

ARISE!

“I say unto thee, Arise, and take up thy bed, and go thy way into thine house.” Mark 2:11

What must a Christian do to be accepted by God today? Well, without faith God cannot be very happy with us. I believe we all agree on this and the importance of, first, having abiding faith. Not just an abiding faith, but a faith that is radiant, joyful, and “rising”! Again, “But without faith it is impossible to please Him; for he that cometh to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of them that diligently seek Him.” (Heb 11:6). This is real faith!

God offers to the lost, salvation; and for the faithful service of the saved, He offers rewards. “If any man’s work abide which he hath built thereupon, he shall receive a reward.” (1 Cor 3:14). We must remember that salvation is invariably spoken of as a free gift (John 4:10), whereas rewards are earned by works (Mat. 10:42). Furthermore, a distinction is made that salvation is a present possession (Luke 7:50), whereas rewards are a future attainment, to be given in Heaven (2 Tim 4:8).

But, faith, now, simply is to ask, believe, and hope for something you can’t see. “The substance of things hoped for.” (Heb 11:1). But, what are man’s thoughts? Many! Faith with works, however, are the basis of life, strength, hope, and sustaining inspiration to continue serving the Lord, to lead lost souls to Jesus. It’s the comforting, soul-searching foundation for directing our steps and conduct.

It’s men like Job and the Apostle Paul that bring us to the basis of things, not the average Christian among us, along with other giants of faith who are souls that have been hard hit, and have gone to the basis of things in life, and whose experiences have been preserved for us by God, that we may know where we stand. It is our Lord Himself, and men like Job in the O.T., and Paul in the N.T. who give us the indication of where we are to look for the foundation of our faith when it is being violently, and rudely shaken!

But, what is the fundamental foundation we understand and is one of our founding pillars of faith? Yes, the sanctuary. The sanctuary that was made on earth. A copy of the Heavenly, sanctuary whereby our prayers and faith carry us before the Throne of Grace, before God, Himself, where our intercessor, Jesus Christ, is interceding in our behalf in Heaven today.

Based on this, then what is our mission, our goal, our divine and joyful duty? To place the sanctuary in the enemy camp! Jesus Christ, our Lord and Saviour, came to earth to take it up to Heaven. We’re merely strangers, pilgrims, sojourners. Place it in every soul, as they accept Jesus Christ, and that come to the sanctuary. From faith we can do that which God asks us to do. Faith, too, has to be placed in the camp of the enemy. This

is a practical, working faith, when

Jesus asked the paralytic man at the pool of Bethesda, “rise, take up thy bed, and walk” (John 5:8). Let’s say, you are, for example, subject to a gnawing temptation. So, ask for help, that it may be God’s will that you can overcome this obstacle in your life, and salvation. “Rise up and take thy bed and walk”!

Today all are sick, all are suffering, in a universe that we awoken to that is no longer one of order, but a great big howling confusion. Distresses are reaped, and it takes time to get adjusted to the surrounding stupendous, and withering changes. The seven plagues will fall upon mankind soon, as prophecies are rapidly being fulfilled. The first plague, interestingly, will be grievous, painful, body ulcers affecting primarily the skin. With the coming of the mark of the beast, we will see it all around us. A mourning, grieving, sickness!

Furthermore, we see the destructive signs in nature; the trees, the ocean, seas, rivers, the air, the earth, and the trees; inundating the earth with a ferocity of immeasurable magnitudes. A recent International Conference consisting of 2300 scientists, representing 43 separate countries, declared grimly, that two-thirds of the World was seriously polluted and dangerously imbalanced ecologically. Moreover, although there may be much prayer in the churches of the world, many false Christ’s and prophets will appear.

Many will appear with pierced hands, as Jesus! Some even have the power to heal. But, we know this bestial power comes from Satan. This is happening today! Many are going on pilgrimages, in the Middle East, and other parts of the world, including the U.S.A. These signs, and more, should all shatteringly awaken us! "Woe unto the inhabitants of the earth and the sea....."(Rev. 12:12).

Satan has very little time, too. The end is truly rapidly coming, we can all agree worldwide, as believers. We can travel to any city or countryside, mountain, island, pasture, or forest and we will see acres of dying trees, darkened, ruffled skies, and remnants of beautiful acts of creation. What a startling difference between the works of man and the works of God!

In Greece one sees on almost every corner, and curve, and on any roadway, mini-chapels with glowing wicks of light bathed in olive oil, and fresh or dried flowers in memorial to a dying or dead spirit. Wickedness exists in every corner of life, and will worsen! (Dan 12:10; Eph 6:12; 1 John 5:19). It has reached the edge of a dangerous precipice for man in his heavenly journey. Yes, sadly, it will even pervade the very refuges of our churches, and infect our very brethren and families. What a petty, but bitter difference. But, we will live and pass through that difference. Many of us, however, are like that. Many of us, moreover, do not know where we want to live; restlessness, loneliness, and confusion. Many of us furthermore are sick, and afflicted with anxiety. If your life is going awry, and not towards the final heavenly goal, then read, (John 5:8), "Jesus said unto him, Rise, take up your bed and walk." This is an order! From Jesus Christ, Himself.

The "bed" mentioned here is merely a cloth roll or blanket; common in ancient Israel, and some parts of the world, even today. It was the Sabbath, and Jesus Christ was passing through this small village, and reached the point of a fountain of water (a healing spa). When the angel entered this water, it struck it, and it rippled. Subsequently, all who entered it were presumably healed. Around the fountain there were many ornate columns. Many sick were gathered around the fountain and in the water. There are still many remnants of such fountains in the East. One still exists in ancient Corinth, a natural

spring of great antiquity which has been so heavily remodeled that it now appears to be an artificial fountain. It is called the Fountain of Peirene. The water is stored in four long reservoirs fed by a transverse supply tunnel.

Jesus was present at such a fountain and saw them all. Jesus didn't desire that anyone suffer, especially on the Sabbath. But, on this day only. Why this day? And this one man? Others were waiting, also. This man, however, aged 38 patiently waited. Was he losing hope? But, he couldn't take it any longer. "When Jesus saw him lying there, and knew that he had been thus now a long time, he saith unto him, 'Wilt thou be made well'?" (John 5:6)

Four precious words reached his ears: "Want to be healed"? One could have said, "Of course; I've been waiting 38 yrs!" He could have answered, "yes, no, why ask me, or are you serious? Or, if I am here why can't you see I want to be healed?" He could have lost all hope. Others were before him, waiting, sick and maimed, too. God's grace and love appeared, however, Jesus said, "Arise and walk". The paralytic man was obedient. He arose, without saying a word. When Jesus said these words, the man arose, and was happy, and had hope that he could arise. He felt this divine power surging through his thin, shivering legs. He knew it was a power from Jesus, and he arose contentedly, took his bed, walked, and left. Why did he have this victory over this crippling condition? Faith!

Today we are gathered around the same pool. But, someone is not in the pool! Do any of you want to enter and be healed? You say, "I'm sick, paralytic, maimed, blind, deaf, or dying. But, I have a traumatic sickness." What? Don't we all know it yet? It's sin! What separates us from Jesus? What puts a wall between us and Jesus Christ? What is it that closes the ears of God to our prayers? We have a sickness to be healed.

Let us listen and do as the Apostle Paul did. He had an experience with Jesus. Inside, Paul had two characters. One was flesh. The other was spirit. Paul knew a battle existed between these two. "What a miserable man I am,"... he said. "Free me. I am caught in sin", he said. We, too, have the same experience as Paul did. But, don't wait until one says, "Arise and walk".

When did Jesus Christ die? In the beginning Jesus Christ died as soon as Adam and Eve sinned. Do you want to be saved? Do you want to be healed from sin? Well, if you want to be healed, you must know what you want to be healed from. First, what is in your heart? Jealousy, hatred, anger, war. If all these are in your heart, it's simply called, ego! There's no room for Jesus to enter your heart. All these terrible traits are not to the glory of God but... mine!!

Brethren, are you living for Jesus Christ or... self? Think about this for a moment. Ask yourself, seriously, analyze your heart, then say, "Jesus, heal me; I can't change my heart; transform my thoughts. Make me a new person." That's a prayer for all of us. Jesus Christ came to heal all of us. Do you believe that? That He wants to heal you? That He came for your own, individual therapy?

Arise, therefore! If you arise, then meditate on these three things:

1. Arise - What does this mean? It means you need faith to get up! Faith that Jesus gives. So, arise. It's a divine order. Faith in us, actually energizes us. If you are obedient you will arise, if you have Jesus Christ in your heart.
2. Take Your Bed - What does this mean? It means, where are you going? It means both faith and by obedience I will go thereby.
3. Walk - What does this mean? It means... work. Do something. Do a good work. Synonymous with work, I have faith in God, and I obey. I do what He says!

Who is the Father of Faith? Abraham. He did it! (Heb 11:8). The faith of Abraham. Do you have the faith of Abraham? Brethren, do you have faith? Examine yourselves. See if you have faith, and that you can do that which Abraham did. He not only arose, but left all of his family, his land, wealth, animals, servants, and lived in a solitary tent. That's faith! We have to, in our faith, set up a tent in an area which is not troubled.

Let Jesus Christ live in our hearts. Nothing can stop us. When we feel weak, read, (Phil 4:13) "I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me." You can do all with Jesus Christ. **ARISE!!! Amen.**

John Theodorou , U.S.A.



FALSE SYMPATHY

Emotions are feelings. They make us who we are. We are all unique, having different levels of emotions. Some have very strong emotions and they can easily get very angry or overly happy and jolly. Others show little emotion – they are always even-tempered.

Emotions can be very powerful in that they can elicit a response from others. Often this response is not what a person would want to do, but they feel compelled to act in a certain way due to the strong emotion from someone else. For example, when a person shows a strong negative emotion like anger, it can cause others to fear and want to run in the other direction. This has led many children to obey their teachers or parents – not from love, but from fear due to a constant barrage of angry words. However, away from these angry elders, the children will do as they please. The angry words only bring temporary obedience, commonly bringing about the opposite of the desired response in secret. “Rebellion is too frequently established in the hearts of children through the wrong discipline of the parents... When given a jerk or blow, do you think it enables him to see the beauty of the Christian character? No indeed; it only tends to raise evil feelings in the heart, and the child is not corrected at all.” CG 282.

There are other strong emotions also, such as shame, disgust, disapproval – all of which will cause a person to react in a particular way than they would normally react if these emotions were not directed towards them.

On the other hand, there are strong positive emotions such as love. When two people are in love, they would happily do even the most mundane duties for the other person because of the love. When we talk of the love of God – its drawing power is irresistible – it can melt a heart of stone. When understood in its fullest this emotion has changed lives. It has created a similar love in a person, giving them a strong desire to share the love.

