

The Reformation



Messenger

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TRUE FREEDOM

Freedom! What a wonderful feeling. How we often long for freedom. Those that have grown up in oppressive circumstances, such as in communist countries where individual freedom was suppressed, have welcomed the freedom they received after the yoke of communism over them was broken. When slaves are set free, what wonderful, happy smiles we see on their faces. They may not be rich in this world's goods, but the freedom is worth more than money can buy. Freedom! What a wonderful feeling.

Often young people, who have grown up in oppressive households, can't wait until they are old enough to get out from under the burdensome yoke of their parents to live their own life in freedom. Sometimes these young people have been truly oppressed, however sometimes young people have not really been oppressed, but they see the religious principles that their parents are living by and therefore expecting their children to follow, as a yoke of bondage. They have been influenced by their peers as to what they think is a better way of life - freedom from care and responsibility.

The greatest freedom we can have though is the freedom and peace with God. Many are not looking to God for freedom but see service to God as a yoke of bondage. Christians miss out on all the "fun" things of life - they are told by their peers.

Then there are other Christians who sincerely want to serve Christ, but believe they have freedom in Christ, freedom from keeping the law. They see the Ten Commandments as a yoke of bondage that they think was done away with at the cross bringing in a new era of freedom to the Christian community. They deem those who still keep the "old" law as in slavery and living a legalistic religion.

Even those in God's church today are in danger of looking to their brothers to compare their lives with them. If they happen to see someone striving for perfection in Christ, putting away all sinful habits as they are revealed to him, and constantly striving ever upward, there is danger of thinking this brother or sister is living a fanatical life. They are making too many laws and restrictions for themselves. Their life is a constant rebuke to those who are lukewarm in the church and making very little progress. We cannot compare ourselves with our brothers; we must all compare ourselves only with Christ. If someone is further along in their Christian experience than we are, we are not to be jealous, but glad as we see God's people reaching for perfection:

Then there are all the "rules" in the church. Often young people don't like too many "rules" about how to live their lives. In the 1970's in North America there was a movement among young people to throw off all restraint and to live life in total freedom. It was the hippie movement and many joined the movement seeking that total freedom which was promised. They may appear to have freedom from all outward appearances, but without Christ there is no inward peace.

With all this talk of freedom, we wonder, have these people really found true freedom in their spirit?

Often when there is talk of "rules" for the church; there is also mention of the conscience by some. They say, "Let your conscience be your guide." You don't need so many "rules" on correct living if you have a conscience, they say. The Holy Spirit speaks to even-honest soul through their conscience and so we can't impose any "rules" of correct living on others because the Holy Spirit will eventually convict them. Let them be led by the Spirit.

This reminds me of a dear, elderly lady from the Watchtower society who used to visit me when she knew my husband was not at home. One day we were talking about the law of God and she told me that the Lord has not convicted her concerning the necessity of keeping the law. When He does then she will keep the law. I had to think for awhile, but I felt sad for this poor woman. The Holy Spirit will never come to her and tell her it is time to keep the law. No, not when it is clearly written in His Word, The Bible, and she has simply ignored the words of the Bible, or twisted them to suit her own belief system.

Sometimes people, both young and old, have difficulty in understanding why certain church rules exist, when they are first faced with some of them. These rules seem to be suppressing their freedom and they simply can't serve the Lord in peace while constantly worrying about violating the law in some point. These people have taken their eyes off the Lord and are trying to obtain salvation through works righteousness. They eventually become so frustrated in their inability to keep all the rules that they decide it is not God's will to impose all these rules. They see freedom only in the absence of the rules, not in Christ. They feel that surely the Lord can't expect all of this from them.

This reminds me of the time I first arrived in Australia. Suddenly I had to learn to drive on the opposite side of the road from what I was used to. I had to also learn some different traffic rules. When I went out to drive, I kept these new rules uppermost in my mind, making sure to follow the law in every detail. Some of the laws I felt were unimportant, however they were laws and were there for a purpose and were to be followed. I felt as though my freedom in driving was severely restricted, especially as I prepared to take the driving test. What

was the solution? Would I find true freedom in driving by casting out all the rules⁹ I could argue that since some of them seem unreasonable and unnecessary to me. perhaps I don't need to obey those. I could still drive safely but make some of my own rules. Theirs were a little too hard to master. After failing my first driving test should I petition the local government that perhaps some of these rules and laws are not so necessary after all? No, I would have been turned away. Either I passed the test, and obeyed *all* the rules or I would not be given the license to drive. As time went on, I did pass the test, and eventually driving became second nature again. No longer do I have to consciously think about the rules, yet I do observe them. I feel perfectly free in my driving, even while keeping all the rules of the road.

