

The Reformation **Messenger**

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International Missionary Society of S.D.A. Church Reform Movement



“Enter into his gates with thanksgiving, and into his courts
with praise: be thankful unto him, and bless his name.”

Psalm 100:4

The Reformation Messenger

We Believe

The all-wise, loving God created all things in the universe by His Son, Jesus Christ; He is its Owner and Sustainer.

He met the challenge to His loving leadership and authority by reconciling the world to Himself through the life, death, and resurrection of His Son, the Word made flesh.

The Holy Spirit, Jesus' representative on earth, convicts of sin, guides into truth, and gives strength to overcome all unrighteousness.

The Bible is the record of God's dealings with mankind and the standard of all doctrine; the Ten Commandments are the transcript of His character and the foundation of all enduring reform.

His people, in harmony with God's word and under the direction of the Holy Spirit, call all men everywhere to be reconciled to God through faith in Jesus.

Bible prophecy reveals that earth's history will soon close with the visible return of Jesus Christ as King to claim all who have accepted Him as the world's only Redeemer and their Lord.

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Q. Where does the idea of thanksgiving come from?

In America:

The Pilgrims came to America from Plymouth, England and established what would come to be known as Plymouth, Massachusetts. This was in 1620, which was almost 400 years ago. America was a strange new land and the pilgrims did not know how to survive there. They came from cities in Europe, which had been civilized for thousands of years. For the first few months they were running out of food until a local tribe of Native Americans showed them how to grow native food and build shelters. They also instructed them to store food for the coming winter. At the harvest time they were so happy at the bountiful harvest that they held a feast of thanksgiving to thank God for providing for them. To this feast they also invited the Native Americans who had shown them how to survive, to thank them for their help. That was the first Thanksgiving in America.

In Israel:

Jewish families also celebrate a harvest festival called **Sukkoth**. Taking place each autumn, Sukkoth has been celebrated for over 3000 years.

Sukkoth is known by two different names: Hag ha Succot, the Feast of the Tabernacles; and Hag ha Asif, the Feast of Ingathering. Sukkoth begins on the 15th day of the Hebrew month of Tishri. This is five days after Yom Kippur, which is the most solemn day of the Jewish year.

Sukkoth is named for the huts (succots) that Moses and the Israelites lived in as they wandered the desert for 40 years before they reached the Promised Land. These huts were made of branches and were easy to assemble, take apart, and carry as the Israelites wandered through the desert.

When celebrating Sukkoth, which lasts for 8 days, the Jewish people build small huts of branches, which recall the tabernacles of their ancestors. These huts are constructed as temporary shelters, as the branches are not driven into the ground and the roof is covered with foliage, which is spaced to let the light in. Inside the huts are hung fruits and vegetables, including apples, grapes, corn, and pomegranates. On the first 2 nights of Sukkoth the families eat their meals in the huts under the evening sky.

Q. What does the Spirit of Prophecy say about Thanksgiving?

Adventist Home pg. 472

“The Need of Guidance in Holiday Observance.-- I saw that our holidays should not be spent in patterning after the world, yet they should not be passed by unnoticed, for this will bring dissatisfaction to our children. On these days when there is danger that our children will be exposed to evil influences and become corrupted by the pleasures and excitement of the world, let the parents study to get up something to take the place of more dangerous amusements. Give your children to understand that you have their good and happiness in view.”

Adventist Home pg. 474

“How Shall We Observe Thanksgiving?--Our Thanksgiving is approaching. Will it be, as it has been in many instances, a thanksgiving to ourselves? Or will it be a thanksgiving to God? Our Thanksgivings may be made seasons of great profit to our own souls as well as to others if we improve this opportunity to remember the poor among us. . . .”

Manuscript Release No. 1546, pg. 222

“Thanksgiving Day will be respected, but how is it used? This day’s privileges are turned out of their proper course and it is made a day of feasting and gluttony. Is it a day to set your tables with luxuries and load them down with sweetmeats and condiments for you and yours? Christ said, ‘When thou makest a feast, call the poor, the maimed, the lame, the blind: they cannot recompense thee: for thou shalt be recompensed at the resurrection of the just.’ Luke 14:13, 14. Now, you may not be at a loss to number how many Thanksgivings are kept according to this rule.

“If you should bring an offering to God upon that day, do you not believe that God would be as well pleased as any one of your earthly friends would be with a present from you? Stop and think of this, and see if you cannot discern your duty and say, I will bring to God a thanksgiving gift for all the blessings He is bestowing upon me, for the rain in its season, for the sun that makes the seed to vegetate, for the laden boughs, and for the fruits of the harvest.”

It is important that we understand what God means by thanksgiving and what it

means to give a testimony, which is often a way of giving a witness to what has happened in our life. Some words in the English language, such as thanksgiving, represent deep and complex concepts. In other languages such as Greek and Hebrew the semantics are much more specific. A concept such as “thanksgiving” is broken into many detailed parts or words. To better understand this we will explore the complimentary meaning of the original Hebrew and Greek words for the concept of thanksgiving.

Psalms 147:1-8

“Praise ye the LORD: for it is good to sing praises unto our God; for it is pleasant; and praise is comely. The LORD doth build up Jerusalem: he gathereth together the outcasts of Israel. He healeth the broken in heart, and bindeth up their wounds. **He telleth the number of the stars; he calleth them all by their names.** Great is our Lord, and of great power: his understanding is infinite. **The LORD lifteth up the meek:** he casteth the wicked down to the ground. **Sing unto the LORD with thanksgiving;** sing praise upon the harp unto our God: Who covereth the heaven with clouds, who prepareth rain for the earth, who maketh grass to grow upon the mountains.”

It is almost overwhelming when we consider these words written by King David. “He *tells* the number of the stars; He *calls* them all by their names” yet the Lord also “lifts up the meek.” Imagine, God is intimately aware of each one of us. He is not too busy with creating and maintaining an ever-expanding universe, of which the planet earth is comparatively not even as a grain of sand on a beach. He is not too busy dealing with all of the other “sons of God” (Job 1:6) in the universe, nor is He too busy dealing with the billions of angels. No, God is intimately aware of everything that goes on in your mind, your body, in every aspect of your life. He is intimately aware and interested in even the events and circumstance that we personally are not even aware of. “Who *covers* the heaven with clouds, who *prepares* rain for the earth, who *makes* grass to grow upon the mountains.” Should we not give thanks to our loving Heavenly father?

Q. What does the word “testimony” mean?

Psalm 19:7

“The law of the LORD is perfect, converting the soul: the *testimony* of the LORD is sure, making wise the simple.”
Hebrew word for “testimony”: *eduwth (ay-dooth), testimony or witness*

2 Timothy 1:8

“Be not thou therefore ashamed of the **testimony** of our Lord, nor of me his prisoner: but be thou partaker of the afflictions of the gospel according to the power of God;”
Greek word for “testimony”: *Marturion (mar-too-ree-on), witness or evidence given.*

Revelation 12:11

“And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their **testimony**; and they loved not their lives unto the death.”
Greek word for “testimony”: *Marturia (mar-too-ree-ah), to testify, to be a witness, to bear record.*

Q. What does the word “thanksgiving” mean?

Let us take another look at the word. Thanksgiving is actually a conjugation of two words: thanks and giving. It is interesting how the word has come to be viewed from a first person perspective or from how it affects us personally. Giving usually entails benefiting others first. We give a gift to someone else and not usually to ourselves. A child might give their parent a gift as a thank you for loving them and providing for them.

Somehow society seems to have perverted these two individual concepts when putting them together.

In the ceremonial law there was a peace offering and if it was an offering for thanksgiving there was a particular way the offering was to be conducted. Each part of the ceremonial law was symbolic. Each part pointed to Christ and His ministration in some way. Let us read about this thank offering:

Leviticus 7:12-15

“If he offer it for a **thanksgiving**, then he shall offer with the sacrifice of thanksgiving unleavened cakes mingled with oil, and unleavened wafers anointed with oil, and

cakes mingled with oil, of fine flour, fried. Besides the cakes, he shall offer for his offering leavened bread with the sacrifice of thanksgiving of his peace offerings. And of it he shall offer one out of the whole oblation for an heave offering unto the LORD, and it shall be the priest’s that sprinkleth the blood of the peace offerings. And the flesh of the sacrifice of his peace offerings for **thanksgiving** shall be eaten the same day that it is offered; he shall not leave any of it until the morning.”
Hebrew word for “thanksgiving”: *towdah (to-daw), an extension of the hand, confession, a sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving.*

Let us look at this thanksgiving offering a little deeper:

Verse 12. “If he offer it for a **thanksgiving**, then he shall offer with the sacrifice of thanksgiving unleavened cakes mingled with oil, and unleavened wafers anointed with oil, and cakes mingled with oil, of fine flour, fried.”

If the offering is an offering of thanksgiving then it needs be with “unleavened cakes mingled with oil, and unleavened wafers anointed with oil”.

Q. What is oil symbolic of?

The Holy Spirit is symbolized by oil.

Q. Who was anointed with oil?

It was Jesus Christ who was anointed with oil.

Q. What are unleavened wafers & cakes?

This represents the sinless character of Christ.

So, proper thanksgiving has to start with the Holy Spirit. The innocent sacrifice of Jesus must purge out the sin that is within us. True thanksgiving is represented by Jesus’ sinless life.

Verse 13. “Besides the cakes, he shall offer for his offering leavened bread with the sacrifice of thanksgiving of his peace offerings.”

Q. What does leavened bread symbolize here?

This represents the sinful nature that we are born with. It is impossible for us ourselves to overcome or change this nature.

Everyone possesses this fallen nature; by ourselves everything is tainted by it.

Verse 14. "And of it he shall offer one out of the whole oblation for an **heave offering** unto the LORD, and it shall be the **priest's that sprinkleth the blood** of the peace offerings."

Q. What is a heave offering?

It is an offering that is made with extended hands outstretched toward Heaven. It is the priest that sprinkles the blood. It is Jesus that sprinkles His blood. It is impossible for us to know how to give thanks unto God by ourselves. It is impossible to know how to give to God or our fellow man without Jesus.

Verse 15 "And the flesh of the sacrifice of his peace offerings for **thanksgiving shall be eaten the same day** that it is offered; he shall not leave any of it until the morning."

Q. Why did the thanksgiving offering have to be eaten on the same day that it was offered?

Every day we should give thanks to God. Each new day we should take advantage of the opportunity to give. Each day of life is a new blessing from God.

The concept of thanksgiving entails giving unconditionally just like Jesus did. It comes from the presence of and through the power of the Holy Spirit. It does not come naturally for us. We must thank and give daily.

Psalms 26:7

"That I may publish with the voice of **thanksgiving**, and tell of all thy wondrous works."

Hebrew word for "thanksgiving": yadah (yaw-daw), to revere, worship, confess or praise with extended hands, to throw as a stone or shoot an arrow.

Imagine this for a moment. What does the imagery of throwing a stone or shooting an arrow mean? Does an arrow not cover a great distance? To confess and praise over a great distance, so that it may affect others.

2 Corinthians 9:6, 11

"But this I say, He which soweth sparingly shall reap also sparingly; and he which

soweth bountifully shall reap also bountifully... Being enriched in every thing to all bountifulness, which causeth through us **thanksgiving** to God."

Greek word for "thanksgiving": eucharista (yoo-khar-is-tee-ah), an act of gratitude and worship.

Luke 6: 31-38

"And as ye would that men should do to you, do ye also to them likewise. For if ye love them which love you, what thank have ye? for sinners also love those that love them. And if ye do good to them which do good to you, what thank have ye? for sinners also do even the same. And if ye lend to them of whom ye hope to receive, what thank have ye? for sinners also lend to sinners, to receive as much again. But love ye your enemies, and do good, and lend, hoping for nothing again; and your reward shall be great, and ye shall be the children of the Highest: for he is kind unto the unthankful and to the evil. Be ye therefore merciful, as your Father also is merciful. Judge not, and ye shall not be judged: condemn not, and ye shall not be condemned: forgive, and ye shall be forgiven: Give, and it shall be given unto you; good measure, pressed down, and shaken together, and running over, shall men give into your bosom. For with the same measure that ye mete withal it shall be measured to you again."

How often and how easy it is for us to judge or condemn others. How easy to give to someone that you know will return the favour. "What thank have ye?" We must learn to give as God gives, to thank like God thanks; "for he is kind unto the unthankful and to the evil."

