

The Reformation 

Messenger

Volume 6, Number 10

October 1999

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



Angel Falls, Canaima, Venezuela



“WHO THEN CAN BE SAVED?”

When Jesus explained some of the conditions for the salvation of men His disciples “were exceedingly amazed, saying, ‘Who then can be saved?’” Matt. 19:25.

They thought that nobody could fulfill the conditions. It seemed that it would be impossible for human beings to reach such a high goal, and Jesus agreed with them on this.

“But Jesus beheld them, and said unto them, With men this is impossible; but with God all things are possible.” Matt. 19:26.

In this Bible verse we learn two facts. To keep the law of God is impossible for man alone. All who have tried it have failed. The second fact is that with God it becomes possible.

Earlier in this same chapter Jesus said, “If thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments.” Matt. 19:17.

Today in our world we have one and a half billion Christians who expect eternal life; but the Bible is clear that only few will make it to heaven from the last generation.

The Pharisees and scribes were very particular in keeping the church rules and laws. They kept the Sabbath very strictly. They paid tithes of the mint and cummin. They fasted twice a week and gave money to the poor. Yet knowing all this 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.

“There is no safety for one who has merely a legal religion, a form of godliness.” D.A. 172.

The Pharisees and scribes did not fulfill the requirements for eternal life. Their righteousness was not good enough. They did that which was humanly possible but it was not acceptable before God. In other words, they were not perfect as the Father in heaven is perfect. That is the standard of righteousness which we must reach.

“The conditions of eternal life, under grace, are just what they were in Eden – perfect conformity to the principles of His law. The standard of character presented in the Old Testament is the same that is presented in the New Testament.” M.B. 76.

“Wherefore, beloved, seeing that ye look for such things, be diligent that ye may be found of him in peace, without spot, and blameless.” 2 Peter 3:14. “And in their mouth was found no guile; for they are without fault before the throne of God.” Rev. 14:5. “But let patience have her perfect work, that ye may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing.” James 1:4. “Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ...but speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ.” Eph. 4:13,15.

The Bible teaching is clear. Nothing less than perfection is required of us in order to have eternal life.

Many professed Christians believe that because we are saved by grace and by faith, perfect obedience to the law of God is not necessary. Such Christians forget what salvation is. Matthew 1:21 tells us that “He shall save His people from their sins.” Then if someone is saved he does not continue in sin.

Many professed Christians will be terribly disappointed in the end to find themselves outside heaven. Too late they realize that perfection meant perfect obedience to the law of God. "What Christ was in His perfect humanity, we must be, for we must form characters for eternity." T.M. 173.

"The Lord requires perfection from His redeemed family. He expects from us the perfection which Christ revealed in His humanity." G.C. 477.

"God designs that every one of us shall be perfect in Him, so that we may represent to the world the perfection of His character. He wants us to be free from sin." M.L. 15.

"Now, while our great High Priest is making the atonement for us, we should seek to become perfect in Christ. Not even by a thought could our Saviour be brought to yield to the power of temptation.... He had kept His Father's commandments, and there was no sin in Him that Satan could use to his advantage. This is the condition in which those must be found who shall stand in the time of trouble." G.C. 623.

PERFECTION IS ATTAINABLE

"God desires us to reach the standard of perfection made possible for us by the gift of Christ." M.N. 114.

"None need fail of attaining, in his sphere, to perfection of Christian character. By the sacrifice of Christ, provision has been made for the believer to receive all things that pertain to life and godliness. God calls upon us to reach the standard of perfection, and places before us the example of Christ's character. In His humanity, perfected by a life of constant resistance of evil, the Saviour showed that through co-operation with Divinity, human beings may in this life attain to perfection of character. This is God's assurance to us that we too may obtain complete victory." A.A. 531.

"He who lays hold upon the righteousness of Christ may become a perfect man in Christ Jesus." T.M. 150.

"So long as we are united to Him by faith, sin has no more dominion over us....we may attain to perfection of character." D.A. 123.

"Paul holds up the standard of perfection, and shows how it may be reached. 'Work out your own salvation,' he says, 'for it is God which worketh in you.'" A.A. 482.

"If you make God your strength, you may, under the most discouraging circumstances, attain a height and breadth of Christian perfection which you hardly think it possible to reach." 4T 567.

"Through the merits of Christ, through His righteousness, which by faith is imputed unto us, we are to attain to the perfection of Christian character....By dwelling upon the love of God and our Saviour, by contemplating the perfection of the divine character, and claiming the righteousness of Christ as ours by faith, we are to be transformed into the same image." 5T 744.

"Having become partakers of the heavenly gift, they are to go on unto perfection, being 'kept by the power of God through faith.'" A.A. 530.

"Perfection of character is attainable by everyone who strives for it." 1 SM 212

This is a message that should thrill our hearts that perfection of character is attainable. If we hunger and thirst after Christ's righteousness we shall be filled with it. This Christ has promised to us.

Apostle Paul gives us council as how to reach this perfection, "But we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into same image

from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord." 2 Cor. 3:18.

HOW TO ATTAIN PERFECTION

"Much time should be spent in prayer, that our garments of character may be washed and made white in the blood of the Lamb." 5T 717

"With fasting and earnest prayer, with deep heart searching, stern self-examination, lay bare the soul; let no act escape your critical examination." 2T 158.

"It is impossible for those who give the reins to appetite to attain to Christian perfection." 2T 400.

"Eating and drinking, and dressing all have a direct bearing upon our spiritual advancement." C.D. 57.

"The strongest evidence of man's fall from a higher state is the fact that it costs so much to return. The way of return can be gained only by hard fighting, inch by inch, every hour. By a momentary act of will, one may place himself in the power of evil;

but it requires more than momentary act of the will to break these fetters, and attain to a higher, holier life. The purpose may be formed, the work begun; but its accomplishment will require toil, time, and perseverance, - patience and sacrifice." Vol. 8 313.

This is where many fail. They are not putting the continuous life long effort into their character building. They are satisfied with a formal religion, hoping that someday by a miracle, their characters will change. Or perhaps they may think that they are good enough already, comparing themselves to other people. Very few Christians have a clear idea of what consists of Christian perfection. The standard of God is higher than what most of the professed Christians realize and therefore they are not putting out the effort to reach it and will fail in the end.

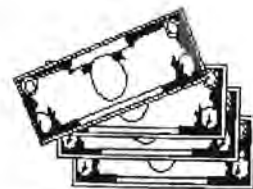
May the Lord help us to reach the perfection that is required for eternal life.
AMEN

Timo Martin



**Brother Neptali Acevedo with his wife
and 3 daughters**

THE PRICE OF SALVATION



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

Many churches and religions like to put a price tag on salvation today. In the Roman Catholic church you can receive various blessings according to the amount of money you have donated to the organization or the amount of pilgrimages you have made. In the Watchtower Society your value is measured by the amount of hours you have put in for witnessing purposes. Each church member is required to put in a certain amount of hours. This takes away from the freedom of being led by the Holy Spirit and the various members using their talents in various different lines. In this way of “work righteousness,” the church dictates to the members as to how they are to work for the Lord. A lot of Televangelists appeal to believers to donate large sums of money to their organization alluding to the fact that they can buy their way to heaven. But is this Jesus’ way? Did He come to earth with a list of requirements for salvation? He came with one requirement.

“Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind,” and “Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.” Matthew 22:37, 39.

This verse, as simple as it is, has been misunderstood by so many. There are those who want no price tags, but they also do not want any commitment or inconvenience to come into their lives for the sake of the gospel. They simply want to believe – making “believe” a passive verb instead of an action verb as it is in the original Greek. They don’t feel it is necessary to

make any changes in life. Is this what Jesus meant?

So, there are two opposing extremes in the Christian world. Which way is correct?

Is there a price on salvation? Let’s examine a parable that Jesus told in Matthew 13:45, 46, “Again, the kingdom of heaven is like unto a merchant man, seeking goodly pearls: Who, when he had found one pearl of great price, went and sold all that he had, and bought it.” And another parable in verse 44, “Again, the kingdom of heaven is like unto treasure hid in a field; the which when a man hath found, he hideth, and for joy thereof goeth and selleth all that he hath, and buyeth that field.”

It seems that in these two parables we can purchase salvation once we find it, but what is God’s price tag? With what do we purchase this salvation? It is not money. Although God expects a faithful tithe and generous offerings from His followers, this will not purchase salvation.

To the church in Laodicea Jesus had a message. Once they realized their wretched condition, Jesus did not leave them there but offered a solution. What is that solution? “I counsel thee to buy of Me gold tried in the fire, that thou mayest be rich; and white raiment, that thou mayest be clothed, and that the shame of thy nakedness do not appear; . . .” Revelation 3:18. Again, here we are told that we must BUY something in order to obtain salvation. But again, the purchase price is not money.

Through the prophet Isaiah, the Lord conveyed us this idea, “Ho, everyone that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money; come ye, buy, and eat; yea, come, buy wine and milk without money and without price.” Isaiah 55:1. Here Jesus calls us to buy, but without money. So what is the purchase price? The rich young ruler loved his possessions too much to give them up for the Lord. He could not pay the price. Jesus said, “If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me.” Matthew 16:24.

SEEK

“And ye shall seek me, and find, me when ye search for me with all your heart.” Jer. 29:13. “Seek the Lord and his strength, seek his face continually.” 1 Chron. 16:11. The first condition is that we must seek with all our heart and do so continually. It is not enough just to want to be saved; we must make an earnest search for it. “Seek ye the Lord while he may be found, call ye upon him while he is near.” Isaiah 55:6. We are not simply to sit and wait for salvation to come our way. We must make an effort on our part. “Depart from evil, and do good; seek peace, and pursue it.” Psalm 34:14. Christian living is both negative and positive. We must go away from evil (“Resist the devil, and he will flee from you.” James 4:7) and we must do good. Yet merely refraining from evil is not enough. We must be active in doing good. “Blessed are they that keep His testimonies, and that seek Him with the whole heart.” Psalm 119:2.

HEALTH REFORM

Is there a price tag for good health? Again, yes there is. In order to have good health you have to deny your appetite all the unhealthy delicacies that it may crave after being exposed to foods that will not nourish but rather degenerate. Sister White had a terrible struggle when she became a vegetarian. She made a firm decision to put away meat and told her cook to prepare only healthy meals from that point on. The first time she went to the table and saw the meal, her stomach rebelled. The potatoes did not look appetizing. Her stomach refused to eat what was on the table. She simply told her stomach that it can wait until it will eat the good food before it will get anything more. Several meals went by this way until finally she obtained the victory over her appetite. Her stomach welcomed the vegetables after the skipped meals, but it was not without a struggle in the beginning.