Many emotions can be used for good or for evil; to manipulate someone else. They are good when they are genuine, however they can be twisted and used to deceive people for evil, while still looking good. “The words of his mouth were smoother than butter, but war was in his heart: his words were softer than oil, yet were they drawn swords.” Psalm 55:21

The emotion I want to address is sympathy. Sympathy is commonly thought of as comforting someone who is in trouble or full of sorrow. “With hearts filled with sympathy and compassion, they are to minister to those in need of help, bringing to sinners a knowledge of the Saviour’s love. Such work calls for laborious effort, but it brings a rich reward. Those who engage in it with sincerity of purpose will see souls won to the Saviour, for the influence that attends the practical carrying out of the divine commission is irresistible.” AA 109 This is genuine sympathy. It is what God wants us to have for our fellow beings.

People feel very sad when deprived of human sympathy. “Thus he seemed to be shut away from all human sympathy. His only hope of help was in a merciful God, and to Him he appealed in brokenness of heart.” AA 118 “The desire for love and sympathy is implanted in the heart by God Himself. Christ, in His hour of agony in Gethsemane, longed for the sympathy of His disciples. And Paul, though apparently indifferent to hardship and suffering, yearned for sympathy and companionship. The visit of Onesiphorus, testifying to his fidelity



at a time of loneliness and desertion, brought gladness and cheer to one who had spent his life in service for others.” AA 491 “Shouldest not thou also have had compassion on thy fellowservant, even as I had pity on thee?” Matthew 18:33

Sympathy is good when used genuinely for the purpose that God intended. It helps us to get out of ourselves and to think of others in their need. Unfortunately this emotion has also been used very successfully by Satan in manipulating and deceiving others into a wrong course.

Before the earth was created, there was a problem in heaven. Lucifer had decided he really didn't want to keep the law of God, and he knew that being angry would not benefit him in any way. If he got angry all the heavenly host would see him for who he really was and he would have no supporters. He spoke as though he was genuinely troubled about God and His leadership. Many of the other angels sympathised with him. They too, were led to question God. Satan successfully used sympathy to deceive. The result was 1/3 of the angels being cast out of heaven along with him. “He sought to create sympathy for himself by representing that God had dealt unjustly with him in bestowing supreme honor upon Christ. He claimed that in aspiring to greater power and honour he was not aiming at self-exaltation, but was seeking to secure liberty for all the inhabitants of heaven, that by this means they might attain to a higher state of existence.” GC 495

It was sympathy that brought all the sin, evil and corruption into this world. When

Eve was in the Garden of Eden Satan showed great sympathy for her. Poor Eve, she was not allowed to eat of the tree of knowledge. After all, the fruit was so delicious – he was enjoying it fully, but Eve was, unfortunately, denied the good things in life. Eve was deceived by his sympathy and ended up joining Satan in sin. Isn't this the same today? Satan stirs up his followers (worldly people or false Christians) to sympathise with God's people. He has been very successful with the young people. Oh how these poor Christians have such a sad life. They don't get to enjoy the 'fun' entertainments, foods and dress that are available in this world. Most other Christians enjoy these good things and believe they are accepted by God, and will eventually be permitted to enjoy eternal life, but you poor Adventist Reformers? – how sad your life must be. He has been very successful with this false sympathy.

When the nation of Israel was wandering in the wilderness, they convinced Aaron to make them a golden calf, by creating in his mind false sympathy. “And when the people saw that Moses delayed to come down out of the mount, the people gathered themselves together unto Aaron, and said unto him, Up, make us gods, which shall go before us; for as for this Moses, the man that brought us up out of the land of Egypt, we wot not what is become of him. Exodus 32:1. The Israelites were fearful. They were like sheep without a shepherd, and Aaron had sympathy for them. Rather than encouraging them to turn to the Lord, he complied with their wishes.

When Israel was about to enter Canaan the

first time, the 10 spies were frightened and did not believe that God could help them conquer those giants. Sympathy to these 10 unfaithful spies resulted in 40 years of wandering in the wilderness for Ancient Israel.

Later on in their journey, there were severe consequences when Korah, Dathan and Abiram, worked on the sympathies of the Israelites for their political purposes. “There is nothing which will please the people better than to be praised and flattered when they are in darkness and wrong, and deserve reproof. Korah gained the ears of the people, and next their sympathies, by representing Moses as an overbearing leader. He said that he was too harsh, too exacting, too dictatorial, and that he reproved the people as though they were sinners when they were a holy people, sanctified to the Lord, and the Lord was among them. Korah rehearsed the incidents in their experience in their travels through the wilderness, where they had been brought into strait places, and where many of them had died because of murmuring and disobedience, and with their perverted senses they thought they saw very clearly that all their trouble might have been saved if Moses had pursued a different course. He was too unyielding, too exacting, and they decided that all their disasters in the wilderness were chargeable to him. Korah, the leading spirit, professed great wisdom in discerning the true reason for their trials and afflictions.” 3T 345. This deception caused a great loss of life.

When King Saul sinned in not destroying the Amelekites according to God's direction, he tried to gain sympathy from

Samuel. He said he had no choice. Samuel, however, refused to be deceived by the false sympathy. He stood his ground for what is right. "And Saul said unto Samuel, I have sinned: for I have transgressed the commandment of the LORD, and thy words: because I feared the people, and obeyed their voice. Now therefore, I pray thee, pardon my sin, and turn again with me, that I may worship the LORD. And Samuel said unto Saul, I will not return with thee: for thou hast rejected the word of the LORD, and the LORD hath rejected thee from being king over Israel." 1 Samuel 15:24-26.

SYMPATHIZING IN WRONG

It is not easy being a church leader, especially when a member strays from the truth and needs to be disciplined. It has happened in the past that when a church leader has been called upon to bring reproof for a straying member, or when the committee places an unfaithful member on church discipline, that the person feels offended. If they don't repent, often they try to elicit sympathy from the other members, claiming that they have been falsely accused and misunderstood. It may go as far as the other members condoning the person in wrong; believing that the church leader made a mistake. This sympathy only causes them to feel justified in their sin. It may have been something simple, like the tone of the voice of the person bringing the reproof or a word spoken unthinkingly, so the offended sinner justifies their wrong action and has support from false sympathisers in the church. Showing sympathy for someone who is in sin is a very dangerous action

"In almost every case where reproof is necessary, there will be some who entirely overlook the fact that the Spirit of the Lord has been grieved and His cause reproached. These will pity those who deserved reproof, because personal feelings have been hurt. All this unsanctified sympathy places the sympathizers where they are sharers in the guilt of the one reproved. In nine cases out of ten if the one reproved had been left under a sense of his wrongs, he might have been helped to see them and thereby have been reformed. But meddling, unsanctified sympathizers place altogether a wrong construction upon the motives of the reproof and the nature of the reproof given, and by sympathizing with the one reproved lead him to feel that

he has been really abused; and his feelings rise up in rebellion against the one who has only done his duty. Those who faithfully discharge their unpleasant duties under a sense of their accountability to God will receive His blessing." 5T 679

"I saw that many souls have been destroyed because their brethren unwisely sympathized with them, when their only hope was to be left to see and realize the full extent of their wrongs. But as they eagerly accept the sympathy of unwise brethren, they receive the idea that they are abused; and if they attempt to retrace their steps, they make half-hearted work. They divide the matter to suit their natural feelings, lay blame upon the reproof, and so patch up the matter. It is not probed to the bottom, and is not healed, and they again fall into the same wrong, because they were not left to feel the extent of their wrong, and humble themselves before God and let him build them up. False sympathizers have worked in direct opposition to the mind of Christ and ministering angels." GW 85

Even if we are not church leaders, we have a duty to lovingly reprove our brothers and sisters who may be straying. They may be making excuses for their actions, seeking our sympathy. It is tempting to pity them, thinking that they are justified in their course of action due to unforeseen circumstances that they were not prepared for, or that were beyond their control, so they had to sin. Are we correct to sympathize with them in their sin? We can have sympathy for the fact that they have left the Lord's side, but never should we condone their sin. No matter how much they attempt to justify their course of action – or blame others for their course of action, sin is sin and needs to be repented of. There is no excuse for sin, and never should we sympathize with someone's sin.

Another problem that occasionally arises is that people say they are too poor to pay tithe. They can't even feed and clothe their children, how on earth could they pay tithes? Their lot in life is difficult. We read from the Spirit of Prophecy, "When they acknowledged the claims of God and complied with His requirements, honouring Him with their substance, their barns were filled with plenty. But when they robbed God in tithes and in offerings they were made to realize that they were not only robbing Him but themselves, for

He limited His blessings to them just in proportion as they limited their offerings to Him." 3T, 395. We should show them sympathy, but not the sympathy they expect. Not sympathy that would excuse them in their duty to God, and condone sin, but rather show them sympathy that they have cut themselves off from the blessing of God.

"The Lord teaches us that... He would have his people acknowledge the justness of his corrections, that others may fear. In these last days, many are liable to be self-deceived, and they are unable to see their own wrongs. If God, through his servants, reproves and rebukes the erring, there are those who stand ready to sympathize with those who deserve reproof. They will seek to lighten the burden which God compelled his servants to lay upon them. These sympathizers think they are performing a virtuous act by sympathizing with the one at fault, whose course may have greatly injured the cause of God. Such are deceived. They are only arraying themselves against God's servants, who have done his will, and against God himself, and are equally guilty with the transgressor. There are many erring souls who might have been saved if they had not been deceived by receiving false sympathy." 1SP 278

NEW LIGHT

When new light is brought to God's people, there will always be opposers who say that the way is being made too strait. They like the way things were before and they will rebel against any advanced light. They say that there is no need to make the cross any heavier. They, in reality, don't want to take up the cross – there are some darling sins that they are retaining and they seek to gain the sympathy and support of other believers in condemning as fanatics those who are advancing in the new light. Others who don't want to accept the new light also join them in sympathy. This has caused many divisions and shakings in the church.

There is no such thing as 'new light'. It is all old light – but it is being revealed little, by little to God's people and there will always be opposers. This sympathy will cause the destruction of many people.

IN CHILDHOOD

The desire for false sympathy begins in childhood. "The curse of God will surely rest upon unfaithful parents. Not only are

they planting thorns which will wound them here, but they must meet their own unfaithfulness when the judgment shall sit. Many children will rise up in judgment and condemn their parents for not restraining them and charge upon them their destruction. The false sympathy and blind love of parents cause them to excuse the faults of their children and pass them by without correction, and their children are lost in consequence, and the blood of their souls will rest upon the unfaithful parents.” CG 563

“We may do the children and the youth a lifelong good by teaching them to meet bravely these troubles and burdens. While we should give them sympathy, let it never be such as to foster self-pity. What they need is that which stimulates and strengthens rather than weakens.” CG 157

BROTHER M

Here is an excerpt from the Spirit of Prophecy. Sister White was reproofing a man for using erroneous sympathy to turn

people away from the Spirit of Prophecy. His actions caused trouble for some of the members in the church. You can read the full narrative in the Spirit of Prophecy, however, from these paragraphs you will hopefully get an understanding of how Satan tries to work among God’s people with the use of false sympathy.

