye, when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for My sake. Rejoice, and be exceeding glad: for great is your reward in heaven: for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you." Matthew 5:11-12

Even if we must go through fiery trials, we are still to rejoice. To be saved and have an expectation of eternal life are treasures more precious and valuable than if we gained the whole world and lose our heavenly treasure. Jesus said, "For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? or what shall a

man give in exchange for his soul?" Matthew 16:26

While we are forgiven all our sins and we are justified we still need to go through fiery trials and tribulations.

These trials have a purpose. God does not make us suffer trials for no reason. "And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to His purpose." Romans 8:28

When we go through trials and tribulations, we know that God loves us and is preparing us for heaven and for eternal life. It is a lack of faith, if after confessing our sins, we still are not sure if we are forgiven and justified.

Sanctification is a process that begins after we are saved from our sins and are born again, and this process requires fiery trials.

When you are saved you have the Holy Spirit within you (1 Corinthians 6:19). You feel His presence. He comforts you and makes you feel happy in all circumstances. He tells you what to speak, what to write, and even what to think. A saved person never feels lonely, or depressed, even if he is in prison for his faith or if he is sentenced to death; he feels it an honour to him.

We cannot claim that our salvation is for eternity, be-

cause we can lose it through Satan's temptations. We read of King Saul, "And the spirit of the Lord will come upon thee, and thou shalt prophesy with them, and shalt be turned into another man." 1 Samuel 10:6. But later we find that the Spirit of God left him and Satan took control of him.

Adam and Eve were living in a perfect, happy condition, but they lost it through Satan's temptation. And Satan has become very skilful in his work of deceiving souls from salvation to perdition in the past 6,000 years. We all will face Satan's temptations, but we read, "Blessed is the man that endureth temptation: for when he is tried, he shall receive the crown of life, which the Lord hath promised to them that love Him." James 1:12

Jesus said, "He that shall endure unto the end, the same shall be saved." Matthew 24:13

If we endure all the trials, and temptations, we will not lose our salvation, but it will lead us into eternal life. Salvation is progressive, first we are saved from sin, and then we are sanctified, that is being made holy, and finally we are saved from death into life. May the Lord help us all in this sanctification process to remain firm and to endure to the end. Amen.

Timo Martin

Step Aside

Step, step aside thou that hampers the soil, please, allow me, I say again, step aside.

And who is this that speaketh so strong, that seeks to remove me from my home

Dare you speak to me who have occupied and have been crowned king of this domain? Why I am verily the sole ruler in this place

So you have seen it fit to crown yourself the king, when it is I who gives to this land his constant daily needs,

Who sends him all that brings in fruits, though he knows not from whence it came?

Tell me, why take this ground captive and restrain him in your domain. A domain that within is drought and death

I will free him; yea I will free him and see what springs forth. A river, waiting to water the things that are

parched and dry

I will send rain out of which boundless springs will flow; I will open gushing streams as touching all that begs to be renewed

I am waiting to refresh, waiting to enrich life and then all that lets go will be as to the rising of the sap when it is spring

So Flesh step aside, step aside so that the Spirit within this land of the soul can take full control.

By Rose Powell

More Than Socrates And Plato!

"Again, the kingdom of heaven is like unto a merchant man, seeking goodly [fine] pearls: Who, when he had found one pearl of great price, went and sold all that he had, and bought it." Matthew 13:45-46

SWEET MYSTERY!

The true church is the pearl of great price. Its formation covers a large part of the period of the mysteries of the kingdom, and is itself called a mystery (Romans 16:25-26; Ephesians 3: 3-12; Colossians 1:24-27). A pearl, however, is an illustration of the church as:

(1) A pearl is formed by accretion (growth—adding on) and that not mechanically but vitaly, as Christ adds to the Church (Acts 2:41, 47; 5:14; Ephesians 2:21; Colossians 2:19). A pearl is formed inside certain mollusks, like oysters, as a defense mechanism agent to a potentially threatening irritant by the microscopic intruder such as a parasite inside, or an accidental attack from outside, or when a grain of sand gets into the shell. This accretion is spontaneously created by nature, but abrasive-like to the inner oyster bivalve shell right between the mantle tissue and the shell. The mantle tissue reacts by making layers of shell material around it creating a pearl sac to seal off the irritation. This secretion process is repeated often, creating a pearl; nearly 100% calcium carbonate (CaCO₃) and conchiolin; white, pale, or black.