From an article in the Review & Herald, January 15, 1884

"The meetings at Battle Creek were fraught with deeper interest than similar meetings ever held among our people. Many prayers had ascended to Heaven in behalf of this session of the General Conference; and we can testify that Jesus came up to the feast, and was an honored guest at this important gathering... Faith and love were awakened in many hearts. Spiritual and eternal things became a reality, and not a mere sentiment; a glorious substance, and not a fitful shadow..."

"Nearly the whole of Thanksgiving day, Nov. 29, was spent in church. Our morning



meeting was one of special interest. In a cheerful testimony every one had a thank-offering to present to God. In the forenoon we had a Bible-reading on the subject of thanksgiving, and it was clearly shown from the Scriptures that it is our duty to glorify God by offering thanks and praise. This was a most precious season. All were instructed and reproofed; for repining at the dealings of God has been almost continual, while gratitude and praise had been seldom expressed and little cherished in the heart. Many confessed that they had cherished doubt and distrust, and had reaped as they had sown; and as they expressed a resolution to reform in this particular, I reminded them that when pretexts for dissatisfaction are presented, we are to say, "Get thee behind me, Satan." Let every one who has tasted of the love of God praise him for his goodness to the children of men. In this let every soul be whole-hearted and sincere. It is a great cause of gratitude that we understand the nature of this day better than we once did...

"Our meeting closed about two o'clock, and we then took ample refreshments; but we had no time to devote to the preparation of extra dishes. We were having a feast of fat things; we were eating of the Bread of Heaven, and drinking rich draughts from the well of Bethlehem. Jesus graced the feast with his royal presence, and our hearts were joyful in him. The testimonies borne by our brethren and sisters were full of courage and gratitude to God; and their verdict was, 'Oh, what a Thanksgiving day this has been! It is the best Thanksgiving day I ever experienced!'"

Many countries such as Canada and the United States celebrate a Thanksgiving



PRAYER AND FAITH

I have frequently seen that the children of the Lord neglect prayer, especially secret prayer, altogether too much; that many do not exercise that faith which it is their privilege and duty to exercise, often waiting for that feeling which faith alone can bring. Feeling is not faith; the two are distinct. Faith is ours to exercise, buy joyful feeling and the blessing are God's to give. The grace of God comes to the soul through the channel of living faith, and that faith it is in our power to exercise.

holiday. But even in countries that don't, let us each think every day what the true meaning and responsibility of thanksgiving is. We do not offer a thanksgiving offering to God as the Israelites did under the Ceremonial law, yet this does not excuse our similar responsibility under the new covenant in which Jesus through His blood atones for our sin. The thanksgiving offering was in addition to the animal being sacrificed.

There are many in the world around us, in our church, our community and around the world that need your help. There are many opportunities that God places before us to help others that have no capacity to return the favour. May the Lord awaken us to take advantage of these opportunities and responsibilities.

Think of the many natural disasters that have occurred over the past few months. The Tsunami that impacted almost every continent. Hurricanes, which have left many destitute children with no parents, even in wealthy countries like the United States. Devastating earthquakes like the one in Pakistan that killed tens of thousands instantly and left millions without food and shelter. How about those in our own community? Many of you might think that the problems in this world are overwhelming; and they might be to our human understanding. Do you really believe in God?

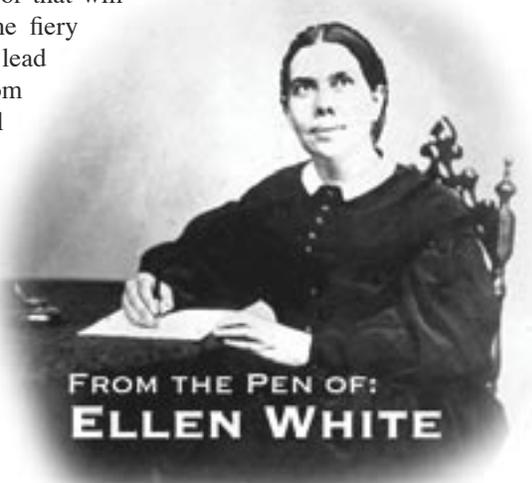
Jesus said the poor would always be with us. This does not mean it is an excuse to do nothing for them. It means that the opportunity to help them would also always be with us. Jesus left these people in our care. Jesus did not say to just pray for these people He said to "clothe and feed" them. Jesus wants us to be active and not just passive. He wants us to be proper representatives of Him. What do you think Jesus would be doing if He were on earth today? Just look at how He lived His life two thousand years ago. **AMEN** 

John Formosa, Canada

True faith lays hold of and claims the promised blessing before it is realized and felt. We must send up our petitions in faith within the second veil, and let our faith take hold of the promised blessing, and claim it as ours. We are then to believe that we receive the blessing, because our faith has hold of it, and according to the Word it is ours. "What things soever ye desire when ye pray, believe that ye receive them, and ye shall have them." Here is faith, naked faith, to believe that we receive the blessing, even before we realize it. When the promised blessing is realized and enjoyed, faith is swallowed up. But many suppose they have much faith when sharing largely of the Holy Spirit, and that they cannot have faith unless they feel the power of the Spirit. Such confound faith with the blessing that comes through faith. The very time to exercise faith is when we feel destitute of the Spirit. When thick clouds of darkness seem to hover over the mind, then is the time to let living faith pierce the darkness and scatter the clouds. True faith rests on the promises contained in the Word of God, and those only who obey that Word can claim its glorious promises. "If ye abide in Me, and My words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you." John 15:7. "Whatsoever we ask we receive of Him, because we keep His commandments, and do those things that are pleasing in His sight." 1 John 3:22.

We should be much in secret prayer. Christ is the vine, we are the branches. And if we would grow and flourish, we must continually draw sap and nourishment from the Living Vine; for separated from the Vine, we have no strength.

I asked the angel why there was no more faith and power in Israel. He said, "Ye let go of the arm of the Lord too soon. Press your petitions to the throne, and hold on by strong faith. The promises are sure. Believe ye receive the things ye ask for, and ye shall have them." I was then pointed to Elijah. He was subject to like passions as we are, and he prayed earnestly. His faith endured the trial. Seven times he prayed before the Lord, and at last the cloud was seen. I saw that we had doubted the sure promises, and wounded the Saviour by our lack of faith. Said the angel, "Gird the armour about thee, and above all take the shield of faith; for that will guard the heart, the very life, from the fiery darts of the wicked." If the enemy can lead the desponding to take their eyes off from Jesus, and look to themselves, and dwell upon their own unworthiness, instead of dwelling upon the worthiness of Jesus, His love, His merits, and His great mercy, he will get away their shield of faith, and gain his object; they will be exposed to his fiery temptations. The weak should therefore look to Jesus, and believe in Him; they then exercise faith. 



Taken from Early Writings,
Submitted by Kathleen Ross, Alberta, Canada

AMBASSADOR'S FOR CHRIST



“Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us: we pray you in Christ’s stead, be ye reconciled to God.” 2 Cor. 5:20

Since His ascension, Christ has carried forward His work on the earth by chosen ambassadors, through whom He speaks to the children of men and ministers to their need. The great Head of the church superintends His work through the instrumentality of men ordained by God to act as His representatives. The position of those who have been called of God to labour in word and doctrine for the building up of His church, is one of grave responsibility. In Christ’s stead they are to beseech men and women to be reconciled to God, and they can fulfill their mission only as they receive wisdom and power from above.

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 posts 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 until it echoed round the city.

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.” (Ez. 33:7-9} DA 360.361.

“In every period of this earth’s history, God has had His men of opportunity, to whom He has said, “Ye are My witnesses.” In every age there have been devoted men, who gathered up the rays of light as they flashed upon their pathway, and who spoke to the people the words of God. Enoch, Moses, Daniel, and the long roll of patriarchs and prophets,—these were ministers of righteousness. They were not infallible; they were weak, erring men; but the Lord wrought through them as they gave themselves to His service.” GW, p.13.

WHAT GOD EXPECTS OF HIS PEOPLE

“God expects personal service from everyone to whom He has entrusted knowledge of the truth for this time...

“Every true disciple is born into the kingdom of God as a missionary...

“To save souls should be the life work of every one who professes Christ. We are debtors to the world for the grace given us of God, for the light which has shone upon us, and for the discovered beauty and power of the truth...

“Every one who has received the divine illumination, is to brighten the pathway of those who know not the light of life.

“To every one work has been allotted, and no one can be a substitute for another. Each one has a mission of wonderful importance, which he cannot neglect or ignore, as the fulfillment of it involves the weal of some soul, and the neglect of it the woe of one for whom Christ died.”

Review and Herald, December 12, 1893.

“We should all be workers together with God. No idlers are acknowledged as His servants.” Review and Herald, December 15, 1887; Christian Service, p. 9, 10.

“And the spirit and the bride say come. And let him that heareth say come. And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely.” (Rev. 22:17).

“Not upon the ordained ministers only, rests the responsibility of going forth to fulfill this commission. Every one who has received Christ is called to work for the salvation of his fellow men.” Christian Service, p. 15, 11, 12.

THERE IS A PLACE FOR YOU

“The children of God are called to be representatives of Christ, showing forth the goodness and mercy of the Lord. As Jesus has revealed to us the true character of the Father, so we are to reveal Christ to a world that does not know His tender, pitying love.” “As Thou hast sent Me into the world.” I in them, and Thou in Me... that the world may know that Thou hast sent me.” John 17:18, 23. The apostle Paul says to the disciples of Jesus, “Ye are manifestly declared to be the epistle of Christ.” “Known and read of all men.” 2 Cor. 3: 3, 2. In every one of His children, Jesus sends a letter to the family, the village, the street, where you live. Jesus dwelling in you, desires to speak to the hearts of those who are not acquainted with Him. Perhaps they do not see the love of God or do not hear the voice that speaks to them in its pages; they do not see the love of God through His works. But if you are true representatives of Jesus, it may be that through you they will be led to understand something of His goodness and be won to love and serve Him.

Christians are set as light bearers on the way to heaven. They are to reflect to the world the light shining upon them from Christ. Their life and character should be such that through them others will get a right conception of Christ and of His service.” Sc 115.

NEVER BE SAVED IN INDOLENCE

“Let no one think that he is at liberty to fold his hands and do nothing. That anyone can be saved in indolence and inactivity is an utter impossibility. Think of what Christ accomplished during His earthly ministry.

How earnest, how untiring, were His efforts! He allowed nothing to turn Him aside from the work given Him. Are we following in His footsteps?” CS, p. 83.

“The world needs missionaries, consecrated home missionaries, and no one will be registered in the books of heaven as a Christian who has not a missionary spirit.” R & H, Aug. 23, 1892.

“If the church members do not individually take hold of this work, then they show that they have no living connection with God. Their names are registered as slothful servants.” Test. Vol. 5, p. 462, 463.

“We can never be saved in indolence and inactivity. There is no such thing as a truly converted person living a helpless, useless life. It is not possible for us to drift into heaven. No sluggard can enter there... Those who refuse to cooperate with God on earth would not cooperate with Him in heaven. It would not be safe to take them to heaven.” COL, p. 280.

“But what think ye? A certain man had two sons; and he came to the first, and said, son, go work today in my vineyard. He answered and said, I will not: but afterward he repented, and went.” Matt. 21: 28, 29. “Thank God we can always change our minds and do what is right.”

CHRIST OUR EXAMPLE

“I must work the works of him that sent me, while it is day: the night cometh, when no man can work.” John 9:4.

The years are rapidly passing, bearing away their record for eternity. Wherever you see work to be done, do your very best, after the order of Christ. Place yourselves under the discipline of God. It was God’s plan that those in darkness should see great light; Christ’s work was one of constant progress. In His life He has left us an example of how we are to labour. Constantly He went about doing good.

JUST FOR ONE MAN

“And the angel of the Lord spake unto Phillip, saying, Arise, and go toward the south unto the way that goeth down from Jerusalem unto Gaza, which is desert. And he arose and went.” Acts 8:26, 27.

“Notice how much effort was put forth for just one man, an Ethiopian.” DA 293.

“This Ethiopian was a man of good

standing and of wide influence. God saw that when converted he would give others the light he had received and would exert a strong influence in favour of the gospel. Angels of God were attending this seeker for light, and he was being drawn to the Saviour. By the ministration of the Holy Spirit the Lord brought him into touch with one who could lead him to the light.