I find a parallel here with our Christian walk. Sometimes we see rules in the church that we don't like, or that we feel are unimportant at first. Are we to lower the standard or change it to suit our lifestyle? "Were men free to depart from the Lord's requirements and to set up a standard of duty for themselves, there would be a variety of standards to suit different minds and the government would be taken out of the Lord's hands. The will of man would be made supreme, and the high and holy will of God -His purpose of love toward His creatures - would be dishonoured, disrespected." MB, p. 51. Perhaps it would be a good idea to ask about, and do some study regarding the issue in question, rather than simply reject it, thinking it is unreasonable. Perhaps there is a good reason behind it after all.

If we would accept the rules God has laid out for us in His Word through the Bible and Spirit of Prophecy in these latter days, we would see that they are all there to help us, not to hinder us on the way of salvation. And the best part of all of this is that Jesus has promised to help us. "Come unto me all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light." Matthew 11:28-30. As we learn to love the Lord and to lean on Him for support we no longer find the rules a burden, but rather as Jesus promised, our burden will be light. We will be focusing on Jesus, not on the rules, yet at the same time we will not be violating the laws that the Lord has laid out for us to abide by. We will not see them simply as arbitrary, unimportant rules, but rather, just as the rules of the road are there for safety purposes, so the rules of right living God has laid out through His church are for the purpose of enhancing our life and bringing us closer to Him. as well as for our safety also.

When Satan first rebelled in heaven, he said that intelligent beings do not need rules to live by. He was speaking specifically about the Ten Commandments. His argument was that they were intelligent beings and they did not need these rules to dictate to them how they should live. Their intelligence was good enough. We often hear some of the same arguments echoed amongst Christians today. They don't need any rules like the commandments. The Holy Spirit will guide them into all the truth and will convict their conscience as to what is right and what is wrong. When on earth, Jesus showed us the spirit of the law, which goes much further than the letter of the law. We are shiners and we need guidance on our heavenward journey.

CONSCIENCE

Is our conscience a viable guide? We do all agree that one way the Lord sends us messages is through the Holy Spirit speaking to our conscience. So can we not say that, as a church, we do not need to make any principles or rules because if we all love the Lord, then the Holy Spirit will show each one of us how to live a truly Christian life?

Can we trust our conscience alone? "Conscience is the voice of God, heard amid the conflict of human passions." 5T, p. 120.

Let's read a few Bible verses. "Unto the pure all things are pure: but unto them that are defiled and unbelieving is nothing pure; but even their mind and conscience is defiled. They profess that they know God but in works they deny him, being abominable, and disobedient, and unto every good work reprobate." Titus 1:15, 16.

"Speaking lies in hypocrisy; having their conscience seared with a hot iron;" 1 Tim. 4:2.

"Dear brother, life or death is before you. Do you know why your steps have faltered? Why you did not persevere with courage and firmness? You have a violated conscience." 2T, p. 42.

Will these types of consciences lead a person to the right pathway? What must be done? "How much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?" Heb. 9:14. "But the only right course to be pursued in these cases is to educate the conscience," UT, Feb. 1, 1888. "In the Word of God we read that there are a good and bad consciences . . . Take your conscience to the Word of God, and see if your life and character are in accordance

with the standard of righteousness which God has there revealed. You can then determine whether or not you have an intelligent faith, and what manner of conscience is yours. The conscience of man cannot be trusted unless it is under the influence of divine grace. Satan takes advantage of an unenlightened conscience, and thereby leads men into all manner of delusions.

“It is not enough for man to think himself safe in following the dictates of his conscience The question to be settled is, Is the conscience in harmony with the Word of God? If not, it cannot safely be followed, for it will deceive. God must enlighten the conscience. Time must be given to a study of the Scriptures and to prayer. Thus the mind will be established, strengthened, and settled.” OHC, p. 143.

The Apostle Paul honestly thought he was pleasing God by persecuting the Christians. Did his ignorance nullify his guilt? No, it certainly did not; he was guilty without excuse. He had access to the Bible as written in his day and he should have known and understood the prophecies pointing to Christ. But sadly he did not, and before he was converted, he committed many grievous crimes against the followers of the Lord. His conscience needed to be educated in the right direction.

In the days of Jesus, many Jewish people really believed what the Pharisees taught as truth. Yes, they had some things right, but they had many things wrong and what a deception they caused amongst the Jewish people. Jesus came to show the way to true freedom. Instead of nullifying the law and taking it away, He came to establish the law forever and to show us the proper way to keep it - according to the Spirit of the law.

OUR GOAL

We need to set ourselves a goal as did the Apostle Paul. “And herein do I exercise myself, to have always a conscience void of offence toward God, and toward men.” Acts 24:16. To Paul, the conscience (the ability to discern between right and wrong) was of supreme importance. The conscience, no matter how good, must still be attentive to the voice of God.