Such an illustration of a pearl, can, by many, consider Jesus Christ as an "intruder," invading the "life-shell" of man. Man is irritated, uneasy, and exudes layers of hard resistance, repelling the beautiful effects of His presence. Ah! But, man's life-filled pearly works are distorted, colorless, asymmetrical, and result in a pearl of no value. Man's efforts to resist are valueless—all vanity. Quality, natural pearls are very rare jewels—indeed; hence, man's cultured pearls merely mimic the fine Pearl of Jesus.

(2) Christ, having given Himself, therefore, for the pearl, is now preparing it for the kingdom during the fulfillment of these mysteries, baptized by one Spirit into one body (1 Corinthians 12:12-13). They compose the Church—the Pearl!

In the parable of the Pearl, or in figurative language, it is

consistent to regard the "merchant man" as Christ, who came seeking men and women (goodly pearls) who would respond to Him and His message.

The one pearl, moreover, depicts that other great company in the Kingdom, the Church, composed of men and women who are made one in the Church (1 Corinthians 10:17; 12:12-13).

Now, most children of men, however, are profoundly busy in life's journey, as the maddened storm of life rages about us. They are seeking goodly pearls; one would be rich, another would be honourable, another would be learned, another famous. But, most are imposed upon, and take up with counterfeits for pearls. Jesus Christ, however, is a Pearl of great price, a Jewel of inestimable value, which will make those who have it, rich, truly rich, rich toward God. In having Him, we have enough to make us happy here and forever more! It is a sweet and delicate mystery—no longer bewildering—for the seekers.

Such, then, is the mystery form of the kingdom (Matthew 3:2). It is the sphere of Christian profession during this age. It is a mingled body of true and false, wheat and tares, good and bad. It is defiled by formalism, doubt, and worldliness. But within it, Christ, the Pearl, sees the true children of the true kingdom who, at the end, are to "shine forth as the sun." In the great field, the world, He sees His treasure that He redeems for His own through His cross. Thus, in this aspect of the kingdom, He sees the church, composed of believers and for joy, sells all that He has (2 Corinthians 8:9) and buys the pearl.

SPIRITUAL MERCHANTS

A true Christian, moreover, is a spiritual merchant, that seeks and finds this pearl of great price; that does not take up with anything short of an interest in Christ, and, as one that is resolved to be spiritually rich, trades high; He went and bought that pearl; did not only bid for it,

but purchased it. What will it avail us to know Christ, if we do not know Him as ours, made to us wisdom (1 Corinthians 1:30)? Those who would have a saving interest in Christ must be willing to part with all for Him, leave all to follow Him. Whatever stands in opposition to Christ, or in competition with Him for our love and service, we must cheerfully quit it, though ever so dear to us. A man may buy gold too dear, but not this pearl of great price.

I have a friend who has many glittering pearls, but she has yet to seek the great treasure which is her own spiritual life in God. She is very successful: busy, projects, investments, wealth, and all sorts of church things and interests based on traditions, rituals, and family ties. She has, however, missed the pearl of great price, her own dialogue with God's Spirit. But, at the mention of the word "spirituality," (GR: *pneumatiko*) she flinches and abruptly twitches, much as a goat whose udder is oppressively squeezed. By the way, the judgment of individual Gentiles at Christ's return to earth will be separated one from another; (1) sheep—saved Gentiles; (2) goats—unsaved Gentiles (Matthew 25:32–33).

Mentioning or even suggesting the Bible and its teachings to many (the most read and influential book of all time; affecting the world for centuries in innumerable ways) is the stumbling block posed by the powers that be in high places. Teaching the Bible can, therefore, be a touchy subject for some. One can't always broach it without someone barking out, "forcing religion down my throat!" Many nominal Christians and ardent atheists, as well, appreciate the Bible's educational heft while rejecting its spiritual claims.

MORE THAN SOCRATES OR PLATO!

Many slight the Bible, and it's just to them another book or an obsolete book, Satan offers spiritualistic manifestations in place of the Bible—in place of God's word (*Early Writings*, p. 91, 265; *The Story of Redemption*, p. 396–397). Furthermore, it influences men to "believe that the Bible is mere fiction." *The Great Controversy*, p. 557. Ah! But, without the Bible, even Shakespeare would read differently—there are more than 1,200 references to Scripture in his works! Moreover, "No one in the English-speaking world can be considered literate without a basic knowledge of the Bible." *The Dictionary of Cultural Literacy*, James S. Trefil, et al, 1993

Nevertheless, spiritualism—counterfeit of truth; necromancy, sorcery, witchcraft, magic, phrenology, animal magnetism, demon worship, etc., are all delusions, lies

of Satan, and is gaining a strong hold in the world—becoming more frequent as it is monstrously invading the churches, educational and political institutions.