We encourage people to give up all unhealthful substances such as: caffeine substances (tea, coffee, etc.), meat, cigarettes, alcohol and any other unhealthy foods that cloud the brain and hinder the health and well-being of the body. The world has labelled us a cult due to these restrictions, but they do not understand the reasons behind these restrictions. A cult will make unreasonable demands and set requirements that make no sense at all – simply to control the minds of the people. Does God make unreasonable demands? Is He being unfair in asking us to deny our appetites? No, God created man and He knows what will keep this living machinery running most efficiently and this knowledge He has passed on to man. He requires us to follow these health laws to keep our body

in top-notch condition before He will bring us to heaven. Any willful indulgence of that which does not build up the strength of the body and which is eaten simply to gratify a depraved appetite is sin. Yes, there is a price for optimum health and few there are who are willing to pay that price. Those who do pay the price enjoy a long life filled with happiness, health, strength, and a sound mind all of their days.

FINANCIAL SECURITY

There is a price tag for financial security. Although some may try to work very hard and hoard their money to themselves, in a moment Jesus can cause it to disappear. All we have is loaned to us from Him. Yes, the price for financial security is a faithful tithe and generous offering. In the time of Ancient Israel the offerings were to exceed the tithes and yet we still see people who were well off. (See Messenger article entitled, “25 Percent” in the December 1996 issue). There is the family of King David, while he was still young and a shepherd boy. They were quite well off. King Saul also came from a well-to-do family, as did Elisha. These families were faithful to God and therefore more than likely paid their generous offerings (exceeding their tithes) and yet they were not poor.

Some get tired of hearing constant requests for money for this project here or that church there. “Well, says one, the calls keep coming to give to the cause; I am weary of giving. Are you? Then let me ask: Are you weary of receiving from God’s beneficent hand? Not until He ceases to bless you will you cease to be under bonds to return to Him the portion He claims. He blesses you that it may be in your power to bless others. When you are weary of receiving, then you

may say: I am weary of so many calls to give. God reserves to Himself a portion of all that we receive. When this is returned to Him, the remaining portion is blessed; but when it is withheld, the whole is sooner or later cursed. God’s claim is first; every other is secondary.” *T5, p. 150*. The tithe is God’s; to spend it is stealing. The rest is yours, but you will be called into account if you use it unwisely. Should you decide to be generous – and make your offerings a true sacrifice, as they are supposed to be – God will bless you and you will have financial success. He doesn’t promise that you will be rich and famous – but you will not lack. Some don’t trust God on this issue, they feel as though they, through their own efforts must build a comfortable financial cushion for themselves.

Some have had to pay by giving up their job. (See the children’s story). This is a difficult position, especially for the person who is the main financial supporter of the household. Many have turned away, unwilling to pay this price. Those that have stood the test and paid this price, have been blessed in miraculous ways. The Lord has provided for them and they never have been in want. They may not have been rich; perhaps the new job doesn’t pay as much, but it may pay for the necessities and then a little extra for tithes and offering. It may not pay for luxuries. Perhaps the Lord wants us to give up some luxuries.

“We ought now to be heeding the injunction of our Saviour: “Sell that ye have, and give alms; provide yourselves bags which wax not old, a treasure in the heavens that faileth not.” It is now that our brethren should be cutting down their possessions instead of increasing them. We are about to

move to a better country, even a heavenly. Then let us not be dwellers upon the earth, but be getting things into as compact a compass as possible." *T5, p. 152*

Jesus asks us to put Him to the test. He says, "Bring ye all the tithes into the storehouse, that there may be meat in mine house, and prove me now herewith, saith the Lord of hosts, if I will not open you the windows of heaven, and pour you out a blessing, that there shall not be room enough to receive it." Malachi 3:10.

PERSONAL PRICES

There are a few other times when some people will be asked to pay a price for salvation.

If we want to be forgiven – the price is that we must first forgive others. If we cherish an unforgiving spirit we will never find forgiveness ourselves.

Some have had to pay the price of friends or family who would turn against them. Jesus says, "He that loveth father or mother more than me are not worthy of Me." Matthew 10:37. For some this price was too high, especially if it is a spouse that will threaten to leave should the person decide to follow the Lord. No, they say, keeping the family together is far more important than following the way the Lord leads. Those that have paid this price have found a new home in the Family of God. "God setteth the solitary in families." Psalm 68:6. Some have been disinherited and others have had their lives threatened when they decided for the Lord (especially in countries where Christianity is still forbidden today - and where the Eastern Religions are very strong – to leave the faith is as good as committing suicide – you must flee for your life).

The peace that comes from following the Lord, far outweighs the peace and security that this world has to offer. Salvation and having peace with God are something that is so precious that some people are willing to pay whatever price God may require.

In the Dark Ages, often the price of following the Lord was your life. Many millions paid that price and went to their death singing songs of praise. They died with the hope of eternal life when Jesus would return.

THE CURRENCY OF HEAVEN

What we read above gives us an idea of what we are to pay. First we must seek for salvation if we are to find it. Then there are two branches on the side – health reform and financial success – which both have a price to pay.

Our salvation costs Jesus a lot. It cost Him His life, which He gave willingly for us. He gave all for us and often we are hesitant to give all to Him. Why? This world is full of selfishness and pride. Many Christians have taken the sacrifice that Jesus made simply as a business transaction. Jesus died for me – therefore I am saved. It is much more than that though. As we study the life of Christ in detail we see the love and sympathy that He had for errant sinners. We see the earnest calls to repentance and a better way of living.

TO FIGHT FOR IT

It is a fight. "We are to do all that we can do on our part to fight the good fight of faith. We are to wrestle, to labor, to strive, to agonize to enter in at the strait gate. We are to set the Lord ever before us. With clean hands, with pure hearts, we are to seek to honour God in all our ways. Help

has been provided for us in Him who is mighty to save. The spirit of truth and light will quicken and renew us by its mysterious workings; for all our spiritual improvements come from God, not from ourselves. The true worker will have divine power to aid him, but the idler will not be sustained by the Spirit of God.

"In one way we are thrown upon our own energies; we are to strive earnestly to be zealous and to repent, to cleanse our hands and purify our hearts from every defilement; we are to reach the highest standard, believing that God will help us in our efforts. We must seek if we would find, and seek in faith; we must knock, that the door may be opened unto us. The Bible teaches that everything regarding our salvation depends upon our own course of action. If we perish, the responsibility will rest wholly upon ourselves. If provision has been made, and if we accept God's terms, we may lay hold on eternal life. We must come to Christ in faith, we must be diligent to make our calling and election sure." *Faith&Works, p. 48*

TO BUY IT

"Buy the truth, and sell it not; also wisdom, and instruction and understanding." Proverbs 23:23. "Truth is a treasure to be gained at any cost and never to be relinquished, whatever the temptations. . . Few realize how dangerous are the little self-deceptions in which they indulge, or for what petty price they sell truth and eternal life." *SDA Bible Commentary, Vol. 3, p. 1025*. Getting back to Revelation 3:18 where we are told to buy gold tried in the fire as a remedy for our wretched spiritual state, we read, "The things He offers her [the church] are not without their price, yet salvation is ever free.

She must give up her old way of life to be truly rich, to be healed, and to be clothed. Even she who is penniless may buy." (as we saw in Isaiah 55:1). *SDA Bible Commentary, Vol., 7, p. 762.*

Referring to the parable of the pearl of great price we read: "In the parable the pearl is not represented as a gift. The merchantman bought it at the price of all that he had. Many question the meaning of this, since Christ is represented in the Scriptures as a gift. He is a gift, but only to those who give themselves, soul, body and spirit, to Him without reserve. We are to give ourselves to Christ, to live a life of willing obedience to all his requirements. All that we are, all the talents and capabilities we possess, are the Lord's to be consecrated to His service. When we thus give ourselves wholly to Him, Christ, with all the treasures of heaven, gives Himself to us. We obtain the Pearl of Great Price.

"Salvation is a free gift, and yet is to be bought and sold. In the market of which divine mercy has the management, the precious pearl is represented as being bought without money and without price. In this market all may obtain the goods of heaven. The treasury of the jewels of truth is open to all." *COL, p. 116/117.*

"We cannot earn salvation, but we are to seek for it with as much interest and perseverance as though we would abandon everything in the world for it. . . . The price we are required to pay is not gold or silver, for this belongs to God. Abandon the idea that temporal or spiritual advantages will win for you salvation. God calls for your willing obedience. He asks you to give up your sins. "To Him that overcometh," Christ declares, "will I grant to sit with

Me in My throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with My Father in His throne." Rev. 3:21." *Ibid, p. 117.*

"I beseech you therefore brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service." Romans 12:1. Jesus wants us to give Him our all. Our time, our talents, our means. We may have to give up some of our leisure time for time spent in service for the Lord. But you will be richly rewarded. Your joy will be more full.

SOME SEARCH IN VAIN

"Strive to enter in at the strait gate: for many, I say unto you, will seek to enter in, and shall not be able." Luke 13:24. "Destruction cometh; and they shall seek peace, and there shall be none." Ezekiel 7:25.

Some seek but cannot find. They seem to be searching for the heavenly pearl, but are not willing to pay the price – make the necessary surrender of their wrong habits. Those habits that we are called to give up are not really making us free. We are in bondage to them and Jesus wants to free us from them. Those that do not die to self that Christ may live in them will never find this precious pearl. They do not take up the cross and follow Jesus in the pathway of self-denial and sacrifice. They seem very near to heaven but they cannot enter. They will come up to the gate and say, "Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? And in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works?" But Jesus will say, "I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity." Matthew 7:22, 23. They are almost saved, but almost is not enough. Almost saved, means wholly lost.

After having a glimpse of the heavenly kingdom Sister White was led to proclaim, "Heaven is cheap enough." Yes, the price that we are asked is cheap compared to the reward that the Heavenly Father has prepared for us.

Sister White saw a vision of the Advent believers travelling on their way to heaven. They left with loaded wagons, carrying all their earthly goods. When they reached a narrowing of the way, they had to leave the wagons behind and travel only by horseback. When the way got narrower, they had to leave the horses and travel on foot, in the next juncture the way got so narrow they had to take off their shoes and travel bare foot. At each step of the way they had a price to pay to follow the Lord. Many were not willing to pay the price and at each crisis point some turned back, while some went on.

