



“Repent and turn yourselves from your idols, and turn away your faces from all your abominations.” Ezek. 14:6.

This is a strong and firm warning which denotes the Lord’s purpose to stretch His hand to him who wants salvation. God does not work a miracle to make man depart from sin, because this should be a conscientious act that requires determination, will power and personal struggle to get a hold of the Lord’s grace, which is always supplied to man in abundance.

Repentance cannot take place in or by itself; it is a gift from God and man needs to want it. Consider that repentance means pain. It is clear that it must come from the Lord. He has to make us abhor sin and feel sorry for the suffering. Our evil deeds or words cause suffering to other people, to Him, and to His beloved Son who died because of our sinfulness. We should constantly plead to God that He may deliver us from the power of sin while we are still under His grace. Every sin, whichever commandment we transgress, can be expressed in one word - idolatry. Whatever we exalt above God and His holiness will become an idol and has to be done away with, no matter how much pain it will or may cause us.

“Turning away your faces, all your abominations.” Consider that our eyes record everything we see like a camera, that everything we look at is not only an instant impression, but is stored in our minds and remains in our memory, and its picture can be made alive any moment. One of the main steps to overcome temptation and return to the Lord is by putting away our

idols and by keeping our eyes away from them.

When we read Patriarchs and Prophets, (section II) about the flood, so many things happened. We see before the flood, God sent Noah to warn the world that the people might be led to repentance to escape the threatened destruction; and as the time of Christ’s second coming draws near, the Lord again sends His servants to tell us the good news about His coming and to repent from our sins. These are warnings from the Lord unto the world to prepare it for the great event. Many people have been living in transgression of God’s law, and in His mercy He still calls us to obey His sacred precepts. All who will put away his/her sins by repentance toward God, and have faith in Christ are offered pardon. It does not require great sacrifice to put away sin, which is contrary to what people think; this is because their lives do not harmonize with the pure principle of God’s moral requirements, rejecting His warning and denying the authority of His law. If we consider the vast population that was on the earth before the flood, only eight souls believed and obeyed God through Noah--fortunately these were Noah’s family--whereas all others rejected and despised His message. It is like today—how many have heard the truth, but have given a deaf ear to the Lord’s teachings, commandments, and repentance of their souls? So it will be that the Law-giver shall come to punish the disobedient. We are being warned to repent and turn our allegiance to God, having in mind that as it was in the days of Noah, even shall it be in the days when the Son of God is revealed.

God calls us for a full surrender of all that we have; each day we have a part to act in deciding our destiny. We are God’s free agents and each one of us must work out his/her own salvation with fear and trembling, while God works in us to do His good pleasure. It doesn’t matter who you are, how famous you are, neither your position in the work place; but only a whole surrender and repentance between you and your Creator. Let God take you the way you are, and your name will be written in the Book of Life before He comes, having in mind that we are living in the great Day of Atonement. We have to afflict our souls before God by sorrow for our sins, because soon the door will be closed and nobody will open it for you, since He Himself has the key. Ask yourself on which side you belong, or are you still among the lost sheep? He went to prepare for us a nice supper in heaven, and we will know that in His Father’s house are so many things, no death or suffering - what a nice place for me and you!

Remember, I was once like you, bound with sin and abominations; I was overburdened with sorrows which seemed to overload me, but I found Jesus, the Son of God, who was sent to deliver me from my bondage of sin. I was freed and made holy and for that reason, everything is possible if we all put our trust in the Lord. And whatever our weaknesses may be, we must depart from the place or circumstance that leads us into temptation, lest we fall under its bewitching influence. Such an attitude will protect us from many snares, but it requires from us, much awareness, prayer and perseverance.

May the Lord help us not to make any kind of compromise, and if we are still worshipping at foreign altars, that we may follow the right steps to repentance. **AMEN. Willkister Akinyi-Outah**

A Trip to Belize

It has always been in our minds to carry forward the work in our neighbouring country, Belize, which covers a small territory, but represents a great challenge in soul winning. This challenge arises from the hardness of the hearts of the people which have their cultural roots from pagan idolatry and rituals.

Nevertheless, we have always hoped to erect a bulwark for the truth in this Central American country, which has caused us suffering, hardships and great investments of money by the General Conference, and by the Western Union of Central America, as well as by the unselfish brothers and sisters who of their good hearts have transferred their money to the bank of heaven. Little by little we have reached the goal for which we are glad, to have a first temple in the district of Toledo, in the province of Punta Gorda; even that the temple is humble-looking, yet it gives us great joy to have it built on our own land. This is one step forward that we have reached with much effort and the help of God. Praise be to God that He has granted us this. And not only this, but we see with great joy, souls preparing for baptism.

Our trip, according to our schedule, started on the first day of February this year, and after sorting out all kinds of difficulties we arrived after two days to Santa Elena El Cayo, which is close to the border of Guatemala. Here we visited a family who had been weakening in faith for the lack of visits to them. We conducted meetings with them at night and during the day we visited people. Also we visited the family of Sister Yolanda Chavarria and her children. In the afternoon we went to the country area called Seven Miles, where we had Bible studies and a youth meeting, because many children came there with us. We sang many hymns with guitar music by Esau Lopez, who is the missionary in that area.

Then we packed our things into the old van which one generous brother in Guatemala lent to us. We continued our journey to Balmopan, where we visited Albita, who is an influential business lady and a friend of the truth. She expressed her desire to join if only there would be meetings conducted in that place.

As we continued our journey towards Punta Gorda, we visited some families on the way. We passed by an area where they grow citrus fruits; oranges, mandarins and pineapples, and these satisfied our thirst and hunger in this hot climate. The people here wanted us to stay longer, but after a meeting we had to continue our trip. It was eight o'clock in the evening we started out with our van, which was a 1975 Vandura, and at midnight we arrived in Punta Gorda, where our worker and his young wife waited for us.

The next day we started our work on the church building. We bought dozens of sheets of materials to build the dividing walls inside between the sanctuary, the kitchen, and the bedrooms. In the afternoon we installed the loud speaker system and started to invite people together who spoke the language of the Maya Indians called Quetkchi, and also English speaking people. Our sister from El Salvador, Esther Ellington, translated into English and our missionary brother, Vinicio Tiul, translated to Quetkchi. We continued this for the rest of the week and on Friday we prepared a dinner for the visitors.

On the Sabbath, many people came together. First in the morning we started the Sabbath School which was conducted by our Sisters

WORK REPORT FROM BELIZE AND HONDURAS

FEBRUARY 1-17, 2005

Esperanza Zepeda and Esther Ellington. The new lesson was taught by Eliseo Morales, who does great work in the department of Good Samaritan. The mission period was conducted by Brother Tiul. The sermon was preached by Brother Oscar Archila, the president of the Union. His topic was the "Setting of the Sun of Mercy." In the end, a call was made for the interested people, and several came forward, indicating their desire to be baptized soon.

After the sermon and benediction we were invited to have lunch which Sister Zepeda had prepared for us, which included tamales prepared in the Guatemalan style. In the afternoon we visited a place nearby called Medina Bank, where we met some interested people who spoke the Quetkchi language.

After Sabbath closing we prepared for the last meeting of our evangelical campaign. In this meeting Brother Esau Lopez spoke about the urgency of receiving the seal of God, and not the mark of the beast. In the end, twelve people expressed their desire to continue Bible studies. Sister Ellington sang a hymn and we gave gifts to the people who had assisted us in the meetings. After the prayer by Brother Archila, we sent people home with the invitation to continue meeting in the temple which was now finished.

Then we continued our journey towards San Pedro Sula, Honduras, where brothers and sisters

waited for us to dedicate our new Christian Primary School. Two o'clock in the morning we started on our way. We took along a new passenger, Anselma Edwards, who had to go to Guatemala to be operated on in the hospital for her tumour. Besides preaching the gospel, we did medical missionary work with this sister.

At seven o'clock in the morning we came to the border of Guatemala, from where we took our journey towards Honduras, where we arrived at eleven o'clock at night. We were tired but glad for the good work we had accomplished in Belize.

San Pedro Sula, Honduras

It was the 14th of February and we had to get up at five thirty in the morning. The body said no, but yet we had to obey the voice of duty. At seven in the morning we had to be at the school. We had to run to be there in time, and as we arrived, many parents and children had gathered together to dedicate a new school which will offer better teaching with good principles and the fear of God. We entered into the main hall in the school and then started to develop the future programmes for the school.

The Master of Ceremonies welcomed the parents and the children, as well as the church officers. Then Brother Oscar Archila spoke about the spiritual values and morals which have been lost in the schools of the world, but in this Reformation school these values are to be taught to the children. He read a few Bible texts and testimony quotations emphasizing the true education that the world needs today.

Afterwards he

prayed for the school, for the teachers, and for the parents and the students. Then he cut the symbolic ribbon of the dedication and invited the students to enter into their classrooms. Then we inspected the installations and various rooms and found that all was well done and in order. We were very thankful to God for this blessing that He had given us. This concluded the happy ceremony of opening the building.

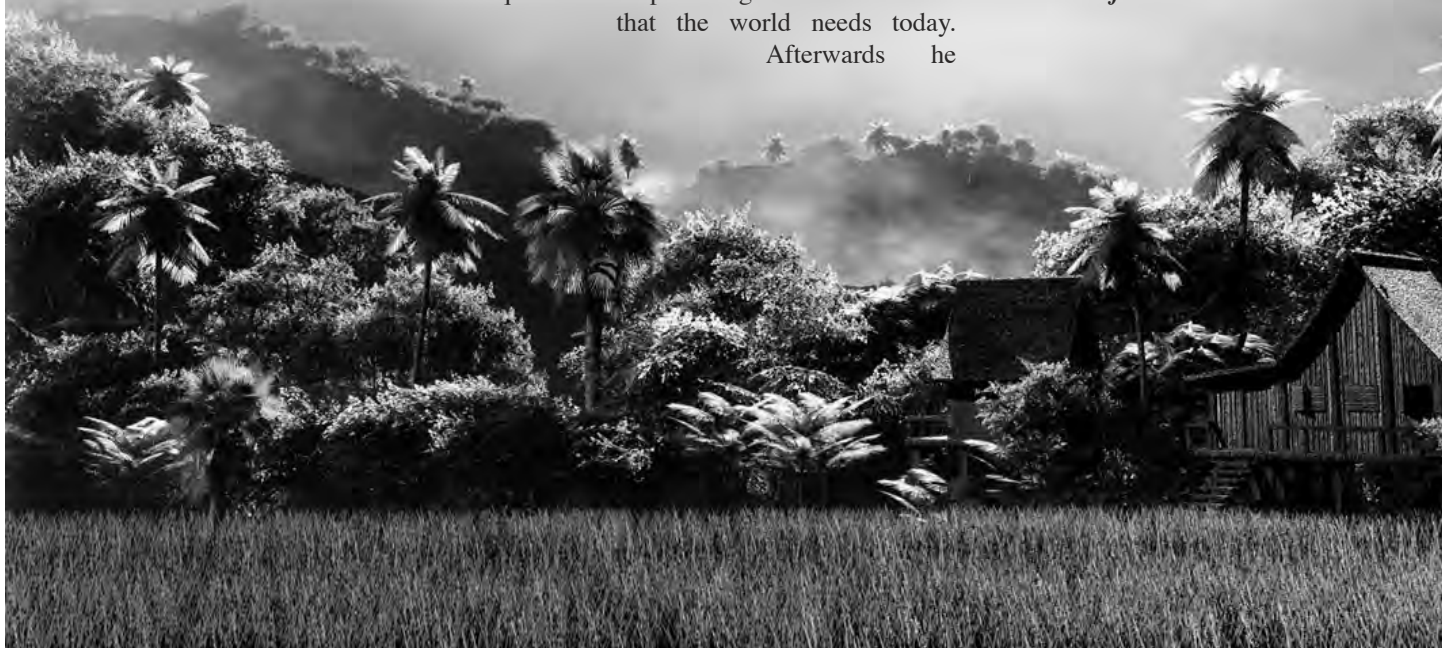
February 15-17

Finally we had two more days for committee meetings to study our financial condition and the work in different Central American countries. The work in Belize was especially discussed. We found out that we have financial limitations in these third world countries. We need financial help to carry on these evangelistic projects. Also we need your prayers besides the money to continue the work in Central America. We also need a couple or family who speaks English in Belize and on its islands. The cost of living is expensive in this country, therefore we need money to continue. We are waiting to hear from you and ask for your prayers.

You can write to us, our address is: ucaosmi@yahoo.com; and archilaoscar@hotmail.com

May the Lord bless you richly and your work for the Central American Union. **AMEN.**

Brother Oscar Archila Zepeda
President of the Union





REVIVE US AGAIN

Part 1

The words of William Mackay's old hymn are elegant and inspiring:

"Revive us again; fill each heart with thy love;
May each soul be rekindled with fire from above.
Hallelujah! Thine the glory,
Hallelujah! Amen;
Hallelujah! Thine the glory,
Revive us again."

Yes, they are beautiful words, and well might we sing them with conviction and earnestness. But dare we? Do we have any just idea of what revival and reformation entail, that we should so glibly offer our petitions to the Lord that He might bring them upon us?

"No line of truth that has made the Seventh-day Adventist people what they are, is to be weakened. We have the old landmarks of truth, experience, and duty, and we are to stand firmly in defence of our principles, in full view of the world." Testimonies, Vol. 6, p.

"Said my accompanying angel, 'Woe to him who shall move a block or stir a pin of these messages.' The true understanding of these messages is of vital importance. The destiny of souls hangs upon the manner in which they are received." Early Writings, pp. 258, 259. (1858.)