The Gospel of Christ is more than Socrates' or Plato's philosophy, although classic and brilliant, or Confucius's (Chinese philosopher; 551–478 B.C.) intellectual morals, ethical code, and his well-known aphorisms, although he was humanistic and rationalistic in his outlook. Socrates (469–399 B.C.) was an enigma, yet considered one of the founders of Western Philosophy. Yet, Socrates, famous for his quotes, himself wrote—"I am the wisest man alive, for I know one thing, and that is that I know nothing."



Plato (427–347 BC), Socrates' most famous student, and 40 years his junior was one of the world's best known and most widely read and studied philosophers. "Plato is philosophy and philosophy is Plato." (Ralph Waldo Emerson). Plato was the teacher of Aristotle. As a young man Plato turned his attention to what is a virtu-

ous life.

But, those however, who have searched the Scriptures, so as in them to find Christ and eternal life, (John 5:39), have discovered such an immense treasure, such a pearl, and make it infinitely more valuable, dignified—and woe-comforting; more than Socrates and Plato!

FLUTTERING SPIRITUALITY

But, my friend may have some good reason for her frustrating reaction on hearing the word "spirituality." In these past few decades, we have had so many versions of what people think is spirituality that many have become afraid to claim any interest in it—not that they were ever so sure themselves, just what it was. Now, however, we are definitely experiencing a sea change—a vast audience—many more in doubt and confused; emotionally lost!

Have you noticed the religion section in your local chain bookstore? Almost threadbare on such issues in years past, bookstores now have whole sections devoted to "spiritual topics," such as: channeling spirits of the dead, foods that can induce a trance, the secret meaning of recently found scriptures, the recently found ark of the covenant, exotic approaches to meditation, inner peace from within, how man is accountable only to himself, revealing heaven—proof of heaven (a Neurosurgeon's near death experiences), the Lamb's agenda, breaking the Jewish Code, atheist's manifesto, etc.; a broiling information age! Christian writers, furthermore, are no-

ting the insights of many Eastern religions and even making use of them in their teachings. It's enough to make a person avoid the whole thing or, at the very least, to be cautious—and to sing out—“Give Me the Bible!”(Psalm: 119:105); perhaps the Christian's theme-song?

Ah! And what about the current obsession with angels? Recent media interviews with people who claim to have seen angels or interacted with them in some manner. There are even more and more books, cards, sit-iPods, iPads, iPhones, YouTube, Twitter, even jewelry that depict angels. Have you noticed? Many even have their ears pierced (especially the young) and tiny angels can fly toward your face at all times! Yipes!



SPIRITUAL MOMENTS

Ah! But, definitely, it has become religiously correct to say you are "spiritual" or "into spirituality" or living a "spiritual life." But, as serious church people, many are not at all sure what that is, or at least for those who have been steeped in our traditional forms of weekly worship and principles, and who have relied on those pillars of faith that support all of their lives. Some churchgoers worry that spirituality is now a New Age religion, while others think of it as contained chiefly within the Roman Catholic or Greek monastic life (Mt. Athos, Greece). Many have respectfully heard monastic orders solemnly chanting ancient or medieval, and melancholy chants since children (I affectionately remember); although liturgical, guttural and nasal, but somewhat mournful—and loving it with a haunting reverence.

The most important thing, however, for us to know at this time is that the "spiritual" is more than a trend or inclination. It has to do with the yearning toward the Creator—found in the innermost part of each human being's heart, mind, and soul. The capacity for the transcendent, however, has always been part of man's nature; that is, a desire to go beyond a measure or standard, to reach beyond human understanding—the supernatural—in philosophy, a concept that understanding goes beyond human reason to the intuitive.

Transcendentalism is found in several religions and cults as the way to understand God—to be in tune with Him. But, failure to address the transcendent may account for the eruption in our society of the current interest in all sorts of "spiritualities!" The transcendental meditation technique is, in fact, based on Hindu traditions, for relaxing and refreshing mind and body through silent repeti-

tion of mantra (metrical psalms of praise).