There is a price to pay for your salvation. Jesus wants you to withdraw your affections from everything on this earth. Soon, very soon the time is coming when all these material goods will have no value. We will not be able to buy or sell. We will have to give them up anyway. Jesus also wants our hearts. He wants to take our sin-polluted hearts and make them hearts of flesh – soft hearts. Yes, you will have to give up some things for Jesus. Are you willing to pay the price?

"And He said unto them, Verily I say unto you, There is no man that hath left house, or parents, or brethren, or wife, or children, for the kingdom of God's sake, Who shall not receive manifold more in this present time, and in the world to come life everlasting."

Luke 18:29, 30.

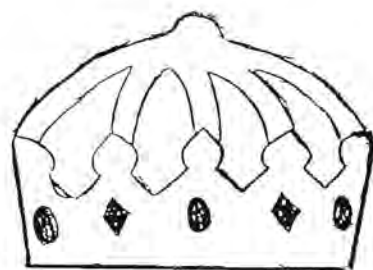
Wendy Eaton

Mini-series about some kings of the Bible

CONCLUSION:

King Manasseh

1 Kings 21 and 2 Chronicles 33



For many generations, Assyria had been a powerful, vast empire. The nations trembled before their rulers who laid many countries waste and put the nations under the yoke of paying a yearly tribute. Among them were Israel and Judah. Esar-haddon, king of Assyria, mentions in his records, Manasseh was one of the 22 kings of West Asia, who were made vassal kings to pay tribute and had to send timber to Niniveh, the first capital of Assyria. At some time in his reign, Manasseh revolted and refused to pay the usual tribute. This created for God the opportunity to put a check upon the wicked regent. He used the Assyrian king as a scourge first to trouble Manasseh, then at a later time the nation.

To defy the duty of yielding the usual tribute, to regard it a trifle of no severe consequence, was a fatal mistake of any vassal king before an Assyrian ruler. The whip of such a monarch would be felt most painfully by the offender that needed to be disciplined. Refusal in keeping up a royal agreement was crime equal to treason.

Now, trouble was on the way to meet the king of Judah. The king of Assyria sent his army against Manasseh to take him prisoner. The New International translation of the English Bible states that they "put a hook in his nose, bound him with bronze shackles and took him to Babylon." 2 Chron. 33:11. (Babylon was the second capital of Assyria at that time, and the kings used to live there at certain times of the year. From *Empires of the Bible*, 346; A.T. Jones)

The surprised king raged against the foreigners who dared to lay hands on him. But the commanders of the host executed no gentleness. With rough hands they dealt firmly and quickly with

this haughty ruler. Their order was to bring him safely to their king so that he would be chastised for his treason. Manasseh was to learn what it meant to revolt against a nation so great and mighty as Assyria.

Manasseh was furious. He roared like a wild animal, fighting for his life. For one who was used to receive homage and obeisance from all, it was a terrifying experience to be handled by such forceful grips. Heavy, cutting chains were placed around the tender flesh of his hands and feet, restricting every movement. His anger knew no bound. He cursed and shouted the most profane utterings against his enemies, who did not care, and were only carrying out their duty. But to crown off the matter, and to make the humiliation complete – a hook was driven through his nose attached to a rope. And the smitten king was led away from his throne – to receive judgment in far away Babylon. Suddenly, all his royalty had been laid to the dust. Manasseh was reduced to a wretched, powerless and helpless prisoner, left to the mercy and cruelty of a strange nation.

It was a most painful and seemingly endless journey to Babylon, and the deposed, captured and bound King Manasseh was as miserable as one can be. The sun was beating down mercilessly. The dust on the rough road covered everything with a reddish layer of powdered clay and added only to the awful ordeal of the prisoner. Sometimes Manasseh was forced to walk, being pulled on the rope through his nose, till he was completely exhausted and simply fainted. His body had never been under physical strain nor was he used to exercise his muscles, thus he had no endurance. And when he did not walk fast enough, the rope tightened, causing

extreme pain almost tearing the hook from the pierced, bleeding and inflamed nose. The dust made him cough and dried up his throat, so that sometimes it seemed he would be close to death, had the soldiers not poured some water in his mouth. He could not breathe through the wounded nose, and neither could he wipe the dust from his eyes because of the chains. Manasseh suffered terribly from physical discomfort. He was by no means a hero in enduring pain, as he never had experienced any suffering before.

When at last the journey ended, and the host of the Assyrian king arrived in the city of Babylon with their special captive, they presented the enormously weary, dirty and rugged looking Manasseh, king of Judah, before the monarch. He looked at him amused. So, this miserable looking, smelling creature, full of dust and dried blood shall be the arrogant Jewish king, who defied the order of the ruling power on earth, Assyria? We shall see how long he continues to be stubborn. He loathed what he saw and with a short gesture the king waved Manasseh out of his sight to be brought to the dungeon. By then Manasseh was so exhausted from the strenuous travel and outbursts of wrath and hatred, he did not care what the Assyrian regent thought of him. When he at last lay down in that lonely prison cell, he immediately fell asleep.

The guardians took off the chains from his hands, and the hook from his nose. They left the shackles on his feet and put a cruise of water, some food, and a bucket beside the exiled king. Now the door was shut and locked and finally Manasseh was left alone.

After a long time, after many days, Manasseh opened his eyes. At first he could not fully grasp where he was. He

was very thirsty and emptied the canteen of water with one long draught. Then vaguely he began to remember how he was taken through dark corridors and stairs down to one of the many prison cells of the palace where he was now. In utter disgust he screamed out like a maniac. He threw his arms into the air, sore and blood crusted from the struggle against the chains, and cursed the awful place.

As he looked around that tiny, filthy, dark and musty cell, that had only one little iron latticed window high above, he nearly fainted with discouragement. Manasseh hated filthy ugly things. He had lived in a bright beautiful palace, where the eye could delight in the splendid surroundings of refined taste and art.

What a change! What a horrible, despicable hole, this wretched, loathsome cell! There was not even a bed, but only a heap of smelly straw with old rags. No sunshine to touch the skin, no nice refreshing breeze to cool the brow so hot from the shock of the scene!

And he would never get out of here. What was this Assyrian king going to do with him? The Assyrians were known for their cruelty, and certainly he, Manasseh, would be punished severely. He was afraid, terribly afraid. He caused others to suffer, but he had no courage to suffer himself. The thought of his outlook paralyzed his spirit. It was more than he could take. A terrible depression settled over the imprisoned king. This stopped all his yelling, cursing and shouting. It completely silenced him. A long dark night came over his mind. He had no strength to fight against it but sat, or laid there, numb from the hopelessness of the situation. He hardly noticed when through the opening in the cell door water and food were replaced. He did not eat, but drank all the water he could get. Days and weeks passed but he did not know. He lost track of time and he did not care. The anger died out in him, he was too weak to be angry and it would not change anything either.

The fact occurred to him that he was in Babylon, the city of the gods he bowed down to. How is it, that his god Baal would let him come into such a horrible situation right here in Baal's own city? This was like mockery to him. He had

offered many sacrifices and had spared nothing to show his devotion! Manasseh consulted the familiar spirits to deliver him, but they only laughed him to scorn. Baal did nothing and the demons let him down. "What have I been following all life long?" he thought. "This is all a lie and I was such a fool to fall into this trap. I will have nothing more to do with this kind of religion!"

But the dark powers were not all willing to let their victim go - the one who had engaged himself so eagerly with the forbidden practices of the occult. Demons had a rightful claim on him and they tormented the stricken king with terrible nightmares and voices, telling him that he was hopelessly lost, and that no one would ever come to help him. He would perish an awful lonely death, forsaken by all the world.

These torments harassed Manasseh with a horror so great, that he thought he would lose his mind. There was not one glimmer of hope and light for him on this earth, only darkness, as black as midnight. Then Manasseh, until recently the haughty, self-assured king of Judah, came to the end of himself and was ready to give up and to perish.

He did not know how long he remained in this stupor. After some time, a memory arose in the back of his mind about an amazing incident from the life of his father. He was about twelve years old when King Hezekiah became sick unto death, but by the grace of God, was restored to health. And for an extra sign of divine favor the sun went backwards ten degrees. This occurrence caused quite a stir everywhere and the king of Babylon sent letters and a present to inquire about his remarkable event. 2 Kings 10: 1, 7-12.

Hezekiah was a good King. He trusted the God of Israel and followed Him faithfully. And from the start he entreated the people to worship the Holy One with earnestness. Hezekiah reopened the temple and restored the temple service and worship and celebrated the feast of Passover with great devotion. 2 Chron. 29 and 30.

'And I, his son have been nothing but rebellious, bad and outright wicked. There is nothing in all I ever did that is of

any worth or to be proud of. I have only ruined and destroyed everything what my devout father had so carefully built up. What have I done with my life? I really deserve to be punished like this for all my evils,' Manasseh pondered. While he was lost in such thoughts, and his whole life rolled up before him like on a screen of fire, he felt a great pain in his heart.

It was a pain of such sorrow words could never express. Because now, Manasseh saw himself as an utter failure and a terrible offence to the kingly office, to God and the people. Suddenly, he felt tears in his eyes, rolling down the haggard face and beard. And soon a fountain broke loose from deep within that shook the penitent man with bitter sobs of great regret that made him fall down on his knees. From the innermost chambers of his tortured souls came a cry of sorrow that melted the heart, which for so long was barred against any feelings.

A horrendous sense of guilt almost crushed him, he was overwhelmed by the weight of his sins and committed evils that were the essence of his life. How he now wished it was all just a bad dream! But his deeds stood out sharp and clear, and the marks and scars of them were everywhere in the land of Judah and in the hearts of the people! He could not bear this load any longer. His only hope was in the God of his fathers, whom he deliberately ignored and defied all his life.

With an intense desire to be cleansed and pardoned, the afflicted prisoner lifted up his hands to heaven, and from the bottom of his being cried to the God of Abraham and Isaac, to be washed from his sins. Manasseh poured out before the Lord all his anguish and plainly confessed his wickedness. He could not stop until everything was mentioned. He also pleaded intensely for deliverance from Satan and his demons and renounced every practice of forbidden religion. He would now only acknowledge and serve the true and living God of Israel, for only He is God.

Manasseh sank exhausted to the floor, when he felt a gentle touch on his shoulder. A most wonderful sensation entered his heart. He rose up and all at once, the gloomy, sad prison cell was for a moment bathed in soft, heavenly light. Such warmth and peace came into his

soul, that he thought this is all a most beautiful dream. Yet this was real and a great joy filled his heart, the horror of crushing guilt was lifted, the heavy burden gone, he felt so light and cleansed all over.