"Satan is constantly seeking to cast his hellish shadow about these messages, so that the remnant people of God shall not clearly discern their import--their time and place--but they live, and are to exert their power upon our religious experience while time shall last." {3SM 405.2}

"God has called His church in this day, as He called ancient Israel, to stand as a light in the earth. By the mighty cleaver of truth, the messages of the first, second, and third angels, He has separated them from the churches and from the world to bring them into a sacred nearness to Himself. He has made them the depositories of His law and has committed to them the great truths of prophecy for this time." {5T 455.2}

I have learned that dress is part of the three Angel's message, so that is why I have a burden to write and to help my Brothers and Sisters come back to our original message.

People were saying in looking to us: "If they really thought that Christ was soon coming, and the case of every soul was to be decided for eternal life or death, they could not devote time and money to dress according to the existing fashions." How little did those professedly believing sisters know of the sermon their dress was preaching! {CH 599.3}

"Our words, our actions, and our dress are daily, living preachers, gathering with Christ, or scattering abroad. This is no trivial matter, to be passed off with a jest. The subject of dress demands serious reflection and much prayer." {CH 600.1}

"But the greatest evil is the influence upon the children and youth. Almost as soon as they come into the world they are subjected to fashion's demands. Little children hear more of dress than of their salvation. They see their mothers more earnestly consulting the fashion plates than the Bible." {CH 600.3}

As a people, we are looked upon as peculiar. Our position and faith distinguish us from every other denomination.

We do not think it in accordance with our faith to dress in the American costume, to wear hoops, or to go to an extreme in wearing long dresses which sweep the sidewalks and streets. (In other words: follow the fashion of the world) If women would wear their dresses so as to clear the filth of the streets an inch or two, **their dresses would be modest**, and they could be kept clean much more easily and would wear longer. **Such a dress would be in accordance with our faith.** Testimonies for the Church, vol. 1, p. 424 (1864).

In John 7:17 we read: "If Any man will do his will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God, or whether I speak of myself."

I can testify now of the joy I have found in reflecting the beauty of holiness. I have found that as we step out in faith and do His will, we shall certainly **know** of the doctrine. As we are faithful in what we know, He grants us increasing understanding and knowledge of His ways. Our God is a very gracious God.

My Father in heaven loves me greatly and wants to protect me in every way possible, and I have discovered one of the most amazing ways He is doing this. It comes in clothing myself in the beauty of holiness. This strange way provides me with moral protection, and keeps me from being a stumbling block to my fellow man. In following the beauty of Holiness I have a wonderful sense of moral security in Him. It also affords me better health, enabling my body to function more harmoniously.

I have determined in my heart to follow His ways. I have discovered there is joy in obedience. I now see it a privilege to be able to wear clothing that symbolizes Christ's righteousness.

There is joy in being able to put my pride and vanity aside in order to confess Christ, and there is peace in overcoming my personal opinion of what constitutes the beauty of holiness.

It is liberating to be able to disregard the opinions of others, and in quietness make the opinion of Christ more important than my own or my peers. It is far easier to please only One--and that is my God.

God had redeemed the children of Israel from bondage in Egypt. God is not forcing us out of spiritual Egypt. It is completely our choice to stay there or

come out, but we must realize that there is only one way out and if we choose to stay, there are consequences to meet. He is not willing that we should perish. God reasons intelligently with us so that we can understand His ways and be willing to cooperate with Him. It is in stopping and listening to His instruction that we have safety from the masterful deceptions of the evil one.

It's like being in an army; to win the battle and have freedom from the enemy we must listen carefully to the Commander and follow exactly what He says. This is our only way of escape.

Our motivation for keeping the commandments should be thankfulness and adoration to the Lord for His redemptive act, as well as a desire to keep away from the bondage that held us in the prison house for so many years.

A quick glance makes us think that these commandments are anything but joyous and beautiful. In fact, the general consensus of those in slavery is that the law is painful and undesirable--but in reality these Commandments are liberating. Following them gives us a life of freedom from the effects of the sin and wickedness that prevail around us.

The commandments of God keep us separate from sin, so when Jesus comes the second time and destroys sin forever, we will not be destroyed with it.

"Wow!" you say. "I don't want to be destroyed. I will keep the commandments of God." But it's not long before reality hits and you realize that you can't keep them. Now what?

Quite simply then, we must fall before the Lord and ask for a new heart: a heart that is like Jesus, one that is submissive to the will of the Father. We must ask for a change of mind and to be given true motivation. We must literally ask for everything, for we are as helpless as little babes.

We read in John 15:5: "I am the vine, ye are the branches: He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing."

Jesus wants us to have His mind. Philippians 2:5 says: "Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus."

Jesus did not follow His own human inclinations, although He could have, but He chose to set us an example. He did nothing of Himself. He did everything the Father asked Him to do. He is showing us not only that obedience is possible, but also how we are to render acceptable obedience to the Father.

John 5:30 says: "I can of mine own self do nothing: as I hear, I judge: and my judgment is just; because I seek not mine own will, but the will of the Father which hath sent me."

As we pray and strive for the mind of Christ we will find ourselves keeping the Ten Commandments, for it is a transcript of the character of God.

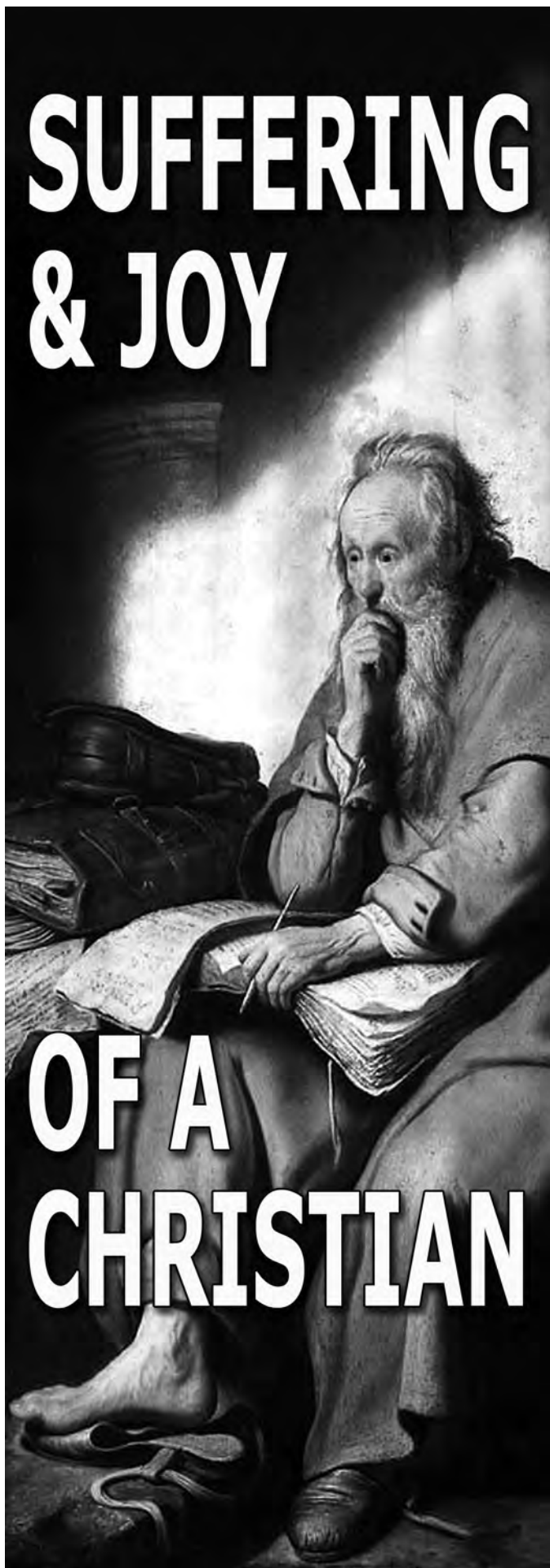
"The world is crazy after show and fashion and pleasure. Licentiousness is steadily and fearfully on the increase. Why will not Christians be true to their high profession!" {4T 646.3}

Christ is ashamed of His professed followers. Wherein do we bear any resemblance to Him? Wherein does our dress conform to the Bible requirements?

So our motivation to escape this world comes from our gratitude to God for bringing us out of bondage. We see that the escape route is in reflecting the character of Jesus, which is expressed in the life by keeping the commandments of God.

"Christians should not take pains to make themselves a gazing-stock by dressing differently from the world. But if, when following out their convictions of duty in respect to dressing modestly and healthfully, they find themselves out of fashion, they should not change their dress in order to be like the world; but they should manifest a noble independence and moral courage to be right, if all the world differ from them. If the world introduces a modest, convenient, and healthful mode of dress, which is in accordance with the Bible, it will not change our relation to God or to the world to adopt such a style of dress. Christians should follow Christ and make their dress conform to God's word. They should shun extremes. They should humbly pursue a straightforward course, irrespective of applause or of censure, and should cling to the right because of its own merits." {1T 458.4} **AMEN.**

To be continued...
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“For unto you it is given in the behalf of Christ, not only to believe on him, but also to suffer for his sake...” Philippians 1:29.

“Rejoice in the Lord always [and] again I say, Rejoice.” Philippians 4:4.

Do we believe in Christ? If we do, then we shall have to suffer for His sake. But if we believe in Him with a living faith, we shall also rejoice in Him always.

There are two phases to the Christian life: suffering and joy, in this order. At first we suffer and then we rejoice. We suffer because of the burden of a sinful life without hope, a life without a goal, and suddenly, we meet Jesus, our Redeemer and personal Saviour. What a joy! We suffer in the first stage of our life with Christ as through the subtle and thorough work of the Holy Spirit in our heart we are made aware of the sinfulness rooted in our flesh, but we rejoice in the experience of forgiveness and in the dependence we can have on Christ to be protected from our own selves. We suffer under the attacks of the enemy of our soul who so often corners us either with his temptations or accusations, but again we rejoice at every victory obtained through the power of the blood of Jesus. We suffer when we share this wonderful message with a receptive soul and go through many battles together, but we rejoice when he finally gives his soul to Jesus. We suffer all along as we grow in the knowledge of God’s grace and become aware of our responsibility and see people all around us who reject this marvellous gift or we experience a lukewarm or self-righteous attitude in the church, that leads to disunity, but we rejoice to belong to the body of Christ and have a family in Him.

There is joy and suffering also when we live without Jesus, mostly in this order: first joy and then suffering. There is much joy, much glamour in the numerous entertainments the world has to offer; there are many lights, many feasts, many opportunities to go places, to have interaction with interesting people, to succeed professionally, to obtain almost everything our soul wants, but there is also suffering when one realizes the vanity of all this, that it leads to nothing, that it leaves us empty and that sometimes for the joy of a wrong choice, one can live a life regretting, suffering and sometimes in sheer bitterness.

Paul’s letter to the Philippians speaks much about the joy of a Christian and actually there is one verse in particular that is frequently used to encourage souls and even the congregation to be happy, “Rejoice in the Lord always, and again I say, Rejoice.” (Phil. 4:4) We should not forget though, that the joy Paul speaks about here is a joy in the Lord and not a happy-go-lucky attitude deprived of depth, but the result of a life of consecration to the cause of God.

This consecration brings suffering, but there is joy in that suffering. Was Paul a masochist who rejoiced in pain? By no means, his sufferings had a repercussion on the well-being of others; they worked for their salvation. His sacrifices motivated by love toward the souls entrusted to him made him always rejoice.

In every chapter of the letter to the Philippians we can read about this joy, “What then? Notwithstanding, every way, whether in pretence, or in truth, Christ is preached; and I therein do rejoice, yea, and will rejoice” (Phil. 1:18). Paul explained that his imprisonment has worked for the progress of the gospel and many brethren had become more daring to confess Christ, while others preached Christ out of contention, but what counted is that Christ was spoken of and that is a

reason to rejoice. Paul saw the result of the fact that to believe in Christ is to suffer for his sake, but that suffering brings joy and is not without fruit.