“Phillip was directed to go to the Ethiopian and explain to him the prophecy that he was reading. ‘Go near,’ the Spirit said, ‘and join thyself to this chariot’... The man’s heart thrilled with interest as the scriptures were explained to him; and when the disciple had finished, he was ready to accept the light given. He did not make his high worldly position an excuse for refusing the gospel...”

This Ethiopian represents a large class who need to be taught by such missionaries as Phillip—men who will hear the voice of God and go where he sends them. There are many who are reading the scriptures who cannot understand their true import. All over the world men and women are looking wistfully to heaven. Prayers and tears and inquiries go up from souls longing for light, for grace, for the Holy Spirit. Many are on the verge of the kingdom, waiting only to be gathered in.

“An angel guided Phillip to the one who was seeking for light and who was ready to receive the gospel, and today angels will guide the footsteps of those workers who will allow the Holy Spirit to sanctify their tongues and refine and ennoble their hearts.” AA 107-109.

He who sent Phillip to the Ethiopian Councilor, Peter to the roman Centurion, and the little Israelite maiden to the help of Naaman, the Syrian captain, sends you and me today as his representatives to those in need of divine help and guidance. All upon whom God’s blessing has been bestowed are to respond by actual service; every gift is to be employed for the advancement of His kingdom, and the glory of His name. God will use men and women and youth today as He used Timothy, if they will submit to His guidance. It is our privilege to be God’s missionaries. He calls us to work for our companions, to seek out those we know to be in danger; in the love of Christ let us try to help them. **AMEN.** 

Your brother and co-worker in Christ,
Golden Kayawa Hingabantu, Zambia

DENY YOURSELF



Jesus said, "If any man will come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me." Matt.16:24.

Millions want to follow Jesus, but only few are willing to deny themselves. This is also the reason why Jesus called the way to salvation a narrow way.

"If you obtain eternal life, you must live for it and deny self. Come out of the world, and be separate. Your life must be marked with sobriety, watchfulness, and prayer. Angels are watching the development of character and weighing moral worth. All your words and acts are passing in review before God. It is a fearful, solemn time." Test. Vol. 1, p. 242.

"We must deny self all along the way, die to self daily." EW, p. 67.

"Self must be crucified. It is a painful death; but it is life, life to the soul." Test. Vol. 6, p. 125.

We have many enemies who are trying to hinder our salvation. Not only people who oppose our religious practices but Satan and his vast host of fallen angels are attacking us constantly, trying to tempt us to sin, to disobey God. But yet our greatest enemy is our own self. It is easy to fight against an outside enemy, but to fight against your own self and your own desires is much harder.

"From whence come wars and fightings among you? Come they not hence, even of your lusts that war in your members." James 4:1.

"But I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection: let that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway." 1 Cor. 9:27.

There is a war going on in every true Christian. When the mind is converted, the body is not. The old habits and lusts are still demanding satisfaction. It is sad to see that so many Christians are losing this battle.

It is selfishness or self-love that causes people to indulge their senses, to gratify their flesh, their eyes, their ears, and appetites. It is selfishness that makes a person to seek riches, and that often by a dishonest way. It is selfishness to seek a position, even in the church. Love of ease and comfort is selfishness. This selfishness must be overcome or all will be lost.

"In the family of God in heaven there will not be found one who is selfish." Test. Vol. 8, p. 140.

"God abhors all selfishness and covetousness. Unmerciful dealing He will not tolerate, but will repay in kind." 3 Bible Commentary, p. 1158.

The best time to learn self-denial and to overcome selfishness is in early childhood. "Teach your children from the cradle to practice self-denial and self-control." CT, p. 127.

"The seed sown in infancy by the careful, God-fearing mother will become trees of righteousness, which will blossom and bear fruit; and the lessons given by a God-fearing father by precept and example will, as in the case of Joseph, yield an abundant harvest by and by." CG, p. 116.

How often this is neglected; and instead of teaching children self-denial, they learn self-indulgence. Parents think that they show love to their children when they shower them with sweets, candies, toys, fancy clothing, and entertainment; while in reality by so doing, they destroy them. When these children grow to be teenagers, they often give up their parent's religion, and turn to the world.

Already before the child was borne, destruction of self-denial was given to the parents. The parents of Samson received instruction from the angel to practice a strict diet before the child was born. "Now therefore beware, I pray thee, and drink not wine nor strong drink, and eat not any unclean thing: For thou shalt conceive, and bear a son." Judges 13:4-5.

It takes a strong willpower to deny ourselves the pleasures that we would normally enjoy. Jesus said, "The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak." Matt. 26:4.

To strengthen our willpower, there is no better way than through fasting and prayer. A young man told me that he has tried everything possible to stop smoking, and he still smokes. I told him to try fasting and prayer, and a few days later he came to see me and said that he had fasted for days and prayed for God's help and now he does not smoke anymore.

"When Christ was the most fiercely beset by temptation, He ate nothing. He committed Himself to God, and through earnest prayer, and perfect submission to the will of His Father, came off conqueror." CD, p. 186.

"The word of God sets a high mark before you. Will you, through fasting and prayerful effort, attain to the completeness and consistency of Christian character?" Test. Vol. 4, p. 400.

"Let us humble our souls before God by

humiliation, fasting and prayer, repentance of sin and putting it away." 2 S.M., p. 379.

To a worldly person the greatest joy and pleasure is to satisfy the desires of the flesh, eyes and ears. Any anniversary or special occasion is celebrated with eating and drinking and with trivial conversation. These are the highlights of their lives. To the Christians, the highlights of their lives are self-

necessities, in persecutions, in distresses for Christ's sake: for when I am weak, then am I strong." 2 Cor. 12:10.

If you ask for God's help to deny yourself, He will do it. He will remove from you the luxury items, money, rich foods by circumstances. The old Israel was taken away from the flesh pots of Egypt, and from their feasts and idol worship. They had no opportunity to indulge their sinful desires in the wilderness.

Daniel denied himself amidst the luxury and rich foods in the royal court; and this is how we must also do it. The world is offering many things for us to indulge and gratify our flesh and sinful desires. They are available so freely to us, but yet we must from a free will refuse to enjoy them and gain a victory by prayer and fasting, as did Jesus.

May the Lord help us in this battle against self and to learn to enjoy spiritual things which will give us far greater joy and peace than any worldly pleasure, is my wish and prayer.

AMEN. 

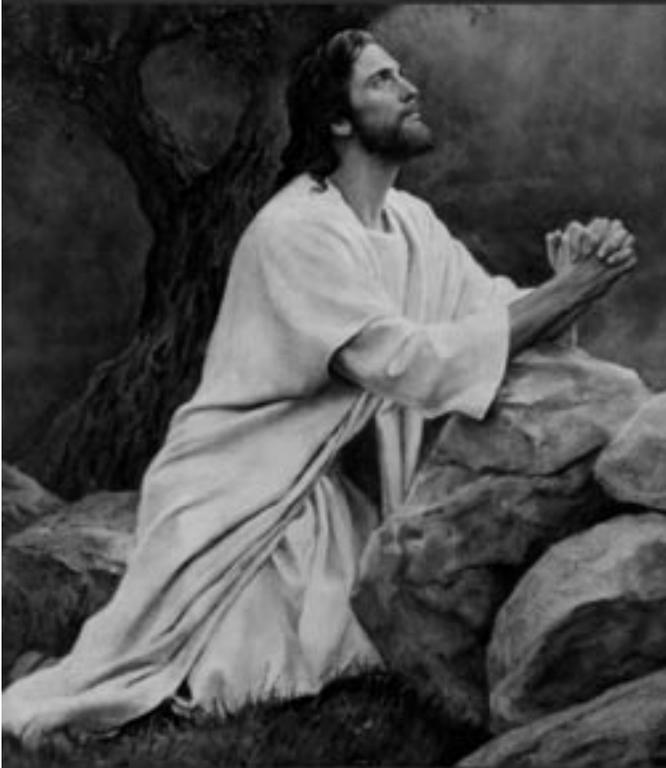
Timo Martin, Canada

denial,
sacrifice
and prayer.

In these moments the soul is lifted to the atmosphere of heaven and the Holy Spirit fills them with joy and peace.

Apostle Paul learned to enjoy the trials and persecutions, because then the grace of God abounded more than in times of peace and prosperity. "Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in

AN EXCEPTIONAL EXCHANGE



“O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me: nevertheless not as I will, but as thou [wilt].” Matthew 26:39.

Jesus was at Gethsemane where He was to fight the greatest battle of His life.

Before He ever came to live upon this earth, He had voluntarily agreed to follow every step of the plan of salvation up to the end. With this purpose, He “made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men” (Philippians 2:7). He willingly came to live as a man among men. He, the Son of God, the Prince of the universe, the co-worker of the Father in the great work of creation was to become like one of His creatures on earth, not even like an angel, which is higher than man. It was an incredible degradation!

“He made himself of no reputation” appears in the original Greek version as “kenose ton eauto tou” and is literally translated into German as “entäußerte sich selbst”, which means “emptied himself”, while in Spanish it says “se despojó a sí mismo”, meaning “He stripped his own self”; He took the place of fallen man. In other words, although He was equal to God, He decided to be born as a fragile baby in a poor environment and grow as a man among men. He was the Son of God and the Son of man, born from the Holy Spirit and a woman, with a dual nature.

“And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross” (Philippians 2:8). Already as a man, endowed with a high intelligence and a noble character, He went all the way along the path of self-denial, which reached its climax when He voluntarily, without any resistance, stretched His torn up body against the rough wood of the cross to be crucified.

In Paul’s epistle to the Hebrews, it is written that Jesus despised the shame and endured the cross and sits at the right hand of the throne of God. In Isaiah 53:11 we learn why He did that, because “he shall see the travail of His soul and shall be satisfied”, which in Greek is expressed even clearer, “he will see the fruit of the pain of his soul and shall be satisfied”! We are the fruit of that pain and for our sake He went through the greatest anguish any man has ever gone through. Jesus did not live for the moment, but His thoughts were always beyond space and time, therefore the joy He experienced just at the thought of sharing eternity with us gave Him power to endure the denigrating death on the cross of Calvary. He did not mind the shame, so that His love would give fruit of repentance.

We all need to have a special encounter with Jesus at Gethsemane. There is where an exceptional exchange takes place. We give Him our sins, and He gives us in return a cup full of His grace and covers us with His righteousness! Shouldn’t our heart be full of gratitude as we experience that His banner over us is love? This is actually quite an unusual exchange!

“What shall I render unto the Lord [for] all his benefits toward me?” asks David, and when he finds the answer, “I will take the cup of salvation, and call upon the name of the Lord”, he takes his harp and composes and sings praises to His Lord and Master all his life long. Shall we not do the same? Do we not approach the Lord’s Supper with grateful hearts and a song on our lips? While we rejoice immensely

every time we take the cup containing the symbol of Jesus' blood poured for us and thus announce His death on our behalf, the cup Jesus took in Gethsemane trembled in His hands and drops of blood covered His forehead. "In His soul anguish He lay prostrate on the cold earth. He was realizing His Father's frown. He had taken the cup of suffering from the lips of guilty man, and proposed to drink it Himself, and in its place give to man the cup of blessing. The wrath that would have fallen upon man was now falling

love for man, so He drank the cup. He accepted to go through the experience of what should be yours and my second death, a complete separation from the Father, if we ever refuse His sacrifice. Because He drank the cup and took our place in Gethsemane, He sits today as our Advocate next to the Father and pleads for us whenever we

with violence placed it upon His head. A thread of blood slid down from every thorn and covered His lovely countenance disfigured by pain and sorrow. The drops of blood on his forehead, at Gethsemane, were the external expression of his inner agony, of his mental pain, of the desperate battle in his soul, while the blood rolling down His face and His bruised body, at Calvary, were a sign of His physical pain. Because He suffered in the body, the mind and the spirit and overcame, He can sanctify us completely.

He, who had left His royal crown and the adoration of the angels and stepped down into this valley of sorrow and pain in order to save

approach Him in prayer and ask Him to intercede for us and our beloved ones.

upon Christ. It was here that the mysterious cup trembled in His hand." (Amazing Grace, p.169)

"The fate of humanity trembled in the balance. Christ might even now refuse to drink the cup apportioned to guilty man.