“Brother M, you have so presented matters to others that you have gained their sympathy. Your friends and sympathizers have lost faith in the testimonies. You have gained their sympathies by misstatements and misapplication of that which the Lord has sent you to save you from ruining your soul and the souls of others. You have planted the seeds of doubt and unbelief, and when your own soul may be rescued and faith takes the place of doubts, can you gather up the evil seeds of doubt you have planted in the minds of others? Will you be pleased to meet this work in the judgment?

“You cannot now see the work you have done. A power from beneath has taken possession of your soul. Shall your heart be the victim of the dupe of lies? Will the truth of God be kept away from the heart? Blind parental affection will easily give sympathy and encouragement which will be a savor of death. This is a love that is un sanctified; it comes in to prevent the messages of warning and condemnation from God for a dangerous, sinful course which, if pursued, will work to the ruin of the soul. Such love is like the tender mercies of the wicked, only cruelty in disguise. Those who work under deception to gain this sympathy and support will surely meet with great loss and obtain the disfavor of God....

“Doubts were created, and seeds of unbelief sown in regard to my work. Your only objection to the testimonies is similar to the objection of skeptics and infidels to the Bible; it condemns their course of sin and evil. The testimonies condemn your course, point out your transgressions, and will not vindicate or praise

in you a course of sin...

“The lessons that you have given by precept and example have done a work, the results of which eternity alone will reveal, while you were concealing your own wrongs. You have imparted all you knew that was faulty in others, purely out of bitterness and revenge, which strengthened and confirmed him [Brother G] to vindicate his unrighteous course, when you yourself were a far greater sinner in the sight of God.” 21MR 162/16

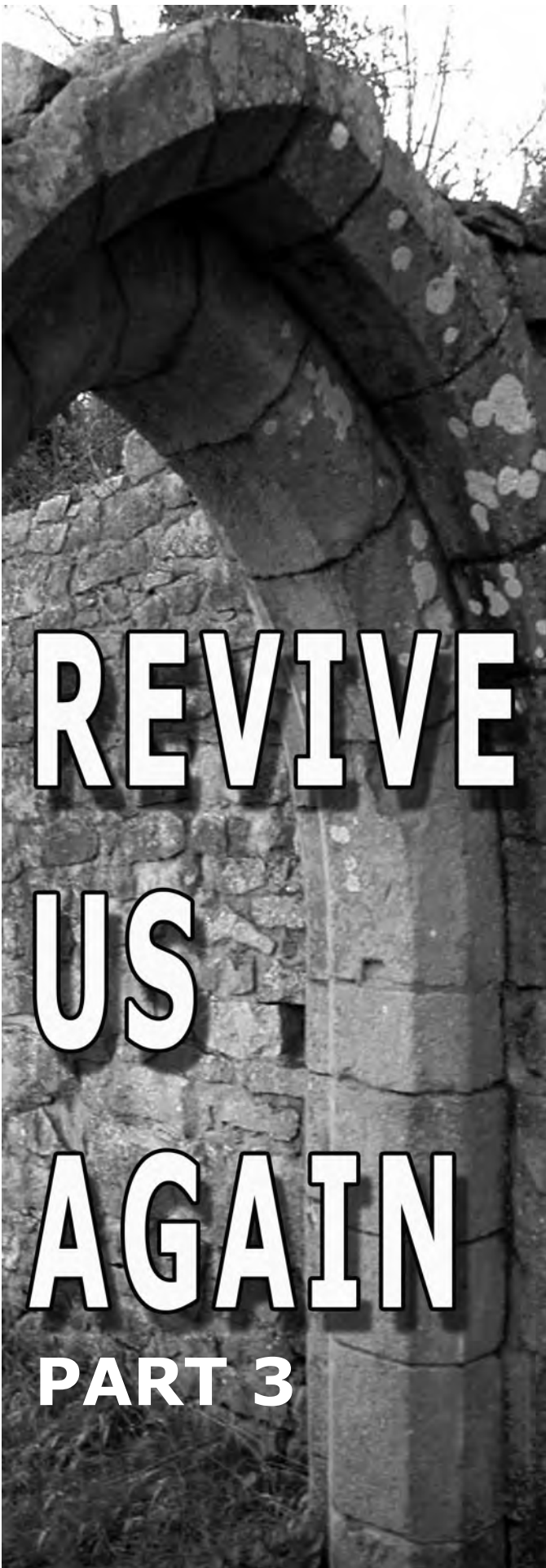
In conclusion, when a person comes to you seeking sympathy, you need to be careful. Are they genuinely needing sympathy or are they planning to use your sympathy for their own purposes to cause you to condone and support them in wrong? Satan was very successful with the angels of heaven, and also many times on this earth. We need to pray that the Lord will keep us from losing our souls through sympathy that is opposed to the truth of God, and opposed to the warnings and reproofs that He sends to His people. Also it is important to have a clear understanding of the Bible and testimonies; a “thus saith the Lord”, and not sympathize with a brother in wrong.

The true kind of sympathy that Jesus wants us to have is this: “Blessed are they also who weep with Jesus in sympathy with the world’s sorrow and in sorrow for its sin. In such mourning there is intermingled no thought of self. Jesus was the Man of Sorrows, enduring heart anguish such as no language can portray. His spirit was torn and bruised by the transgressions of men. He toiled with self-consuming zeal to relieve the wants and woes of humanity, and His heart was heavy with sorrow as He saw multitudes refuse to come to Him that they might have life. All who are followers of Christ will share in this experience. As they partake of His love they will enter into His travail for the saving of the lost. They share in the sufferings of Christ, and they will share also in the glory that shall be revealed. One with Him in His work, drinking with Him the cup of sorrow, they are partakers also of His joy.” MB 12

May God help us to show genuine sympathy when it is needed, but beware of others who are trying to put us on the wrong pathway by false sympathy. *AMEN*

Wendy Eaton, Australia





REVIVE

US

AGAIN

PART 3

Satan, the instigator and prime mover in the ever-changing, never-satisfying decrees of fashion, is always busy devising something new that shall prove an injury to physical and moral health; and he triumphs that his devices succeed so well. Death laughs that the health-destroying folly and blind zeal of the worshipers at fashion's shrine bring them so easily under his dominion. Happiness and the favour of God are laid upon her altar. {CG 432.3} The idolatry of dress is a moral disease. It must not be taken over into the new life. In most cases submission to the gospel requirements will demand a decided change in the dress. {CG 432.4}



In Isaiah 6 we see that as the Seraphim come to the throne of God to worship Him, they cover their faces and even their feet as they sing Holy, Holy, Holy. Complete covering is a sign of worship and reverence to the Most High.



Thus we can see that the dress code in heaven is from shoulders to the feet as it is verified in the sanctuary services of the Old Testament. The earthly sanctuary was a copy of the heavenly, down to every last particular detail. So, as we look at the garments of the priests we know they were a copy of the style of dress in heaven. Therefore when God made them coats of skin they were modest. That is the way all dress in heaven above.

It is very significant to note that the first purpose of clothing in Eden was not to keep warm, nor for adornment but in order to cover nakedness.

Way back in the time after the flood we read about a curse that came upon Noah's son Ham, in reference to nakedness. This curse is still in place today. It is not an arbitrary curse, but a universal law that says: what we behold we become.

We read the story in Genesis 9: 22-25

“And Ham, the Father of Canaan, saw the nakedness of his father, and told his two brethren without. And Shem and Japheth took a garment, and laid it upon both their shoulders, and went backward, and covered the nakedness of their father; and their faces were backward, and they saw not their father's nakedness. And Noah awoke from his wine, and knew what his younger son had done unto him. And he said, Cursed be Canaan; a servant of servants shall he be unto his brethren.”

Inspiration tells us that Ham had disrespect for his father and this was revealed in the fact that when he saw his father's nakedness, which was dishonourable to see, instead of turning his face away and covering his father up, Ham made a joke of it and told his brothers. He showed great disrespect by speaking of his father's shame.

Leviticus 18:17 tells us that we are not to uncover the nakedness of

another person because it is wickedness. What, then, would happen if we did uncover the nakedness of another person? Simply, we see their nakedness, seeing leads to thoughts and thoughts leads to actions. This is cause and effect. We are not to look upon another's nakedness. Further on we are told that as we do these things we defile ourselves like the nations around us:

Leviticus 18:24 "Defile not ye yourselves in any of these things: for in all these the nations are defiled which I cast out before you."

Our God is wonderful in telling us these things so we can save ourselves from defilement. How would we ever know if He had not told us?

It is very evident from the Scriptures that there is a curse attached to nakedness. Nakedness can indeed separate us from God.

In Romans 8:35,37, we read: "Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword?... Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us."

Satan is attempting to use these things to separate us from God. As Paul very positively and emphatically states, the Spirit helps us in our infirmities. (Romans 8:36) Christ makes intercession for us and because of this we can be conquerors in all things, even nakedness. Yes, nakedness can separate us from God, but it need not.

There is no doubt as to how clearly the fashions of today show our nakedness in some enticing form or another. We will see from the scriptures God's understanding of nakedness, it does not only mean complete uncovering, but even partial exposure of the body.

In Exodus 20, it is written that God designed the priest's clothing for a two fold purpose; for beauty and for service. His was a complete covering. A little further on God says, in Exodus 20: 26 "Neither shalt thou go up by steps unto mine altar, that thy nakedness be not discovered thereon."

In the book "The Faith I Live By" page 195, we read: "Everything connected with

the apparel and deportment of the priests was to be such as to impress the beholder with a sense of the holiness of God, the sacredness of His worship, and the purity required of those who came into His presence. Not only the sanctuary itself, but the ministration of the priests, was to 'serve unto the example and shadow of heavenly things.'

How particular is God about nakedness? Remember that "God is the same yesterday, today and forever". (Hebrews 13:8)

The Israelite women had a blue thread in the tassels of the corners of their garments to be distinguished from the pagans. What does it mean for us?



Numbers 15:38-40 "Speak to the children of Israel: Tell them to make tassels on the corners of their garment, throughout their generations, and to put a blue thread in the tassels of the corners... that you may remember and do all My commandments, and be holy for your God."