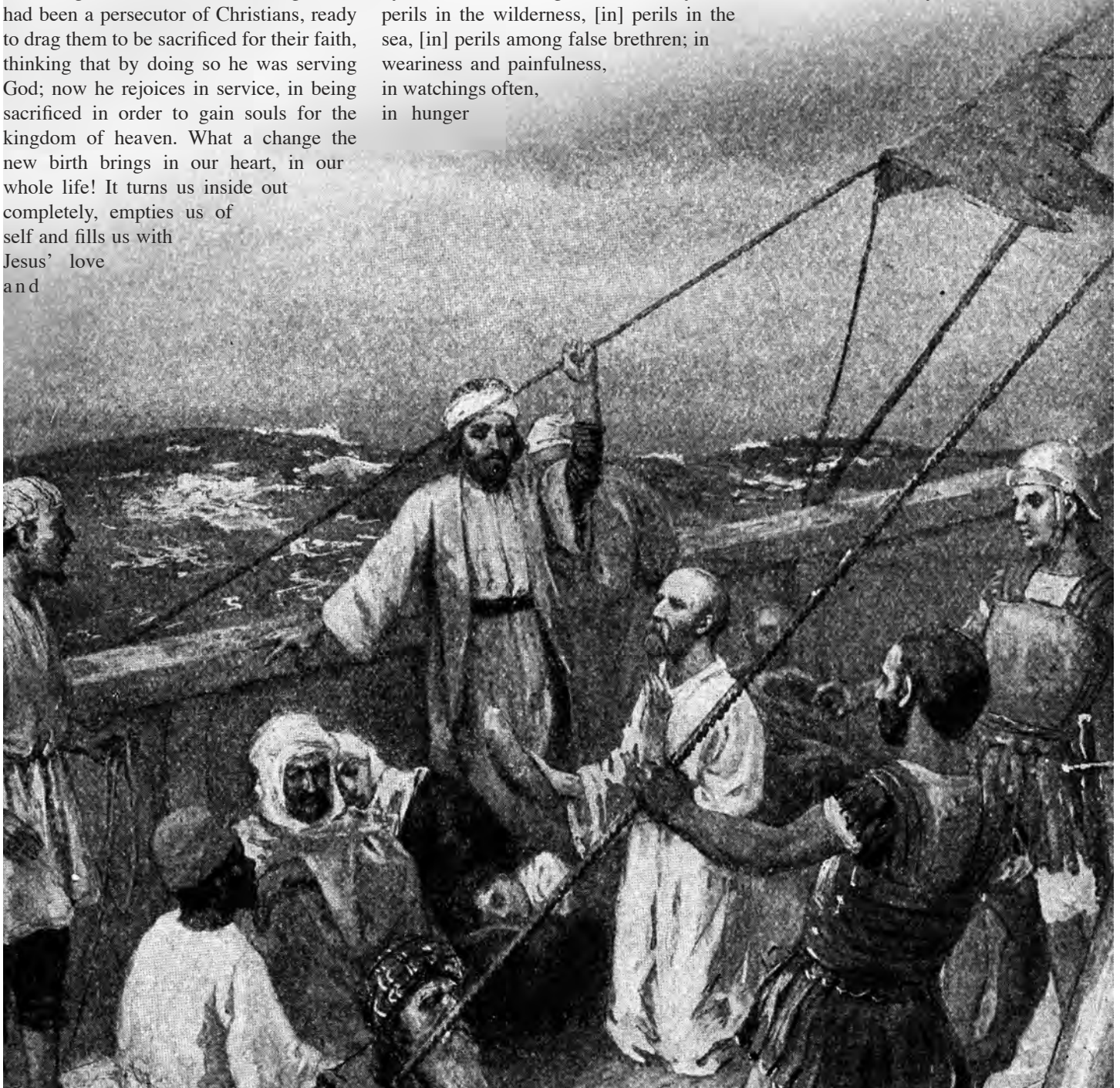
In Philippians 2:17, we read, “Yea, and if I be offered upon the sacrifice and service of your faith, I joy, and rejoice with you all.” Paul was the one disciple of Jesus Christ who did not try to shun pain or suffering. He was inwardly so moved by the great sacrifice done on his behalf, he was so much aware that he was saved by grace, that he welcomed trial and sacrifice as a privilege, as a way of sharing in Jesus’ life and being more Christ-like. In the past, he had been a persecutor of Christians, ready to drag them to be sacrificed for their faith, thinking that by doing so he was serving God; now he rejoices in service, in being sacrificed in order to gain souls for the kingdom of heaven. What a change the new birth brings in our heart, in our whole life! It turns us inside out completely, empties us of self and fills us with Jesus’ love and

care for others.

Paul knew very well what it was to suffer for the sake of Christ, as a result of his faith in Him, “Are they ministers of Christ? (I speak as a fool) I [am] more; in labours more abundant, in stripes above measure, in prisons more frequent, in deaths oft. Of the Jews five times received I forty [stripes] save one. Thrice was I beaten with rods, once was I stoned, thrice I suffered shipwreck, a night and a day I have been in the deep; [In] journeyings often, [in] perils of waters, [in] perils of robbers, [in] perils by [mine own] countrymen, [in] perils by the heathen, [in] perils in the city, [in] perils in the wilderness, [in] perils in the sea, [in] perils among false brethren; in weariness and painfulness, in watchings often, in hunger

and thirst, in fastings often, in cold and nakedness. Beside those things that are without, that which cometh upon me daily, the care of all the churches.” (2 Corinthians 11:23-28)

“For unto you it is given in the behalf of Christ, not only to believe on him, but also to suffer for his sake...” Paul was always ready to suffer for His Master. The love of Jesus was nestled in his heart and that love was manifested in his care for others. His eyes were completely turned from himself to the outside world. The disciples who knew Jesus personally, the ones who shared so many



experiences with Him, who lived with Him for three and a half years, were not joyful at the thought of offering sacrifice for their Lord.

James and John wanted to sit, one at the right hand and the other one at the left hand of Jesus, when he would come in His glory. What was Jesus' answer? "But Jesus said unto them, Ye know not what ye ask: can ye drink of the cup that I drink of and be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with?" (Mark 10:38). In other words, "Do you believe in me to the point of being ready to suffer for my sake?" Peter tried to prevent Jesus from going to Jerusalem where he was going to be sacrificed for the sake of us all. It took Peter many bitter experiences before he could accept the fact that a disciple of Jesus is a partaker of his sufferings, but finally he reached the same conclusion as Paul and in his first epistle, chapter 4:1 we read, "Forasmuch then as Christ hath suffered for us in the flesh, arm yourselves likewise with the same mind: for he that hath suffered in the flesh hath ceased from sin;" He also discovered that there is joy in suffering for Christ, "If ye be reproached for the name of Christ, happy [are ye]; for the spirit of glory and of God resteth upon you: on their part he is evil spoken of, but on your part he is glorified. But rejoice, inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ's sufferings; that, when his glory shall be revealed, ye may be glad also with exceeding joy". 1 Peter 4:13, 14.

Many times we suffer in the spirit because of the consequences of our sins, but the suffering of a real Christian is suffering in the flesh and there is always pain in the flesh when it is submitted to the spirit. Jesus Christ, our perfect example, went through this pain and suffering of the flesh, "Who in the days of his flesh, when he had offered up prayers and supplications with strong crying and tears unto him that was able to save him from death, and was heard in that he feared; though he were a Son, yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered." (Hebrews 5:7, 8). Have we already been in agony on our knees praying for the Father to uproot a sin that is very deeply set in our flesh? There is much pain in this pleading, desperate supplication. It is a necessary experience for the cleansing of our soul. But the reward is so big that all pain later on seems like nothing.

In the third chapter of the epistle to the

Philippians, Paul speaks again about joy and he is very concise this time, "Finally, my brethren, rejoice in the Lord." (Phil. 3:1) How many things are entailed in these few words! Maybe the most important one that summarizes the whole concept is the declaration in verse 3, "For we are the circumcision, which worship God in the spirit, and rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh." When we worship God in the spirit and have no confidence in the flesh, our only joy is Jesus Christ! The chapter goes on explaining how all the achievements of the flesh one could boast of are just vanity, worthless compared to the "excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus". The greatest joy of Paul is that he was set free from his self-righteousness that had led him to be a persecutor of God's children, "And be found in him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith" (Phil. 3:9). This is the greatest experience of our Christian life, our passport to freedom, to be set free from the power of our own concept of righteousness, to be aware that all our logic and reasoning amounts to nothing and can be even dangerous to ourselves, others and the cause of God, and to bring every thought and feeling into captivity to Christ. By dying daily, Paul grew in grace to the point of being able to declare, "But God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world." (Gal. 6:14).

There is not a single drop of presumption when Paul urges his brethren, "Be ye followers of me, even as I also [am] of Christ" (1 Cor. 11:1), or when later on he says to the Thessalonians, "And you became followers of us, and of the Lord" (1Thess. 1:6) and explains "For yourselves know how ye ought to follow us, for we behaved not ourselves disorderly among you." (2 Thess. 3:7). Jesus was everything in Paul's life and serving Him faithfully was the greatest motive of joy.

The climax of all these reasons to rejoice is the well-known verse in Philippians 4:4 "Rejoice in the Lord always [and] again I say, Rejoice." But these words are not to be used as an omen, with a magical connotation, without realizing that this assertion is the conclusion of a whole process of awareness, cleansing,

surrendering of the will and fitness for service. To use this verse isolated from the rest of the epistle, to apply it to a person isolated from his personal experience is only shallowness. It is the same as using the promise in Joel 2:28, "And it shall come to pass afterward, [that] I will pour out my spirit upon all flesh; and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, your young men shall see visions" and ignoring the previous verses, the preparation and conditions for receiving the gift of the Spirit.

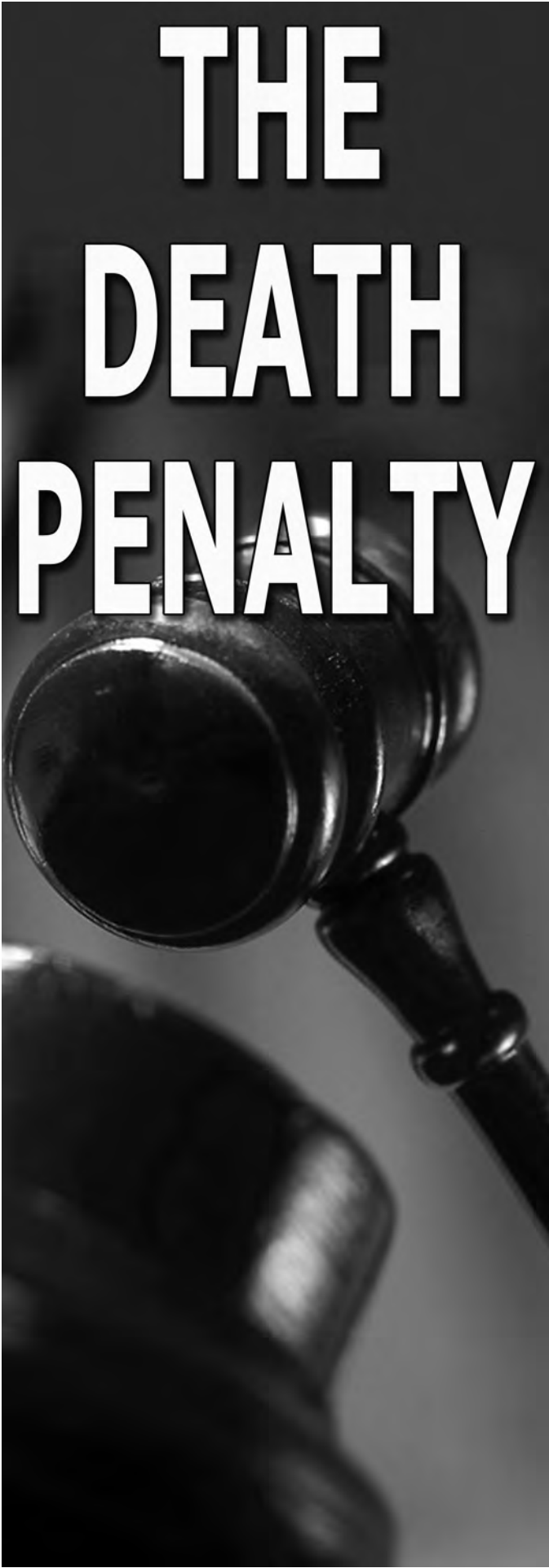
The information we have of Paul's life and character leaves no room in our imagination to think of him as the cheerful and easy-going type. He was certainly a circumspect man who served the Lord with fear and rejoiced with trembling. (Psalm 2:11)

The same man who tells his brethren, "Rejoice in the Lord always [and] again I say, Rejoice", suffers extremely for the situation he sees around him, in the church, among his brethren, "My little children, of whom I travail in birth again until Christ be formed in you, I desire to be present with you now, and to change my voice; for I stand in doubt of you." (Galatians 4:19, 20). His life was a continual joy in the Lord and pain for his brethren, "I have great heaviness and continual sorrow in my heart. For I could wish that myself were accursed from Christ for my brethren..." (Romans 9:2, 3).

He also rejoices for the faith, love and generosity of the Thessalonians that had spread like a blessing all over the peninsula, for the consecration of his son in the Lord, Timothy, who was one of the few "like-minded" who "naturally cared" for the state of his co-believers instead of seeking his own as most did. (Phil. 2:20, 21)

Suffering and joy, joy and suffering and a perfect balanced life that like a fragile boat plies the deep ocean in the assurance that it will reach the shore because the Lord's grace suffices for each one of us. May we rejoice in this thought always so that we can be ready to suffer for His sake at any moment. **AMEN.**

Teresa Corti



THE DEATH PENALTY

“For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.” Romans 6:23.

“Whosoever committeth sin transgresseth also the law: for sin is the transgression of the law.” 1 John 3:4

According to the Bible we understand that the Moral Law, the Ten Commandments are still valid today. They have always been in existence and always will be throughout eternity. Any transgression of the law brings the penalty of death on the guilty person.

However, in Old Testament times, the Ceremonial Law was added. Why? “Wherefore then serveth the law? It was added because of transgressions,” Gal.3:29. This law is the one that was nailed to the cross. “Blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to his cross;” Colossians 2:14. It was the law that dealt with ordinances.

Since it was done away with, often we are tempted to think that it is not important to study these laws. Yes, they contained instructions for the keeping of the feasts, such as Passover and Pentecost. They also contained instructions for animal sacrifices which became unnecessary when Jesus was nailed to the cross.

But, if you carefully read the books of Moses, you find that they contain more laws besides the feasts and sacrifices. There are health laws and laws regarding conduct in families, all of which are an extension of, or interpretation of, the spirit of the law contained in the Ten Commandments. Some laws incurred a death penalty when violated – others simply brought upon the guilty person a milder form of punishment. These laws are still good instructions for us in our personal lives, as well as social contacts.

From studying these laws, it is clear that there are degrees of sin. Some are more offensive in the eyes of God than others.