It was not yet too late. He might wipe the bloody sweat from His brow,

At the end of the world, when the life of every man will have been weighed in the balance and many of us will be found righteous because we have accepted this mysterious sacrifice of love, we "will wear robes woven in the loom of heaven with not one thread of humanity in them" (Temperance, p. 292) and with joyful and grateful hearts participate at the wedding feast of the Lamb! On the other hand, many others, who have not emptied themselves to give up their sinful nature and accept the one offered them by God, will receive their part of the content of the cup handed to Jesus at Gethsemane, as the plagues will be poured upon the impenitent.

us, was crowned with a wreath of thorns for our sins! Have we ever thought of how many thorns each one of us has personally contributed to this crown? Isn't it another exceptional exchange to think that we crowned Him with thorns, which covered His

and leave man to perish in his iniquity. He might say, Let the transgressor receive the penalty of his sin, and I will go back to My Father. Will the Son of God drink the bitter cup of humiliation and agony? Will the innocent suffer the consequences of the curse of sin, to save the guilty? The words fall tremblingly from the pale lips of Jesus, 'O My Father, if this cup may not pass away from Me, except I drink it, Thy will be done.'" (The Desire of Ages, p. 690)

When Jesus' battle with self at Gethsemane was completely won, and His free will was totally surrendered to His Father, He was ready to go through all sorts of outrageous insults and mishandling.

countenance with blood, and we shall receive instead a golden crown and have a bright shining countenance illuminated by His grace? No wonder the gospel is foolishness to those who are lost! Shouldn't this supreme expression of love make us fall in love with Jesus and make us able to openly declare it with the words in Songs of Songs 2:5, "Stay me with flagons, comfort me with apples, for I am sick of love"?"

A medical doctor explains us that due to His anguish His blood pressure had reached the highest possible degree, therefore his forehead was covered with blood drops. But the fear of death was not greater than His fear of God and His

"Then Pilate therefore took Jesus, and scourged [him]. And the soldiers platted a crown of thorns, and put [it] on his head, and they put on him a purple robe, and said, Hail, King of the Jews! And they smote him with their hands." John 19:2, 3.

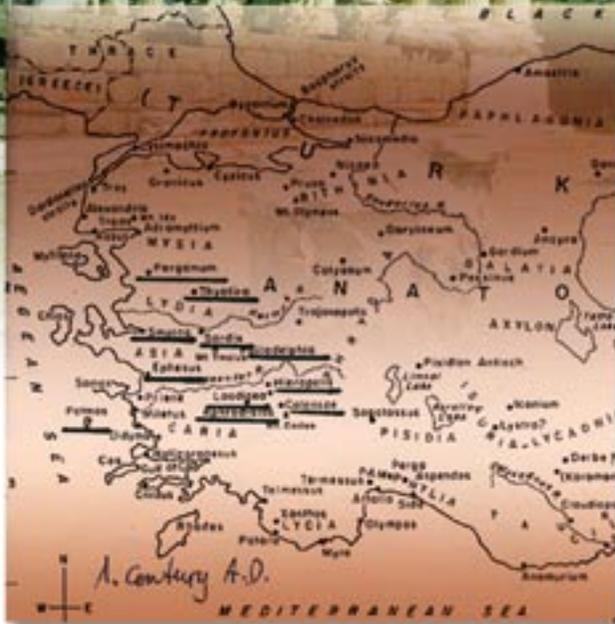
May the Lord help us understand a little more of the great price paid for our salvation and give us the courage to "come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need" (Hebrews 4:16). **AMEN.** 

The soldiers platted a crown of thorns and

Teresa Corti

JOURNEY TO THE SEVEN CHURCHES

Rev. 2-3



Pergamon-Hadrian Temple

in Turkey, here is a brief account of our schedule:

Every other day was a tour, then the day after the tours were Seminars of the places visited and other themes like Arabic World and Prophecies about the End, Islam and the Bible, Character and Personalities, Christian Youth and the modern World, Heart and Mind, etc. We thank all the lecturers and speakers for their input of such interesting topics: Henry Dering, Gerhard Hunger, Vicente Giner, Pablo Hunger, Stefano Salemi.

The days began 7:20 AM with praying groups, worship and ended (often late) with worship. There was much singing and praying, and we could experience the blessings of it all. The pool was busy when time permitted it, the sea was clear and cool, inviting for a refreshing dip. The meals were healthy, simple, and delicious soups were offered beside much fresh crisp salads of all kinds. Lots of watermelon for breakfast and other fruit, grapes, peaches.

Friday and Sabbath were spent with lectures and other spiritual activities. On Sabbath we had believers from our small group in Turkey, who came from Izmir, 80

km away. A sister from Bulgaria translated for them through Brother Josef, our Bible worker in Turkey. We were very happy to see him on the second Sabbath with 16 others who study with him; some also have been baptized recently. The work in this country is difficult and not welcomed by the Muslim community. But Josef has a winning personality and the right touch for these people; he made friends already with many. On the day of his departure, Br. Henry Dering and Gerhard Hunger, travelled in the morning to Izmir, to visit Br. Josef, who was waiting with a group of about 30 people to hear more about God. All went well, but the time pressed on and they had to come back to leave the country. May God open the eyes of these dear, mostly old people, to see His wonderful truth about Jesus Christ and accept Him as their personal Saviour.

Though it was a Youth Study Trip, older ones were invited too, and many came. The nice thing was that nobody made any fuss about the age groups. We were all mixed together at the table and in the bus; there was never a discriminating attitude. The whole atmosphere was joyous, everybody was happy. Souls from 16 different countries from Austria to South Africa, Mexico and South Korea, etc. made up the group of 65, without children. Unfortunately, not all of those at first 80 registered souls could come, and really missed a great event.

Now that the long awaited journey to the land of the Seven Churches of Revelation 2 and 3 is over, I want to retrace my steps of this interesting and impressive excursion, and want to invite you to come with me, all who could not be there.

But first, I wish to express my deep gratitude to the Lord of lords, our gracious Redeemer for His mercy and protecting hand over the group of believers, interested souls and friends of our faith during our entire stay in Turkey.

And, special thanks to the organizers, especially Pablo Hunger, speakers and other helpers, who laboured weeks before to make this remarkable trip possible, who were always kind, patient and helpful. And a most grateful thank you to the translators, who from morning till night translated into four different languages, to bring the message to all of us. May God give them a double blessing.

To have a little overview of the two weeks



For my liking, I would love to start all over again, since this is not possible, I will now give an account of the experiences, so sit back and come with us to the several amazing places of the early Christian churches.

Tour 1: Pergamon and Thyatira

Departure 9:00AM in two buses, one for the German group, the other for the English speaking, Spanish and Bulgarians. Each bus had his own guide and the tours were programmed by the tour companies. Thus the tours were not in sequence with the Bible churches beginning with Ephesus etc., but were conducted according to the different distances to them. We had a very nice, friendly and patient guide in our bus, Bill, with incredible knowledge about history and the Bible; we appreciated his kindness very much.

There was always a happy atmosphere in the bus, and the Spanish speaking group made the bus literally alive with their many beautiful songs, some funny, some solemn,



hymns and other tunes. Brother Giner with his guitar and his rich, beautiful voice fit for the best opera stage, enriched the hours travelling between places, and a special thank you to him!

On all tours we needed to go through Izmir first, till we came to the country side with its immense fertile soil, growing rich crops of every sort of vegetable and fruit. Turkey is self-sufficient in foods, only bananas and kiwis are imported. Cotton, melons, corn, okra, olive trees, grapes, peaches, oranges, figs can be seen everywhere, also tobacco fields.

The horizon is adorned with hills and mountains, dotted with trees and in some valleys are multitudes of cultured pistachio forests, Turkey is one of the world's top exporters of pistachios, also of olives and tobacco.

Pergamon

The bus brings us after two and more hours to the gate on the mount going up to the remains of the ancient acropolis of Pergamon, or Pergames (Greek), Pergamum, Pergamus (Latin). There you go upward on the stone-cobbled road to the ruins of: the city wall, king's palaces of eons ago, a gymnasium, the theatre and the several disintegrated remains of temples of ancient heathen deities like Jupiter, Athena, etc., on top of the acropolis and the library. From there you have a good view to Bergama, the city of today below the mountain, and the vast valley to the horizon with many mountain ranges.

Pergamon was in Paul's time a very magnificent and richly populated city of 150 000, with alabaster and onyx palaces. It was a gold, onyx, and alabaster supply centre. It had once the largest library of 200 000 parchments or books in the world,

built during the reign of Attolos I, (241- 197 BC), who also started the erection of the magnificent temple or altar of Zeus, which has been reconstructed in the Pergamum Museum in Berlin, Germany.

Under the reign of the son of Attolos I, Eumenes II, (197-159 BC), Pergamon enjoyed its golden age, greatest power, became a centre for arts and sciences. Not only philosophy, mathematics, literature and astronomy flourished, but also practical trades like mechanics, leather manufacturing and architecture, ship building advanced remarkably.

The temple of Zeus - centre of cult worship was then completed, and the library enlarged. Later on this library was twice destroyed by the invading Galatians, who not only set this library on fire, but also the one in Ephesus, and in Alexandria, Egypt. The Alexandrians were jealous of the success of Pergamon, and no longer sent papyrus for the books. So they had to invent their own, what became known until today as parchment paper.

After Eumenes II, his brother Attolos II kept good relations



Pergamon-Red Basilica



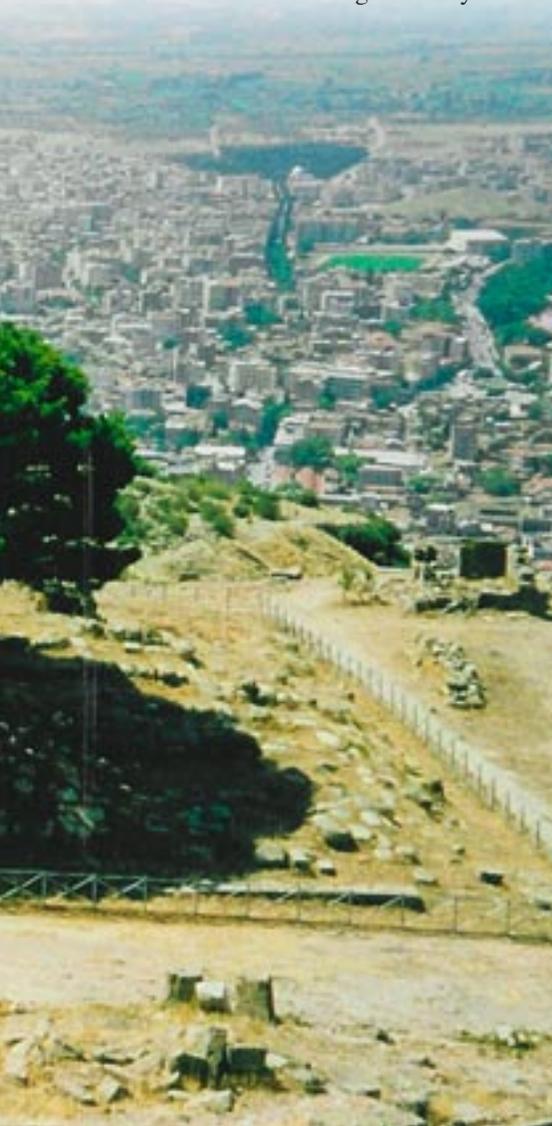
Enjoying Lunch



Silk Production



Carpet Weaving



with Rome, and his nephew Attalos III (138-133BC) bequeathed the kingdom of Pergamon to Rome. During the rule of Julius Caesar, the city lived through one of its best times, but was affected by riots after the murder of Caesar. The 200 000 books of the library were given to Cleopatra as a present from Antonius, which the city considered a great insult. Caesar Augustus and the Emperor Tiberius also stayed here at times. The latter started the construction of the temple of Trajan, its ruins of whitest marble can be seen from the acropolis far into the country today. It is one of the most rewarding sites, because there is still some structure left, while all the others do not leave much to imagine what they once represented. Going down to the hill looking to the left, we find below the temple ruins of Athena, the remains of the former temple of Zeus, with some of the 39 steps leading to the top, where the actual altar was situated.