"Many who profess to believe the Testimonies live in neglect of the light given. The dress reform is treated by some with great indifference and by others with contempt, because there is a cross attached to it. For this cross I thank God. It is just

what we need to distinguish and separate God's commandment – keeping people from the world. The dress reform answers to us as did the ribbon of blue to ancient Israel." 3T 171

Follow Prevailing Customs if Modest, Healthful, and Convenient.--Christians should not take pains to make themselves a gazingstock 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. {CG 414.2}

If the world introduced 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.

What style of dress can be neater, more becoming girls from the ages of five to fourteen years, than ours? Stand those girls of fashion beside these, and then say which appears most comfortable, most modest, and most becoming. The fashionable style is not as long as ours, yet no one laughs at those who follow that style for wearing a short dress. Their limbs are nearly naked, while modesty and health clothe the limbs of the others. Fashion and false modesty look upon these girls who have their limbs clad in reference to comfort, modesty, and health, with horror, but smile upon those whose dresses are quite as short, and whose limbs are uncomfortably, immodestly, and unhealthfully exposed. Here come the cross and the reproach, for simply doing right, in the face of the tyrant--Fashion. God help us to have the moral courage to do right, and to labour patiently and humbly in the great cause of reform. {HR, September 1, 1868 par. 13} *To be continued.....*

*Evelin Graf Australia
evelin7@bigpond.com*



Many have a mistaken idea that righteousness is ONLY obedience to the law. Certainly it includes obedience to the law as an expression of love. Jesus said, “If ye love Me, keep My commandments.” John 14: 15. “For this is the love of God, that we keep His commandments.” 1 John 5:3.

The Pharisees considered themselves as righteous people, but Jesus said, “Except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven.” Matt. 5:20.

What was lacking in their righteousness? Jesus explained it clearly to them. “Woe unto you scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For ye pay tithe of mint and anise and cumin, and have omitted the weightier matters of the law, judgment, mercy, and faith: these ought ye to have done, and not to leave the other undone.” Matt. 23:23.

Jesus included mercy as part of the law; and this was the part that was lacking in their righteousness.

Sister White explains it further, “Righteousness is love, and love is the light and the life of God.” M.B., p. 18. It was the righteousness of God that He sent His Son to this world to save man from sin. It is the righteousness of God that He forgives us our sins, and accepts us as His children.

“Nothing but the righteousness of Christ can entitle us to one of the blessings of the covenant of grace.” PP 431.

“Paul and his fellow-workers proclaimed the doctrine of righteousness by faith in the atoning sacrifice of Christ.” AA 207.

“The repentant soul realizes that his justification comes because Christ, as his substitute and surety, has died for him, in His atonement and righteousness.” 6 BC 1073.

The death of Christ on the cross was His righteousness. Therefore now by His righteousness, we can be justified. “When God pardons the sinner, remits the punishment he deserves, and treats him as though he had not sinned, He receives him unto divine favour, and justifies him through the merits of Christ’s righteousness.” 1 SM 389.

In 1889, Sister White wrote that not one in a hundred among the church members understand this message to themselves. How could they then teach it to others if they themselves do not understand it? I have heard comments, that God is righteous, but also He is love. In a similar way, some believe that God’s mercy is above his righteousness. These are heresies that try to make inroads into the teachings of the church.

The message of Christ’s righteousness is the third angel’s message in verity. If someone loses this message, then he could not possibly be a part of the third angel. This message is as a lighthouse in a dark sea; it has guided men and women back to God. It is the only message that brings peace to the restless human heart. This message gave hope to the first human pair in paradise, that what was lost through sin can be gained by Christ’s righteousness.

This message brought comfort to the dying thief on the cross. It is the message of greatest love which, as a sweet music has thrilled the ears

of desperate victims of Satan.

Paul writes, "Being justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus: Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in His blood, to declare His righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God." Rom. 3:24, 25.

It is the righteousness of Christ that pardons our sins.

"The righteousness of Christ, as a pure white pearl, has no defect, no stain, no guilt. This righteousness may be ours. Salvation, with its blood-bought, inestimable treasures, is the pearl of great price." The Faith I Live By, p. 111.

"The righteousness of Christ alone can give you power to stem the tide of evil that is sweeping over the world." PK 175.

In the 1888 Conference, many Adventist leaders rejected the Christ's Righteousness message, and by so doing committed sin against the Holy Spirit. Many today do the same, by ignoring it, and neglecting the study of this message that is so vital for our temporal and eternal welfare.

Ten years ago, we had 16 articles about the Christ's Righteousness message in the Reformation Messenger. Anyone interested in the study of this topic can write to the I.M.S. Publishing and request a reprint of them.

May the Lord bless you in your study of this message, and if you put it into practice, it will make you perfect, that is, sinless, and ready for heaven. **AMEN.**

Timo Martin, Canada

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MUST BE BETWEEN THE AGES OF 13 TO 32

"ONE THING THOU LACKEST"



"Then Jesus beholding him loved him, and said unto him, One thing thou lackest: go thy way, sell whatsoever thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come, take up the cross, and follow Me." Mark 10:21.

This one thing that Jesus asked of this young man seemed too much to him. He lost his joy and sadness came in its place. How could he give up his riches? They were so important to him! His heart was in them. He did not understand that Jesus wanted to free him from the love of money, which is "the root of all evil." 1 Tim. 6:10. Being grieved, he turned away from the Saviour. How sad a decision! For the sake of earthly treasure he sacrificed eternal life. Only one thing he was lacking, and it was enough to separate him eternally from God and from salvation.

How is it with us? Are we also lacking one thing? Are we keeping in our hearts, secretly, something which is against the will of God? Let us not make the same mistake as this rich young man! Let us make a right decision to save our souls before the time of mercy ends.

The Case of Judas

There was one disciple to whom worldly treasures were important, and he did not want to fight against the love of money. This was Judas. He started to follow Jesus for the purpose of getting a better position and financial gain.

When Mary anointed the feet of Jesus, he was not happy. He had to say, "Why was not this ointment sold for three hundred pence, and given to the poor?" John 12:5.

The Spirit of Prophecy reveals to us that he did not care for the poor. "Judas was treasurer for the disciples, and from their little store he had secretly drawn for his own use, thus narrowing down their resources to a meager pittance." DA 559.

The power of the Holy Spirit which can change us was offered to Judas as well as to the other disciples. The Saviour's loving treatment towards him did not cause a change in him, nor the promptings of the Holy Spirit. The one thing that was lacking closed his heart to repentance and brought about his destruction. He went so far that for the gain of money he agreed to betray his Teacher.

"And he said unto them, What will ye give me, and I will deliver Him unto you? And they covenanted him for thirty pieces of silver." Matt. 26:15.

How sad and shameful end that came upon Judas. Because of the love of money he lost both, the temporal and the eternal life. He was very close to salvation, but did not use the opportunities that were offered to him.

Only One Thing Lacking

"For whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all." James 2:10.

The word of God teaches us that it is not enough to keep nine commandments. The one commandment that is neglected will separate us from salvation. The enemy of souls knows this, and therefore, he is trying so that the candidates for heaven will not give up all their weaknesses, but break at least one of the commandments of God.

Since the beginning, Satan has been fighting against the law of God and still today he is continuing the battle. He causes the people to think that it is impossible to keep all the commandments of God. Because of his influence, many of the believers who try to obey the law in their own strength, only to be soon disappointed, therefore they come to the decision that it is impossible to keep the law of God.

By the influence of the devil, the churches are teaching that Christ has fulfilled the law for us. Furthermore, they say that the law has been nailed to the cross, and therefore it is not necessary to keep it. By this, the enemy of souls leads millions of Christians to eternal death.

It is clear that no one can fulfill the law of God in their own strength. Jesus said, "Without Me ye can do nothing." John 15: 5. The Saviour Himself said, "If ye love Me, keep My commandments." John 14: 15. inspired by the Holy Spirit, Apostle Paul wrote, "I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me." Phil. 4: 13.

Also John wrote by inspiration: "For this is the love of God, that we keep His commandments: and His commandments are not grievous." 1 John 5:3.

May the Lord help us that His love will increase in us, only then can we fulfill His will in all points.

Lack of Oil

"And the foolish said unto the wise, give us of your oil; for our lamps are gone out." Matt. 25:8.

In the last moment the five virgins realized that they had no oil. Then they wanted it very much, but it was too late. The time of the preparation had been neglected and now it had passed. How sad disappointment. Did they not know before that they had no oil? They were the same kind of virgins as the others. They had lamps in their hands and everything what the other virgins had, except one thing, the precious oil, the Holy Spirit.

Without the early rain and the latter rain, a believer is not prepared to meet his Saviour, although the outside may seem genuine. If his heart is not open to the influence of the Holy Spirit, his faith is just mere formality,

and his soul, spirit, and body are not being sanctified in the truth.

Without A White Garment!

"And when the king came in to see the guests, he saw there a man which had not on a wedding garment: And he said unto him, Friend, how comest thou in hither not having a wedding garment? And he was speechless." Matt. 22:11, 12.

Nothing is more sorrowful than to see that we are not among the saved, although we called ourselves Christians. How serious a thing this is. Now is the time to examine ourselves to make sure that we have the wedding garment.

It is necessary to know that we are not covered by our own garments, while thinking that we have the white garment offered by Christ. We need to examine ourselves daily so that we will not be deceived. When we have died to sin, then we live for Him.

Today Jesus is still offering to us the gift of the white garment--His righteousness, which will entitle us to enter into the new earth. Let us accept this marvelous gift which is given us without merit on our part. A Christlike character is the only thing we can take to heaven. We receive it when Christ lives in us and we in Him.

It Is A Small Thing!

"Take us the foxes, the little foxes, that spoil the vines: for our vines have tender grapes." Song of Sol., 2:15.

People always have a tendency to say, "It is a small thing!" In other words, "It has not great importance," "it does not pay to do it." It is true that in our life

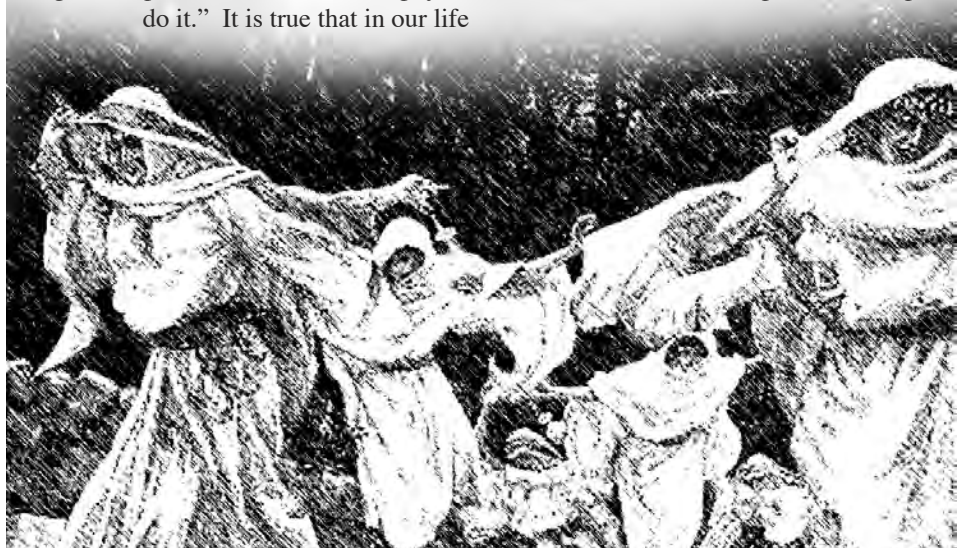
and religion, we have many small things; but have they been given us for no reason?