“If any man see his brother sin a sin which is not unto death, he shall ask, and he shall give him life for them that sin not unto death. There is a sin unto death: I do not say that he shall pray for it. All unrighteousness is sin: and there is a sin not unto death.” 1 John 5: 16,17

“Wherefore I say unto you, All manner of sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven unto men: but the blasphemy against the Holy Ghost shall not be forgiven unto men. And whosoever speaketh a word against the Son of man, it shall be forgiven him: but whosoever speaketh against the Holy Ghost, it shall not be forgiven him, neither in this world, neither in the world to come.” Matthew 12:31-32

“God does not regard all sins as of equal magnitude; there are degrees of guilt in His estimation, as well as in that of man; but however trifling this or that wrong act may seem in the eyes of men, no sin is small in the sight of God. Man’s judgment is partial, imperfect; but God estimates all things as they really are. The drunkard is despised and is told that his sin will exclude him from heaven; while pride, selfishness, and covetousness too often go unrebuked. But these are sins that are especially offensive to God; for they are contrary to the benevolence of His character, to that unselfish love which is the very atmosphere of the unfallen universe. He who falls into some of the grosser sins may feel a sense of his shame and poverty and his need of

the grace of Christ; but pride feels no need, and so it closes the heart against Christ and the infinite blessings He came to give.” SC 30

Even though there are degrees of sin, even the smallest sin that is cherished is enough to keep a person out of heaven. All sin must be overcome, however, as a person persists in living a life of sin, returning and repenting become increasingly more difficult.

“For it is impossible for those who were once enlightened, and have tasted of the heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the Holy Ghost, And have tasted the good word of God, and the powers of the world to come, If they shall fall away, to renew them again unto repentance; seeing they crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh, and put him to an open shame.” Hebrews 6:4-6

Backsliding is very dangerous... yet God is still merciful to the sinner.

“Go and proclaim these words toward the north, and say, Return, thou backsliding Israel, saith the LORD; and I will not cause mine anger to fall upon you: for I am merciful, saith the LORD, and I will not keep anger for ever.” Jeremiah 3:12

SIN AGAINST HOLY SPIRIT

In the previous issue of the Messenger (March 2004), there is an article about grieving the Holy Spirit. There are many ways in which we can grieve the Holy Spirit and the article brought out a few ways that we perhaps may not have thought so important, yet are grievous in the eyes of God. Things were mentioned, such as, gossiping, complaining, carelessness and neglecting our duty, especially our duty in missionary work. Grieving the Holy Spirit is very dangerous and if not corrected very soon, it can lead to sin against the Holy Spirit – blasphemy against the Holy Spirit, a sin from which there is no forgiveness. The death penalty (the second death) is inevitable.

“What constitutes the sin against the Holy Ghost? It is willfully attributing to Satan the work of the Holy Spirit. For example, suppose that one is a witness of the special work of the Spirit of God. He has convincing evidence that the work is

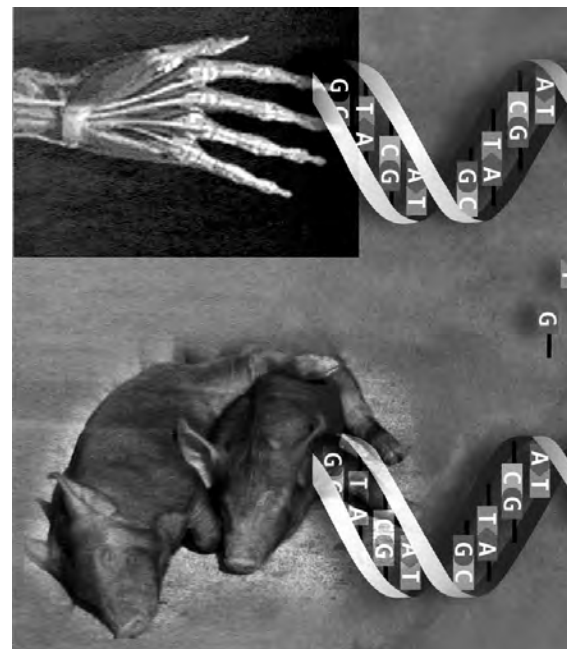
in harmony with the Scriptures, and the Spirit witnesses with his spirit that it is of God. Afterward, however, he falls under temptation; pride, self-sufficiency, or some other evil trait, controls him; and rejecting all the evidence of its divine character, he declares that that which he had before acknowledged to be the power of the Holy Spirit was the power of Satan. It is through the medium of His Spirit that God works upon the human heart; and when men willfully reject the Spirit and declare it to be from Satan, they cut off the channel by which God can communicate with them. By denying the evidence which God has been pleased to give them, they shut out the light which had been shining in their hearts, and as the result they are left in darkness. Thus the words of Christ are verified: ‘If therefore the light that is in thee be darkness, how great is that darkness!’ For a time, persons who have committed this sin may appear to be children of God; but when circumstances arise to develop character and show what manner of spirit they are of, it will be found that they are on the enemy’s ground, standing under his black banner.” 5T 634

“The most common manifestation of the sin against the Holy Spirit is in persistently slighting Heaven’s invitation to repent. Every step in the rejection of Christ is a step toward the rejection of salvation, and toward the sin against the Holy Spirit.” AG 215

“Closely connected with Christ’s warning in regard to the sin against the Holy Spirit is a warning against idle and evil words. The words are an indication of that which is in the heart. ‘Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh.’ But the words are more than an indication of character; they have power to react on the character. Men are influenced by their own words. Often under a momentary impulse, prompted by Satan, they give utterance to jealousy or evil surmising, expressing that which they do not really believe; but the expression reacts on the thoughts. They are deceived by their words, and come to believe that true which was spoken at Satan’s instigation. Having once expressed an opinion or decision, they are often too proud to retract it, and try to prove themselves in the right, until they come to believe that they are. It is dangerous to utter a word of doubt, dangerous to question and criticize divine light. The habit of careless

and irreverent criticism reacts upon the character, in fostering irreverence and unbelief. Many a man indulging this habit has gone on unconscious of danger, until he was ready to criticize and reject the work of the Holy Spirit. Jesus said, ‘Every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment. For by thy words thou shalt be justified, and by thy words thou shalt be condemned.’” DA 323

Your words can have a very powerful influence in deciding your eternal destiny.



Use your words wisely. Sin against the Holy Spirit has no repentance. He who has sinned against the Holy Spirit is living on Death Row.

THE DEATH PENALTY IN THE CEREMONIAL LAW

When people sin today; they don’t incur an immediate death penalty. This has caused some to become more hardened and bold in their sin. In Ancient Israel, there was immediate capital punishment for certain sins. I now want to address some of these sins that brought on the death penalty in Ancient Israel since these sins are very prevalent in society today and often they are not considered grievous at all. However, it is important for the Christian to know their grievous nature in the eyes of God and violation of these laws is sin and will bring upon the person the death penalty.

Children's Action Towards Parents:

The counsel is given to parents: "Withhold not correction from the child: for if thou beatest him with the rod, he shall not die. Thou shalt beat him with the rod, and shalt deliver his soul from hell." Proverbs 23:13,14

"He that spareth his rod hateth his son: but he that loveth him chasteneth him betimes." Proverbs 13:24

However in today's society this counsel has been taken to extremes. On one side

Ancient Israel these children would have been stoned to death. These verses portray children and youth who are in deliberate and persistent opposition to parental authority. When we think about it a bit deeper, parents stand in the place of God to their children until the age of moral responsibility. They care for and protect them in their helpless years, and even nature places within the minds of children an instinctive reverence for their parents, therefore this penalty is not as excessive as it may at first appear. Society is never secure and cannot long exist where parental authority is held in contempt.

Far more is involved here than a single act of disrespect. Inasmuch as parents do stand in the place of God to their children in their earliest years, the penalty for cursing them is equivalent to the penalty for

of youth would be stoned in today's society if this law were still enforced today. The disrespect of parents is a plague that is destroying society.

Genetic Engineering:

This includes combining beast and human... "Whosoever lieth with a beast shall surely be put to death." Exodus 22:19

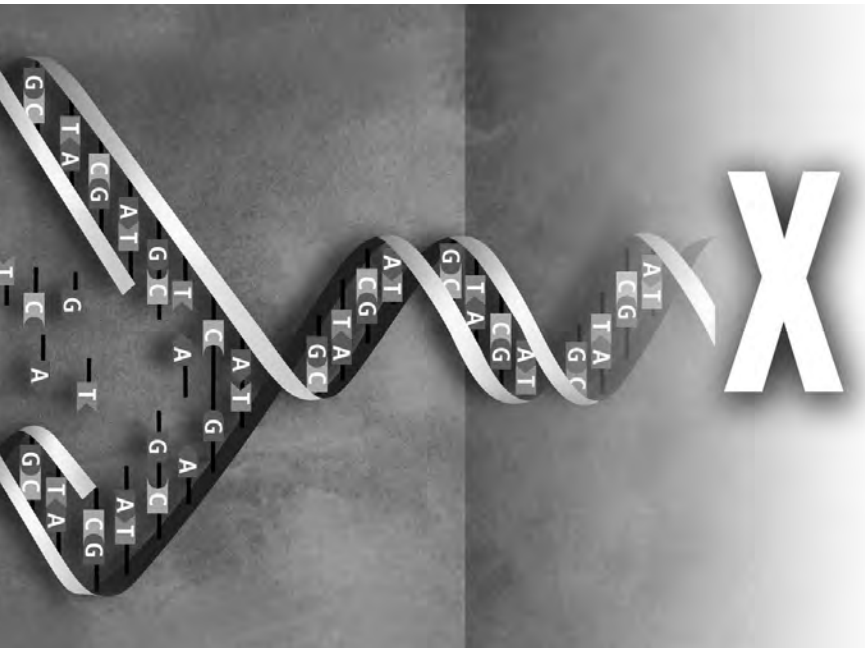
"But if there was one sin above another which called for the destruction of the race by the flood, it was the base crime of amalgamation of man and beast which defaced the image of God, and caused confusion everywhere." 3SG 64. We've seen in the name of medicine how man has attempted to combine human with beast, one example being the attempt to add a baboon's heart into a baby. Who knows to what extent genetic engineering may go to in the future before the Lord puts an end to it all.

Sacrifice To Other Gods:

"He that sacrificeth unto any god, save unto the LORD only, he shall be utterly destroyed." Exodus 22:20. To make a sacrifice is the ultimate form of worship. To do so to a false god, not only acknowledges that this false god has first place in a person's life, but also renounces the true and living God and any responsibility to Him. In the Theocracy of Ancient Israel this brought on the death penalty. Today Christians have many gods which have priority in their lives over the Lord and His requirements. Are we guilty also? Do we have more important things to do than attend prayer meetings, Bible Studies, or to even have some quiet time with the Lord every day?

Afflict Widow And Fatherless:

"Ye shall not afflict any widow, or fatherless child. If thou afflict them in any wise, and they cry at all unto me, I will surely hear their cry; And my wrath shall wax hot, and I will kill you with the sword; and your wives shall be widows, and your children fatherless." Exodus 22:22-24. The widows and fatherless are defenseless individuals, requiring extra care and concern. It is important not only to refrain from afflicting them, but also to not neglect those in need. To neglect to do well is to do ill. The Holy Spirit is grieved when we neglect to do the duty that the Lord places before us.



discipline has degenerated into child abuse, causing society to turn against any form of physical punishment. The other side states that all punishment can be done by non-physical methods. This may be true in some cases, however not in all cases. There needs to be a middle ground of physical discipline wisely conducted when absolutely necessary without degenerating into child abuse.

From the child's perspective, a child at no time is to ever smite or curse a parent on pain of death.

"And he that smiteth his father, or his mother, shall be surely put to death. And he that curseth his father, or his mother, shall surely be put to death." Exodus 21:15,17. These two Bible verses show how disrespect for parental authority is severely condemned by God. How much rebellion do we see amongst children and young people today, against their parents? In

blaspheming God.

This punishment is repeated in the book of Leviticus. "For every one that curseth his father or his mother shall be surely put to death: he hath cursed his father or his mother; his blood shall be upon him." Leviticus 20:9

"If a man have a stubborn and rebellious son, which will not obey the voice of his father, or the voice of his mother, and that, when they have chastened him, will not hearken unto them: Then shall his father and his mother lay hold on him, and bring him out unto the elders of his city, and unto the gate of his place; And they shall say unto the elders of his city, This our son is stubborn and rebellious, he will not obey our voice; he is a glutton, and a drunkard. And all the men of his city shall stone him with stones, that he die: so shalt thou put evil away from among you; and all Israel shall hear, and fear." Deut. 21:18-21. A lot

Sabbath Breaking:

“And while the children of Israel were in the wilderness, they found a man that gathered sticks upon the Sabbath day. And they that found him gathering sticks brought him unto Moses and Aaron, and unto all the congregation. And they put him in ward, because it was not declared what should be done to him. And the LORD said unto Moses, The man shall be surely put to death: all the congregation shall stone him with stones without the camp.” Numbers 15:32-35. This man’s act was clearly presumptuous. There was such a warm climate in the wilderness that fires were unnecessary. The Sabbath forbids any unnecessary labour, with punishment for violation, being death. The Sabbath is a sacred and holy day. It would do well for us to consider how carefully we are keeping it. It is easy to get distracted – allow the mind and words to wander onto worldly themes. It takes much effort and prayer to keep the mind stayed on the Lord during the Holy Sabbath hours.

“Ye shall keep the Sabbath therefore; for it is holy unto you: every one that defileth it shall surely be put to death: for whosoever doeth any work therein, that soul shall be cut off from among his people. Six days may work be done; but in the seventh is the Sabbath of rest, holy to the LORD: whosoever doeth any work in the Sabbath day, he shall surely be put to death.” Exodus 31:14,15

Uncontrolled Animal:

“But if the ox were wont to push with his horn in time past, and it hath been testified to his owner, and he hath not kept him in, but that he hath killed a man or a woman; the ox shall be stoned, and his owner also shall be put to death.” Exodus 21:29. If a man knew his animal was dangerous but did not watch it properly, he is considered an accessory to the death and his penalty is death, even though he did not commit the act himself.