A more acceptable definition, therefore, of spirituality is simply, “connecting with God!” Well, that may sound too simple to some, but give it a chance. Let it sink in. By responding, somehow, to the Creator, by sensing that we are accompanied, we feel quite a different dimension in our lives. We have all had moments when we felt an extraordinary sense of being connected to something larger than ourselves—in awe and wonderment—Heavenly—in a Divine Presence. These are spiritual moments—“spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ” (Ephesians 1:3; 2:6; 3:10). Those who have gone before us testify to the human capacity to live, not momentarily, but continually in this Presence!

ISRAEL—WE HAVE A PROBLEM!

The challenging and delicate problem to be solved, both by individual people and by congregations, however, is how to nurture that keen sense of connection and intimacy? Ah! It's workable—but how? Well, we know, first, from experience that we simply cannot command it! We yearn for a road-map and suspect that the Christian faith should have more to offer on this subject. But, what we actually do have is an unbelievably rich legacy of narrative accounts written by those who have gone before us, who lived in a less mechanical, computerized, digital world and who experimented with and reported on their ways of talking and interacting with God—many, one on ONE!

Until recently, unfortunately, many of us had almost lost touch with this treasure. The current fascination with spirituality has, along with its eclectic sources, also brought along a revival of interest in the works of a myriad of mystics too unfathomable to name in number. Note! These are not merely people who gaze into crystals or channel messages from others—namely the dead. But, these are solid, ordinary people who have experienced God and who tell us of their spiritual adventures!

We have many spiritual pathways, however, from dozens of people; prophets, kings, patriarchs, apostles, disciples, and pioneers, who lived and wrote in order to guide, and inform—“Howbeit when He, the Spirit of truth, is come, He will guide you into all truth: for He shall not speak of Himself; but whatsoever He shall hear, that shall He speak: and He will shew you things to come.” John 16:13.

But, somehow, many have stopped valuing their treasure—their gems—their pearls (attrition ceases), so that the spiritually focused life seems, to many, like a foreign country, a remote image, or circumstance, of one who speaks a language that many no longer know. Spirituality

has not been their territory—their domain—an abstract entity!

What effect, therefore, does the popularity of spiritual things have upon us then? How are we affected by this renewed interest in our internal being—our awareness—our spirituality, much of which may be foreign to our traditional modes of worship and our goal-orientated way of looking at things? Well, the results, I think, are mixed. There is both curse and blessing in this fascination with the spiritual for the "children of Israel," and "fellow travelers." Read on!

NEGATIVE EFFECTS!

The negative effect is that such obsessions tend to give a bad name to our deepest religious feelings. Shallowness, trivializes! Some of us, in fact, have treasured a deep spiritual life long before it was discovered by aficionados of the spiritual growth movements and their wild scenes.

We may feel put off by this sudden interest and sense that as people of faith, we have been made laughable to more erudite types. We also fear the effects on those among us who suffer insecurity and so grasp at any magic—may it be from family, believers, church-goers, brethren, neighbours, leaders, or teachers. "For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears; And they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables." 2 Timothy 4:3–4. The Apostle Paul warned Timothy that his teaching will come under attack as men desert the truth for "ear itching" words.

POSITIVE EFFECTS!

Ah! But the positive effect for us is great if we can discern what is useful and what is not. We are, at the very least, being offered hope that this deepest yearning part of ourselves is being acknowledged. Others are now giving consideration to the possibility of the something more that we have suspected was there all along. We are, eh—It would seem, not so strange after all! From this acknowledgment, we may summon the courage to do as the holy men of old did, which is to boldly step into the world of deeper prayer and meditation, knowing that this more intimate contact with God is part of our nature and of our heritage. So, you see, this is what we have been missing! This is the void—the vacuum residing in our palpitating hearts!

THE GOAL

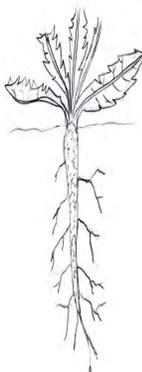
The goal, therefore, is not to discard praying, believing, worshiping, or the church. No! That would be tragedy. The gift to us, the pearl, hidden in the current popularity

of spirituality, may be that of preserving what we have, cherishing it, and taking it even further by exploring our relationship with God as a personal companion, a brother, a friend—our Saviour!