In our body there are very small organs and we need them all. If some of them are removed, then we cannot live in a normal way. Then as the small organs in our body are needed, then also the small things in our Christian life are important. God speaks to us through His apostle, "Therefore to him that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is sin." James 4:17.

God has given us wisdom and ability to understand by the light of the Holy Scriptures, what is good and how to do it, but through the carnal mind the enemy of the soul works and speaks to us. "It is a small thing," you don't need to go that far, and so on.

Just one sin is enough to shut heaven to us!

"If we would escape having a sickly experience, we must begin in earnest without delay to work out our own salvation with fear and trembling. There are many who give no decided evidence that they are true to their baptismal vows. Their zeal is chilled by formality, worldly ambition, pride, and love of self. Occasionally their feelings are stirred, but they do not fall on the Rock, Christ Jesus. They do not come to God with hearts that are broken in repentance and confession. Those who experience the work of true conversion in their hearts will reveal the fruits of the Spirit in their lives. Oh, that those who have so little spiritual life would realize that eternal life can be granted only to those who become partakers of the divine nature and escape the corruption



that is in the world through lust!" Test. Vol. 9, p. 155.

God in His great mercy has given much light about our salvation. Do we want to be faithful to the Lord in the great things as well as in the small things? May the Lord help us in this.

Faithful in All Things

"Come, ye blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world: For I was an hungered, and ye gave Me meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave Me drink: I was a stranger, and ye took Me in: Naked, and ye clothed Me: I was sick, and ye visited Me: I was in prison, and ye came unto Me." Matt. 25:34-36.

O, how great joy it will be to hear these words from the Lord, when we find out that the battle was not in vain., that we are in the company of the overcomers.

A true Christian is ready to do any sacrifice for the Saviour. He is not resenting the necessary change when he hears the words of Jesus, "One thing thou lackest." He is like Abraham, ready to follow the Lord and be faithful in all things.

"The power of Christ alone can work the transformation in heart and mind that all must experience who would partake with Him of the new life in the kingdom of heaven. 'Except a man be born again,' the Saviour has said, 'he cannot see the kingdom of God.' John 3:3. The religion that comes from God is the only religion that can lead to God. In order to serve Him aright, we must be born of the divine Spirit. This will lead to watchfulness. It will purify the heart and renew the mind, and give us a new capacity for knowing and loving God. It will give us willing obedience to all His requirements. This is true worship." Test. Vol. 9, p. 156.

My wish and prayer is that after this great battle we can enter into the land of peace, and hear the words of Jesus, "Well done, thou good and faithful servant: thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy Lord." Matt. 25: 21. *AMEN.*

Your brother, V. Marinov, Finland



Eternal life truly is a gift and no one can receive it unless they come to Jesus Christ. He has given us a great promise that if we live a faithful life and serve Him then we will live eternally in happiness and joy. Then the question arises, why is there so many people out there, even professed Christians, who are passing up the opportunity to be saved forever? The answer is quite simple. They don't want to surrender their whole life to God. They prefer to hang on to the corrupt and evil heart, which they have. There are a few sins which they just love too much and would never be able to go without, in all the ages of eternity. So, for a few sins they sacrifice being eternally with Jesus and enjoying the presence of the angels and other created beings. Jesus has offered us a beautiful heart of flesh which He can shape and mould after his own likeness. Wouldn't you like your heart to be shaped and moulded after the greatest being in the universe, the all-powerful God? Unfortunately most Christians do not feel that this heart of flesh that is offered is good enough for them and they choose to hold on to their heart of stone, refusing to allow God to change it.

The first step towards salvation is simply acknowledging that God is the only one who has immortality. "Which in his times he shall show, who is the blessed and only Potentate, the King of kings, and Lord of lords; Who only hath immortality, dwelling in the light which no man can approach unto; whom no man hath seen, nor can see: to whom be honour and power everlasting. Amen." 1 Timothy 6:15-16. It says here that no man can approach

Him, we must go through Jesus Christ, our Mediator. People who say they are infallible or immortal particularly the pope, who supposedly has the key to heaven and hell, are simply fallen, mortal beings who will be judged in the day of judgement just like the rest of us.

Eternal life can only be given to man through Jesus Christ and it is put very simply for all to understand. "And this is the record, that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. He that hath the Son hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life." 1 John 5:11,12. It really is just that simple. If you have not asked God into your life to be your ruler and to guide you into ways of light then you do not have eternal life yet. He is knocking on the door of your heart and waiting for you to let him in. Do it right now if you haven't already done so. Too many people believe that they can make their own decisions in life and don't really need the Lord directing their paths. "There is a way which seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death." Proverbs 14:12. This only leads to sin and destruction because they are letting their heart of stone, and human flesh, lead them wherever it wants. Satan rejoices when this happens and the angels and Jesus weep.

If our thoughts are not surrendered to Christ, then Satan can lead our thoughts wherever he wants. "For as he thinketh in his heart, so is he:" Proverbs 23:7. Sin begins in the thoughts. Before any crime is committed, often it has been a result of thought processes. Many terrible sins

have been committed through hatred. We are given a warning of where hatred may lead us. "Whosoever hateth his brother is a murderer: and ye know that no murderer hath eternal life abiding in him." 1 John 3: 15. And this has proven to be true in many places in the Bible, beginning with Cain and Abel.

Satan won't be telling us to do missionary work, instead he will be sowing seeds of hate for our brother and we know that the next step after hate is killing our brother. It is for this reason that no wicked person can have eternal life because every idea that comes into their head is wicked and perverse and thoughts often lead to actions. If we ask the Lord to come on in He will change our thoughts so that all we ever want to do is good and kind things for others. Helping and supporting others will be the motto of our lives.

A great promise is given to us that Christ has abolished death and hath brought life and immortality. "But is now made manifest by the appearing of our Saviour Jesus Christ, who hath abolished death, and hath brought life and immortality to light through the gospel:" 2 Timothy 1:10 Jesus came for the express purpose of giving His children life and happiness for all eternity. He doesn't want any of us to die but He leaves it completely up to us because He is a God of love and would never force anyone. I pray that everyone here who reads this has accepted Jesus, the only
o n e

who can bring a person eternal life and happiness.

We are urged to seek for immortality and eternal life. "Who will render to every man according to his deeds: To them who by patient continuance in well doing seek for glory and honour and immortality, eternal life." Romans 2:6-7. Of course if we possessed it, we would not need to seek for it, but until we accept Jesus into our lives and surrender all the choices we make to Him we cannot have it. And then we have to continue holding on to Jesus with all our strength. It is essential to continually have Jesus in our lives. Paul said that he died daily to himself and his sinful lusts and we must do the same. The experience we had with God yesterday is not good enough for today, instead we must continually seek the Lord and surrender ourselves to Him.

"Behold, I show you a mystery; We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must

put on immortality. So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory. 1 Corinthians 15: 51-54 This is such a precious verse because it shows that if the righteous remain faithful until the second coming of Christ they are promised the gift of eternal life. And let me tell you when God promises us something it's for real, we can rest in the assurance that if we have a personal walk with God and surrender ourselves and the choices we make to Him every single day, that we will be walking through those pearly gates some day. It is my wish and prayer that everyone of my brothers and sisters in the faith reach those pearly gates and we can all enjoy eternity together. *AMEN.*

Richard Eaton, Australia



WHO IS MY NEIGHBOUR



Part 2



The great difference between the Jews and the Samaritans was a difference in religious belief.

What “Religious Belief” are YOU?

The great difference between the Jews and the Samaritans was a difference in religious belief, a question as to what constitutes true worship. The Pharisees would say nothing good of the Samaritans, but poured their bitterest curses upon them. So strong was the antipathy between the Jews and the Samaritans that to the Samaritan woman it seemed a strange thing for Christ to ask her for a drink. “How is it,” she said, “that Thou, being a Jew, askest drink of me, which am a woman of Samaria?” “For,” adds the evangelist, “the Jews have no dealings with the Samaritans.” John 4:9.

And when the Jews were so filled with murderous hatred against Christ that they rose up in the temple to stone Him, they could find no better words by which to express their hatred than, “Say we not well that Thou art a Samaritan, and hast a devil?” John 8:48. Yet the priest and Levite neglected the very work the Lord had enjoined on them, leaving a hated and despised Samaritan to minister to one of their own countrymen.

The Samaritan had fulfilled the command, “Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself,” thus showing that he was more righteous than those by whom he was denounced. Risking his own life, he had treated the wounded man as his brother. This Samaritan represents Christ. Our Saviour manifested for us a love that the love of man can never equal. When we were bruised and dying, He had pity upon us. He did not pass us by on the other side, and leave us, helpless and hopeless, to perish. He did not remain in His holy, happy home, where He was beloved by the entire heavenly host. He beheld our soul need, He undertook our case, and identified His interests with those of humanity. He died to save His enemies. He prayed for His murderers. Pointing to His own example, He says to His followers, “These things I command you, that ye love one another”; “as I have loved you, that ye also love one another.” John 15:17, 13:34.

The priest and the Levite had been at worship in the temple whose service was appointed by God Himself. To participate in that service was a great and exalted privilege, and the priest and Levite felt that having been thus honored, it was beneath them to minister to an unknown sufferer by the wayside. Thus they neglected the special opportunity which God had offered them as His agents to bless a fellow being.

Many today are making a similar mistake. They separate their duties into two distinct classes. The one class is made up of great things, to be regulated by the law of God; the other class is made up of so-called little things, in which the command, “Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself,” is ignored. This sphere of work is left to caprice, subject to inclination or impulse. Thus the character is marred, and the religion of Christ misrepresented.

There are those who would think it lowering to their dignity to minister to suffering humanity. Many look with indifference and contempt upon those who have laid the temple of the soul in ruins. Others neglect the poor from a different motive. They are working, as they believe, in the cause of Christ, seeking to build up some worthy enterprise. They feel that they are doing a great work, and they cannot stop to notice the wants of the needy and distressed. In advancing

their supposedly great work they may even oppress the poor. They may place them in hard and trying circumstances, deprive them of their rights, or neglect their needs. Yet they feel that all this is justifiable because they are, as they think, advancing the cause of Christ.