This can hold true for our brethren and friends – if we see they are in danger by their lifestyle of sin – if they are doing something that will lead to eternal death and we don’t warn them, we are considered an accessory to their death. Or if we don’t restrain our children when they are young and it is in our power to do so, we are guilty of their sin also. Will our penalty be any less than the penalty in Ancient Israel for

the man who did not restrain his animal?

The Seventh Commandment:

Adultery: “And the man that committeth adultery with another man’s wife, even he that committeth adultery with his neighbour’s wife, the adulterer and the adulteress shall surely be put to death.” Leviticus 20:10

Incest: “And the man that lieth with his father’s wife hath uncovered his father’s nakedness: both of them shall surely be put to death; their blood shall be upon them. And if a man lie with his daughter in law, both of them shall surely be put to death: they have wrought confusion; their blood shall be upon them.” Leviticus 20:11,12

Homosexuality: “If a man also lie with mankind, as he lieth with a woman, both of them have committed an abomination: they shall surely be put to death; their blood shall be upon them.” Lev. 20:13. Homosexuals are permitted to be priests and leaders in some Christian churches. We can only wonder at the spiritual level of these churches when there are the “blind leading the blind.”

Rape:” But if a man find a betrothed damsel in the field, and the man force her, and lie with her: then the man only that lay with her shall die:” Deut 22:25

We see in today’s society how little if any, punishment is given to those offenders in these immoral sins. Some of them are accepted as normal behaviour. In God’s eyes, they are very grievous sins – bringing upon the guilty person the death penalty.

Entice others to sin

“If thy brother, the son of thy mother, or thy son, or thy daughter, or the wife of thy bosom, or thy friend, which is as thine own soul, entice thee secretly, saying, Let us go and serve other gods, which thou hast not known, thou, nor thy fathers; Namely, of the gods of the people which are round about you, nigh unto thee, or far off from thee, from the one end of the earth even unto the other end of the earth; Thou shalt not consent unto him, nor hearken unto him; neither shall thine eye pity him, neither shalt thou spare, neither shalt thou conceal him: But thou shalt surely kill him; thine hand shall be first upon him to put him to death, and afterwards the hand of all the people. And thou shalt stone him

with stones, that he die; because he hath sought to thrust thee away from the LORD thy God, which brought thee out of the land of Egypt, from the house of bondage.” Deut. 13:6-10.

Here we see the influence of close relatives on spiritual life. The wife, the person nearest to the man, for they are one flesh has often had the most success in influencing her husband in the wrong direction. The reverse is also true, therefore great care should be exercised in the choice of a life partner. In times of crisis, particularly during the final events in the history of this world it may not be possible to trust even the closest relatives if they do not hold to the faith.

Today we are surrounded by the false gods of materialism, wealth, popularity, politics, sports, fashions and amusements. How easy to wander away from the Lord, and encourage others to follow us. However to entice someone into sin, brings upon the offender the death penalty. Be careful of your influence. You are either a positive influence or a negative influence on the people with whom you come into contact – especially your close friends. If you are a negative influence, you bring upon yourself the blood of their guilt. Make sure also that your friends are not enticing you in the wrong direction either.

Spiritualism:

“A man also or woman that hath a familiar spirit, or that is a wizard, shall surely be put to death: they shall stone them with stones: their blood shall be upon them.” Leviticus 20:27

“The very name of witchcraft is now held in contempt. The claim that men can hold intercourse with evil spirits is regarded as a fable of the Dark Ages. But spiritualism, which numbers its converts by hundreds of thousands, yea, by millions, which has made its way into scientific circles, which has invaded churches, and has found favor in legislative bodies, and even in the courts of kings--this mammoth deception is but a revival, in a new disguise, of the witchcraft condemned and prohibited of old.” GC 556. The majority of the Christian world now believes in spiritualism in one degree or another. Communicating with the dead is very common. The idea that dead loved ones are looking out for us is an accepted belief. Visiting those who communicate

with the dead is considered a privilege. This is spiritualism in a real sense.

Respect Leader's Decision:

"And the man that will do presumptuously, and will not hearken unto the priest that standeth to minister there before the LORD thy God, or unto the judge, even that man shall die: and thou shalt put away the evil from Israel." Deut 17:12. The root of the word "presumptuous" here is: "to act rebelliously". How many we see, especially young people, acting presumptuously and rebelling against, and disrespecting, the leaders God has set up.

"He who has placed upon men the heavy responsibility of leaders and teachers of His people will hold the people accountable for the manner in which they treat His servants. We are to honor those whom God has honored. The judgment visited upon Miriam should be a rebuke to all who yield to jealousy, and murmur against those upon whom God lays the burden of His work." PP 386. We see what happened to Korah, Dathan and Abiram in Ancient Israel when they rebelled against Moses' leadership. Also in 1951, there was a group that separated from God's church because of rebellion against God's appointed leaders. They were shaken out.

Sacrifice Children To Moloch:

"Again, thou shalt say to the children of Israel, Whosoever he be of the children of Israel,

strangers that sojourn in Israel, that giveth any of his seed unto Moloch; he shall surely be put to death: the people of the land shall stone him with stones." Leviticus 20:2. This was a terrible sin that was regularly practiced in heathenism in Old Testament times – sacrificing children on an altar to the heathen god, Moloch. We would never do this would we? We often do when we don't give our children proper guidance and discipline. We allow the world to guide and discipline them – which ultimately is sacrificing them to heathen gods.

Murder:

"And if he smite him with an instrument of iron, so that he die, he is a murderer: the murderer shall surely be put to death. And if he smite him with throwing a stone, wherewith he may die, and he die, he is a murderer: the murderer shall surely be put to death. Or if he smite him with an hand weapon of wood, wherewith he may die, and he die, he is a murderer: the murderer shall surely be put to death." Numbers 35: 16-18 Of course, murder incurred the death penalty. However if you read in the New Testament where Jesus discusses the spirit of the law, it is said that "Whosoever hateth his brother is a murderer: and ye know that no murderer hath eternal life abiding in him." 1 John 3:15. To be unable to forgive someone or to harbour hatred falls under the sin of murder.

False Prophet:

"And that prophet, or that dreamer of dreams, shall be put to death; because he hath spoken to turn you away from the LORD your God, which brought you out of the land of Egypt, and redeemed you out of the house of bondage, to thrust thee out of the way which the LORD thy God commanded thee to walk in. So shalt thou put the evil away from the midst of thee." Deut. 13:5.

Anyone, whether a self-professing prophet or a leader who turns another person away from the truth, was punished by death. Today there are, "spirits of devils working mira-

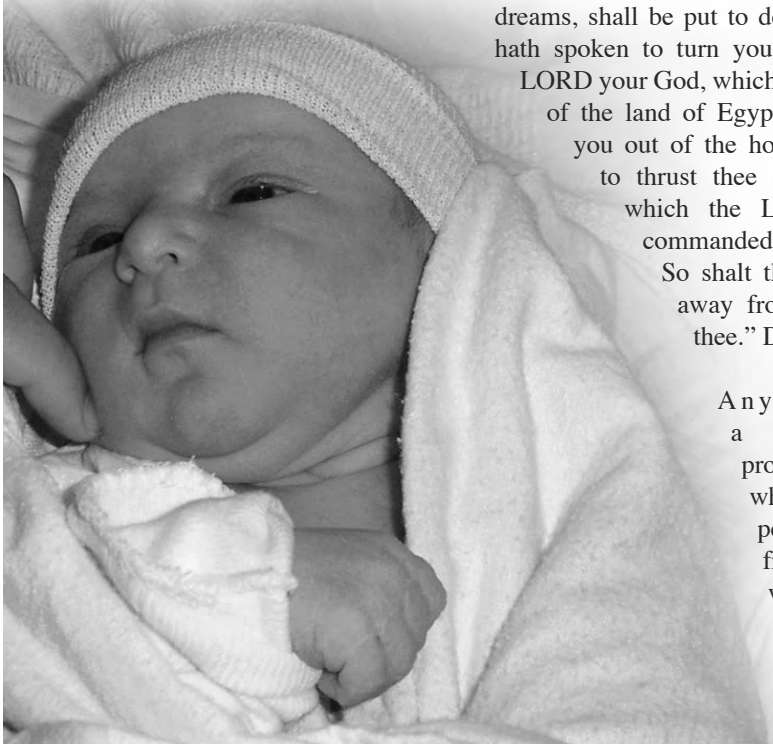
cles". And in the time of the end, Jesus said that "Many shall come in my name, saying, I am Christ; and shall deceive many." Matthew 24:5. Don't trust a person just because they say they are a prophet, have dreams or even performs miracles. We can only trust a person who speaks according to the "law and testimony: If they speak not according to this word it is because there is no light in them." Isa. 8:20

Rebellion Against Leaders Of The Church:

"And they answered Joshua, saying, All that thou commandest us we will do, and whithersoever thou sendest us, we will go. According as we hearkened unto Moses in all things, so will we hearken unto thee: only the LORD thy God be with thee, as he was with Moses. Whosoever he be that doth rebel against thy commandment, and will not hearken unto thy words in all that thou commandest him, he shall be put to death: only be strong and of a good courage." Joshua 1:16-18. How grievous a sin it is to rebel against the commandments and instructions that God has sent to His people through His appointed servants. Often these servants are not respected due to the fact that they are mere fallible men. While it is true, they are fallible, but in the strength of Christ they are a powerful force against the enemy and their messages and instructions must be heeded.

Also to rebel against the commandments given by God through His servants, and even ridiculing the standard, not believing that the Lord would set so high a standard. We don't need to be as strict in the lifestyle issues that the church teaches.

What can we learn from all these laws? While there are degrees of sin, some sins which we, perhaps, have not considered too serious, are very grievous in the eyes of God. Some sins are more difficult to overcome because they have become habitual – and a part of our character. "We are to do all that we can do on our part to fight the good fight of faith. We are to wrestle, to labor, to strive, to agonize to enter in at the strait gate... Help has been provided for us in Him who is mighty to save. The spirit of truth and light will quicken and renew us by its mysterious workings; for all our spiritual improvement comes from God, not from ourselves. The true worker will have a divine power to aid him, but the idler will not be sustained by the Spirit of God." Faith and Works, p. 48.



All sin brings about the final death penalty to be given to the unrighteous after the millennium.

“I will heal their backsliding, I will love them freely: for mine anger is turned away from him.” Hosea 14:4

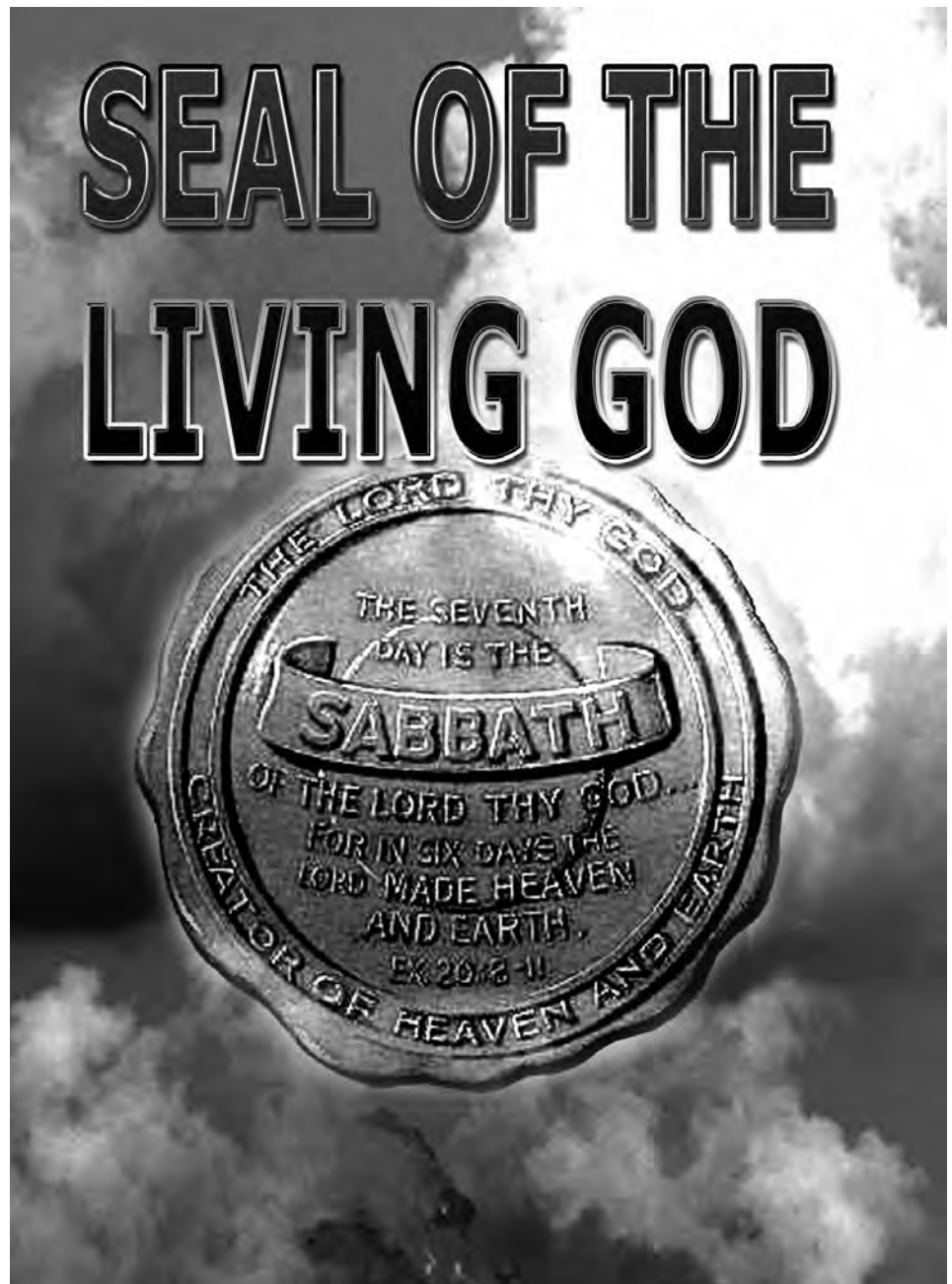
“Seek ye the LORD while he may be found, call ye upon him while he is near:” Isaiah 55:6. Thankfully we serve a merciful and loving God, who sent His own Son to pay our death penalty. Unfortunately, the vast majority of people do not want to accept this payment for their debt. They choose to continue in their own ways, which will bring upon themselves the death penalty in the end.