During the fifties and early sixties, a Quaker writer, Elton Trueblood, used a metaphor I find particularly illuminating. He called the nominal churches the "cut flower generation." What he meant was that the church was like a flower in full generation. Churches did bloom, so to speak. It was a decade of flourishing growth, and of high activity. Since then, however, we have seen a withering of the churches—dying, or dead! What do you suppose happened? Were they cut off from their source of nutrients, let their spiritual energy become exhausted, as the churches wilted? Hmmm?

TAPROOT

What we all really want, finally, for the church is a recovery of that spiritual taproot (a large single root growing straight down) that resides in the Christian faith. Granted, we will need to carefully thread our way through the burgeoning array of spiritualities displayed. But we can tread a sure path as we reconnect, revisit, with Scripture, prayer and those people, past and present, who have cared about this God-connection. It is the highest human adventure; one which now presents itself to us as the reclaiming of wholeness and the recovery of our spirituality.



So then, first, let prayer—be your most powerful weapon in critical times. "To pray in the name of Jesus is something more than a mere mention of that name at the beginning and the ending of a prayer. It is to pray in the mind and **spirit** of Jesus, while we believe His promises, rely upon His grace, and work His works." —*Steps to Christ*, p. 100 (emphasis mine)

If we are to believe Jesus, then the pearl of great price is the kingdom of heaven. Ah! But there are many smaller kingdoms which keep us active, busy, boisterous, distracted, diversified, and occupied, but the great treasure, the one that is worth all the others, **is our connection to God—More Than Socrates and Plato.**

"The kingdom of God is within you!" Luke 17:21

AMEN and AMEN <><

John Theodorou

U.S.A.

Ours is Not to Reason Why

**When God assigns a task,
One that He needs done,
Don't question why He chose you
To be the special one,
Ours is not to reason why,
Or fret about His plan,
Or hesitate to air our doubts,
Or ponder if we can,
He knows our limitations,
He knows your talents, too,
The chores He has are many,
The willing workers few,
He needs your hands and feet,
To demonstrate His caring,
He needs your voice to witness
To the Kingdom He's preparing,
So answer when God calls you,
Supply a ready ear,
He won't ask the impossible,
Put aside your fear,
The only thing you really need
To honour God's request,
Is the will to serve Him fully,
And a pledge to do your best.**

—FB

Submitted by Franziska Pedersen

“Jesus is the ladder to heaven. Angels ascend and descend this ladder of shining brightness; and God calls upon us to mount this ladder. But we can not do this while we load ourselves down with earthly treasures. We wrong ourselves when we place our convenience and personal advantages before the things of God. There is no salvation in earthly possessions or surroundings. A man is not exalted in God's sight, or accredited by Him as possessing goodness, because He has earthly riches. If we gain a genuine experience in climbing, we shall learn that as we ascend we must leave every hindrance behind. Those who mount must place their feet firmly on every round of the ladder.” –*The Signs of the Times*, February 1, 1899

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“Go to the camp meeting, even though you have to make a sacrifice to do so. Go with a will to work. And make every effort to induce your friends to go, not in your place, but to go with you, to stand on the Lord's side and obey His commandments. Help those who are interested to attend, if necessary providing them with food and lodging. Angels who are commissioned to minister to those who are heirs of salvation will accompany you. God will do great things for His people. He will bless every effort to honor His cause and advance His work.” – *Testimonies for the Church*, Vol. 6, p. 40

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NOTE: The article, entitled, Climbing Higher Heights in the April 2013 issue was written by James Bessec.



Living Water

The Red Sea

The Israelites were in captivity under the rule of the pharaoh. Moses helped them escape. After they escaped Egypt, they traveled in the wilderness. The Lord guided them in a cloud by day and a pillar of fire by night.

But pharaoh came for them. He wanted the Israelites to work for him again. Erecting buildings, statues, temples, towers, and serving him for the rest of their lives. There was no way out! There were mountains on both sides of them. The Red Sea was in front of them and pharaoh was behind them! The pillar of cloud stood between the Hebrews and the Egyptians. The Egyptian army could not see the Israelites, but they kept on going STRAIGHT AHEAD.