The great transaction was done; the miracle of the saving of a soul from the territory of hell to the kingdom of Heaven was accomplished. Manasseh received a new heart and a new spirit. He was a new creation, for the old things passed away, all things became new (2 Cor. 5:17). A deep love for God filled him and an immense desire to know Him, who had done such a wonder as to receive him, the worse criminal and sinner. It was beyond his grasp to fathom the depth of this amazing power of divine love, for only love beyond compare could pluck him out from that tight grip of hell. He never ceased to marvel about it, nor did he ever forget from what he had been delivered.

Day and night he spent conversing with God to praise and thank Him for the goodness and mercy shown towards him. The gloomy cell was not so sad a place anymore, for the Holy One of Israel was with him. And now after a long time, he began to take food with appetite and thanksgiving. For the first time he was able to sleep peacefully like a little child.

We read in the Scriptures that Manasseh "humbled himself greatly before the God of his fathers, and prayed unto Him: and He was entreated of him, and heard his supplication, and brought him back to Jerusalem unto his kingdom." 2 Chron. 33:12-13.

Another great surprise and marvel was yet in store for Manasseh - something he did not expect to happen. Soon after his conversion, the squeaky iron door of his

cell opened, and the astonished prisoner was taken out and brought up to the palace to be bathed, groomed and arrayed in royal garments. Then again he was brought before the king.

Manasseh was now very humble and expressed his gratefulness for the kindness the servants showed to him. He forgot altogether that he was a king. As his majesty, the regent of Assyria beheld once more the Hebrew king, he leaned forward to make sure his eyes did not deceive him for what he was seeing. With unconcealed astonishment he gazed at the man before him, whom he had despised in his heart when he saw him first. But now he was fascinated by the elegant appearance of Manasseh, from whom radiated - unknown to him - nobility and humbleness at the same time, something very rarely noticed in his realm. 'With this man one can talk' the Assyrian ruler was thinking, 'we will come to an agreement. What a terrific transformation of a person!' Genuine respect flowed from him to the altogether different Manasseh before him.

The king had been informed by the prison guards what a great change had taken place in that once so mad prisoner. They saw him in his depression and sadness, in his tears when praying and kneeling and how his whole person was changed after that. The former, fierce looking king, whose piercing eyes made one feel like being nailed to the wall, had become an altogether different man. There was now a noble and mild expression on his face. The lips that before were a straight, hard line, became softly curved. From his eyes flowed a warmth and gentleness, which touched the heart of the beholder. The king of Assyria was so impressed by the report about Manasseh, that he decided to approach him with kindness. And what

he now saw with his own eyes surpassed his greatest expectation. He decided to restore Manasseh to his royal seat. The severe punishment he intended to inflict upon the disloyal ruler was put out of his mind. It was no longer needed. Manasseh had undergone such torments of mind and that was chastisement enough. He would now be a truly good king and a loyal vassal.

Through an interpreter Manasseh was informed that he would be brought back to Jerusalem, to rule again as king. Manasseh could hardly believe his ears and he bowed before the Assyrian monarch, who had granted him pardon and regarded him with restored honor.

The thrilling moment did indeed come when Manasseh, now an altogether changed man, beheld the city of Jerusalem again. To be home again, how wonderful it felt. Never before had Manasseh known such feelings of appreciation and tears of joy ran down his cheeks. For only the merciful, gracious God of his fathers could do such a marvelous thing, an "he knew that the Lord He was God." 2 Chron. 33:13 (last part).

Now Manasseh reigned as a just and faithful monarch worthy of his trust. He studied with diligence the divine precepts, and followed the sacred instructions. With all his heart he worshipped the Holy One of Israel, and did all to bring the people back to the Lord, and restored with eagerness what he had ruined and destroyed before. His name was no more a threat, but the people loved and respected him. Manasseh never forgot what great kindness God had shown to him and walked humbly before Him until the end of his days. Amen

By: Edda Tedford

Never will the human heart know happiness until it is submitted to be molded by the Spirit of God.

The Spirit conforms the renewed soul to the model, Jesus Christ. Through its influence, enmity against God is changed into faith and love, and pride into humility. The soul perceives the beauty of truth, and Christ is honored in excellence and perfection of character. -OHC 152 (1896).

Man's Manipulation or the work of the Holy Spirit?

Manuscript Releases 21 p. 64-68

"The law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul." Psalm 19:7. "There is wickedness that is being made strong through making void the law of Jehovah. Many have regarded the divine precepts as a dead letter; they have not accepted God's law as the rule of their life in all business transactions. And in their disregard of this law they give expression to a disregard for the authority of the Governor of the universe of heaven.

All the earthly kingdoms are now under God's supervision. He who made the heavens and the earth is Supreme Ruler. In the whole territory of the world which He has created, there is not a kingdom that is independent of God. And when men and women in an earthly kingdom or community understand the laws made to govern the subjects of the Ruler of the universe, but still refuse obedience, they bring themselves under the condemnation of the law that God, our Supreme Ruler, has established from the foundation of the world.

It was while there was a disregard of His holy precepts, that God called His people from Egyptian bondage, away from the influence of human authority, to be set free from their life of slavery. The Dignitaries of heaven had ordained that God's people, as a nation, should be delivered from slavery and become a separate and peculiar people....

The vast armies of Egypt ventured to traverse the sea by the same path, in pursuit of Israel. A dark cloud was before them, and yet they pressed on. When the whole army—'all Pharaoh's horses,

his chariots, and his horsemen—were in the very bed of the sea, the Lord said unto Moses, 'Stretch out thine hand over the sea.' Israel had passed over on dry land, but they heard the shouting of the armies in pursuit. As Moses stretched out his rod over the sea, the embanked waters that had stood as a great wall, rolled on in their natural course. Of all the men of Egypt in that vast army, not one escaped. All perished in their determination to have their own way and to refuse God's way. That occasion was the end of their probation.

Thus it will be with every class who choose to refuse the light God gives, and persist in following a course of action that makes void the law of Him who is Supreme Ruler over all kings—over all human powers that oppose themselves to the law of the Supreme Ruler of the universe, and set themselves in array against the expressed will of the Great I AM.

In the antediluvian world, man refused to obey. There was an extraordinary prevalence of feeling of self-importance. Sinful man, with swelling pride, continued in deeds of unrighteousness. The Lord bore long with transgressors, and in mercy gave man a probation of one hundred and twenty years. If the evil-doers repented not, they were to be swept from the face of the earth by a flood of waters. Noah and his helpers were constantly at work preparing an immense boat. Many of the unbelieving ones kept the faith and died triumphant.

Finally, the long period of probation was about to close. By the standard of God's law, the obedient were distinguished from the disobedient. The time was a most critical one. Will Noah

become tempted by the universal scorn which he sees thrown upon God's law and upon himself and his helpers, and will he have less reverence and love for this law? No; for Noah, and those who died in the faith, preached all the more earnestly, in proportion to the ridicule and scorn heaped upon them for building that immense ark—a boat on dry land.

Said Christ, 'As it was in the days of Noe, so shall it be also in the days of the Son of Man' (Luke 17:26). Let all read and understand the warnings given by the Saviour.

'And as He went out of the temple, one of His disciples saith unto Him, Master, see what manner of stones and what buildings are here! And Jesus answering said unto him, Seest thou these great buildings? There shall not be left one stone upon another, that shall not be thrown down.' (Mark 13:1,2).

Men will continue to erect expensive buildings, costing millions of money; special attention will be called to their architectural beauty and the firmness and solidity with which they are constructed; but the Lord has instructed me that despite the unusual firmness and expensive display, these buildings will share the fate of the temple in Jerusalem. That magnificent structure fell. Angels of God were sent to do the work of destruction, so that one stone was not left upon another that was not thrown down.

The Lord's terrible denunciations of sinful practices are made the more awful because of the restraint He has placed upon His own prerogatives and power. He who was reviled and reviled not again, declared before multitudes that the blood of all the prophets that had been shed from the foundation of the

world should be required of the nation He addressed. The Lord will show before a world transgressing His holy law, that He is God, and beside Him there is none else. *He has borne long with the deceptions of men claiming piety. While He has been provoked by their impieties, He has inflicted less punishment than they deserved.*

I am bidden to declare the message that cities full of transgression, and sinful in the extreme, will be destroyed by earthquakes, by fire, and flood. All the world will be warned that there is a God who will display His authority as God. His unseen agencies will cause destruction, devastation, and death. All the accumulated riches will be as nothingness. Notwithstanding the scientific care with which men safeguard buildings from destruction, one touch of the great and rightful Ruler will bring to nothingness the idolatrous possessions that have been laid up in a sightly and magnificent display. The devices of men will come to naught."

Manuscript Releases 4, pgs. 91-92

The injustice in our world, the masterly power man has taken unto himself, the oppressive, man-made unions that bring confusion and violence and strife, and the manipulation of a power to rule men and to acquire means through underhand deceptions—these conditions God cannot pass by with silence. Those who are under the influence and teaching of the great deceiver will find that although God has borne long with their deceptive acuteness, He has not been deceived, and He will reward every transgressor according to His works. He keeps a strict account of every lie framed, and when He takes matters in His hand, He will deal in accordance with every man's secret and hidden devising.

The Lord calls upon men everywhere to repent of their transgression of His law. Those who are so foolish as to trust in man, making flesh their arm, will be deceived and deluded, to their certain ruin.

The Lord will not suddenly cast off all transgressors, or destroy entire nations, but He will punish cities and places where men have given themselves up to the possession of satanic agencies. Strictly will the cities of the nations be dealt with, and yet they will not be visited in the extreme of God's indignation because some souls will yet break away from the delusions of the enemy, and will repent and be converted, while the mass will be treasuring up wrath against the day of wrath.

Will God's people be aroused? He has been calling, calling after certain ones who have defied Him; and the figures have been accumulating against them, while their ingenuity has been increasing in the work of deceiving if possible the very elect. *With satanic cunning they have striven to gain control of minds and of property. They have spurned many overtures of mercy upon condition of repentance.* The list of their evil deeds has been swelling. The wrath of God's signal displeasure is hanging over them; and they will not always be permitted to continue practicing their deceptive methods to draw souls into masked nets. Finally the word will go forth that divine patience has been exhausted.

Bible history is to be repeated. Calamities will come—calamities most awful, most unexpected; and these destructions will follow one after another. If there will be a heeding of the warnings that God has given, and if churches will repent, returning to their allegiance, then other cities may be spared for a time. But if men who have been deceived

continue in the same way in which they have been walking, disregarding the law of God, and presenting falsehoods before the people, God allows them to suffer calamity, that their senses may be awakened.

A disregard of God's law brings discord, violence, crime, war, and bloodshed. It has led men to defy God, to take leave of reason, to try to control the minds of their fellowmen.