Although we may have been forgiven after we repented of our sin, there is one more condition before we are fully accepted into harmony with God. In the following Bible verse we read:

“If they shall confess their iniquity, and the iniquity of their fathers, with their trespass which they trespassed against me, and that also they have walked contrary unto me; And that I also have walked contrary unto them, and have brought them into the land of their enemies; if then their uncircumcised hearts be humbled, and they then accept of the punishment of their iniquity: Then will I remember my covenant with Jacob, and also my covenant with Isaac, and also my covenant with Abraham will I remember; and I will remember the land.” Lev. 26: 40-42. Sin has consequences, even if it is repented of. We must accept the punishment that comes along with our sin. Then the Lord will remember the covenant that He has made with us. If a man is a murderer and ends up in jail for 25 years, God will forgive him, however he may still have to serve his time in prison. The punishment may not be removed. Even then, grace is given for a person to bear the punishment. The Lord is with them.

May God help us to overcome all sin that we may be perfect, even as our Father in heaven is perfect, (Mat. 5:48) so we will be ready to meet Jesus without shame or remorse when He comes in the clouds of glory and avoid the final death penalty (the second death), which Jesus, Himself, suffered for our sake. **AMEN**

Wendy Eaton, Australia



“The Sabbath of the fourth commandment is the seal of the living God. It points to God as the Creator, and is the sign of His rightful authority over the beings He has made. Those who obey this law will bear the seal of God, for He has set apart this day as a sign of loyalty between Himself and His people. To Moses on Mt. Sinai, he said, ‘Speak thou also unto the children of Israel, saying, Verily My Sabbaths ye shall keep; for it is a sign between Me and you throughout your generations; that ye may know that I am the Lord that doth sanctify you.’” ST, Mar. 22, 1910.

“What is the seal of the living God which is placed in the foreheads of His people? It is a mark which angels, but not human eyes, can read; for the destroying angel

must see this mark of redemption. LT 126, 1898. The angel with the writer’s inkhorn is to place a mark upon the foreheads of all who are separated from sin and sinners, and the destroying angel follows this angel.” LT12, 1886

“Just as soon as the people of God are sealed in their foreheads,—it is not any seal or mark that can be seen, but a settling into the truth, both intellectually and spiritually, so they cannot be moved,—just as soon as God’s people are sealed and prepared for the shaking, it will come. Indeed, it has begun already; the judgments of God are now upon the land, to give us warning, that we may know what is coming.” MS 173, 1902.

“Nothing is more essential to communion with God than the most profound humility. ‘I dwell,’ says the Lord, the High and Holy One, ‘with him also that is of a contrite and humble spirit.’ While you are so eagerly striving to be first, remember that you will be last in the favour of God if you fail to cherish a meek and lowly spirit. Pride of heart will cause many to fail where they might have made a success. ‘Before honour is humility;’ and the patient in spirit is better than the proud in spirit.’ When Ephraim spake trembling, he exalted himself in Israel, but when he offended in Baal, he died.’ ‘Many are called, but few are chosen.’ Many hear the invitation of mercy, are tested and proved; but few are sealed with the seal of the living God. Few will humble themselves as a little child, that they may enter the kingdom of heaven.

“Few receive the grace of Christ with self-abasement, with a deep and permanent sense of their unworthiness. They cannot bear the manifestations of the power of God, for this would encourage in them self-esteem, pride, and envy. This is why the Lord can do so little for us.” 5T 50.

“The followers of Jesus will not be popular, but will be like their Master, meek and

lowly of heart. You are seeking to climb to the highest seat, but will find yourselves at last in the lowest. If you seek to deal justly, to love mercy, to walk humbly with God, you will be partakers with Christ of His sufferings, and sharers with Him of His glory in His kingdom. The Lord has blessed you, but how little have you appreciated His loving-kindness! How little praise He has received from your lips! You may do a good work for the Master, but not with your ideas as supreme. You must learn in the school of Christ, else you can never be qualified to enter the higher grade, receive the seal of the living God, enter in through the gates into the city of God, and be crowned with glory, honour, and immortality.” 5T 502.

“What are you doing, brethren, in the great work of preparation? Those who are uniting with the world are receiving the worldly mold and preparing for the mark of the beast. Those who are distrustful of self, who are humbling themselves before God and purifying their souls by obeying the truth, these are receiving the heavenly mold and are preparing for the seal of God in their foreheads. When the decree goes forth and the stamp is impressed, their

character will remain pure and spotless for eternity.

“Now is the time to prepare. The seal of God will not be placed upon the forehead of an impure man or woman. It will never be placed upon the forehead of the ambitious, world-loving man or woman. It will never be placed upon the forehead of men or women of false tongues or deceitful hearts. All who receive the seal must be without spot before God--candidates for heaven. Go forward, my brethren and sisters, I can only write briefly upon these points at this time, merely calling your attention to the necessity of preparation. Search the Scriptures for yourselves, that you may understand the fearful solemnity of the present hour.” 5T 216

May the Lord help us, may God bless us and grant us more power. AMEN.

Your sister,
Edeline P. Cosby, Detroit, MI





Samar Elhamalawy didn't know what was wrong with her little son. But when Mahmood was nine months old, he suddenly lost interest in walking. He reverted back to crawling, from standing and cruising along the couch. "He just started to deteriorate," the Hamilton mother of two recalls. A few months later, she worriedly asked her family doctor why he had so few teeth. Then, at 14 months old, the little boy took two steps, fell down and broke his arm.

Within a month, Hamilton bone specialists diagnosed Mahmood with rickets, a bone-weakening disease caused by vitamin D deficiency.

Looking back a century, the slums of New York and London teemed with children whose weak, spindly limbs and bowed legs testified to their D deficiency. The disease all but disappeared after the 1920's, when doctors realized it could be cured by sun exposure.

But lately the malady has been making a comeback. That's bad news, and not just for kids: Nowadays scientists are linking low levels of D to cancer, hypertension, diabetes, multiple sclerosis, osteoporosis and inflammatory bowel disease.

More and more evidence is mounting that vitamin D plays an absolutely pivotal role in all aspects of human health.

Researchers used to think D's main value was in building strong bones. But new research shows that this humble nutrient is far more versatile. Unlike other vitamins, D isn't found in much we eat. Instead, most is supplied by the sun. The process begins when a molecule in the skin called 7-Dehydrocholesterol reacts to ultraviolet light and turns into vitamin D. It then travels to the liver, where it picks up extra molecules of oxygen and hydrogen. This process transforms the skin molecule into a potent pre-hormone called calcidiol. Scientists now think many tissues in the body—not just the liver—can convert the calcidiol to make their own calcitriol, the active disease-fighting compound of vitamin D.

Let the sun bake your unprotected arms and face for a few minutes a day and you'll make all the D you need—it sounds simple. But combine Canada's short summers, indoor lifestyle, sun-blocking pollution and the fact that even sunscreen with an SPF of 8 reduces D absorption to virtually nil, and many of us end up falling short. While you can get some D in the spring and fall, summer in Canada is the best time to stock up (your body can store D for several months). Forget about winter. From early October until late March, the ultraviolet light you get in a city is not enough to generate vitamin D.

The vitamin is absorbed through the skin, and people with darker skin types tend to be more deficient. Meanwhile, the elderly tend to be at higher risk for D deficiency because they tend to avoid sunshine.

One result of the growing D deficiency is more and more rickets cases each year. "Mahmood was born in January and wasn't exposed to a lot of sunlight," says his mother, Samar. His dark skin probably didn't help. But after a month on vitamin therapy, the little boy bounced back and started walking. By 22 months of age, seven months after starting treatment, tests showed no trace of bone problems.

What really worries D experts, though, is what Mahmood's deficiency may represent: huge chunks of the world's population living with a chronic lack of D, which boosts the risk of serious illnesses. At the top of the list?

Cancer

The cancer theory got its legs in 1980 after Frank and Cedric Garland, epidemiologists and brothers, were struck by maps showing that the rate of colon cancer was about twice as high in the cloudy northeast United States as in the south. People who consumed the most vitamin D or had the highest levels of D in their blood had a lower risk of colon cancer. “We know sunnier places have lower breast-cancer rates compared with more northern countries.”

A teacher in the School of Medicine in North Carolina has studied the role of D in prostate cancer. Prostate cells, he has shown, produce the hormone calcitriol, which can act as a brake on cell growth. When the cells can’t get enough calcitriol to make calcitriol, it’s as if the brake lines are cut, he reasons. The cells can multiply uncontrollably, and cancer results.

Diabetes

People in Finland, where the sun shows its face for only a few hours a day during winter, have the world’s highest incidence of Type 1 diabetes. But vitamin D reduces their risk for the disease. In one study tracking 10,000 children, researchers found that those who got regular doses of vitamin D as infants were about 80 percent less likely to later develop Type 1 diabetes than those who did not get enough. So the vitamin may help by preventing destruction of the cells that produce insulin.

Hypertension

It’s long been known that a population’s average blood pressure rises the farther the country is from the equator. A doctor recruited 18 volunteers with mild hypertension and put them under ultraviolet lights for at least six minutes, three times a week. After six weeks, the amount of D in their systems had more than doubled and their blood pressure had dropped significantly—to normal for some. The lights may work, says this doctor, because they boost calcitriol production by the kidneys, and calcitriol tamps down enzymes that cause blood vessels to constrict, a major cause of high blood pressure.

Osteoporosis

In the intricate ballet of calcium regulation that goes on in our bodies, when D goes

missing, another hormone, parathyroid hormone, builds up and starts pulling calcium out of the skeleton.

One result is the bone-brittling disease osteoporosis. If people don’t get the right balance of both calcium and D throughout their lives to help build up bone strength, their bones can weaken and easily fracture in their senior years.

We need calcium because we’re really deprived of vitamin D. If we had enough D, we wouldn’t need so much calcium.

Eventually, prevention of osteoporosis—which should start in childhood—may involve people taking vitamin D supplements and basking in the sun.

Multiple Sclerosis

Getting lots of vitamin D from sun exposure might also reduce your risk of developing multiple sclerosis, a degenerative neurological disease. One Australian study found that people who had more sun exposure as children were much less likely to develop the disease. It’s been suggested that taking high doses of D might both prevent the disease and aid in its treatment.

Inflammatory Bowel Disease

Crohn’s disease and ulcerative colitis—both which fall under the category inflammatory bowel disease (IBD)—are both more common in northern nations and are associated with vitamin D deficiency.

How Much D?

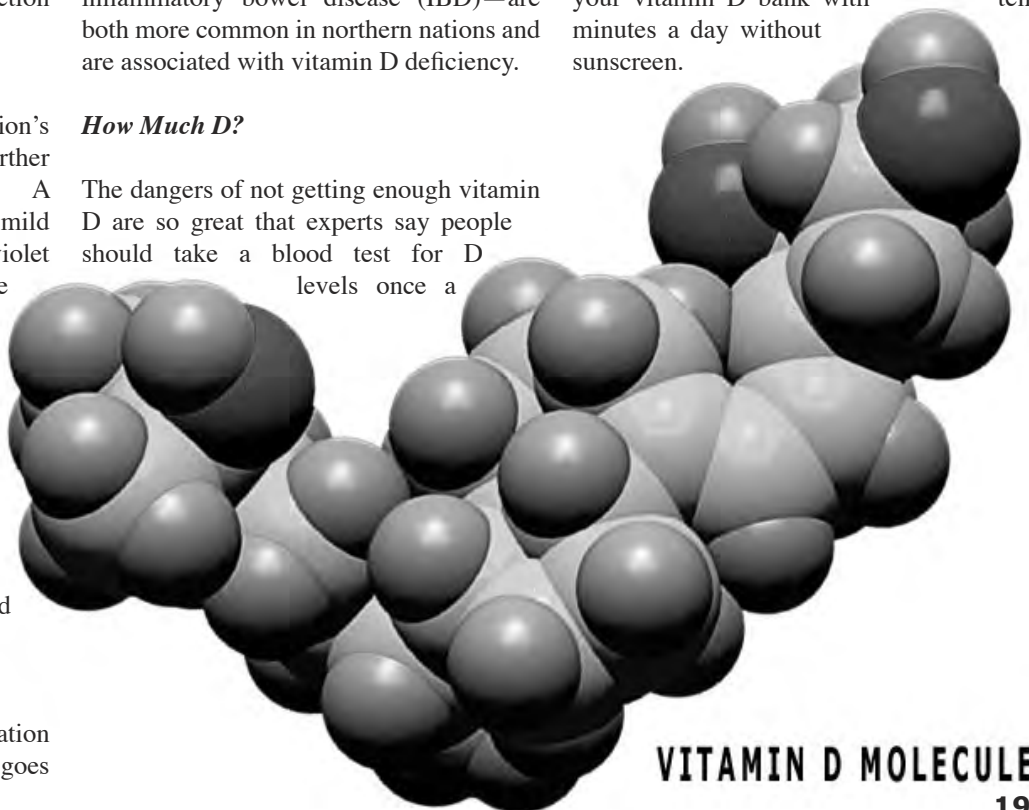
The dangers of not getting enough vitamin D are so great that experts say people should take a blood test for D levels once a

year—just as they check their cholesterol regularly. Your doctor can order this test for you at any time.