Moses spread his robe out and the waters parted. The Israelites went quickly between the walls of water and made it safely to dry land on the other side of the Red Sea. The



Egyptians followed them. Moses spread his robe out once more and the waters came back together. The Egyptian army was destroyed. As morning dawned, the Hebrews saw the chariots and soldiers from the Egyptian army. They were free at last. Paul writes that when the Israelites passed through the Red Sea, they were baptized. Afterwards, they rejoiced and praised God for bringing them out of bondage. They could have gone the short way, but God lead them through the Red Sea. It is my wish and prayer that we will never fear and that we have God in our hearts. Amen.

Stephen Newby

Water at the Well

Jesus was on a journey towards the town of Galilee, from Judea. On His way there He passed through a Samaritan city called Sychar. The Samaritans, as some of you probably know, were the descendants of corrupt Israelites who worshiped the Assyrian gods that the Assyrian King brought to Israel when he invaded it. The disciples went into Sychar to buy some food for themselves and for Jesus. They left Jesus on the outskirts of the town near a well. This well in particular was called "Jacob's Well." Jacob, supposedly, when he was passing through the country, had stopped and made a well for himself and for the other people around him. As Jesus sat there at the side of the well, a woman came to draw water. She was a Samaritan. As she let down her pail and brought it up again Jesus said, "Give Me to drink." The woman was startled. She replied:



"How is it that Thou, being a Jew, askest drink of me, which am a woman of Samaria? for the Jews have no dealings with the Samaritans. Jesus answered and said unto her, If thou knewest the gift of God, and Who it is that saith to thee, Give me to drink; thou wouldest have asked of Him, and He would have given thee living water." John 4:9–10

That's amazing isn't it? *Living* water. What was the woman's reply? In John 4:11–15 it says:

"The woman saith unto Him, Sir, Thou hast nothing to draw with, and the well is deep: from whence then hast Thou that living water? Art Thou greater than our father Jacob, which gave us the well, and drank thereof himself, and his children, and his cattle? Jesus answered and said unto her, Whosoever drinketh of this water shall thirst again: But whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the

water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life. The woman saith unto Him, Sir, give me this water, that I thirst not, neither come hither to draw.”

The woman realized that the water that Jesus was giving to her was spiritual water. She realized that to obtain this water she must confess her sins. This, she did. Jesus proceeded to ask her to call her husband to tell him what she had seen and heard. But she confessed that she had no husband. Jesus told her that she had had five husbands. She stared in awe at this man who knew everything about her. She ran into the city and called all of her friends and neighbours to come and see the man that told her everything she ever did.

As Jesus and His disciples looked over the fields that were not yet ready to be harvested, He said “Say not ye, There are yet four months, and then cometh harvest? behold, I say unto you, Lift up your eyes, and look on the fields; for they are white already to harvest. And he that reapeth receiveth wages, and gathereth fruit unto life eternal: that both he that soweth and he that reapeth may rejoice together.” John 4:35–36. Jesus was referring to the missionary work that had been done that day. The Samaritan woman brought many people to Christ. Many of them believed and they asked Jesus to stay with them for a time.

It is my wish and prayer that we also may ask for this living water and that we may be gathered in by Jesus when the time of deliverance comes.

Michael Cyrus Newby

Water to Wine

In Cana there was a wedding party; a lot of people were invited.



The people ran out of wine/grape juice, so Mary told them to put water into very large jars. Mary then asked Jesus to turn the water into wine/grape-juice.

When they tasted the wine/grape-juice, it was the best they ever had.

If we want Jesus to change us like He changed the water into wine/grape-juice, then ask him with all your heart and with all your mind and soul. Amen.

Sarah Newby

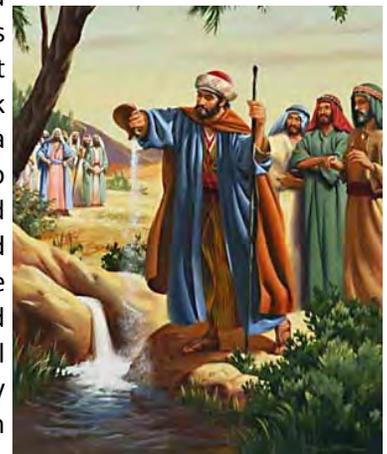
The Healing of the Waters

There once was a valley that was well watered. It was compared to the garden of the Lord. In Genesis 13:10 it says “And Lot lifted up his eyes, and beheld all the plain of Jordan, that it was well watered every where, before the LORD destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah, even as the garden of the LORD, like the land of Egypt, as thou comest unto Zoar.” It was the Jordan Valley, and it was in this beautiful place that Lot chose to pitch his tent. Unfortunately, after Sodom and Gomorrah were destroyed, the region became a desolate waste, a wilderness.