The unions that are being formed all over the world will never qualify men for the rule of the Prince of peace; for in them every one is striving for the mastery, seeking for the highest place. History is being repeated. Men have a burning desire to rule men.

The Lord is bringing the perplexities of these social problems to our notice that we may see the evil of seeking to carry out our own way and will. This is an evil that has appeared again and again in our work, and which is appearing now. The natural man needs to be converted; the Spirit of God is needed to operate upon human hearts. Many of our church members are becoming weak because, instead of depending upon God, they are self-sufficient.

I am instructed to say to our churches, study the Testimonies. They are written for our admonition and encouragement upon whom the ends of the world are come. If God's people will not study these messages that are sent to them from time to time, they are guilty of rejecting light. Line upon line, precept upon precept, here a little and there a little, God is sending instruction to His people. Heed the instruction; follow the light. The Lord has a controversy with His people because in the past they have not heeded His instruction and not followed His guidance."

Compiled by Jerry Eaton



Babylon is Fallen

“Incline not my heart to any evil thing, to practice wicked works with men that work iniquity and let me not eat of their dainties.” Psalm 141:4

I have a burden of such magnitude that my soul is exceedingly sorrowful, even to the point of death. “And He (Jesus) taketh with Him Peter and James and John, and began to be sore amazed, and to be very heavy; And He saith unto them, My soul is exceeding sorrowful unto death: tarry ye here, and watch.” Mark 14:33,34.

All around me I see souls perishing for want of the word of God, the food of heaven. “Behold the days come, saith the Lord God, that I will send famine in the land, not a famine of bread nor a thirst for water, but of hearing the words of the Lord.” Amos 8:11. Yet the food, the word of God is in their midst and these souls cannot see it. “And Jesus said unto them, I am the bread of life: he that cometh to me shall never hunger: and he that believeth on Me shall never thirst. But I said unto you, That ye also have seen Me, and believe not.” John 6:35,36.

Oh, that the Lord would cast my soul alive into the pit. How can I endure the joys of salvation when the lives of those around me continue to walk in such blindness to the truths for this generation. I want to cease to exist – the affliction is too great.

The wine of Babylon has soured but there are those who continue to drink thereof and have become so intoxicated by its delusion their taste is turned numb. “Yea also, because he transgresseth by wine, he is a proud man neither keepeth at home, who enlargeth his desire as hell, and is as death, and cannot be satisfied, but gathereth unto him all nations, and heapeth unto him all people.” Hab. 2:5

While smooth things continue to be preached from the pulpits of Babylon the people excel in unrighteousness and rejoice in transgression. “That they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness. Who knowing the judgment of God, that they which commit such things are worthy of death, not only do the same, but have

pleasure in them that do them.” 2 Thess. 2:12; Rom. 1:32

How despairing I feel over the loss of millions of souls. Lives that Jesus Christ died and shed His blood to redeem. “For this is My blood of the new testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins.” Matt. 26:28. Yet these souls do not know the manner of God’s visitation.

What agony, what hopelessness, what heartache is in the world today because the light of the glory of the gospel of truth is allowed to be obscured by this wicked and perverse city. Generation upon generation of the sons and daughters of Babylon have perverted the way of truth. Are we to allow this destruction?

“Think not that I am come to send peace on earth: I came not to send peace, but a sword.” Matt. 10:34. But Babylon has melted down this sword and make a marriage ring that the children of God should be wed to the world. Such illicit fornication can only result in sudden and swift destruction. “Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. Little children, it is the last time: and as ye have heard that antichrist shall come, even now are there many antichrists; whereby we know it is the last time.” 1 John 2:15,18.

While men and women are being given in marriage, eating, drinking and being merry, God has called on His righteous, not to build an ark as in the days of Noah, but to form a remnant. Like the ark that arose to float on the flood waters that destroyed the earth and its inhabitants in Noah’s day, so God too, will cause His remnant to rise above the burning passions of licentiousness and the consuming fire of God’s wrath. In that day, all those who call upon the name of the Lord from a pure heart shall be saved.

While the Master intercedes for His righteous with groanings that cannot be uttered, are you asleep? Can you not watch with the Master for one hour? Do not let the intoxicating delusion of smooth things harden your hearts nor give in to complacency. This world is fast going down into the pit. “Hell and destruction are

never full; so the yes of man are never satisfied. Ye adulterers and adulteresses, know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God? Whosoever therefore will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God. Psalm 27: 20, 1 John 4:4

I stand back abhorred at the idea that I should be the only one standing in truth while thousands are perishing all around me. But God has preserved for Himself a remnant who have not bowed down to the beast or his image. "Here is the patience of the saints: here are they that keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus." Rev. 14:12. I quickly want to flee to God's chosen and experience with all the saints "what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height of the fullness of God and to know what is the love of Christ which passeth knowledge." Eph. 3:18,19. "That ye be not slothful, but followers of them who through faith and patience inherit the promises." Heb. 6:12. What comfort we have knowing we need not bear the burdens of sin alone. God is with us. And in God's elect you can see the unity of the Spirit in the bond of perfection which is love for one another, inspired by love for God, which is rooted and grounded in truth. "And the glory which Thou gavest Me I have given them; that they may be one, even as We are one. I in them, and Thou in Me, that they may be made perfect in one; and that the world may know that Thou hast sent Me, and hast loved them, as Thou hast loved Me. Sanctify them through Thy truth: Thy word is truth." John 17:22,23,17.

Babylon's bond of unity is founded on smooth things and complacency. What heart-wrenching sorrow I feel as the day fast approaches, the day that God shall remember Babylon's iniquities. "For her sins have reached unto heaven, and God hath remembered her iniquities." Rev. 18:5. In one day sudden destruction with none to help. "Therefore shall her plagues come in one day, death, and mourning; and famine: and she shall be utterly burned with fire: for strong is the Lord God who judgeth her." Rev. 18:8 "For as a snare shall it come on all them that dwell on the face of the whole earth." Luke 21:35. What terror as millions of souls suffer perdition. Death itself would be eagerly received instead of suffering

the terror of knowingly blaspheming the Holy Ghost, the consequence being their eternal loss of paradise. "And the kings of the earth, and the great men, and the rich men, and the chief captains, and the mighty men, and every bondman and every free man, hid themselves in the dens and in the rocks of the mountains; and said to the mountains and rocks, fall on us, and hide us from the face of Him that sitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb: For the great day of His wrath is come; and who shall be able to stand?" Rev. 6:15-17.

God has His ways of getting His messengers for this time to the people, even a wicked and perverse people. We are not to hesitate nor fret about how we can evangelize, but make every effort in all circumstances to make the best use of what we have available. Most importantly, let us always pray, "Thy word have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against Thee." Ps. 119:11. That this same world may we always have ready to give to others. "For the Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost." Luke 19:10

God will always reward us according to our efforts and give us fully of His Spirit according to our need. "But his I say, he which soweth sparingly shall reap also sparingly; and he which soweth bountifully shall reap also bountifully. Give, and it shall be given unto you; good measure, pressed down, and shaken together, and running over, shall men give into your bosom. For with the same measure that ye mete withal it shall be measured to you again." 2 Cor. 9:6; Luke 6:38. Bear in mind it is God who goes before us, to subdue our enemies. "Through God we shall do valiantly: for He it is that shall tread down our enemies." Ps. 60:12.

Lord willing, we shall triumph over Babylon and proclaim from the corners of the earth "Rejoice over her, thou heaven, and ye holy apostles and prophets: for God hath avenged you on her. And a mighty angel took up a stone like a great millstone, and cast it into the sea, saying, Thus with violence shall that great city Babylon be thrown down, and shall be found no more at all. And in her was found the blood of prophets, and of saints and of all that were slain upon the earth." Rev. 18:20,21,24.

By Clinton McNutt, June 12,1999



MY CONVERSION

ELLEN WHITE

Arriving at home, I spent most of the long hours of darkness in prayer and tears. One reason that led me to conceal my feelings from my friends was the dread of hearing a word of discouragement. My hope was so small, and my faith so weak, that I feared if another took a similar view of my condition, it would plunge me into despair. Yet I longed for someone to tell me what I should do to be saved, what steps to take to meet my Savior and give myself entirely up to the Lord. I regarded it a great thing to be a Christian, and felt that it required some peculiar effort on my part.

I was much encouraged while listening to a discourse from the words, I will 'go in unto the king,' 'and if I perish, I perish.' In his remarks the speaker referred to those who were wavering between hope and fear, longing to be saved from their sins and receive the pardoning love of Christ, yet held in doubt by timidity and fear of failure. He counseled such ones to surrender themselves to God, and venture upon His mercy without delay. They would find a gracious Savior ready to present to them the scepter of mercy, even as Ahasuerus offered to Esther the signal of his favor. All that is required of the sinner, trembling in the presence of his Lord, was to put forth the hand of faith and touch the scepter of His grace. That touch ensured pardon and peace.

Those who were waiting to make themselves more worthy of divine favor before they venture to claim the promises of God, were making a fatal mistake. Jesus alone cleanses from sin; He only can forgive our transgressions. He has pledged Himself to listen to the petition and grant the prayer of those who come to Him in faith. Many had a vague idea that they must make some wonderful effort in order to gain the favor of God. But all self-dependence is vain. It is only by connecting with Jesus through faith that the sinner becomes a hopeful, believing child of God. These words comforted me and gave me a view of what I must do to be saved.

I now began to see my way more clearly, and the darkness began to pass away. I earnestly sought the pardon of my sins, and strove to give myself entirely to the Lord. But my mind was often in great distress because I did not experience the spiritual ecstasy that I considered would be the evidence of my acceptance with God, and I dared not believe myself converted without it. How much I needed instruction concerning the simplicity of it!

While bowed at the altar with others who were seeking the Lord, all the language of my heart was; "Help, Jesus, save me or I perish! I will never cease to entreat till my prayer is heard and my sins forgiven!" I felt my needy, helpless condition as never before. As I knelt and prayed, suddenly my burden left me, and my heart was light. At first a feeling of alarm came over me, and I tried to resume

my load of distress. It seemed to me that I have no right to feel joyous and happy. But Jesus seemed very near to me; I felt able to come to Him with all my griefs, misfortunes, and trials, even as the needy ones came to Him for relief when He was upon earth. There was a surety in my heart that He understood my peculiar traits and sympathized with me. I can never forget this precious assurance of the pitying tenderness of Jesus toward one so unworthy of His notice. I learned more of the divine character of Christ in that short period when bowed among the praying ones than ever before

One mother of Israel came to me and said: "Dear child, have you found Jesus?" I was about to answer, "Yes" when she exclaimed: "Indeed you have, His peace is with you, I see it in your face!" Again and again I said to myself: "Can this be religion? Am I mistaken?" It seemed too much for me to claim, too exalted a privilege. Though too timid to openly confess it, I felt that the Savior had blessed me and pardon my sins.