Many will allow a brother or a neighbor to struggle unaided under adverse circumstances. Because they profess to be Christians he may be led to think that in their cold selfishness they are representing Christ. Because the Lord's professed servants are not in co-operation with Him, the love of God, which should flow forth from them, is in great degree cut off from their fellow men. And a large revenue of praise and thanksgiving from human hearts and human lips is prevented from flowing back to God. He is robbed of the glory due to His holy name. He is robbed of the souls for whom Christ died, souls whom He longs to bring into His kingdom to dwell in His presence through endless ages.

Divine truth exerts little influence upon the world, when it should exert much influence through our practice. The mere profession of religion abounds, but it has little weight. We may claim to be followers of Christ, we may claim to believe every truth in the word of God; but this will do our neighbor no good unless our belief is carried into our daily life. Our profession may be as high as heaven, but it will save neither ourselves nor our fellow men unless we are Christians. A right example will do more to benefit the world than all our profession.

By no selfish practices can the cause of Christ be served. His cause is the cause of the oppressed and the poor. In the hearts of His professed followers there is need of the tender sympathy of Christ--a deeper love for those whom He has so valued as to give His own life for their salvation. These souls are precious, infinitely more precious than any other offering we can bring to God. To bend every energy toward some apparently great work, while we neglect the needy or turn the stranger from his right, is not a service that will meet His approval.

The sanctification of the soul by the working of the Holy Spirit is the implanting of Christ's nature in humanity. Gospel religion is Christ in the life--a

living, active principle. It is the grace of Christ revealed in character and wrought out in good works. The principles of the gospel cannot be disconnected from any department of practical life. Every line of Christian experience and labor is to be a representation of the life of Christ.

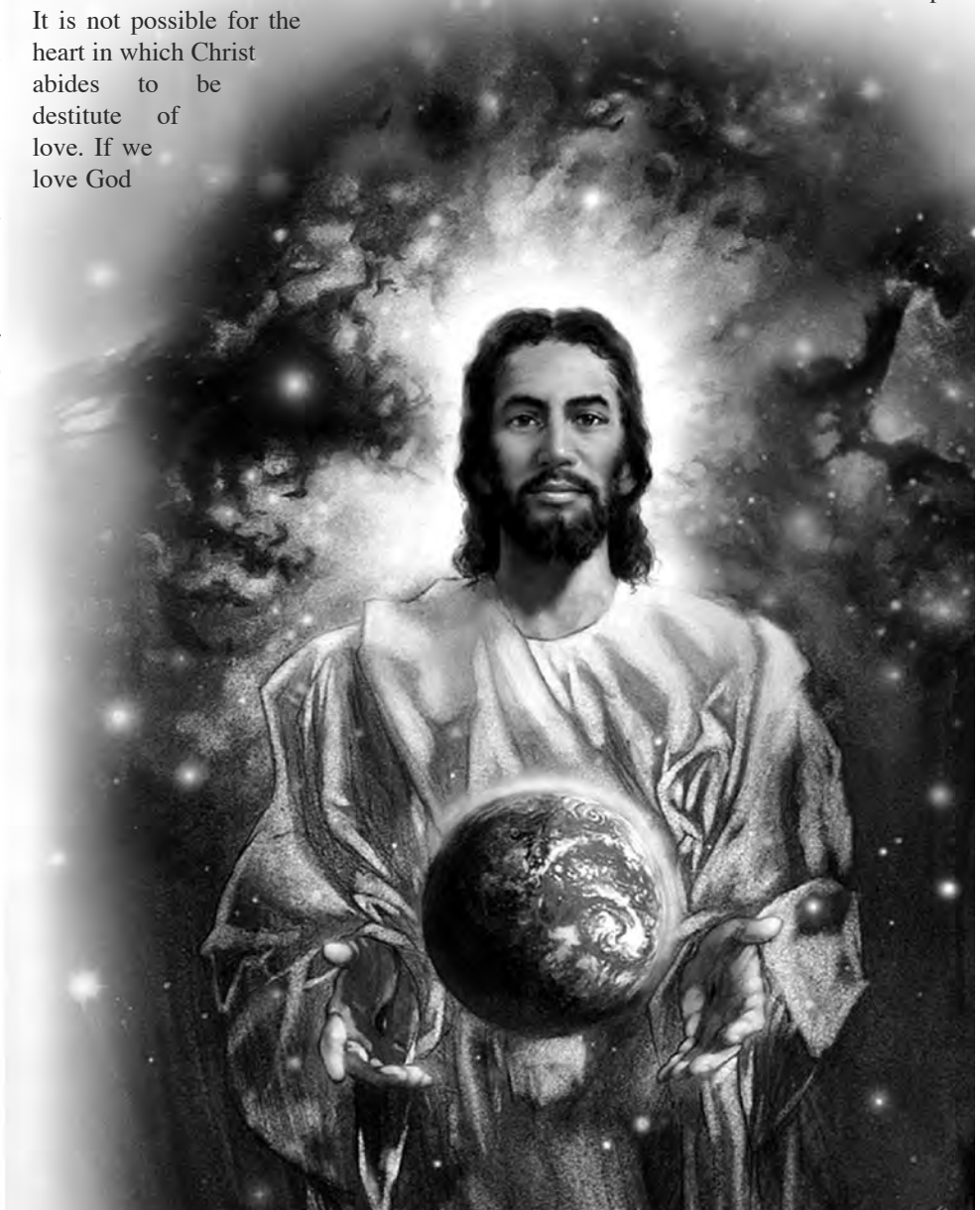
Love is the basis of godliness. Whatever the profession, no man has pure love to God unless he has unselfish love for his brother. But we can never come into possession of this spirit by trying to love others. What is needed is the love of Christ in the heart. When self is merged in Christ, love springs forth spontaneously. The completeness of the Christian character is attained when the impulse to help and bless others springs constantly from within--when the sunshine of heaven fills the heart and is revealed in the countenance.

It is not possible for the heart in which Christ abides to be destitute of love. If we love God

because He first loved us, we shall love all for whom Christ died. We cannot come in touch with divinity without coming in touch with humanity; for in Him who sits upon the throne of the universe, divinity and humanity are combined. Connected with Christ, we are connected with our fellow men by the golden links of the chain of love. Then the pity and compassion of Christ will be manifest in our life. We shall not wait to have the needy and unfortunate brought to us. We shall not need to be entreated to feel for the woes of others. It will be as natural for us to minister to the needy and suffering as it was for Christ to go about doing good.

Wherever there is an impulse of love and sympathy, wherever the heart reaches out to bless and uplift others, there is revealed the working of God's Holy Spirit.

In the depths



of heathenism, men who have had no knowledge of the written law of God, who have never even heard the name of Christ, have been kind to His servants, protecting them at the risk of their own lives. Their acts show the working of a divine power. The Holy Spirit has implanted the grace of Christ in the heart of the savage, quickening his sympathies contrary to his nature, contrary to his education. The "Light which lighteth every man that cometh into the world" (John 1:9), is shining in his soul; and this light, if heeded, will guide his feet to the kingdom of God.

The glory of heaven is in lifting up the fallen, comforting the distressed. And wherever Christ abides in human hearts, He will be revealed in the same way. Wherever it acts, the religion of Christ will bless. Wherever it works, there is brightness.

No distinction on account of nationality, race, or caste, is recognized by God. He is the Maker of all mankind. All men are of one family by creation, and all are one through redemption. Christ came to demolish every wall of partition, to throw open every compartment of the temple, that every soul may have free access to God. His love is so broad, so deep, so full, that it penetrates everywhere. It lifts out of Satan's circle the poor souls who have been deluded by his deceptions. It places them within reach of the throne of God, the throne encircled by the rainbow of promise.

In Christ there is neither Jew nor Greek, bond nor free. All are brought nigh by His precious blood. (Gal. 3:28; Eph. 2:13.)

Whatever the difference in religious belief, a call from suffering humanity must be heard and answered. Where bitterness of feeling exists because of difference in religion, much good may be done by personal service. Loving ministry will break down prejudice, and win souls to God.

We should anticipate the sorrows, the difficulties, the troubles of others. We should enter into the joys and cares of both high and low, rich and poor. "Freely ye have received," Christ says, "freely give." Matt. 10:8. All around us are poor, tried souls that need sympathizing words and helpful deeds. There are widows who need sympathy and assistance. There are orphans whom Christ has bidden His followers receive as a trust from God. Too often these are passed by

with neglect. They may be ragged, uncouth, and seemingly in every way unattractive; yet they are God's property. They have been bought with a price, and they are as precious in His sight as we are. They are members of God's great household, and Christians as His stewards are responsible for them. "Their souls," He says, "will I require at thine hand."

Sin is the greatest of all evils, and it is ours to pity and help the sinner. But not all can be reached in the same way. There are many who hide their soul hunger. These would be greatly helped by a tender word or a kind remembrance. There are others who are in the greatest need, yet they know it not. They do not realize the terrible destitution of the soul. Multitudes are so sunken in sin that they have lost the sense of eternal realities, lost the similitude of God, and they hardly know whether they have souls to be saved or not. They have neither faith in God nor confidence in man. Many of these can be reached only through acts of disinterested kindness. Their physical wants must first be cared for. They must be fed, cleansed, and decently clothed. As they see the evidence of your unselfish love, it will be easier for them to believe in the love of Christ.

There are many who err, and who feel their shame and their folly. They look upon their mistakes and errors until they are driven almost to desperation. These souls we are not to neglect. When one has to swim against the stream, there is all the force of the current driving him back. Let a helping hand then be held out to him as was the Elder Brother's hand to the sinking Peter. Speak to him hopeful words, words that will establish confidence and awaken love.

Thy brother, sick in spirit, needs thee, as thou thyself hast needed a brother's love. He needs the experience of one who has been as weak as he, one who can sympathize with him and help him. The knowledge of our own weakness should help us to help another in his bitter need. Never should we pass by one suffering soul without seeking to impart to him the comfort wherewith we are comforted of God.

It is fellowship with Christ, personal contact with a living Saviour, that enables the mind and heart and soul to triumph over the lower nature. Tell the wanderer of an almighty hand that will hold him up, of an infinite humanity in Christ that pities him. It is not enough for him to believe in law and

force, things that have no pity, and never hear the cry for help. He needs to clasp a hand that is warm, to trust in a heart full of tenderness. Keep his mind stayed upon the thought of a divine presence ever beside him, ever looking upon him with pitying love. Bid him think of a Father's heart that ever grieves over sin, of a Father's hand stretched out still, of a Father's voice saying, "Let him take hold of My strength, that he may make peace with Me, and he shall make peace." Isa. 27:5.