Here was the place where the apostle Paul had been preaching; olive trees grow there now. When he saw the many temples and pagan cults, Paul put himself in the most populated places, like the market and the altar of Zeus, and determined to turn the deluded idol worshippers to the living God of heaven. Many were converted, the church in time grew, life was pleasant and in time the church became proud. According to tradition, so our guide was telling, the first Christian in Pergamon was Antipas, a rich man who accompanied Paul for 1 ½ years on his travels.

Heathen practices mingled with Christian truths, philosophy entered the church, men's ideas became prominent, covetousness, love for money, foods sacrificed to idols were bought and eaten, the purity of the church was destroyed.

Then came the change from Sabbath to Sunday, the worship of saints, a church and state union, and at last the election of a man to represent Christ on earth. The church became elevated when Constantine gave liberty to the Christian religion. Pergamon was recognized as the official religious centre of the empire, this made her proud. It is the birthplace of Roman Catholicism, the seat of Satan.

Few kilometres from the acropolis to the modern world of Bergama, there are the remains of a once very large Basilica, (a former temple of Egyptian gods Isis and Serapis, which the rich people worshiped).

It was erected during the reign of Hadrian in the 2nd century and because of its red brick walls is named the Red Basilica. It was at first the largest temple during Roman times in that region, located on an area of almost 260x100m with marble floor, and pillared courtyards. In the centre was a podium 1,50m high upon which on one of the steps a cult statue had stood. The priest could enter this statue (probably of Isis) through an underground tunnel, and a hole in the stone, so that he could speak from inside the statue to make the people believe that the gods were speaking. Also there were holes in the floor, in which the people cast coins, and bread came up, which they called manna, but it was the priests in the tunnel that did that.

Later this was changed into a synagogue, (after Paul's days) and in the 6th century Emperor Justinian changed it into a Christian church with a cross shaped design.

A mighty earthquake in 1190 destroyed it as well as other strong earthquakes destroyed all the ancient sites in that land, which are said to occur every 250 years.

Jesus said that, he that overcomes, to him He will give of the hidden manna, that is the true word of God, His promises of eternal life literally fulfilling, not the false oracles of mortal men.

Thyatira

After having lunch in a most delightful country setting at a carpet weaving, and silk centre, we received most interesting instructions about silk and carpet weaving and distinguishing the qualities of carpets. We then headed towards Thyatira, the last visit of the day.

There is not much to see but a few ruins in the centre of the present day town Akhisar, silent witnesses of a once Christian church, destroyed by an earthquake.

Thyatira was once an important outpost for the protection of Pergamon and Sardis, both being the greatest capitals of the world in different eras.

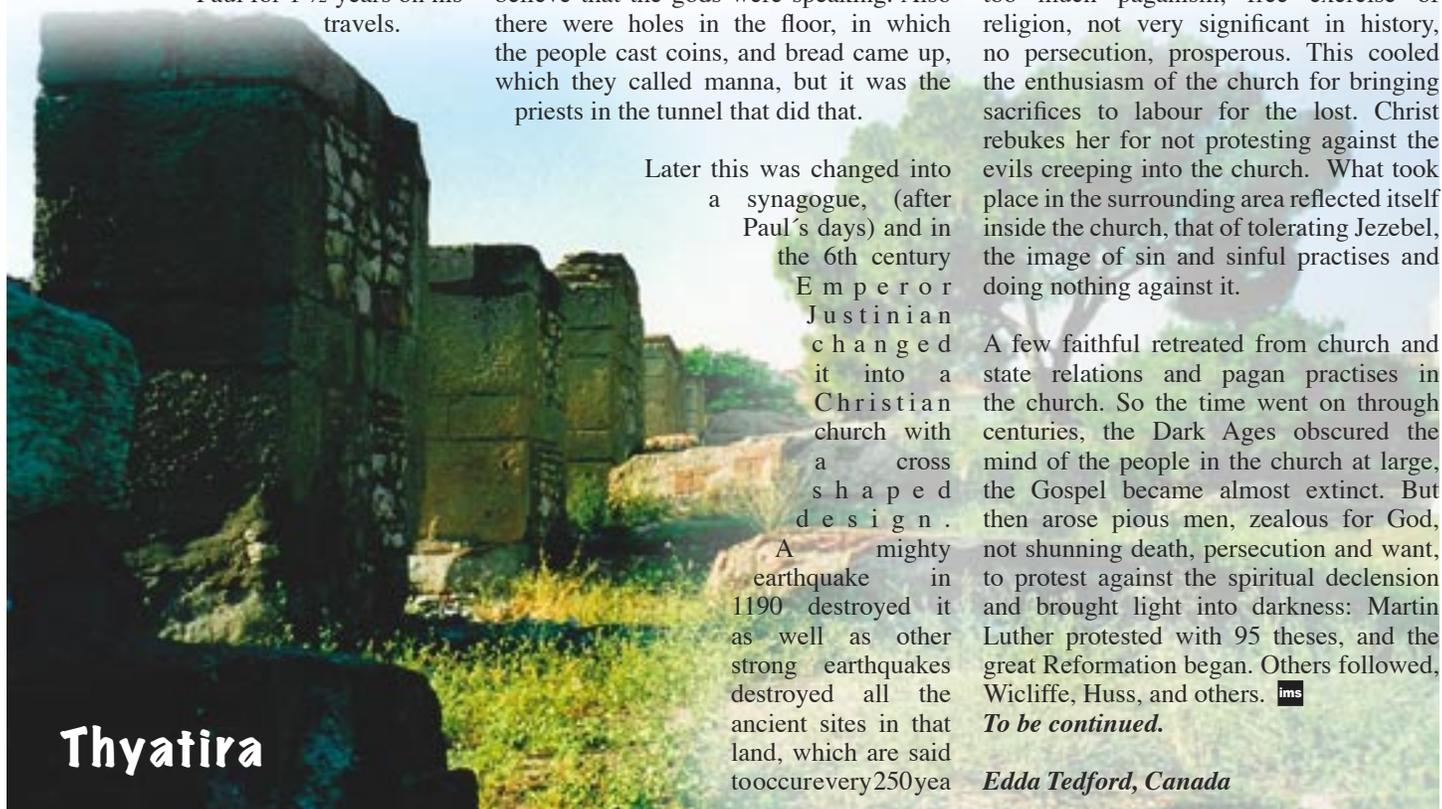
Thyatira itself was a bronze production centre, which manufactured two edged swords. It also was a city of several guilds, like leather tanners, colour makers of purple, coppersmiths, potters, bakers, slave dealers, linen and wool producers. It had been colonized by the Greeks. Under Roman rule in Paul's time it had a population of 120 000. Paul met Lydia the purple seller of Thyatira outside the city of Philippi.

Thyatira enjoyed a smooth life, not too much paganism, free exercise of religion, not very significant in history, no persecution, prosperous. This cooled the enthusiasm of the church for bringing sacrifices to labour for the lost. Christ rebukes her for not protesting against the evils creeping into the church. What took place in the surrounding area reflected itself inside the church, that of tolerating Jezebel, the image of sin and sinful practises and doing nothing against it.

A few faithful retreated from church and state relations and pagan practises in the church. So the time went on through centuries, the Dark Ages obscured the mind of the people in the church at large, the Gospel became almost extinct. But then arose pious men, zealous for God, not shunning death, persecution and want, to protest against the spiritual declension and brought light into darkness: Martin Luther protested with 95 theses, and the great Reformation began. Others followed, Wicliffe, Huss, and others. 

To be continued.

Edda Tedford, Canada



Thyatira



THE LAST CRISIS!

“He who testifieth these things saith, Surely, I come quickly. Amen. Even so come, Lord Jesus.”

It Is Final!

We are living in the last crisis. The last promise, last prayer, last provision, last warning, last chance, last generation, and the last church. In reality, we are living in the last painful scenes of planet earth’s history. That is why the scripture from Rev. 22: 20, is the most important verse for us today. A verse we are to learn, repeat often, share with others, dwell on it, and... above all believe in it. Still, it is true also that, “For yet a little while, and he that shall come will come, and will not tarry.”(Heb 10:37). He will come, whether you believe it or not, or want it or not.

We are living in the time of the third angel’s message (Rev 14:6-11). Even so, are we living the message of truth? Pilate asked Jesus Christ, “what is the truth?” To be sure, are we living up to the light that we have? We have the light, but the fact remains, are we living up to it? Is it reflected in your countenances? Or, are you living in the book of Lamentations?

Sabbath Warning

As we rapidly approach the end of man’s time on earth, the Sabbath day gains more prominence in our preaching. Are you aware of this? Granted that we observe this day, even more fervently, we are to be careful not to take extreme positions by making it prominent to all those around one that we work on Sunday! Furthermore, in some areas of the world, this led to the severest persecution. History, we know will repeat itself... soon.

Flood Victims

Unquestionably, we are living in the time of the end. Plagues, calamities, disasters, judgments are unceasingly falling on the ungodly. It takes courage today to read the news. Many are forecasting, proclaiming the approaching events to come; some boldly, others solemnly. Scriptures clearly describe the condition of the world just before the coming of Jesus in James 5:1-6. Read this. But, on the other hand, who reads the warning? What impression has it made? Has it been shared with others? Has it changed attitudes? No. Certainly no more than the attitudes of the Antedeluvians. “They knew not ‘til the floods came and swept them away... except eight.” (Matt. 24:39)

Few Are Chosen

The world is in a spirit of war. The prophecy of Daniel 11 is nearly completely fulfilled. Floods, storms, of Biblical magnitude are frequently occurring. We are in a “mini-apocalypse” (Is. 24:1, 4, 5, 10). Alas! The Day of the Lord is at hand. This is not Sunday, but destruction from the Almighty God that will come, like the time of Jacob’s trouble. There will be no day like it. (Jer. 30:7)

But, not everyone in the world will take sides with the enemy against God. There will be a few faithful believers that will be true to God. Who are they? They are, “they that keep the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus” (Rev 14:12).

The Enemy

Soon, very soon, there will be a fierce battle between two opposing forces--those that serve God and those that do not serve God. “Everything will be shaken, that can be shaken; mountains, islands, and those that cannot, may remain.” Satan is a diligent Bible student. He knows his time is short, and is doing everything he can

to counterattack the Lord's work here on earth.

Testing Time

But, the children of God... they will walk in the light of God. Through angels, they will have constant communication with heavenly elements and earth. Nobody denies, however, that signs are obviously prominent and growing. False prophets will be at the back door. The very elect will be deceived. Who are they, the elect? We! You, and I. A counterfeit Jesus will appear claiming to be God. He will work miracles! (Matt. 24:24).

Indeed, God's people will be tested and tried. Having trials? Are you being tested... yet? Jesus Christ did not promise an easy time. The path is narrow, crooked, and getting narrower. Many will fall away. Where will God's people find power to endure, to stand?

Security Measures

The only place, the only foundation is the living Word. Here we can be steadfast, safely, enduring (Ex. 31: 12-18). But, for those that broke the commandments of God, they are without hope, without God. They close the door on themselves. A frightening thought!

How can we distinguish God's people? Simply, by how they observe the Sabbath day, by how they observe the fourth commandment. Why? It is a sign of God's creative power. It is the Creator's Memorial Day.

Now, how can we distinguish the wicked? Simply, by their ceaseless efforts to tear down the fourth commandment, the Sabbath day. To "stamp it out." They exalt Rome, the papacy, and the mark of the beast... Sunday.

A Choice

There are two distinct classes of people left in this decaying world. 1) Those that keep the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus Christ (Rev. 14:12). 2) Those who worship the beast and his image, and who will receive the mark of the beast (Sunday).

The church and state will unite in power, and force all... great, small, rich, poor, free, slaves, to receive the mark of the beast (Rev 13:16). What did John the prophet, that old sage of the island of Patmos in

Greece, say and see? "...them that had gotten the victory over the beast, and over his image, and over his mark, and over the number of his name, standing on the sea of glass, having the harps of God, and they sing the song of Moses and the song of the Lamb, saying Great and marvelous are thy works, Lord God Almighty; just and true are thy ways, thou King of saints." (Rev 15:2.3).

Trouble Ahead

Fearful tests and trials are awaiting God's people. The spirit of war is stirring the nations, from one end to the other. We are, to be sure, in the middle of the time of trouble. God's people, however, will be unmoved. Satan cannot destroy them. Angels will protect them, having superior strength. What is God's Word to His people? (2 Cor. 6:17.18; 1 Pet. 2:9). God's people will be distinguished by those who serve Him fully, wholeheartedly, and take no honor for themselves. How? By being affectionate, selfless, servants.