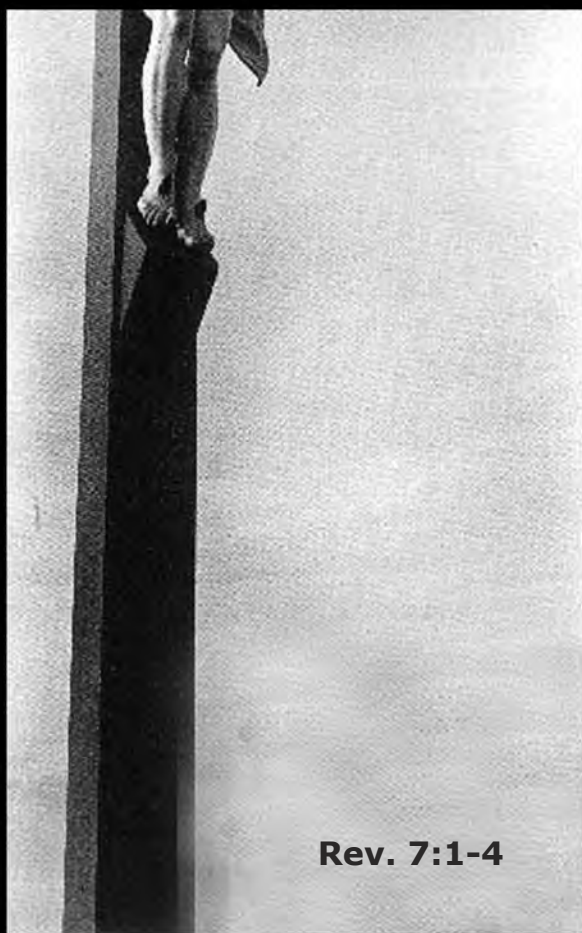
Current Health Canada recommendations for vitamin D suggest people under 50 get 200 international units (IU) a day; people age 51 to 70 should get 400 IU a day; and those over 70 should aim for 600 IU. But experts don’t think that’s enough. In a study of young Canadian women, it was found that those who took 400 IU a day had the same deficiency rate as those who didn’t. These women were taking double what the government said they should and it had zero consequence on their blood-vitamin D levels.

Studies suggest it takes about 800 IU daily to impact bones, but top experts recommend buying a 1,000 IU supplement to get real health benefits. (It is possible to get a toxic buildup of calcium in the bloodstream, but only if you take megadoses of vitamin D. Some recommendations suggest that 4,000 IU a day could be toxic. However, the new data experts have collected suggest you’d have to take 40,000 IU a day for long stretches for the vitamin to be dangerous.

You can also combine a supplement with getting D elsewhere. Look for D-fortified brands of soy beverages. Better still, soak up the rays on warm, sunny days or when you’re on a winter vacation. Fill up your vitamin D bank with ten minutes a day without sunscreen.



VITAMIN D MOLECULE



Rev. 7:1-4

WHY REPENT ?

“...And I heard the number of them which were sealed; and there were sealed an hundred and forty and four thousand of all the tribes of the children of Israel.”

We live in a mighty world in which there live 2 billion Christians alone! Is it possible that only 144,000 will be saved? Do you believe this? How often have you been asked this question by sincere, professed believers? How many more doubt this, perhaps even some devoted believers.

Well, the Apostle John, that old sage of Patmos, saw this on the desolate island of Patmos in Greece. He not only saw it but heard it! Furthermore, he saw the Holy of Holies, and the sealed ones.

So, how few are there, really? A zealous pastor in Italy believes the figure is very large! Moreover, is this a literal or figurative number? It is exact in its wording, not symbolic, but realistic; the Word of God. The Greeks have an agonizing word for it in referring to this number. They say “alimono” if there is only 144,000! Meaning, woe, emphatically if there is only 144,000!

Others question this figure further, saying this refers to the Israeli tribes of the past, or it consists of men only, or that it’s composed of 12 different characters (i.e. cholic, sanguine, etc.) and they shall enter into 12 different gates in Heaven.

Therefore, some unshakably believe, some erroneously believe, and other popularly do not believe. One can, however, by studying the Scriptures and the Spirit of Prophecy, discover that the message of Rev. 7:104 is the present truth, and includes Rev. 14:1; 12:4; Daniel 12.

The Holy Scriptures say, in Luke 18:8, “Nevertheless, when the Son of man cometh, shall he find faith on the earth?” This implies that there will, in fact, be very few... if any! Why aren’t all ready? Why aren’t others that believe in Jesus Christ ready? What of the Great Multitude? Those from Adam to the 2nd Advent of Jesus Christ? Those from Adam to the year 1844? Is it those who believe by faith alone and not works, or those who believe by faith and works?

But first, an important scripture to understand for our time is from 1 Thess. 4:17, “Then we who are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air, and so shall ever be with the Lord.” A familiar passage for many of us today, however, we must repent first of our sins, before we are caught up in the air. Or, are we “caught up” in our sins?

The word, repent, and repentance is mentioned over 75 times in the Holy Scriptures. It must, therefore, have importance, and needs to be understood in its entirety, before proceeding further. Repent, simply means, “a wish one had not done something; feeling regret for deed or omission. In Biblical terms it is called, penitent, or penitence. Most often, this is brought to ones light by the standard of the Law (Ten Commandments). An interesting definition is taken from the Greek, “meta-nois,” which translates, “after-understanding”. Yes, understanding comes after the fact.

But, what is sin and who are the sinners? We find a partial answer in Luke 13:4, “Whereby men must not judge but repent,” or those eighteen, upon whom the tower in Siloam fell, and killed them, think

ye that they were sinners above all men that dwelt in Jerusalem? Here we have an industrial accident involving some Galileans, whereby the question was raised. The same burning questions arise when the 9/11—Twin Towers of the World Trade Center were destroyed in New York City; and concerning the thousands of victims who recently died in the Tsunami of S. E. Asia. The Lord pointedly answered the Galileans, “I tell you, Nay, But, except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish.” The answer for man today, is the same, “repent or perish.”

We continue on the same theme, in Acts 3: 19, “Repent, therefore, and be converted that your sins may be blotted out, when the times of refreshing (latter rain), shall come from the presence of the Lord.” Repentance, hereby, is a condition for receiving the latter rain. Who, therefore, will receive it? Are you preparing for it?

We are all vital tools of Jesus Christ, and so have a great need of Jesus in order to be tempered and shaped. Consequently, we become obedient tools in His hands. Elijah was a shining example of obedience, in which he defended the living God in his striking victory over Baal and 850 supporting priests. The magnificent result that followed was the repentance of 3000 faithful followers.

The Apostle Paul, all alone, in the rich and influential city of Athens, Greece, stood on Mars Hill of the Acropolis, and boldly preached the message of repentance to the Unknown God, and followed saying that, “the times of this ignorance God overlooked, but now commandeth all men, everywhere to repent.” (Acts 17:22, 30). His message was repeated in all his travels in Greece, from Beria, Philippi, and Corinth to Thessalonica.

The question, again, why repent? “For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God.” (Rom. 3:23). But, why are we afraid to tell people to repent? It’s because since we were born, we have learned to steal, grab, lie, and cheat.

Jesus Christ elaborated on this when He answered the Pharisees by, “Saying unto them, They that are well need not a physician, but they that are sick. I am not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance.” (Matt. 9:12, 13).

Again, why repent? “For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ, or Lord.” It’s a promised gift, a gift to be cherished and longed after. It’s a matchless gift, that cannot be duplicated in this expectant and fictitious world.

The Apostle Paul, in prison, and abandoned by most of his friends, wrote to young Timothy, who was intimately associated with Paul, and instructed Timothy, “To lead a quiet, and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty.” Paul instructed him further, “God our Saviour, who will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth.” (1 Tim. 2:3, 4).

But, we still hear. Where’s Jesus? When will the end come? We have heard this for centuries from our forefathers. Many rejected the truth, and many more apostatized. Few will be saved we understand now. “Who at the time were disobedient, when once the longsuffering of God waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was preparing, in which few, that is, eight souls, were saved by water.” (1 Pet. 3:20).

Yet, we see that God’s mercy abounded to the inhabitants of Nineveh, in which an entire prosperous city repented and was saved! A city of six score thousand persons, including the king and nursing babies. This was the greatest revival in history! What a marvel! The Jonah fish story tells of this spiritual miracle. (Jonah 1-4)

There is opportunity for all! “God is not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.” (2 Pet. 3:9). God loves us, but sees some of us are not ready. Are you? But, not only us but the whole world. “He is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness, but is long-suffering toward us.” (v.9)

What, however, is man’s attitude today? Even professed Christians? We can refer to the seven churches for an answer, in part. We are living in the church age of Laodicea, the last church, the last period, the last generation. This church is passing through a crisis state, a state of indifference, and lukewarmness.

When did it begin for our church? In 1844, when Miller and thousands rejected its message, and in reality was the beginning

of the judgment, when Jesus Christ entered the Holy of Holies from the Holy of the Heavenly Sanctuary.

When did Jesus Christ begin His ministry here on planet Earth? He began His public ministry in Capernaum, and, “From that time Jesus began to preach, and to say, Repent, for the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand.” (Matt. 4:17; 9:12, 13). Furthermore, Jesus visited Nazareth with His disciples, and, “They went out and preached that men should repent, and they cast out many demons and anointed with oil many that were sick, and healed them.” (Mark 6:12, 13).

The message of Jesus Christ, therefore, was that also, of John the Baptist... repent!

Ezekiel, priest, and prophet, was the Watchman, who was commanded by the Lord to give warning to the wicked and the righteous. “If you give the wicked no warning from his wicked way, nor the righteous man who commits iniquity, they will die and your blood I will require at your hand.” (Ezek 3:18-20) It is your duty, therefore, and privilege to warn them of their ways. If not, you will be a “stumbling block” for them and their blood will be on your hands. For many to be asked to repent has a jarring sound, and needs to be approached in the spirit of Jesus.

Judah is a disastrous example of non-repentance. But, he returned the coins. Is this repentance? No. Silver is not repentance. What would you do if you were placed in such a position? Jesus Christ washed his feet. He knew! Judah could have repented; however, he was left in the darkness of his heart. He passed the limit. There was no returning. If he committed true repentance, he would go to Jesus, to Golgotha, to Herod, the courts, the trial. He repented, however, for the results and not the act.

Elijah, the Tishbite, and prophet, the victor at Mt. Carmel, was commanded by God to denounce King Ahab. Elijah boldly entered King Ahab’s palace, past the guards, and confronted him, commanding him to repent.

The Pharaoh and the Egyptians didn’t truly repent; although they were given time to repent.



An Angel Blocks The Way Of Balaam

- Balaam, the disobedient and rebellious prophet, did not exhibit true repentance.
- Eli, the high priest, and judge, yet, did not exhibit true repentance.
- King Saul, king of Israel, did not exhibit true repentance.
- Felix, the Governor, did not exhibit true repentance.
- The Antediluvians, did not exhibit true repentance.

But, David, exhibited true repentance, crying until tears wet his bed. (Ps. 51:10) Apostle Peter, who thrice denied Jesus, repented, crying bitterly. (Matt. 26:25). Zacchaeus, the tax collector, exhibited true repentance. He heard of Jesus Christ; climbing a tree, as he was short, to see Jesus. He truly repented. Did he keep all the money he absconded with? No! He returned four times that amount. (Lk 19:8)

The thief on the cross exhibited true repentance. He had a chance to repent and it was done in the last three hours on the cross. He was miraculously saved. He believed in the crucified Jesus. The thief shouted, "Don't you fear God"? to the other thief; the third angel's message - Fear God! He made God his trust.

There are two classes of sinners:

1. The repented sinner.
2. The unrepentant sinner.

How long will it be before you accept to repent? How long before you will make Jesus Christ your intercessor? In

Greek, intercessor is defined as, "Mesolabis," meaning, "in the middle-- to handle." In other words, if you accept Him, He will handle matters in the midst of your life. Moreover, how long will it be before the door of grace is still open? Now, it's open. Soon it will be too late, when you finally decide.

What, then, do we need to do now? "Wherefore, as the Holy Spirit saith, Today if ye will hear His voice, harden not your hearts..." (Heb. 3:7, 8). Don't say tomorrow.

What else? "Seek ye the Lord while He may be found, call ye upon him while He is near." (Isa. 55:6) Repent and be forgiven.

There are three classes of men:

1. Rev. 6:15--The unbeliever, and completely unrepentant.
2. Jer. 8:7, 20--Believe in God and Jesus Christ, but know not the Law.
3. Isa. 25:9--Those ready, and waiting for the coming of the Lord.

It's much like waiting for a guest at your home; flowers, clean, neat. But, here we are waiting for the King of Kings. **Which class are you in?**

Repent, therefore, and seek Him with tears. He'll forgive you. Not for our own good only, but of the family, and others. Repent, but don't stand in sin. When baptized, you'll walk in a new life. But, repentance and faith are needed for baptism. "And now why are you waiting? Arise and be baptized," and wash away your sins, calling on the name of the Lord." (Acts 22:16)

From what we read heretofore, and heard, what is true repentance. Well, it can take on many more meanings, but simply the spirit of prophecy says, "The things hated you now love, and the things you loved you now hate."