As you engage in this work, you have companions unseen by human eyes. Angels of heaven were beside the Samaritan who cared for the wounded stranger. Angels from the heavenly courts stand by all who do God's service in ministering to their fellow men. And you have the co-operation of Christ Himself. He is the Restorer, and as you work under His supervision, you will see great results

Upon your faithfulness in this work not only the well-being of others but your own eternal destiny depends. Christ is seeking to uplift all who will be lifted to companionship with Himself, that we may be one with Him as He is one with the Father. He permits us to come in contact with suffering and calamity in order to call us out of our selfishness; He seeks to develop in us the attributes of His character--compassion, tenderness, and love. By accepting this work of ministry we place ourselves in His school, to be fitted for the courts of God. By rejecting it, we reject His instruction, and choose eternal separation from His presence.

"If thou wilt keep My charge," the Lord declares, "I will give thee places to walk among these that stand by"--even among the angels that surround His throne. (Zech. 3:7.) By co-operating with heavenly beings in their work on earth, we are preparing for their companionship in heaven. "Ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation" (Heb. 1:14), angels in heaven will welcome those who on earth have lived "not to be ministered unto, but to minister" (Matt. 20:28). In this blessed companionship we shall learn, to our eternal joy, all that is wrapped up in the question, "Who is my neighbour?" (C.O.L.)

Raewyn Jones, Australia

SEVEN ANGELS

HAVING...

I saw that the four angels would hold the four winds until Jesus' work was done in the sanctuary, and then will come the seven plagues. These plagues enraged the wicked against the righteous; they thought that we had brought the judgments of God upon them, and that if they could rid the earth of us; the plagues would then be stayed. A decree went forth to slay the saints, which caused them to cry day and night for deliverance. This was the time of Jacob's trouble. Then all the saints cried out with anguish of spirit, and were delivered by the voice of God. The 144,000 triumphed. Their faces were lighted up with the glory of God. Then I was shown a company who were howling in agony. On their garments was written in large characters, "Thou art weighed in the balance, and found wanting." I asked who this company were. The angel said, "These are they who kept the Sabbath and have given it up." I heard them cry with a loud voice, "We have believed in Thy coming, and taught it with energy." And while they were speaking, their eyes would fall upon their garments and see the writing, and then they would wail aloud. I saw that they had drunk of the deep waters, and fouled the residue with their feet—trodden the Sabbath underfoot—and that was why they were weighed in the balance and found wanting. EW 36-37.

Here we see that the church—the Lord's sanctuary—was the first to feel the stroke of the wrath of God. The ancient men, those to whom God has given great light and who had stood as guardians of spiritual interests of the people, had betrayed their trust. They had taken the position that we need not to look for miracles and the marked manifestation of God's power as in former days. Times have changed. These words strengthen their unbelief and they say: The Lord will not do good, neither will He do evil. He is too merciful to visit His people in judgment. Thus "peace and safety" is the cry from men who never again lift up their voice like a trumpet to show God's people their transgressions and the house of Jacob their sins. These dumb dogs that would not bark are the ones who feel the just vengeance of an offended God. Men, maidens, and little children all perish together. 5T 211

The Lord will not be trifled with. Those

who neglect His mercies and blessings in days of opportunities will bring impenetrable darkness upon themselves and will be candidates for the wrath of God. Sodom and Gomorrah were visited with the curse of the Almighty for their sins and iniquities. There are those in our day who have equally abused the mercies of God and slighted His warnings. It will be more tolerable for Sodom and Gomorrah in the day of judgment than for those who bear the name of Christ, yet dishonor Him by their unconsecrated lives. This class are laying up for themselves a fearful retribution when God in His wrath shall visit them with His judgments. 4T 191

Those who profess to be followers of Christ will be found guilty before God unless they are laborers together with God, and earnestly seek to lift up their fellow-men. Prophecy is rapidly fulfilling; and all men are ranging under their chosen standards. One class are preparing to be used of the Holy Spirit, and another class is ranging under the black banner of the prince of evil. This class have no love for either God or



their fellow-
men and Satan uses
them as a vessel to honour himself. The very atmosphere of our world is tainted with physical and spiritual miasma. The principles of truth are corrupted. God has been dishonoured, His law has been transgressed, and the earth has become defiled under the inhabitants thereof, and the vials of the wrath of God will be poured out upon the world. ST Oct. 1, 1894.

The triumph of the wicked is short. The pleasures of sin are ever purchased at a tremendous cost; for the wrath of God is continually hanging over the sinner, and in the end, he will learn indeed that it is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God. Every corrupt passion, every wrong feeling, or sinful act, not only dishonours God, but brings guilt and misery upon ourselves. Only in the strength of God can we succeed in subduing the enemies of our soul. While the foes of Christ are continually at work as Satan's agents, to entice us into sin, we must firmly resist their advances, looking to God for counsel and assistance. Every sinful desire must be repressed, every wrong trait overcome, or they will prove our ruin. ST Jan. 13, 1881.

There are those who are today doing the very same thing. In the counsels they venture to pronounce judgment upon the work of God; for they have become trained in doing that which the Lord has never required them to do. They might better humble their own hearts before God, lest the wrath of God shall break forth upon them; for if God has ever spoken by me, I testify that they have

undertaken
a work in criticizing and pronouncing
unsound judgment, which I know is not
right. They are but finite men, and being
befogged themselves, suppose that other
men are in error. (1888) 1604-1605

It was not the will of God that Israel should wander forty years in the wilderness; He desired to lead them directly to the land of Canaan and establish them there, a holy happy people. But "they could not enter in because of unbelief." Heb. 3:19. Because of their backsliding and apostasy they perished in the desert, and others were raised up to enter the Promised Land. In like manner, it was not the will of God that the coming of Christ should be so long delayed and His people should remain so many years in this world of sin and sorrow. But unbelief separated them from God. As they refused to do the work which was appointed them, others were raised up to proclaim the message. In mercy to the world, Jesus delays His coming, that sinners may have opportunity to hear the warning and find in Him a shelter before the wrath of God shall be poured out. CGT 458.

God is sifting His people. He will have a clean and holy church. We cannot read the heart of man. But the Lord has provided means to keep the church pure. A corrupt people has arisen who could not live with the people of God. They despised reproof, and would not be corrected. They had an opportunity to know that theirs was an unrighteous warfare. They had time to repent of their wrongs; but self was too dear to die. They nourished it; and it grew

strong, and they separated from the trusting people of God, whom He is purifying unto Himself. We all have reason to thank God that a way has been opened to save the church; for the wrath of God must have come upon us if these corrupt pretenders had remained with us. IT 99.

The world is soon to be left by the angel of mercy, and the seven last plagues are to be poured out. Sin, shame, sorrow, and darkness are on every side; but God still holds out to the souls of men the precious privilege of exchanging darkness for light, error for truth, sin for righteousness. But God's mercy will not always wait. Let not one soul think that he can hide from God's wrath behind a lie, for God will strip from the soul the refuge of lies. The bolts of God's wrath are soon to fall, and when He shall begin to punish the transgressors, there will be no period of respite until the end. The storm of God's wrath is gathering, and those only will stand who are sanctified through the truth in the love of God. They shall be hid with Christ in God till the desolation shall be overpast. He shall come forth to punish the inhabitants of the world for their iniquity, and "the earth also shall disclose her blood, and shall no more cover her slain." Let the language of the soul be—Hide me, O my Saviour, hide! Till the storm of life is past; Safe into the haven guide, Oh, receive my soul at last! Other refuge have I none, Hangs my helpless soul on Thee; Leave, oh leave me not alone! Still support and comfort me. TM 182-183

On whose side are we? The world cast Christ out; the heavens received Him. Man, finite man, rejected the Prince of life; God, our Sovereign ruler, received Him into heaven. God has exalted Him. Man crowned Him with a crown of thorns; God has crowned Him with a crown of royal majesty. We must all think candidly. Will you have this man Christ Jesus to rule over you, or will you have Barabbas? The death of Christ brings to the rejecter of His mercy, the wrath and judgments of God, unmixed with mercy. This is the wrath of the Lamb. But the death of Christ is hope and eternal life to all who receive Him and believe in Him. Lt. 31, 1898, INL 20. God bless us and give us more power. **AMEN.**

*Your Sister in Christ,
Edeline P. Cosby
Detroit, MI, USA*



+ HEALTH MATTERS: MAKE YOUR TEETH LAST A LIFETIME

People used to think that losing your teeth was just a natural part of aging, but dentists now know that, with proper care, your teeth can last a lifetime. To prevent diseases of the bone and tissue supporting your teeth, called periodontal disease, pay special attention to your teeth and gums.

Gingivitis, an early form of gum disease, is caused by bacteria. If your gums are red and swollen, and they bleed when you brush your teeth, you may have gingivitis. Left untreated, gingivitis can develop into periodontal disease.

To keep the bacteria from thriving in your mouth, brush and floss your teeth at least twice a day. Over-the-counter and prescription mouth rinses help prevent receding gums, too.

If you have arthritis or a neurological disease such as Parkinson's,

you may not be able to wield a toothbrush or floss. Look for specialized tools such as electric toothbrushes, mouth-irrigating machines, special picks, and tiny brushes that slide between your teeth.

Arthritis and some medications can cause you to have a dry mouth. Saliva has an important role in keeping your teeth healthy. If your mouth isn't producing enough, it's a good idea to drink more liquids to keep up the moisture level in your mouth.

Eating a healthy diet of fresh foods and getting enough calcium is an important part of keeping your teeth healthy.

Seeing your dentist regularly is a must for keeping your teeth healthy. If you have gum disease, twice-a-year dental visits may not be enough. However, the daily care

you give your teeth is really the deciding factor in keeping them for a lifetime. If you aren't sure about the most effective way to brush and floss, your dentist can show you how.

An interesting fact: If you have sensitive teeth, you've probably noticed an odd thing about brushing your teeth right after breakfast. If orange juice was part of the meal, brushing can hurt your teeth. This phenomenon is not a figment of your imagination. Your teeth have microscopic tubes leading from the surface to the nerves inside. Brushing your teeth helps to clog these tubes so your teeth don't feel so sensitive. The acid in the orange juice counteracts this effect. To decrease tooth sensitivity, don't brush right before or after consuming orange juice or other foods or drinks high in acid.

THE DEMANDS OF FAITH

*“For we walk by faith, not by sight.” 2
Corinthians 5:7*

From what it seems, faith has nothing to do with what we see. Actually, the definition of faith is that it is “*the evidence of things not seen*”. Evidence is always related to something we see, to a tangible proof. In court, those who are called to give testimony are people who have been eye-witnesses, who have seen something happen. John, in his first epistle, speaks about what he saw with his own eyes, “*That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled, of the Word of life;... that which we have seen and heard declare we unto you*” (1 John 1:1, 3).