We made a covenant with the Lord. We are bound to serve the Lord and only Him, and not man.

The Lord spoke to Moses, and Moses spoke to the children of Israel, saying, "keep my Sabbath days as a sign between you and me throughout your generations" (Ex. 31:12-17).

Reformed Saints

Don't these words undoubtedly point us out as God's children? Moreover, to declare as long as time lasts, to dearly keep this distinction that has been put on us in humility and reverence? This is a perpetual agreement, a covenant, and still a sign between God's people and God... forever.

Our church has never been large, nor will it ever be. This is true, nobody denies, and our church is never well known... or a popular church... nor politically powerful. Why? Because it is a spiritual organization, not political one. All those lives that have been changed by the Spirit of God are either somewhat visibly apparent or scattered. Persecutions will come, and consequently, it will be difficult to remain united and organized, because God's true people would be scattered (Ezek. 34:5-12; Jer. 23:1-2; Math 26:31). They all foretold it! Jesus foretold it! God's people will be despised by the world, and scattered by

persecution (Acts 8:11).

Sabbath or Sunday?

Prophecies bring the church into clear focus in Rev 12. A persecuted, commandment keeping church, which for 1230 years was driven into the wilderness, and was referred to as the Dark Ages, or Middle Ages. But, even as early as in Paul's days, many in Antioch, Jerusalem, Ephesus, Corinth, etc., began to apostasize, and turn from the truth. Old pagan beliefs, practices, traditions, began to take root.

King Constantine I in the early 4th century ruled, whose kingdom was almost wholly pagan, but in the Council of Nicaea 325 A.D., changed the Sabbath Day to the Sunday, to appease the pagans. Excommunications were common. All those were persecuted who held the true word of God, and kept the Sabbath day. The real Christians fled, and scattered from the jurisdiction of Rome to worship God freely.

Shine On

Let us, therefore, humbly, and obediently, observe and obey the sacred Law as we are commanded from a love for Jesus, and not a mere ritual, fear, or "form of godliness." We learn often by suffering. A child learns by touching a hot stove with his finger, to see if it is hot. Jesus learned, too, by experience (Heb. 5:8-9).

We have such a blessed hope, "to he that overcomes, will I grant to sit with me in my throne" (Rev. 3:21). We are watchmen in this teetering world. Furthermore, we have been entrusted with the last warning message for a perishing world. We have this wonderful light; the third angels message. God says, moreover, "you are the light of the world" (Matt. 5:14).

How Long?

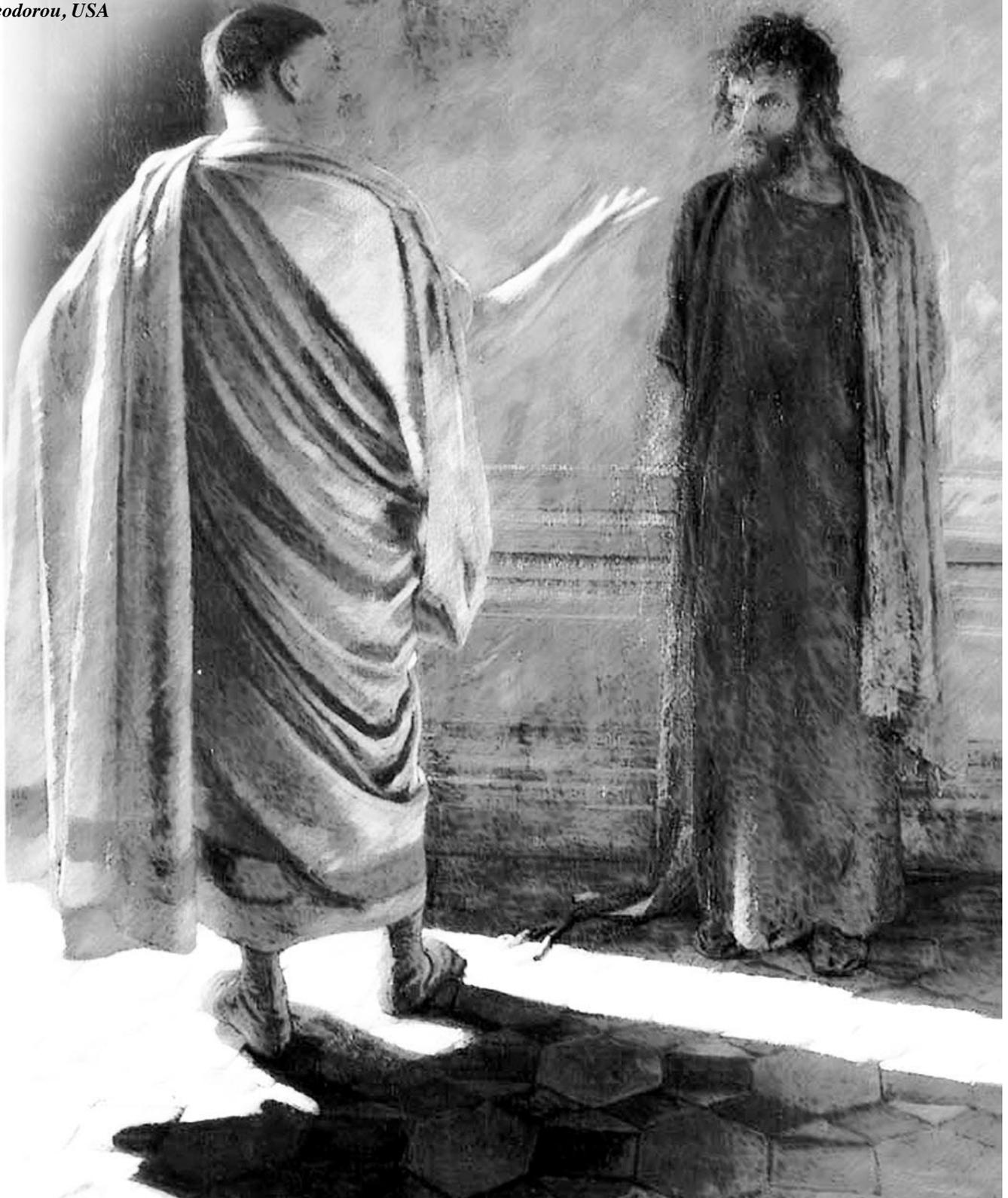
There is unmistakable evidence of the nearness of the end. Warnings are given to prepare the way for the coming of Jesus Christ again, the Prince of Peace. The message of the Sabbath has been set forth, with clearness and power. Shall we wait until prophecies are fulfilled? Until God's judgments fall, before we tell others? Or, do we avoid them? What good is it then? It is not only preaching and distributing literature and books, but leading a Christian life. Men don't always believe what the minister preaches, but what the church

lives! We are to be a stirring example, having a quiet spirit, as we are to be His witnesses. What an honor!

Every day, we are drawing nearer to the End. Does it, however, bring us nearer to God? Watching, praying? Bringing our lives into harmony with God's will?... to meet The Last Crisis? *Amen.* 

John Theodorou, USA

What is truth?





But grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. To him be glory both now and for ever. Amen. 2 Peter 3:18

There are many satisfied Christians in the fallen churches who see no need to continue studying God's word and growing spiritually. They are happily enjoying their worldly habits and enjoying the fact that they are told they can enjoy eternal life when their journey on this earth is finished. There are also many satisfied people in God's church. People who feel very righteous and spiritual and see no need to continue growing. There are also some people who are trying to work their way to heaven; by doing the least that they possibly must in order to remain a church member. Neither of these types of people have improved spiritually or gained spiritual knowledge for years, however they are still keeping the rules of the church and therefore continue to remain church members. Little growth is seen they feel as though they are good enough and have reached the platform. These people will be bitterly disappointed when Jesus comes. They will cry unto the Lord and saying, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works? and He will answer, I never ever knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity. Matthew 7:22,23.

Christian life requires growth. We are far from the perfect image that Jesus wants to create in us. His knowledge far surpasses ours and He wants to impart it to us. Compare your life as to where you were a year ago? Have you seen improvement?

We are told to grow in grace in the opening Bible verse. It didn't say grow in character or in knowledge it says grow in grace. What is grace? One definition is mercy, clemency, or pardon. We are to become more firmly established in a personal experience of Christ's own gracious kindness.

When we think of the word grow, we think of living things, whether people, animals plants or bacteria. Jesus spoke several parables regarding Christian growth and He compared our growth to the growth of plants. There is always growth when we surrender to Christ. If a Christian is not growing, I question their connection with Jesus.

The plants and flowers grow not by their own care or anxiety or effort, but by receiving that which God has furnished to minister to their life. The child cannot, by any anxiety or power of its own, add to its stature. No more can you, by anxiety or effort of yourself, secure spiritual growth. The plant, the child, grows by receiving from its surroundings that which ministers to its life --air, sunshine, and food. What these gifts of nature are to animal and plant, such is Christ to those who trust in Him. He is their everlasting light, a sun and shield. Isaiah 60:19; Psalm 84:11. He shall be as the dew unto Israel. He shall come down like rain upon the mown grass. Hosea 14:5; Psalm 72:6. He is the living water, the Bread of God...which cometh down from heaven, and giveth life unto the world. John 6:33. SC 67

What kind of effort do the plants make to grow? Do they not simply draw on the energy stores in the sunshine and soil and using those elements they grow? It doesn't sound too difficult. How strong are plants? Man can squash them if they want, they can also uproot them or poison them and they will die, but if left to their own they can be very strong. Have you ever seen plants grow up through the tiniest cracks in a pavement? Plants can be very strong when man leaves them alone. Roots of trees have been known to tear up roads

and sidewalks open solid steel coffins. In your spiritual life if you try to manipulate things the way you want them to be to try to live the Christian life in your own strength, you will not be strong. But if you surrender yourself to Jesus and leave things to Him, you will grow strong like the mighty cedar.

WEEDS

What about weeds? What is a weed? Weeds are simply displaced plants. They are plants growing where we do not want them to grow. In our lawn we want grass to grow and are disappointed when it is thin and scanty with many bare spots; so we may add fertilizer, plant more grass seeds and put some fresh soil on top. Just let those grass plants grow in our vegetable garden and then we consider them obnoxious weeds and we uproot them as fast as they grow. As we uproot those weeds, they may disappear for a time, but may reappear time and time again. It is a constant battle to keep our vegetable gardens free from weeds.

Sometimes our Christian life is like weeds. We fall down get uprooted over and over again when Satan attacks us. However, we need to be persistent. Just get up again and go on, don't give up. Satan would want more than anything to have Christians give up after they stumble, but a just man falleth seven times, and riseth up again: but the wicked shall fall into mischief. Proverbs 24:16

Satan suggests that you are helpless and cannot bless yourself. It is true; you are helpless. But lift up Jesus before him: I have a risen Saviour. In His name I triumph. He is my righteousness and my crown of rejoicing. Let no one here feel that his case is hopeless, for it is not. You may see that you are sinful and undone, but it is just on this account that you need a Saviour. If you have sins to confess, lose no time. These moments are golden. 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). Those who hunger and thirst after righteousness will be filled, for Jesus has promised it. Precious Saviour! His arms are open to receive us, and His great heart of love is waiting to bless us. Faith and Works 37/38. Rejoice not against me, O mine enemy: when I fall, I shall arise; when I sit in darkness, the LORD shall be a light unto me. Micah 7:8.

Weeds have also been compared to sin. Once indulged, they can take a deep root in the heart and it takes much effort to pull them free. If only the plants above the surface are pulled off and the roots are left to grow, the weeds will regrow. Sin must be completely rooted out of the heart.

SEEDS

All plants grow from seeds. Each seed produces only one kind of plant. An apple seed will never grow into a lemon tree. Likewise in our Christian life we reap what we have sown. Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap. For he that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting. And let us not be weary in well doing: for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not. Galatians 6:7 8.