Furthermore, it's confessing sin without excusing it.

Well, now being inspired by words heard or read today, you say, I'm going to repent

tomorrow. No, it's not that easy. Man cannot do it by himself. It's obtained only by Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit affecting the heart. This is the miracle of the ages! For one, it's shown by obedience to God's Law. Repentance continues all our lives... to the very end. It's a daily relationship with Jesus.

But, that great deceiver, Satan tries to discourage us. It's his number one and favorite tactic... discouragement!

We're like little children. We start to walk, drink milk, fall, get up, and fall. We are much like that, too. We don't see. We fall. We get up. We fall. The elect, too! Many are always fallen. So, if we fall, we get up and ask forgiveness. Then, we fall less, and less, and less each time.

There's a thin line between the world and Jesus Christ. For many it's erased. One can't distinguish anymore between the world and Jesus. What's your position? Are you walking on that thin line or has it vanished?

Soon we'll see our King and God in all of His glory. All of those who have repented of their sins will be waiting for that glorious event. All of those who have repented and overcame, and washed their robes (KJV--do His commandments), in the blood of the Lamb, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter through the gates into the city." (Rev 22:14).

Finally, we read in Heb 12:17, of Esau, son of Isaac, son of Abraham, a warning to professing Christians. Esau was destitute of faith, who despised his birthright, and sold it for a "momentary fleshly gratification". He didn't recognize that it was a spiritual thing of value, but only as there was faith to apprehend it; understanding it and taking hold of it.

He was, therefore, rejected and found no place of repentance, though he sought it with tears and anguish. But, only after the passing of ("meta-noisis"-GR) understanding. (Gen 27:38). Like Judah, he passed the limit!

May we be one of them that have repented and overcame, and understand the vexing and searching question, "Why Repent"?

AMEN. John Theodorou, USA

WATCH!



We are surrounded with dangers every day, and if we do not watch for them we can have an accident and hurt ourselves or even get killed. Even that we try to keep our eyes open, yet accidents do happen; on the highways, on the sea and in the air. Only a few seconds of carelessness can cause a fatal disaster.

But then there are dangers that are invisible which cause accidents to happen. A hiding rock in the sea can cause a shipwreck; poison added to the food can kill us, yet in religion there are more dangers than anywhere else, and most of them are invisible. On the highways no one tries to hit us purposely, but in religion there are many who try to destroy us whenever they have an opportunity.

“Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour.” 1 Pet. 5:8.

Satan with his millions of angels are our enemies who day and night are seeking opportunities to tempt us to sin and to destroy our faith. They also have many helpers. Often our family members and friends can tempt us to do wrong, as happened to Adam. His wife tempted him to do sin with terrible consequences.

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

To illustrate the need of constant watching and praying, Jesus spoke several parables:

“Watch ye therefore: for ye know not when the Master of the house cometh, at even, or at midnight, or at the cockcrowing, or in the morning: Lest coming suddenly he find you sleeping. And what I say unto you I say unto all, Watch.” Mark 13:35-37.

To all of us there is a danger to sleep spiritually in these last days, which can be fatal.

“Watch therefore: for ye know not what hour your Lord doth come. But know this, that if the goodman of the house had known in what watch the thief would come, he would have watched, and would not have suffered his house to be broken up. Therefore be ye also ready: for in such an hour as ye think not the Son of man cometh.” Matt. 24:42-44.

Jesus gave a warning that, “in such an hour as ye think not the Son of man cometh.” When all seems peaceful: two men working in the field, and two women grinding, doing everyday chores, then at that time one is taken and the other left.

That eventful night when Jesus asked His disciples to watch and pray, they neglected to do it. They saw no need for it. They were sure that they were strong and will not be offended. “Peter answered and said unto Him, though all men shall be offended because of thee, yet will I never be offended.” Matt. 26:33.

Do we need to watch and pray or are we strong that nothing will offend us? Do we say like Peter that we will never be offended?

You can insult us, speak evil of us, take our property away or even kill us, but we will not be offended.

Whatever evil men do to us, we will not feel upset or have bitterness in our heart, nor have a revengeful spirit. Every child of God will be tested in these points.

Jesus said, “Woe unto the world because of offenses! For it must needs be that offenses come; but woe to that man by whom the offense cometh.” Matt. 18:7.

It is much better to be persecuted than to be the persecutor. The faithful prophets were always persecuted by their own brethren. Jesus was killed by His own church, and this has never changed. Satan knows that the best way to discourage someone is to turn his own friends and church leaders against him.

Our heart is compared to a garden. There can grow beautiful flowers and delicious fruits, but also weeds, thorns and thistles. Satan wants to plant tares among the wheat. There can be also a little root of bitterness, yet under the surface, invisible, but it will grow and eventually be visible and destroy the good plants. We need to watch and pray that this root will not grow in our hearts.

“Looking diligently lest any man fail of the grace of God; lest any root of bitterness springing up trouble you, and thereby many be defiled.” Heb. 12:15. Paul is calling us to look diligently lest we fail of the grace of God by letting the root of bitterness to grow.



This root of bitterness has separated many from the church of God, and not only individuals but companies. It begins by destroying the unity in the church and at the same time, love between brethren dies out. Then complainings and dissatisfied feelings will do their destructive work.

Watch for Your Time

Every minute of our time is precious. We cannot afford to waste one moment of our time. We have a great work to be done, and our time is short.

“We have a great work to do. Let us not pass in idleness the precious hours that God has given us in which to perfect characters for heaven. We must not for a moment be inactive or slothful in this work, for we have not a moment to spend without a purpose or object.” Test. Vol. 3, p. 540.

Suddenly our time is up and it will be too late to accomplish what we have neglected.

Our time was purchased by the blood of Jesus for a definite purpose. He did not sacrifice His life to buy us time to be spent in idleness or in pleasure seeking.

Watch What You Eat

Many professed Christians will be out of heaven for uncontrolled appetite. Their belly is their idol.

“The abuses of the stomach by the gratification of appetite, are the fruitful

source of most church trials. Those who eat and work intemperately and irrationally, talk and act irrationally. An intemperate man cannot be a patient man. It is not necessary to drink alcoholic liquors in order to be intemperate. The sin of intemperate eating, eating too frequently, too much, and of rich, unwholesome food, destroys the healthy action of the digestive organs, affects the brain, and perverts the judgment, preventing rational, calm, healthy thinking and acting. And this is a fruitful source of church trials. Therefore, in order for the people of God to be in an acceptable state with Him, where they can glorify Him in their bodies and spirits, which are His, they must with interest and zeal deny the gratification of their appetites, and exercise temperance in all things. Then may they comprehend the truth in its beauty and clearness, and carry it out in their lives, and by a judicious, wise, straightforward course, give the enemies of our faith no occasion to reproach the cause of truth.” Test. Vol. 1, p. 618-619.

“The controlling power of appetite will prove the ruin of thousands, when, if they had conquered on this point, they would have had moral power to gain the victory over every other temptation of Satan. But those who are slaves to appetite will fail in perfecting Christian character. The continual transgression of man for six thousand years has brought sickness, pain, and death as its fruits. And as we near the close of time, Satan’s temptation to indulge appetite will be more powerful and more difficult to overcome.” Test. Vol. 3, p. 492.

The first sin committed by man was indulging appetite. The sin in the time of Noah was the same, and Jesus said that in the last days again, people will be eating and drinking again to satisfy their perverted appetites.

Watch What You See and Hear!

Our eyes and ears are the avenues to our minds, and our minds can be corrupted by seeing and hearing evil and vanity.

He “that stoppeth his ears from hearing of blood, and shutteth his eyes from seeing evil; He shall dwell on high.” Isa. 33: 15-16.

Satan has filled the world with sinful literature, movies, shows and Internet, which can destroy the purity and holiness of the minds. Instead of looking to Jesus, reading the Bible and praying, people indulge in watching and reading shows and literature what Satan has inspired, and by so doing corrupting their minds.

Several times Jesus told His hearers to watch and pray. “Watch ye therefore, and pray always, that ye may be accounted worthy to escape all these things that shall come to pass, and to stand before the Son of man.” Luke 21:36.

There is a special blessing promised to all who are watching and praying without ceasing. “Behold, I come as a thief, Blessed is he that watcheth, and keepeth his garments.” Rev. 16:15.

This is the condition for receiving the blessing of the Lord. Never has the time been so serious and solemn as today. Many seemingly honest and sincere Christians get involved with the affairs of this world and stop watching their spiritual condition and the dangers that Satan sets on their way. By not watching they fall as helpless victims to Satan’s snares. May the Lord help us to watch and pray in this short time that we have left and do the necessary preparations for the end. **AMEN.**

Timo Martin

WAIT ON THE LORD



Manua was very discouraged. He had been sent by the mission to a certain village to try to build up a church, but somehow he just couldn't get anyone to come to his meetings. It wasn't that he hadn't tried. Oh, no. He had gone from house to house inviting people to come. He had promised to show them pictures and to teach them to sing. He had tried to lure them with stories for the children. In short, he had done everything he could think of, but to no avail. The people were too satisfied with the other church mission that had been there for many years, and they would not even come to listen. They were not willing to change because they were set in their ways and traditions.

Manua and his wife prayed earnestly that something would happen. They distributed clothing to the needy and Manua's wife gave simple treatments to the sick. The people appreciated what was done, but they would not come to the meetings.

"Well," said Manua one day, "The only thing I can think of is to have the missionary come again. When he preached here everyone in the village came to hear him, because it was a novelty to see and hear a foreigner."

"Anyway," he added in despair, "I'm not a good preacher. I'm just a translator and I should stick to that. Going out on my own was a big mistake. I should stick to the one thing I can do well, and I'm going to write to the mission and tell them that I no longer want to work as a missionary and that they should send someone else here to work. Maybe they will have more success."

So he carefully wrote a letter late that night, asking the mission to relieve him of his responsibilities and put him back in the evangelistic team where he could translate. "Translation," he wrote, "is the one thing I can do well, and I have decided to go back into it. Please send me somewhere where I can work for the Lord and get results."

But for some reason Manua didn't get the letter posted. For one thing he was too busy packing up his books and other personal belongings so he could be ready to go where he was certain he would be called. Of course, it bothered his conscience. Many times as he tied up his boxes he wondered if he were acting like Jonah. But always he brushed aside the thought. If the Lord wanted him here He would

translation, he went back home and to bed.

The next morning Manua picked up the letter and put it in his pocket. Today he was going to town and would mail it without fail. But somewhere along the way he got sidetracked and when he got back home he discovered the letter still in his pocket. Manua was really disgusted with himself. For a moment he considered another trip to



have given him some results. Or at least people would come to hear what he had to say. There simply was no use wasting his time here.

He went to bed that night feeling very sorry for himself. But before he drifted off to sleep he heard something. The sound of singing was coming from the other little church down the road where the other mission was located.

Quickly Manua got up and dressed. At the edge of the ray of light that streamed from the window he stood listening. A foreign evangelist was speaking and a man very much like himself, Manua, was translating. He listened for a while, then smiling and shaking his head at the very poor

town, but decided he would not get there before the post office closed, so with a sigh he put it away for the next day.

That night as he lay in his bed he again heard the singing. He smiled to himself. If the translator was translating as he did last night, nobody was going to understand anything.

Manua had just dropped off to sleep when a loud knocking at his front door announced a visitor. Quickly he got up from his mat and stumbled through the darkness.

"Yes?" he answered, peering through the open doorway.

The man at the door turned on his



what would happen when it was all over, but like Balaam he could do nothing else.

When the service ended, the people at the door shook the minister's hand cordially. "That was a real sermon," they said. "We want some more like that."

Smiling to himself, Manua went home and tore up the letter. Somehow he knew God was getting through to these people.

Several more nights passed, with Manua translating truth from error. The people began to say, "Why, this is what Manua believes. Our church believes just like his does." And when the preacher left town Manua opened his own meetings with most of the other congregation present. And before long Manua's church – the church where truth was preached – was the biggest in the village.

Sometimes it may look like our work is in vain because we don't see any results from our work. We may be tempted to give up like Manua was. We feel we don't have a talent for the

specific duties that have been asked of us. However sometimes God tests us to see if we will continue working for Him, or if we will give up. We are to plant the seeds and leave the growth to the Lord. We need to just patiently wait on the Lord.

"And let us not be weary in well doing: for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not." Galatians 6:9

We should work like Paul and not worry about the results, but leave them to the Lord. Paul said, "I have planted, Apollos watered; but God gave the increase." 1 Corinthians 3:6

"Wait on the LORD: be of good courage, and he shall strengthen thine heart: wait, I say, on the LORD." Psalm 27:14

flashlight. It was the foreign preacher. "I was wondering whether I could secure your services for translation?" he asked politely. "The translator I have working for me simply cannot get the message across. I understand that you are the best translator in the village. I would be glad to pay you well."

Manua was on the verge of refusing when a brilliant idea hit him. Why not? It was worth a try.

The next evening Manua entered the pulpit with the foreign preacher. Together they knelt to pray and Manua's request was very special.

As he stood beside the preacher Manua's request was always on his heart. "Lord, help me to get Thy message across," he prayed. "Don't let me say anything that is not truth."

Now the preacher was getting warmed up, "Nobody has to keep the law," he

bellowed.

Manua translated. "Everybody has to keep the law."

"That was done away with at the cross!"

"It was never done away with at the cross," said Manua.

"You don't have to keep the law." The old minister went on.

"You must keep the law," Manua countered.

"The seventh-day Sabbath is Jewish," the preacher went on. "No one needs to keep it."

"The Sabbath is for all Christians. Everyone should keep it," preached Manua.

And so it went all through the sermon. The preacher spoke error and Manua translated truth. In the back of his mind he wondered