Australian Youth Conference



**Baptism of five souls Manado, Indonesia.
Pastor Karinda in the middle in the black robe.**



CURRENT SCENE

Written by Richard C. Nickels,
member of the Worldwide Church
of God.

The Sabbath Under Cross-fire

In July, 1998, Pope John Paul II issued a lengthy Pastoral Letter, *Dies Domini*, which appeals to Christians to observe Sunday as the fulfillment of the Sabbath, and calls for civil legislation to facilitate Sunday observance. In a break with traditional Catholic teaching, which until now, has admitted that Sunday-keeping came from Church tradition rather than Scriptural mandate, the Pope attempts to provide Biblical support for Sunday-keeping. The need to respond to the Pope's "new" theology was one reason why Bacchiocchi decided to write his new book. It's out, it's awesome, and you need it! Dr. Samuele Bacchiocchi's newest book, *The Sabbath Under Crossfire: A Biblical Analysis of Recent Sabbath/Sunday Developments*, addresses critical issues especially important to current and former Church of God members. If there is any book that you read this year, don't put it off, read this one. You can view Bacchiocchi's personal web site at <http://www2.andrews.edu/~samuel e/>.

Earlier in 1998, former SDA Dale Ratzlaff, author of the book, *Sabbath in Crisis* (1990), appeared on radio station KJSL in St. Louis, Missouri. He savagely attacked the Sabbath. His book had earlier been used by Joseph Tkach of the Worldwide Church of God to overthrow the validity of Sabbath-keeping. My friend, Neil Gardner of Florissant, Missouri, responded

to the radio station with letters answering Ratzlaff's points, asking for equal time to present an affirmation for the seventh-day Sabbath. Gardner asked me to join with him in defense of the Sabbath. It became apparent to me that a stuttering bumpkin such as myself would be no match for the polished rhetoric of Ratzlaff. I suggested that we try to get Dr. Bacchiocchi to debate Ratzlaff, which he graciously agreed to do. The one-hour debate was held on June 15, 1998, and continued for many weeks over the Internet. Eventually, Ratzlaff backed off from further discussion. Ratzlaff's anti-Sabbath attacks were a second motivation for Bacchiocchi's new book.

Dr. Sam had promised his wife Anna that he would take a year off from writing books to spend more time with her and attend to household chores. Because of the urgency of the Pope's Letter and Ratzlaff's frontal assault on the Sabbath, Dr. B. felt he had to break his promise. I am sorry, Sam, for helping you to break your promise, but I trust the result will benefit many, as indeed it has and will. Incidentally, when I met her in 1995, in San Antonio, I asked Anna Bacchiocchi if she has trouble getting in a word edgewise with her constantly talking husband Sam. She assured me that in their private lives, she does get to say her piece!

The Pope challenges Christians to respect Sunday, not merely as a Church institution, but as a divine command, the "full expression" of the Sabbath. This is in stark contrast to the so-called "New Covenant," and related "Dispensational" teaching (adopted by Ratzlaff and Tkach) which

emphasizes the radical discontinuity between Sabbath and Sunday. Dispensationalists hold that the Sabbath is a Mosaic, Old Covenant, institution that terminated at the cross. Bacchiocchi shows that Sunday is not the Sabbath, as the Pope now maintains, because the two days differ in authority, meaning, and experience. Sunday is so lacking in authority that it needs the Pope to call for civil legislation to foster its observance. In most European countries, Sunday Laws have been in effect for many years, yet Sunday Church attendance is less than 10% of the Christian population. In Italy, 95% of Catholics go to church only three times in their lives, when they are "hatched, matched, and dispatched." Sunday laws fail to encourage Sunday-keeping.

In Chapter 2 of his book, *Sabbath Under Crossfire*, Bacchiocchi explores in depth the question: "Is the Sabbath creational or ceremonial?" In spite of Genesis 2 and Mark 2:27-28, many professing Christians, including Ratzlaff and Tkach, believe that the Sabbath is not a creation ordinance given to mankind, but a Mosaic ordinance given to the Israelites together with the Ten Commandments. Bacchiocchi carefully reviews the Biblical evidence, and uses non-Sabbatarian commentators in this (and other portions of his book), to lend authoritative support that the Sabbath is a creation ordinance for all mankind.

In Chapter 3, Bacchiocchi looks at the "Old and New Covenants," referring to Joseph Tkach's view of the distinction between the two covenants as the model for his discussion. Dr. Sam

shows that salvation by grace through faith is the central theme of both the old and new covenants. Saving faith is never alone, because it is always accompanied by loving obedience, Galatians 5:6. The Decalogue is not merely a list of ten laws, but primarily ten principles of love. There is no disagreement between law and love, because one cannot exist without the other. Bacchiocchi shows that Paul's use of sabbatismos in Hebrews 4:9, supports literal Sabbath-keeping, answering Ratzlaff's five reasons against literal Sabbath-keeping. Rather than the Levitical priesthood and animal sacrifices which were "abolished" (Hebrews 10:9), "obsolete" and "ready to vanish away" (Hebrews 8:13), Paul explicitly teaches that "Sabbath-keeping has been left behind for the people of God" (literal rendering of Hebrews 4:9).

Lutherans, as well as Ratzlaff and Tkach, believe that Christ fulfilled the Sabbath commandment by terminating its observance altogether, and replacing it with an existential experience of salvation-rest available to believers every day. For others, such as Catholics and Calvinists, Christ fulfilled and terminated only the ceremonial aspect of the Sabbath commandment, the observance of the seventh day, but the moral aspect of the Sabbath commandment, the principle of observing one day in seven was not abrogated by Christ, but transferred to the observance of the first day of the week, Sunday. In exploring the topic of "the Savior and the Sabbath," Dr. B. demonstrates the fallacy of both of these views. The healing miracles of Jesus on the Sabbath show the expansion, not the termination, of the Sabbath, and reveal the redemptive nature of true Sabbath-keeping. Just as God "is working until now" (John 5:17, literal translation), we too must

work to extend the Sabbath rest and peace to others, John 9:4. "This means that for believers today," Bacchiocchi states, "the Sabbath is the day to celebrate not only God's creation by resting, but also Christ's redemption by acting mercifully toward others," page 173.

Next, Bacchiocchi presents a thorough discussion of "Paul and the Law," and "Paul and the Sabbath." How can one reconcile the seemingly contradictory statements of the Apostle Paul about the Law? Five major passages are examined, which frequently are quoted to support the idea that the Law is done away with by Christ, and consequently is no longer the norm of Christian conduct: Romans 6:14, "not under the law"; II Corinthians 3:1-18, the letter and the spirit; Galatians 3:15-25, faith and law; Colossians 2:14, what was nailed to the cross? and Romans 10:4, "Christ is the end of the law." Bacchiocchi's conclusion is that when Paul speaks of the Law in the context of salvation (justification, right standing before God), he affirms that Law-keeping is of no avail (Romans 3:20). On the other hand, when Paul speaks of the Law in the context of Christian conduct (sanctification, right living before God), he upholds the value and validity of God's Law (Romans 7:12, 13:8-10; I Corinthians 7:19). This is the most valuable portion of *Sabbath Under Crossfire*.

In my opinion, the teaching of the Worldwide Church of God throughout its history has been rather weak regarding God's Law and the New Covenant. This shortcoming opened the door for Dr. Ernest L. Martin, former Chairman of the Department of Theology of Ambassador College, to lead over 10,000 members out of the Church in 1974, most of whom abandoned the Sabbath entirely. Martin paved the way for

the Systematic Theology Project in the late 1970s, which was the theological underpinning for Joseph Tkach, Senior, and Junior. In a letter dated April, 1995, Dr. Ernest Martin (rightfully in my opinion) claims credit for many of the doctrines the Worldwide now says are "new truths." Why, Martin claims, he has been proclaiming many of these "new truths" for over twenty years! Martin's so-called "New Covenant" and anti-Sabbath teachings are well in line with those of Ratzlaff and Tkach. Many of the senior ministers today were taught by Martin when they went to Ambassador. Is it any wonder why so many have rolled over and played dead, when it comes to a Biblical understanding of God's Law and the New Covenant? Tkach's current teachings are merely Martinism, Act II.

In *Sabbath Under Crossfire*, Bacchiocchi states, "Contrary to what many people believe, the Old Testament does not view the Law as a means of gaining acceptance with God through obedience, but as a way of responding to God's gracious redemption and of binding Israel to God. . . . salvation has always been a divine gift of grace and not a human achievement," pages 186-187. There is no such thing as Old Testament legalism; this aberrant concept was developed between the Testaments by the Pharisees. "Paul rejects the Pharisaic understanding of the Law as a means of salvation and affirms the Old Testament view of the Law as a revelation of God's will for human conduct," p. 189. Ernest Martin, and some ex-WCG ministers today, make Paul into a law-breaking antinomian. But the Truth is that our new life in Christ enables us to keep the Law, not as an external code (in the letter), but as a loving response to God (in the spirit).

Prior to reading this section of *Sabbath Under Crossfire*, I did not have a well-grounded

understanding of the place of Law in Christian life. The plain, easy-to-understand terminology of Bacchiocchi, and his Biblical exegesis, is extraordinary. If you know someone who has left the Church, maybe many years ago, and has given up the Sabbath and most all the other distinctive teachings we hold dear, perhaps they would consider re-examining the issue of the Sabbath, God's Law, and Pauline theology. *Sabbath Under Crossfire* could be the best book on this subject ever written, and would make an ideal gift to help someone regain their spiritual footing. Don't forget yourself. Maybe you, like me, did not really dig into the teaching of Law by Paul like Bacchiocchi does in his excellent book.

Finally, in Chapter 7, Sam Bacchiocchi shows that many Sunday-keepers are re-examining and rediscovering the validity of the Sabbath. The Sabbath is not an hour in worship services, but twenty-four hours of holy time spent with God, a divine vacation from the turmoil and stress of daily life. While some Sunday-keepers are more zealously keeping Sunday, the fact remains that Sunday is not the Sabbath. You cannot keep cold water hot! As Ratzlaff and the Worldwide Church of God are abandoning the Sabbath, the exciting news is that other Christians are rediscovering the seventh-day Sabbath, observing the literal day, and learning more of its spiritual meaning.