“A portion of the beautiful valley remained, with its life-giving springs and streams, to gladden the heart of man. In this valley, rich with fields of grain and forests of date palms and other fruit-bearing trees, the hosts of Israel had encamped after crossing the Jordan and had first partaken of the fruits of the Promised Land.” – *Prophets and Kings*, p. 229. A great walled city was before them, Jericho, the center of the worship of Ashtoreth. When the walls came down a declaration was made. “And Joshua adjured them at that time, saying, Cursed be the man before the LORD, that riseth up and buildeth this city Jericho: he shall lay the foundation thereof in his firstborn, and in his youngest son shall he set up the gates of it” Joshua 6:26

Centuries later the place remained desolate, cursed. The springs no longer brought forth water. In the days of Ahab, Jericho was rebuilt and the worship of Ashtoreth was also revived.

Elisha attended the school of the prophets that was not far from Jericho. One day, the men of the city came to him asking for help. Even though the school was in the midst of fruitful groves and the city beautiful, the land was barren. The spring, that years before had been pure and had provided the city with water, was now unfit for use. What did Elisha do? He took some salt and put it in a new cruse. He went to the spring of water and threw the salt in and said “Thus saith the LORD, I have healed these waters; there shall not be from thence any more death or barren land.” 2 Kings 2:21



It was not Elisha, but God who healed those waters. In Matthew 5:45 it says "That ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven: for He maketh His sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust." The people of this city did not deserve to be helped and healed but God is always willing to heal and restore.

But what does the salt represent? Just a few weeks ago we had a health meeting on salt. We learned that it preserves and adds taste or flavour to food. Elisha taught this spiritual lesson by casting the salt into the spring, the same lesson that Jesus taught years later. He said, "Ye are the salt of the earth." The salt mingling with the polluted spring purified its waters. It brought life and blessing where before had been death. Ellen White writes that when God compares us to salt it

is to teach us that we are to be blessed, purified, and to receive the grace that brings salvation, When salt is added to food, for example, it must be mixed in properly so that it may preserve. So it is with us. We must mingle and have personal contact with others. Only in this way can those that have been polluted like this stream be purified and turn to God.

This is our work, for our own life and also for others. It is my wish and prayer that we may allow God to use us so that we may be a blessing in this dark world.

"Give and it shall be given unto you," (Luke 6:38) for the word of God is "a fountain of gardens, a well of living waters, and streams from Lebanon." Song of Solomon 4:15. Amen.

Sesciah Newby



Asleep in Jesus



MARY BESCEC - October 3, 1930 – March 11, 2013

Sister Mary Bescec was born on October 3, 1930 in a small town in the former Yugoslavia. Her father heard the Reformation Message and he and his family soon after joined the church. When Sister Mary was 9 months old, her mother died. Her father later remarried and had another daughter, Kata.

Sister Bescec grew up during the war years when life was very difficult. She lived in a large extended family with many uncles and aunts. However, since her father had joined the church there were differences that arose with other family members and he was forced to leave if he wanted to remain faithful to the truth.

After marrying Ivan Bescec in May 1956, together for their family, so they decided to many days through fields and forests and There they ended up being placed in a spring of 1961 things improved significant-accept Canada's invitation and immigrate

Sister Bescec had five children, including a We live in the hope and believe that the place her in her mother's arms on resur-

Sister Bescec was a very faithful Christian both raise a family and make sure that she the Lord. She always put the needs of oth- love. Her house was always open to all, welcome.



they wanted to build a better life to- flee Yugoslavia. They travelled on foot finally over the mountains into Austria. camp for displaced persons. In the ly for the Bescecs when they decided to to Canada.

daughter who died shortly after birth. angels will bring her little daughter and rection morning.

who worked very hard her entire life to brought her children up the right way in ers before her own with self-sacrificing friends or strangers; they were always

For Sister Bescec her desire to follow Jesus was everything to her. Although she went through many difficulties and trials in life, she never lost sight of Jesus, her strength and her shield. In her final days she would struggle to speak but she would use her last breaths to talk about Jesus and how she wanted her children to follow Jesus as well, all the days of their lives. We all look and long for that day when Jesus returns, and we, if we remain faithful, will be reunited with Sister Mary Bescec again. Amen