Many people are not planting good seeds. God destroys no man. Everyone who is destroyed will have destroyed himself. Everyone who stifles the admonitions of conscience is sowing the seeds of unbelief, and these will produce a sure harvest. By rejecting the first warning from God, Pharaoh of old sowed the seeds of obstinacy, and he reaped obstinacy. God did not compel him to disbelieve. The seed of unbelief, which he sowed, produced a harvest of its kind. Thus his resistance continued, until he looked upon his devastated land, upon the cold, dead form of his first-born, and the first-born of all in his house and of all the families in his kingdom, until the waters of the sea closed over his horses and his chariots and his men of war. His history is a fearful illustration of the truth of the words that whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap. Gal. 6:7. Did men but realize this, they would be careful what seed they sow. COL 84

From this quote we see that Pharaoh planted seeds of obstinacy. He firmly and perversely adhered to his erroneous beliefs, disregarding all the evidence given him that there is a God in heaven who is greater than he is and it would do well for Him to serve this God. He also planted the seeds of unbelief and what a terrible result he reaped.

Are we sowing seeds of obstinacy or unbelief? We may belong to God's remnant church, but what about issues we consider minor details in the Spirit of Prophecy that

we may feel are not so important? Are they words from God or man? It is often issues that people think are very small and minor that causes the undoing of many. It may be a little indulgence of appetite, a minor breach of the Sabbath, a little white lie or a dislike for dress reform. It is obstinacy and unbelief that keep many from a full surrender. If we are not faithful in these points that we think are minor points, how can we ever hope to be faithful in greater matters?

It is Satan that tries to plant these seeds, Ever since the fall of man, Satan has been sowing the seeds of error. COL 37

If we have Jesus with us, those seeds can be prevented from germinating. Jesus can pull up the weeds of sin as they appear. We need to allow Jesus to plant the good seeds of truth and righteousness. But we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord. 2 Cor. 3:18.

Mustard Seed: The kingdom of heaven is like to a grain of mustard seed, which a man took, and sowed in his field: Which indeed is the least of all seeds: but when it is grown, it is the greatest among herbs, and becometh a tree, so that the birds of the air come and lodge in the branches thereof. Matthew 13:31,32. The work of grace in the heart is small in its beginning. A word is spoken, a ray of light is shed into the soul, an influence is exerted that is the beginning of the new life; and who can measure its results? COL 78.1 This is the kind of seeds that need to be sown. The mustard seeds will grow into a large plant, and likewise the seeds of truth in our hearts will grow.

SOWER (Jesus is the sower in the parables that He taught when on the earth. He also has helpers who assist in sowing the seeds. I have planted, Apollos watered; but God gave the increase. Acts 3 3:6 So those who are called to unite with Christ must leave all, in order to follow Him. Old associations must be broken up, plans of life relinquished, earthly hopes surrendered. In toil and tears, in solitude, and through sacrifice, must the seed be sown. COL 37. This is a difficult task that is required old associations broken up life plans relinquished earthly hopes surrendered and then through much sacrifice the seed must be sown. How could Jesus

ask this of us? It is the only way to true happiness. It is hard to leave the old life and many have turned away, like the rich young ruler, because they loved their worldly possessions and associates too much. Many have refused the call of Jesus to be with His people, only because of social contacts. They could not leave their old friends behind in the other churches and join a small remnant of people. Just a small group; it was too much of a sacrifice to make. Or then to leave behind worldly associations who lead them in the wrong way is very difficult. They may have believed the truth 100%, but could not turn their backs on the world. But the promise is given to us. They that sow in tears shall reap in joy. Psalm 126:5. We are all called to join with Jesus in the work of sowing the seed.

PREPARE THE SOIL

In order to have a good crop, the soil must be prepared. If the soil is too hard, the seeds cannot penetrate and send their roots down. If there are too many rocks, the plant will spring up quickly but will also die out quickly since the roots have no depth. There may be thorns that choke the plants as they grow. We need to spiritually prepare the soil before planting the seeds of truth. In labouring in a new field, do not think it your duty to say at once to the people, We are Seventh-day Adventists; we believe that the seventh day is the Sabbath; we believe in the nonimmortality of the soul. This would often erect a formidable barrier between you and those you wish to reach. Speak to them, as you have opportunity, upon points of doctrine on which you can agree. Dwell on the necessity of practical godliness. Give them evidence that you are a Christian, desiring peace, and that you love their souls. Let them see that you are conscientious. Thus you will gain their confidence; and there will be time enough for doctrines. Let the heart be won, the soil prepared, and then sow the seed, presenting in love the truth as it is in Jesus. Ev 200

THE SOIL

In the parable that Jesus told about the sower who went to sow, the seeds fell in four different types of ground. They were briefly mentioned in the paragraph above. How do you treat the message? That with which the parable of the sower chiefly deals is the effect produced on the growth of the seed by the soil into which it is cast. By this parable Christ was virtually



saying to His hearers, it is not safe for you to stand as critics of My work, or to indulge disappointment because it does not meet your ideas. The question of greatest importance to you is, How do you treat My message? Upon your reception or rejection of it your eternal destiny depends. COL 43

The wayside (hard soil): The seed sown by the wayside represents the word of God as it falls upon the heart of an inattentive hearer. Like the hard-beaten path, trodden down by the feet of men and beasts, is the heart that becomes a highway for the world's traffic, its pleasures and sins. Absorbed in selfish aims and sinful indulgences, the soul is 22hardened through the deceitfulness of sin. Heb. 3:13. The spiritual faculties are paralysed. Men hear the word, but understand it not. They do not discern that it applies to themselves. They do not realize their need or their danger. They do not perceive the love of Christ, and they pass by the message of His grace as something that does not concern them. COL 44

As the birds are ready to catch up the seed from the wayside, so Satan is ready to catch away the seeds of divine truth from the soul. He fears that the word of God may awaken the careless, and take effect upon the hardened heart. Satan and his angels are in the assemblies where the gospel is preached. While angels of heaven endeavour to impress hearts with the word of God, the enemy is on the alert to make the word of no effect. With an earnestness

equalled only by his malice, he tries to thwart the work of the Spirit of God. While Christ is drawing the soul by His love, Satan tries to turn away the attention of the one who is moved to seek the Saviour. He engages the mind with worldly schemes. He excites criticism, or insinuates doubt and unbelief. The speaker's choice of language or his manner may not please the hearers, and they dwell upon these defects. Thus the truth they need, and which God has graciously sent them, makes no lasting impression. COL 44

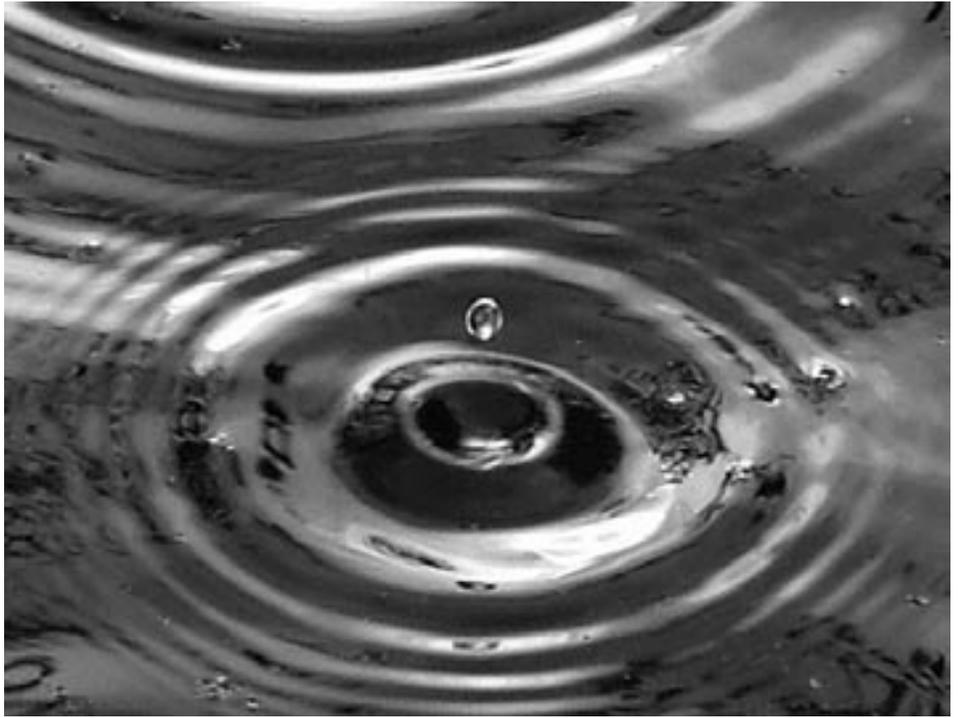
Satan has many helpers. Many who profess to be Christians are aiding the tempter to catch away the seeds of truth from other hearts. Many who listen to the preaching of the word of God make it the subject of criticism at home. They sit in judgment on the sermon as they would on the words of a lecturer or a political speaker. The message that should be regarded as the word of the Lord to them is dwelt upon with trifling or sarcastic comment. The minister's character, motives, and actions, and the conduct of fellow members of the church, are freely discussed. Severe judgment is pronounced, gossip or slander repeated, and this in the hearing of the unconverted. Often these things are spoken by parents in the hearing of their own children. Thus are destroyed respect for God's messengers, and reverence for their message. And many are taught to regard lightly God's word itself. COL 44/45

In Stony Places: The hot summer sun, that strengthens and ripens the hardy grain, destroys that which has no depth of root. So he who hath not root in himself, dureth for a while; but when tribulation or persecution ariseth because of the word, by and by he is offended. Many receive the gospel as a way of escape from suffering, rather than as a deliverance from sin. They rejoice for a season, for they think that religion will free them from difficulty and trial. While life moves smoothly with them, they may appear to be consistent Christians. But they faint beneath the fiery test of temptation. They cannot bear reproach for Christ's sake. When the word of God points out some cherished sin, or requires self-denial or sacrifice, they are offended. It would cost them too much effort to make a radical change in their life. They look at the present inconvenience and trial, and forget the eternal realities. Like the disciples who left Jesus, they are ready to say, This is an hard saying; who can hear it? John 6:60. COL 47

Thorns: Cares of this world & The deceitfulness of riches. The love of riches has an infatuating, deceptive power. Too often those who possess worldly treasure forget that it is God who gives them power to get wealth. They say, My power and the might of mine hand hath gotten me this wealth. Deut. 8:17. Their riches, instead of awakening gratitude to God, lead to the exaltation of self. They lose the sense of their dependence upon God and their obligation to their fellow men. Instead of regarding wealth as a talent to be employed for the glory of God and the uplifting of humanity, they look upon it as a means of serving themselves. Instead of developing in man the attributes of God, riches thus used are developing in him the attributes of Satan. The seed of the word is choked with thorns. COL 52

Good Ground: Merely to hear or to read the word is not enough. He who desires to be profited by the Scriptures must meditate upon the truth that has been presented to him. By earnest attention and prayerful thought he must learn the meaning of the words of truth, and drink deep of the spirit of the holy oracles.

A knowledge of the truth depends not so much upon strength of intellect as upon pureness of purpose, the simplicity of an earnest, dependent faith. To those who in humility of heart seek for divine guidance,



angels of God draw near. The Holy Spirit is given to open to them the rich treasures of the truth.

The good-ground hearers, having heard the word, keep it. Satan with all his agencies of evil is not able to catch it away. COL 59

GROWTH

For the earth bringeth forth fruit of herself; first the blade, then the ear, after that the full corn in the ear. Mark 4:28. A plant grows slowly and imperceptibly. A seed planted today will not produce a mighty oak tomorrow. How often we expect that from our children or from those we are studying the Bible with. We get impatient with their slow growth and want them to be mighty cedars very quickly. However this is not the way the Holy Spirit works. However there must be growth, and Christian growth is described in several different ways in the Bible.

Peter's Ladder. Although written in the book of Peter and often described as Peter's ladder, in reality is Jesus ladder. And beside this, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue; and to virtue knowledge; And to knowledge temperance; and to temperance patience; and to patience godliness; And to godliness brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness charity. For if these things be in you, and abound, they make you that ye shall neither be barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. 2 Peter 1:5-8. We

must take the first step of faith and climb the ladder, one step at a time. We can never hope to be patient if we are not temperate. Our goal is to reach the top and to have our lives filled with the love of God.