Conviction has certainly to do with facts that are visible and tangible, but faith is not related to concrete material things, but to abstract ones. Faith is an experience of the heart that begins with the eyes. When we see the beauties of nature, we believe that everything was created by an almighty God. When we experience the service of nature, we understand something of God’s love for us. Faith is actually trusting in that love. That trust must come from the bottom of our heart and that is only possible if we have experienced it, if that love has become in some way visible to our heart. Through faith we are not only able to see, but to perceive things.

In 1 Corinthians 2:14, we read, “*But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know [them], because they are spiritually discerned.*” The verb “receiveth” as used here is translated into Spanish as “perceive” and in Greek, the original version of the sentence, it says “dextai” (accepts). The dictionary defines the verb “to perceive” as “to receive and handle with, to understand or know something.” On the other hand, the noun “perception” is defined as “an inner sensation that results from a material impression upon our senses.” In other words, what we cannot “perceive” (understand inwardly), we cannot accept

or receive. Therefore, faith is something completely subjective. We handle the truth according to how much we perceived it, understood it inwardly, experienced it, discerned it, as the verse says later on.

Faith gives us a completely different appreciation of things; it “looks” at things from a different angle. Faith, most of the times, demands that we do exactly the opposite of what our logic tells us based on the situation according to how we see it with our eyes and mind. Not in vain the wise Solomon tells us, “*Trust in the Lord with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding.*” (Proverbs 3:5).

Faith demanded from Noah to invest all his possessions to build an ark when never a drop of rain had fallen upon the earth. Faith asked Abraham to abandon his motherland and to sacrifice his only son. Faith demanded from Moses to renounce the glory of a powerful nation, to leave the wealthy productive land of Egypt and go to the wilderness where nothing grows and the heat during the day and the cold at night are a threat to any wanderer. Faith required from the three princes in the Babylonian court to be tested by fire and from Daniel to end up in the lions’ den. Faith demanded from the priests to enter the waters of the Jordan before the river was divided. Faith demanded from Jesus to die on the cross of Calvary and after Him many martyrs died in the Roman Coliseum, torn by lions, responding to the demands of their faith.

Yes, faith is frightfully demanding. Do we know what it will request from us tomorrow? Are we ready to respond to its demands?

All these men who responded to the hard demands of faith were weak men like you and me, so how could they submit to the demands of faith? Because, before requiring something, faith gives. It gives the impossible so as to gain our trust.

Faith had given Noah all the petitions of his heart and had preserved him from corruption in the midst of a perverted society. Faith had guided Abraham during

his whole pilgrimage and had given him a son where there was no hope. Yes, faith destroys the barriers of hopelessness and despair. Faith had saved Moses from the waters when he was a baby and that faith, which he learnt from his mother, had given him a family in the wilderness and a humble character, the most precious gift that can be given to a very talented and educated man. Faith had preserved Daniel and his friends as a light, full of wisdom and understanding in a very idolatrous nation and had given the former the skill to interpret dreams. Faith had given Jesus the power to make the blind see, to heal the lepers, to resurrect the dead. Faith gives anything we may ask for according to God’s will, but when it demands something, it seems to have no mercy. Is it really so? What was Noah’s reward for having invested all his possessions in building the ark? He and his whole family were saved and could start a new life in a land clean from corruption. Abraham was rewarded with a revelation of the Saviour who gave His life not only for his son but for all mankind; the three young men came out of the fire untouched, as so did Daniel from the lions’ den. Many people were won for God’s kingdom as a result of this manifestation of God’s power. Moses saw the Red Sea open at the movement of his hand and close over their enemies and swallow them. Faith brought Jesus out of the grave so that He could be the Saviour of the world.

Let us ask from faith today so that we may respond to her demands tomorrow! Let us allow God to work wonders in our life so that He may reveal the greatness of His power and we may not fear trial. Let us rest in peace in the arms of faith without fearing its demands; let us look at it as our best ally, as our shield that can protect us from evil and through which we can get hold of the grace by which we are saved. Yes, let us walk by faith and not by sight, no matter how many obstacles we may find on our way; our powerful God can remove them as He removed the stone of the door of Christ’s sepulchre. Faith has power even over death; faith is not passive, but dynamic: “*We walk by faith*”. Let us walk hand in hand with faith and allow it to take us to wherever it may want, because its purpose is always that we reach higher grounds and its goal is the pearly doors of the New Jerusalem. **Amen.**

Teresa Corti

FORGIVENESS



CHILDRENS CORNER

Hate him. Hate him. Hate him. Hate him.
All night long the wheels of the train echoed the dreary song in my heart, as I cried myself to sleep in the bed below my mother and six-year-old sister. *Hate him. Hate him. Hate him.*

All I could think about was lashing out to hurt the one who was hurting me – my father. Terrible thoughts kept running through my mind like invisible darts. How dare he do this to us? What kind of father would send his own

f a m i l y

away on a train?

Daddy was sending us to my aunt's place in Florida. I was only twelve years old at the time and too timid to tell my father how much I hated him for sending us away. He made me leave my two brothers, all my friends, and our comfortable brick home. I was not able to express my anger and hurt, so I closed my heart to him and silently made a vow that I would never forgive him.

The same morning that he put us on the train, I overheard a whisper of the ugly word – divorce. A few months later the divorce was final and daddy had married someone else. At least my two brothers had come to live with us now, so we were almost a complete family again.

Mother worked very hard to save enough money to buy an old wooden boarding house, that could house forty people and also there was a small restaurant. Here she could help her four children get a college education. She spent fourteen hours every day taking care of t h e

boarders, and feeding another 300 that would pass through her dining room. My sister and I had to serve the food. Whenever I heard mother cooking in the kitchen at five o'clock, the old feelings of anger and resentment towards Daddy would return.

My only contact with my father as I grew up were painful visits – strained and quick, never on holidays or important occasions, and always in a neutral place with his wife present. I began to hide my true feelings of anger, hurt and rejection.

Mother's hair turned grey, her legs dragged with arthritic pain. The state of Florida finally condemned her old boarding house so they could build a large state office on the site. Mother had to take what they offered her and move once more. Resentment against my daddy rose up in me again.

Although I was a Christian, I would not take responsibility for my ugly attitude. I continued to blame Daddy for Mother's failing health and having to work so hard. I told myself that my feelings were justified because of Daddy's actions.

He never contributed a dollar towards our family and I had to work two jobs to finish college. He never sent a card when I graduated, never wrote when I married, and never acknowledged the birth of any of my three children. And all the while he and his wife lived in a rich, fancy home.

One day in my late thirties, something startling happened that changed my angry heart. While I was visiting Mother, I went with her to prayer meeting where the folks who were worshipping seemed to know God in a deeper depth than I did. When the pastor invited those who wanted prayer and further instruction about Christian life to meet afterwards in his office, I went.

I was astonished that the first subject

he talked about was forgiveness. We needed, he said, to ask God to forgive us for holding unforgiveness towards anyone. Instantly, I thought of Daddy. I knew that Jesus had taught us to pray, "Forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors." But could I, after all these years of hate, really forgive my father? I hung my head and thought about it.

I now had a choice to make. I made a choice not based on my emotions or my feelings, but based on God's Word. Haltingly, I began to pray. "Lord I choose to forgive Daddy right now." I lifted my open palms ever so slightly as though pushing this burden right into my heavenly Father's lap. Then I added, "Lord forgive me for all the bitterness, rage, and anger I have harboured all these years. Forgive me for hating him."

Waves of love, deep love, pulsed through me. I had never known anything like it. It filled my whole body. A Bible verse I had read sometime earlier came to mind again as a promise just for me: "He will restore the hearts of the father to their children, and the hearts of the children to their fathers..." (Malachi 4:6). The pastor then prayed that

alone to visit the three of his children who still lived in Florida. He had taken the bus to my sister's, and in a couple of days I was to get him, and he would stay awhile with us.

It would be the first time in my married life that Daddy had been in our home overnight. I had mixed emotions! How could I greet him? I never remembered him hugging me. Could I hug him?

As I drove the one hundred and fifty kilometres to my sister's home, doubts filled my mind. I had forgiven him, hadn't I? Too soon I was there. There, in her backyard, our eyes met. I smiled and walked to where he stood. I draped a limp arm across his bony, stooped shoulders. Just a thought was all I could manage. Yes, I had forgiven him. My heart told me I no longer hated him, but we were still strangers.

"God help me," I prayed. "Help me get to know this man who is my father."

While sitting on our porch the next night, I drew him out in conversation; I encouraged him to talk about his childhood, and he did. He laughed and leaned far back in a chair,

He looked full into my watering eyes and his voice broke. "How could you love me? After all I've done. After all....?"

I couldn't answer. I was too choked up to tell about the hate I had turned over to Jesus.

But I think he knew. After three days of being with our family, joining us for family worship, I think he knew: I loved because I had forgiven. My heart was clear of all the debris I had surrendered to Jesus the night I chose to forgive my dad.

And I had found forgiveness from God for all my bitterness, resentment, hate and faultfinding. What a load that had been.

The bus slowly rolled down the street. As it picked up momentum, the tires seemed to echo the thoughts swirling through my mind. Forgiven. Forgiven. Forgiven. The song had changed.

I saw my Dad several times after that, always making the effort to stop by whenever I was in the state where he and his wife lived.

He was almost eighty-four when he died, outliving my mother by 12 years. He visited me only one other time alone; and when he did, I took him to the cemetery where we children had buried Mom.

"She forgave you long ago, Dad."

Tears sprang in his eyes. "She made a lot of sacrifices for you children. By the way, I'm glad you forgave me too," he said.

Unforgiveness not only hinders our prayers from being answered, it is the one thing that chains us to the person or situation. It keeps us in bondage. Jesus said, "Forgive, and you will be forgiven." Luke 6:37, and the word translated "forgive" means to release, set at liberty, release as unchaining someone. We, the ones who choose to forgive, are now unchained, loosed. We have given up the desire to get even.

When we are dealing with this problem in our hearts, it is a good time to realize that God's Spirit can shape us and make us into men and women who are both healed and holy. All we have to do is invite Him to do so.



Jesus would live through me and that the Holy Spirit would fill me to overflowing.

Some weeks later I wrote my dad, eager to have our relationship restored. Sometimes he answered with polite letters; other times he sent hateful ones. But I was determined to remain open to him, so I continued to write.

Almost five years passed. Then one day I got a call from Daddy. He was coming

staring at the stars. I couldn't remember hearing him laugh before. It was a good sound.

For the next two days we caught up on life that had passed us by. The hours flew. All too soon it was time for him to leave. Before boarding the bus, I couldn't resist the strong urge to reach out and squeeze him. I hugged him tightly for a moment, as a child clutches a treasured teddy bear.