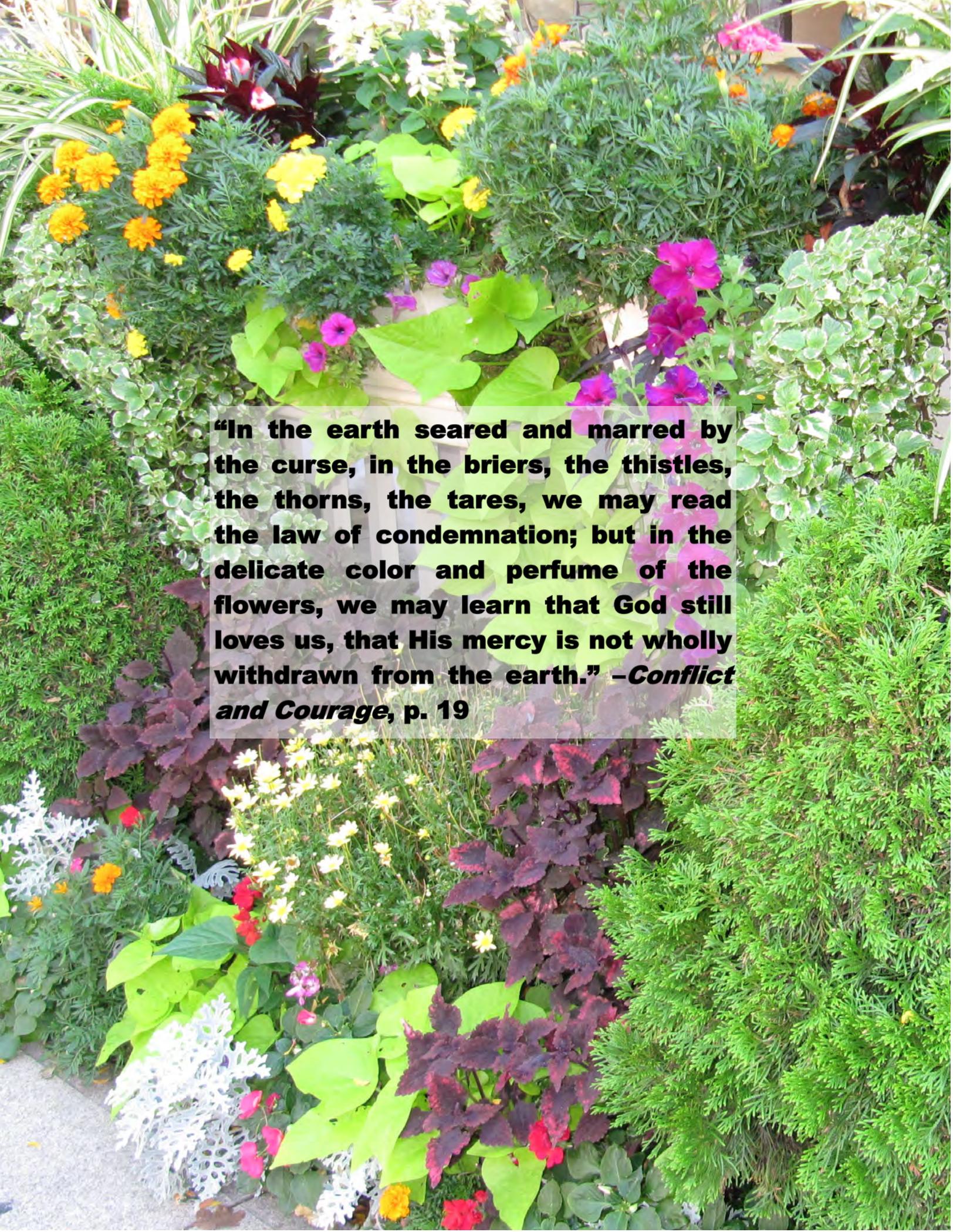


MEMBERS, YOUTH AND CHILDREN IN PADAN, PHILIPPINES

ETHIOPIA

BELOW: THE LEADER, BROTHER LIBAMU WITH BROTHERS CAPUTO (LEFT) AND SALEMI (RIGHT) FROM ITALY.





“In the earth seared and marred by the curse, in the briars, the thistles, the thorns, the tares, we may read the law of condemnation; but in the delicate color and perfume of the flowers, we may learn that God still loves us, that His mercy is not wholly withdrawn from the earth.” -*Conflict and Courage*, p. 19