Bishop Steven Sanchez and the Wesley Synod of sixty-eight Methodist congregations in North America have recently become Sabbath-keepers, claiming that John Wesley originally kept the Sabbath and dietary laws. They observe the Sabbath from Friday sunset till sunset Saturday, have Saturday Church services, and abstain from work on the Sabbath. What great news!

Most Messianic Jews, who accepted the Messiah through Protestant efforts and were thus originally Sunday-keepers, have now become seventh-day Sabbatharians. Sabbatarian Mennonites such as Daniel Leichty, are renewing the Anabaptist heritage of Andreas Fischer and Oswald Glait by returning to the Sabbath. The True Jesus Church, founded in 1917 in China (which may have descended from earlier Nineteenth Century Chinese Sabbatharians) today has a million members in China and 79,000 in the free world. Their basic tenet states, "The Sabbath day, the seventh day of the week (Saturday), is a holy day, blessed and sanctified by God. It is to be observed under the Lord's grace for the commemoration of God's creation and redemption, and with the hope of eternal rest."

What is it going to be for you? Are you going to throw away the Sabbath like Martin, Ratzlaff, and Tkach? Are you going to observe the Sabbath in a legalistic, hard-hearted way, thinking that by so doing, you gain favor with God and earn salvation, turning the Sabbath into a burden for your children so that they will reject it when they become adults? Or instead, will you, even as a Sabbath-keeper perhaps for many years, rediscover the joy of the Sabbath, "a gift waiting to be unwrapped"? Will you allow God to enrich your life with a larger measure of His divine presence, peace, and rest that the Sabbath affords? And, most importantly, as Bacchiocchi concludes, will you DO SOMETHING to spread the Sabbath delight to others? Will you share your faith with others? Dr. Sam implores us to rid ourselves of spiritual lethargy: "Many more can receive the gift of the Sabbath if those of us who experience weekly the blessings of this divine gift will share with

others the benefits this day brings to our lives," page 283.

Dr. Sam, now that you have helped me and others to become more thoroughly grounded in New Covenant Law, take some time off with Anna and get those household chores done!"

As you may know, the Worldwide Church of God has for the most part given up the Sabbath truth and because of this have received the commendation of many Christian leaders, such as Hank Kannegraf, the man who took over from Walter Martin as the Bible Answer Man on religious radio. Walter Martin himself was largely responsible for the SDA leaders making theological compromises in their meetings in 1956-57; the first steps toward giving up the Sabbath themselves. Now the Sabbath is a great point of controversy throughout the Christian world, and we have a part to play in this great final drama.

God's people are to "give the trumpet a certain sound" in showing that it is the Sabbath which is the specially controverted point, the obvious dividing line between the penitent and the impious. Of course, as this excellent article alludes to, it is all of the law that God's people are to uplift. We are to show that the Ten Commandments are the only foundation for enduring reform. Therefore, we are to appeal to all of those who are out of the way of God's peace, purity and plan for the uplifting of humanity to come back to the foot of the cross where His true people are. It is only in obedience to all of those commandments that we can have the divine image of God restored within us, which was Jesus' favorite theme. May our great God help you and I to uplift His goodness and truth by word and action, appealing for unity in the truth.

Edited by Jerry Eaton

1999 Australian Youth Camp Reunion

July 11-14, 1999

"As cold waters to a thirsty soul, so is good news from a far country."

Proverbs 25:25.

With the Lord's protection and blessing, I was able to spend a long weekend in July together with our brothers and sisters from across Australia. We were able to share together experiences about our walks and talks with the Lord. It was a privilege and joy to see them after such a long time.

In our four-day fellowship we were able to study 'The Laws of Health.' Each and everyone of the young people had a health talk to present on important topics such as: The need for sunshine, fresh air, pure water, a lot of sleep and rest, exercise, and knowing how to have a proper diet. The best topic of all was being able to obey all the health laws.

We spent a weekend at a place called, "The Udder Cow Café" up in the mountains, about 300 km from Sydney. We all had a great time travelling to this place and back. We were able to see the big green trees, the green grass, the wildlife and so forth. It just shows us the wonderful things God made for us. The experience was an experience of a lifetime. We were able to relax and learn new things about the laws of health that God has provided for human beings.

A first class diet was given to all mankind. It consisted of fruits, nuts, grains and vegetables. When man sinned, they didn't care anymore. They began eating animals. They ate more and more meat.

These were just a few things that were studied. Everyone present had something to take home with them, something new to put into their everyday life. I am sure that every soul present received a great blessing from

God. Just being able to relax in this quiet environment and listen to the flowing river beside our cabin made everyone want to stay longer.

Sabbath day was a great time. We were able to share our thoughts on our Sabbath School lesson and enjoy each other's company out in nature.

Also, I would like to personally thank sisters Marlene Reid and Jenny Nalder for making our weekend such a success and for preparing this weekend for us. Thank you very much.

Now, remember, getting a lot of sunshine into our eyes, and a lot of fresh air in our lungs, pure water in our blood stream, good exercise and a proper diet, and enough sleep and rest is vital to our well being. But most of all, keep the faith in the Lord Jesus Christ and you will be sure to receive great blessings.

Taking time away from the world and our busy lives by visiting a quiet place for a few days is a great way to spend time with the Lord. May God bless everyone, and may He keep you also.

Tanya Foese,
Australia





CANAIMA, VENEZUELA

After reading the article by Brother Neptali Acevedo about his work in the Venezuelan jungle with the Indians, with his invitation, I decided to pay a visit to Canaima. I wanted to see how the work there was done.

I arrived in Caracas, the capital city of Venezuela. From there we took a bus to the city of Bolivar. It took the whole night. In the morning we continued with a small six-seater airplane to Canaima, since there are no roads to these jungle areas.

There are Indian villages in various places and the natives speak different languages. The only way of travel from one community to another is by the rivers that cross the jungle in different directions and in some cases one can travel by narrow footpaths through the jungle.

The community where Brother Acevedo works with his family has 14 houses and often more than one family lives in a house. This village is exceptionally clean and orderly, with no drunkenness that is common among the Indians. Almost all of the Indians in this village are members of the S.D.A. Reform movement. This is good advertising for our church in that area.

On the same day that we arrived our first meeting was held. As I spoke an Indian brother, who knew Spanish, translated into the Pemon language.

The next morning we started out travelling in an Indian canoe which had been carved out of one piece of wood. It had a powerful motor to help go up the fast flowing rapids. Five hours later we set our camp for the night at the foot of the Angel Falls which is the tallest waterfall in the world. We slept in small tents and hammocks. Hours of travelling on foot through the jungle, infested with all kinds of insects and animals, including tigers, was also a new experience.

The Indians were very friendly and hospitable. Many spoke Spanish. Some who had visited or lived before in Guyana also spoke English.

We crossed through rivers by just wading through. In a tropical climate our clothes dried fast. In one place we crossed the river behind the waterfall by staying close to the solid rock face.

In these jungle areas many people still suffer from malaria and even die from it. It is caused by parasites that are spread by mosquitoes. Although treatments are available, if all the parasites are not removed from the body, the sickness can reoccur from time to time.

Brother Acevedo's whole family is involved in missionary work. His wife gives Bible studies and looks after the sick in the community. The oldest daughter, Raquel, who is 16 years old, has a class of 17 Indian children. She is teaching her students to read in Spanish and also other subjects. Raquel also has now four Bible studies going on.

Nine souls are ready for baptism at the next conference. Seven were baptized last year.

Sabbath meetings are held in the home church that had about 100 people present. On Sunday we visited various interested souls in their homes. That evening I held the last meeting in the church and Monday morning I had to leave. A large number of believers, interested souls and children came to the airport to say goodbye and gave hand-made souvenirs to me. Even though they are poor in material goods, they requested only our prayers and future visits.

May the Lord bless His work in Canaima that it may go forward and that new villages can be entered with our message.

Timo Martin

GOOD NEWS FROM JAMAICA

Sabbath, June 26, was a wonderful and memorable day for the brethren in Montego Bay, Jamaica. This Sabbath was doubly blessed. We had wonderful services commencing first with Sabbath School. It was very lively as everyone participated in asking and answering questions.

The divine hour was truly divine, as the sermon presented with fervor, rang loud and clear with encouragements and rebukes. We were reminded of the words of Jesus found in Matt. 18:21-35, that we are to forgive one another no matter how often we are mistreated. All who will go to heaven will pass through the door of forgiveness, so all must forgive.

At the end of this wonderful sermon, the Righthand of Fellowship was extended to our new sister in the Faith, Sister Dionne Merchant. Tears of joy filled the eyes of the brethren. Sis. Merchant had been a member of the Adventist Church for most of her life and learnt about the Reform Movement from a close friend. She has been attending the church for a little over a year. Please pray for her and her family.

The final service of the morning, the Lord's Supper, left us happy. We look forward for the time when we will sit at the table with Jesus, our Saviour, and He will drink of the fruit of the vine with us.

Attending this Sabbath service were over thirty (30) people, including members, visitors and children. Among these are 10 people who expressed a desire to serve the Lord and join His people. Please pray for these souls and this field, that the work here may prosper.

May the Lord bless you all. Amen



Group of believers and visitors in Montego Bay, Jamaica



Sister Dionne Merchant and her two sons.

A STRONG MAN FOR THE LORD



"If a Protestant dares to come into my house, I'll kill him!" declared Jose Barretto. The hard set of this Brazilian's mouth, the glint in his dark eyes, the scars on his face, all indicated he meant exactly what he said. He was known to have a fierce disposition, a "mean turn." He was quite capable of committing murder. But probably at the time he threatened Protestants he did not realize that soon his challenge would be tested, and in an unusual way.

Jose had not met any of the several missionaries who were active in Brazil, but he had heard of their activities. "And I don't like the way they're butting in," he said. "Brazil is Catholic — always has been and always must be."

Barretto was not really an active Catholic himself. Any type of religion seemed completely foreign to his nature. He lived chiefly to eat, drink, and to run a local mining company that belonged to a larger organization in San Antonio. He was a ruthless bully, who pushed men around and always stubbornly insisted upon having his whims obeyed.

He did not attend church, and of course there was never any devotional services in his home. Religion was not a popular subject for discussion. So neither Jose nor his wife had the slightest idea that soon a visitor in their home would talk about that subject.

This visitor was Jacques, Mrs. Barretto's brother. He was blind and came to visit only occasionally. But during this visit, while they talked, Jacques admitted that after talking with a Christian missionary he had become converted to Protestantism.

Jose's face looked as if it would explode. His wife fainted because she remembered Jose's threat. When she revived she fully expected to find her brother murdered. But instead, she saw her husband still sitting in his chair, and there were tears in his eyes!