Justification Sanctification: The germination of the seed represents the beginning of spiritual life, and the development of the plant is a beautiful figure of Christian growth. As in nature, so in grace; there can be no life without growth. The plant must either grow or die. As its growth is silent and imperceptible, but continuous, so is the development of the Christian life. At every stage of development our life may be perfect; yet if God's purpose for us is fulfilled, there will be continual advancement. Sanctification is the work of a lifetime. As our opportunities multiply, our experience will enlarge, and our knowledge increases. We shall become strong to bear responsibility, and our maturity will be in proportion to our privileges. COL 65

Although we are justified in a moment, Sanctification is not the work of a moment, an hour, or a day. It is a continual growth in grace. We know not one day how strong will be our conflict the next. Satan lives, and is active, and every day we need to cry earnestly to God for help and strength to resist him. As long as Satan reigns we shall have self to subdue, besetment to overcome, and there is no stopping place, there is no point to which we can come

and say we have fully attained. 1T 340. Therefore we must be continually growing. As we near the close of time Satan is getting angry. He goes about as a roaring lion & seeking whom he may devour. 1 Peter 5:8. Therefore it is of vital importance that we are growing closer to Jesus or we will have no hope against the devices of the enemy.

Early Rain Latter Rain: We are all waiting and praying for the outpouring of the Latter Rain so that the Holy Spirit can be poured out with great measure on God's people. The latter rain will only fall on those that have allowed the Lord to sanctify their hearts. Be glad then, ye children of Zion, and rejoice in the Lord your God: for he hath given you the former rain moderately, and he will cause to come down for you the rain, the former rain, and the latter rain in the first month. Joel 2:23.

The Latter Rain, ripening earth's harvest, represents the spiritual grace that prepares the church for the coming of the Son of man. But unless the former rain has fallen, there will be no life; the green blade will not spring up. Unless the early showers have done their work, the latter rain can bring no seed to perfection. TM 506

The Early Rain Produces Conversion; The Latter Rain Develops a Christlike Character

At no point in our experience can we dispense with the assistance of that which enables us to make the first start. The blessings received under the former rain are needful to us to the end & As we seek God for the Holy Spirit, it will work in us meekness, humbleness of mind, a conscious dependence upon God for the perfecting latter rain. TM 507, 509.

We may have had a measure of the Spirit of God, but by prayer and faith we are continually to seek more of the Spirit. It will never do to cease our efforts. If we do not progress, if we do not place ourselves in an attitude to receive both the former and the latter rain, we shall lose our souls, and the responsibility will lie at our own door. TM 508

It is left with us to remedy the defects in our characters, to cleanse the soul temple of every defilement. Then the latter rain will fall upon us as the early rain fell upon the disciples on the Day of Pentecost. 5T 214.

There is nothing that Satan fears so much as, that the people of God shall clear the way by removing every hindrance, so that the Lord can pour out His Spirit upon a languishing church & Every temptation, every opposing influence, whether open or secret, may be successfully resisted, not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit, saith the Lord of hosts (Zech. 4:6). 1SM 124

We may be sure that when the Holy Spirit is poured out, those who did not receive and appreciate the early rain will not see or understand the value of the latter rain. TM 399

Only those who are living up to the light they have will receive greater light. Unless we are daily advancing in the exemplification of the active Christian virtues, we shall not recognize the manifestations of the Holy Spirit in the latter rain. It may be falling on hearts all around us, but we shall not discern or receive it. TM 507

Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord; Acts 3:19.

I saw that none could share the refreshing unless they obtain the victory over every besetment, over pride, selfishness, love of the world, and over every wrong word and action. We should therefore be drawing nearer and nearer to the Lord and be earnestly seeking that preparation necessary to enable us to stand in the battle in the day of the Lord. EW 71

HEART EXAMINATION

Closely examine your own heart, and the state of your affections toward God. Inquire; Have I devoted the precious moments of today in seeking to please myself, seeking for my own amusement?

or have I made others happy? Have I helped those connected with me to greater devotion to God and to appreciate eternal things? Have I brought my religion into my home, and there revealed the grace of Christ in my words and in my deportment? By my respectful obedience, have I honoured my parents, and thus kept the fifth commandment? Have I cheerfully taken up my little, everyday duties, performing them with fidelity, doing what I could to lighten the burdens of others? Have I kept my lips from evil, and my tongue from speaking guile? Have I honoured Christ my Redeemer, who gave His precious life that eternal life might be within my reach? MYP 122

The only way to grow in grace is to be disinterestedly doing the very work which Christ has enjoined upon us--to engage, to the extent of our ability, in helping and blessing those who need the help we can give them. Strength comes by exercise; activity is the very condition of life. Those who endeavour to maintain Christian life by passively accepting the blessings that come through the means of grace, and doing nothing for Christ, are simply trying to live by eating without working. And in the spiritual as in the natural world, this always results in degeneration and decay. A man who would refuse to exercise his limbs would soon lose all power to use them. Thus the Christian who will not exercise his God-given powers not only fails to grow up into Christ, but he loses the strength that he already had. SC 80

May God help us to be continually growing in grace and knowledge that we may be ready for the outpouring of the latter rain when it comes. **AMEN** 

Wendy Eaton, Australia



A LESSON IN THANKSGIVING



CHILDRENS CORNER

Sally and Sam had always had fun on Thanksgiving. It had been a time when the whole family got together at Grandma and Grandpa Miller's house. There was lots of good food to eat, and Sally and Sam got to play with their cousins.

They were disappointed when their mother told them that they wouldn't be able to go to grandma and grandpa's for Thanksgiving this year. "I'm afraid we live too far away now, and your father can't take the time off of work," their mother explained.

Seeing their disappointment, their father said. "I have an idea! Why don't you invite some of your friends over for Thanksgiving?"

"Everyone is going to have Thanksgiving with their own family!" Sally pointed out with a sigh.

"How about Roger?" Sam asked, "He only has a mother, and she doesn't make much money. I'll bet they'd like a nice thanksgiving dinner."

"I've met Roger's mother at school," Sally and Sam's mother said, "She seems like a very nice woman, but I'm not sure she'd like it if she thought we were inviting her because she and her son were poor. I'll write her an invitation, explaining that you children aren't able to be with your cousins this year, and we'd appreciate it if they could join us for dinner. That's true, isn't it?"

"Is something wrong, Sally?" Sally's father asked. "Don't you like Roger?"

"The other kids make fun

of him, daddy!" Sally cried, "When they find out he was over for Thanksgiving, they'll tease me too!"

"Why do they make fun of him?" her father wanted to know.

"I don't know. His ears are a little big - so some of the kids call him Roger Rabbit, but mostly, I guess, it's because of how he dresses. He wears the same pants and shirt all week! And his shoes have holes in them!"

"Perhaps his mother can't afford to buy him new clothes, Sally," her mother pointed out gently, "Not everyone's job pays as much as your father's does."

"Jesus tells us to do good to others without hoping to get any kind of reward," Sally's father reminded. "If the boy is being teased at school, he can use some friends. We'll invite Roger and his mother over for

Thanksgiving dinner."

Sally knew her father had made up his mind, but she wasn't really happy with his decision.

The next day she watched as Sam gave Roger the note their mother had written, and told him that they were invited over for Thanksgiving. The look of joy that came into Roger's eyes made her feel slightly uncomfortable.

"Hey Sally, what's your brother doing with Roger Rabbit?" One of the girls who had been playing nearby came up and asked.

"Father says it's wrong to call names," Sally answered proudly and walked off before they could question her further.

Sally was happy when no one learned that they had invited Roger and his mother to their house. Perhaps no one would ever know, she thought as school let out for the



Thanksgiving holiday. It was different with boys, she decided. Boys didn't care what they looked like. But girls had to look nice to have friends, and their friends had to look nice too, or people noticed and made fun of you.

Sally always helped her mother make the pies, but this year Roger's mother had asked if she might bring desert. Sally's mother was glad of the help, but Sally was resentful. Not that there wasn't plenty of work for her to do! There was the salad to toss, and potatoes to peel, and rolls to make, and oh so much more! Usually grandma did most of the work, while mother and Aunt Jessie helped. This year mother was doing everything herself.

"You've done a wonderful job, my dear, and such delicious smells!" Father said approvingly as he lay the last piece of silverware on the table and stood back to inhale deeply.

"Shouldn't they be here by now?" mother asked, "The dinner is nearly ready."

"Didn't Sam say they had to take the bus? I'm sure they'll be here any minute now."

As the doorbell sounded, he nodded his head, "Didn't I tell you?" he asked as he crossed to open the door for their guests.

Sally watched with curiosity as Roger and his mother entered their apartment, their hands full of boxes. Imagine! Store bought pies! Sally thought and wrinkled her nose.

"I'm afraid I didn't have time to cook from scratch," the woman apologized, "I had to work later than expected."

"I'm sure they're delicious," Sally's father said.

"Hi, Roger!" Sam called out from his bedroom doorway. "Come on in and let's play!"

Roger looked toward his mother and she nodded her head, "Go have fun, dear, and I'll get better acquainted with Sam's parents. And this little girl must be Sam's sister, Sally? I expect you've been a big help to your mother today."

"Indeed she has!" Sally's mother flashed her daughter a smile. "Why don't you go

play with the boys, Sally? Dinner won't be long."

Sally stood in the doorway watching the boys as they talked, "So how many games do you have, Roger?" Sam was asking.

"I don't have a game system," Roger said picking up one of Sam's books and looking at it.

"I'm sorry," Sam mumbled but Roger smiled broadly. "I don't mind. I don't have time to play anyways, what with my music lessons, and reading. Do you like to read?"

"Sometimes," Sam admitted, though he hadn't read much lately. "What kind of music do you play?"

"Mother is giving me lessons on an old piano that used to belong to my grandmother. There's a few keys that don't work, but I can play it anyways!"

"How silly!" Sally said, "To play something that doesn't work properly."

"When you don't have, you make do, that's what mother always says. Besides, I don't mind a few broken keys. I just think of all the keys that DO work!"

"Would you like some punch, kids?" father asked as he came into the room. "Made from grandma's special recipe!"

"I wish grandma had made it!" Sally said as she took a cup off of the tray.

"Maybe next year we can go to grandma and grandpa's, dear, if I can get the time off work," her father said. "In the meantime, you should try and enjoy yourself. Are there any games the three of you can play?"

"I know a good Thanksgiving game!" Roger explained. "It's easy too. All you have to do is make a list of the things you're thankful for, and the person with the most things wins."

"I don't know," her father seemed hesitant, but Roger added, "My mother and I play it every year. I'll ask her if she wants to play," he declared, rushing from the room.

"What can he have to be thankful for!" Sally asked. "He doesn't even have a good pair of shoes to wear!"

"Perhaps he knows there's more to life than new shoes," Sally's father said soberly. "Come you two, let's play Roger's Thanksgiving game."

Paper and pencils were passed out and the children sat down to list all the things they were thankful for.

"If you don't know how to spell a word, just draw a picture." Roger directed.

This is going to be easy, Sally thought and wrote down a few items. Then her brow puckered. What else did she own? Her doll house, of course it was a few years old, but it was still in good condition.

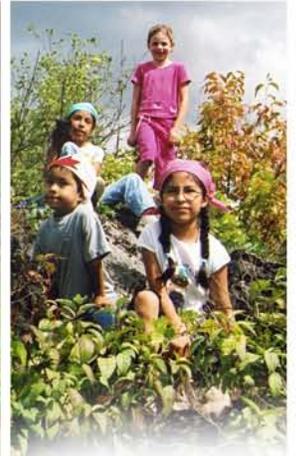
"Times up," Sally's father announced as the buzzer in the kitchen went off. "While mother's taking the food out of the oven suppose we go over our list and see who came up with the most things to be thankful for."

The lists were laid out on the table and Roger's list was the longest. But as Sally looked at what he had written she felt puzzled.

"I don't understand, daddy," she said to the man who stood looking over her shoulder. "How can he be thankful for those things?"

"How can anyone not be thankful for those things, Sally?" her father asked. "Roger has remembered to be thankful for things that many of us take for granted. That's one of the reasons he's so happy all the time. I think we would all be a lot better off if we remembered to thank God every day for the wonderful things he's given us."

When Sally and Sam's father gave the prayer he remembered to include many of the things Roger written on his Thanksgiving list. Watching Roger as he sat at the table laughing and joking with his mother and the others, Sally began to feel ashamed of herself. Roger knew better than she how to do things God's way. And that was why Roger, in spite of not having much in the way of physical possessions, was happy. 



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