Just what had been said or what had happened she could not imagine. Perhaps Jacques' blindness, or probably something he said penetrated the conscience of the uncouth man. At any rate, God was surely talking with him in some way through Jacques.

Imagine the woman's further surprise when she heard Jose asking to be told more about Christianity. Of course, Jacques was happy to supply the information, and before he left that evening Jose asked his wife to read something from the Bible.

But Jacques did not have a Bible with him, and there was none in the house. Finally, however, Mrs. Barretto found a book that contained the story of the prodigal son. Jose listened attentively while she read.

The next day Jacques told a missionary about Jose's interest in the Bible. "Will you please visit him?" asked Jacques.

The missionary had heard about Jose Barretto's fierce threats to kill Protestants, but he knew Jacques was telling the truth, and he wanted to help the big mine boss. So at his first opportunity he called Jose's office.

He discovered the man trying to read an old Bible that he had found in a pile of trash. Earnestly the two men talked at length. This visit was closed with prayer. The rough mine boss knelt humbly and God came into

his life completely. He had taken a turn for the right. Gone forever was the bitterness, the desire to kill and to hate. Wonderful peace flooded his soul. And during the days and years that followed he spared no efforts to do right.

Jose Barretto witnessed to the men who worked for him. He also witnessed to his employer when he came to Brazil on an inspection trip.

"What's that!" demanded the big man from headquarters. "You know you can't run this mine and be a Protestant!"

"I can be a much better boss since I am a real Christian," declared Jose.

"You can't be any boss at all for us. You're fired!"

Jose Barretto's acceptance of Christ cost him his job, but this did not bother him, because he knew he had found something far more valuable than any job. Soon he went into the merchandising business and earned a good living from it.

He had learned that man does not live by bread alone, and that there is supreme value in having a right spirit. Guarding his own salvation and leading others to Jesus became his dominant purpose in life. Truly this strong man became a firebrand for God. His excessive energy, which formerly sought channels of brutality, was now spent peacefully and enthusiastically serving God.

This new convert was accused of being a "turncoat." His sanity was sometimes questioned; he was even threatened at times, yet he withstood all persecution to remain faithful to God. Despite opposition, he was able to lead

twenty-three relatives to God, and he organized a church with them. Soon others were converted at that church.

Truly God is able to save

anyone. And Jose Barretto's life became a vivid illustration of the truth in 2 Corinthians 5:17, "Therefore if any man be in Christ,

he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold all things are become new."



THE LOST "SWORD"

"What's that floating in the ocean?" asked General Wakasa as he stood on the shore, squinting his eyes to see better.

"I don't know, sir," said one of the men.

"Get it!" was Wakasa's pointed command.

It was a New Testament, printed in English. Wakasa, being Japanese, could not read a word of it. He could have tossed the Book back into the ocean or have forgotten it completely, but he was curious to know the Book's contents. He was not satisfied until he found a translator who could read it for him.

As the man read, Wakasa leaned forward to listen more closely. He had never before heard such beautiful thoughts. The story of Jesus thrilled him. He just had to talk with someone about this book and its Author. His need became known to Dr. Guido Verbeck, a Christian missionary in Japan who was always eager to help anyone know more about God.

Wakasa talked with Verbeck at length and at various times. The thrilling result of those visits was Wakasa's conversion to Christianity. How unusual for a commanding officer in the Japanese forces to become a Christian! But what a difference this experience made in his life. He became ever eager to know more about God and to tell others about his wonderful Saviour.

Furthermore, this converted Japanese had Dr. Verbeck teach

several groups of influential young men in Japan. Many of them became Christians. Then they used the Bible to help win other people for God. This Bible they found to be a more powerful "sword" for good than any made of steel that might be used.

It was partly because of Wakasa's conversion and favorable attitude toward Christianity that his countrymen willingly accepted Missionary Verbeck's teachings. This missionary became a useful servant of God and man in the Orient. Not only was his advice asked for on spiritual matters, but his judgement concerning government and education was also sought. For about forty years he was a vital Christian influence, and he had an active part in establishing Christian missions where they were desperately needed.

Wakasa and others appreciated Guido Verbeck's assistance and influence so much that he was decorated by the government and was invited to appear at court, which was quite an honour in Japan. But God's work came first for him. Dr. Verbeck was an important man in the planting of Christianity in the Sunrise Kingdom. He was able to tell more people about Jesus because of the "sword that Wakasa found."

Through his many years of service, however, Guido Verbeck was very careful never to seek any honor for himself. Neither did he consider one person any better or

more deserving in God's plan of salvation than another. He desired only to help "whosoever will" find salvation through the Saviour.

.....
"For the Lord seeth not as man seeth; for man looketh on the outward appearance, but the Lord looketh on the heart."
1 Samuel 16:7.

We can never judge anyone as hopeless. It doesn't matter what kind of person someone might be, or what his or her position is in this world, God can save. He brought salvation to the Apostle Paul - who was fighting fiercely against God's church. "Wherefore he is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him,..." Heb. 7:25. Our duty is to sow beside all waters and bring the truth to anyone who the Lord places in our pathway. We are told to go and seek and save the lost as Jesus did. We are not to simply wait until they come to us, but we must go and seek them.

We can never be afraid of anyone with Jesus by our side. David was not afraid of the giant Goliath and also Jacques was not afraid of his angry brother-in-law Jose. They both boldly did the will of the Lord, with wonderful results. Just because someone is rich or holds a high position does not mean that they cannot be reached by the gospel. May we all have the same kind of courage and sow beside all waters.



WITHOUT ME

My vision has diminished somewhat. In the distance, objects appear blurry. While moonlighting, chemicals sometimes splash into my eyes. Perhaps this has affected my sight. But this was not the reason for my resignation. The varied hours and time restrictions prohibit my inquiring of Bible study participants. Therefore I mostly concentrate on correspondence and canvassing. So after my appointment, I asked my Lord to lead me to the latter.

I travelled five and a half miles north to a transfer point. I was going to the post office when a young woman boarded the coach. After stationing herself across from me, I noticed her arranging a wad of money. The Spirit spoke, I then pulled out a variety of our Sabbath School lessons. The Spirit was wooing this child of God. She cradled three of the 8 ½ by 11 lessons in her arms. She decided, however, to purchase only the Junior lesson, second year, fourth quarter, "The Great Controversy between Christ and Satan".

After she handed me a five-dollar bill, I gathered my material, indicated to the driver my desire, thanked and blessed the woman, and exited the bus. Although I had missed my ideal stop, making a sale had inspired me. Then the Spirit spoke, and within five to ten minutes, I made another sale. "Yeah, it's on now". This woman had begged and scraped for the money in order to purchase one of these lessons. She could not decide which one of the two lessons she really wanted. So I gave her both. The next short block was unfruitful. At its end, I saw my limousine approaching, which I interpreted a sign to return east. I was glad of my recent

success in canvassing. Unfortunately, in just a few minutes, my gladness was turned into sadness.

I suffered loss. Unintentionally, I left lying on the bus six lessons, valuing, according to man's estimation, thirty dollars. O how could I have been so careless? Enthusiasm departed from me. Depression set in. Even the Reformation Messenger could not lift my spirit. "Search me, O God, and know my heart: try me, and know my thoughts: and see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting." Psalm 139:23, 24.

"And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are called according to His purpose." Romans 8:28. "As the disciples had seen the success of their labors, they were in danger of taking credit to themselves, in danger of cherishing spiritual pride, and thus falling under Satan's temptations. Like the disciples, we are in danger of losing sight of our dependence on God, and seeking to make a Savior of our activity. We need to look constantly to Jesus, realizing that it is His power which does the work." *The Desire of Ages* pp. 360, 362.

"I am the Vine, ye are the branches: He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bring forth much fruit: for WITHOUT ME ye can do nothing." John 15:4. "I can do all things through Christ who strengtheneth me." Philippians 4:13. AMEN

Chester Cosby

ARE YOU LIKE ANCIENT ISREAL?

The Israelites were slaves in a foreign country, Egypt. They were afflicted until Moses came to take them back to Canaan, a land which God had given to Abraham and his descendants 400 years earlier.

On their way to Canaan they met with trials and temptations. Why was it that God took them 40 years through the wilderness before they were allowed to enter the promised land? There were many who came because they just wanted to see the land flowing with milk and honey and not to worship God, the reason Moses had taken them out of Egypt.

God knew they weren't ready, seeing that they easily forgot Him. For example, when the people of Israel saw that Moses delayed in coming from Mount Sinai, they built a golden calf. They became afraid when they saw the Egyptians behind them and the Red Sea in front and, also when they received the report from Canaan they wanted to return to Egypt. Couldn't they remember how their shoes and clothes hadn't worn out, the daily manna from heaven or the poisonous snakes that didn't harm them?

When they finally arrived only two, Joshua and Caleb entered out of the original 600,000 men (besides women and children) who had started out.

We are also strangers in this land. It wasn't until Jesus came down from heaven to rescue us from the slavery of sin that we can go to the heavenly Canaan. He has promised us this if we are faithful.

On the way to the heavenly Canaan we meet with trials and temptations. So why doesn't God take His children to heaven now?

There are too many who want to go there for their own pleasure just to live eternally, not to worship our God.

God knows his people still need time. They are constantly forgetting their Creator. When they see that Jesus has delayed His coming, or that the Sunday Law is soon to be established, or when they're being persecuted because they keep the Sabbath, then they return to the world. They forget how He has protected them on their travels keeping them safe from any harm. They forget the food that they never lack and all the other daily occurrences.

How many Joshuas and Calebs will there be when we do reach our destination out of the millions who claim to be Christians?

Let us pray that we won't be like the foolish virgins that when the Midnight Cry is heard, there will be oil in our lamps. Let us not be found wanting when Jesus comes to take his faithful few who endure to the end. AMEN

Deborah Conde

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A PRAYER FOR THOSE WHO LIVE
ALONE

I live alone, Dear Lord,
Stay by my side.
In all my daily needs,
Be my guide.

Grant me good health.
For that indeed I pray,
To carry on my work
From day to day.

Keep pure my mind,
My thoughts, my every deed.
Let me be kind, unselfish
In my neighbour's need.

Spare from fire, flood
Malicious tongues
From thieves, fear
And evil ones.

If accident or sickness befall,
Then humbly, Lord,
I pray,
Hear my call.

And when I'm feeling low
Or in despair,
Lift up my heart
And help me in my prayer.

I live alone, Dear Lord,
Yet have no fear,
Because I feel Thy Presence...
Ever Near. Amen