Can we trust our conscience only to be our guide? “The Word of God is your guide and counselor.” ST 05-29-84. Yes, our conscience is not our only guide and counselor. We may have a weak or deceived conscience in which case we need to go and read the Bible in order to educate our conscience in the way of the Lord. “It is the privilege of everyone to so live that God will approve and bless him. You may be hourly in communion with Heaven; it is not the will of your heavenly Father that you should ever be under condemnation and darkness. It is not pleasing to God that you should demerit yourself. You should cultivate self-respect by living so that you will be proved by your own conscience, and before men and angels.” OHC, p. 143. “A conscience void of offence toward God and man is a wonderful acquirement.” Ibid.

When Jesus came the Pharisees were keeping the letter of the law as diligently as humanly possible. Yet, Jesus called them hypocrites. He came to show us how to keep the spirit of the law. While He ignored some of the ridiculous rules that the Pharisees had added to Sabbath keeping, making it a yoke of bondage, He did not ignore one jot or tittle of the Moral Law. He showed us how it was to be kept in spirit and we are to follow His example. He gave a clearer interpretation of the Ten Commandments and as we near the close of time, He is working through His church to also bring clearer interpretations on various points of Truth.

But can we say that the church has authority today to set up standards and rules as to correct Christian behaviour and deportment? Should we not leave this part to the individual conscience?

“To the end of time the presence of the spirit is to abide with *the true church*. . . But near the close of earth’s harvest, a special bestowal of spiritual grace is promised to prepare *the church* for the coming of the Son of man.” AA, p. 54, 55.

“Every believer should be wholehearted in his attachment to the church... They should defer their individual judgment to the judgment of the body of the church... Unbelief suggests that individual independence increases our importance, that it is weak to yield our own ideas of what is right and proper to the verdict of the church; but to yield to such feelings and views is unsafe and will bring us into anarchy and confusion. Christ saw that unity and Christian fellowship were necessary to the cause » of God, therefore He enjoined it upon His disciples. And the history of Christianity from that time until now proves conclusively that in union only is there strength. *Let individual judgment submit to the authority of the church.*” 41, p. 18, 19.

SEARED CONSCIENCE

The term “seared conscience” I quoted above from 1 Tim. 4:2. Is there true freedom with a seared conscience? Was the Apostle Paul free when he was a faithful Pharisee and persecuting the Christians? He honestly thought he was doing God’s will, but when Jesus met him on the Damascus road, He stated, Saul, “It is hard for thee to kick against the pricks.” Acts 9:5. Saul had no peace in his heart even though he honestly thought he was doing God’s will. He didn’t know Jesus. Only if we know Jesus will we have peace in our hearts and a clean conscience.

Having a seared conscience is a very sad way to be. How does a person end up this way? We see some criminals in our jails today who have no remorse. Some have committed the grossest of crimes. Whether they are serial killers, rapists, or some other type of wicked person, they seem to have no conscience. The medical associations have labeled such a person as a psychopath and conclude that this person has no hope to ever regain then-conscience. They may be right in some cases. Once the Holy Spirit has departed from a person, He will not return and thus they will have no one to convict them of wrong. Were they born this way? Some people seem to think so. However I believe that everyone was born with an equal opportunity to accept the Lord in their lives and live a good life with a promise of salvation. Perhaps some have quieted their conscience at a much earlier age than others have and *it seems that they were never born with a conscience*

“With some, the knowledge of their true state seems to be hidden from them. They see the truth, but perceive not its importance or its claims. They hear the truth, but do not fully understand it, because they do not conform their lives to it, and therefore are not sanctified through obeying it. And yet they rest as unconcerned and well satisfied as though the cloud by day and the pillar of fire by night, as tokens of God’s favor, went before them. They profess to know God, but in works deny Him.” IT, p. 406.

“My brother, your soul must be quickened and your faith enlarged. You have so long excused yourself in your disobedience on one plea or another that your conscience has been lulled to rest and ceases to remind you of your errors.” T4, p. 254.

“The truth must take control of the conscience and the understanding in all the work that is done. The Holy Spirit must preside over thought and word and deed. It is to direct in all temporal and spiritual actions.” PM, p. 155.

“He whose conscience is a sure guide will not stop to reason [i.e., rationalize away] when light shines upon him out of God’s Word. He will not be guided by human counsel. He will not allow worldly business to stand in the way of obedience. He will lay every selfish interest at the door of investigation, and will approach the Word of God as one whose eternal interest is hanging in the balance.” UL, p. 140.

“Unless the truth of God controls the heart, the conscience will be warped.” 2SM, p. 124.

Judas Iscariot was not an honest man and for a while his conscience bothered him when he stole the money from the bag. However, as time went on his conscience grew cold, until he eventually betrayed the Son of God.

GOOD CONSCIENCE

“Holding faith, and a good conscience; which some having put away concerning faith have made shipwreck.” 1 Tim. 1:19. Paul encouraged Timothy to have a good conscience, which is an effective weapon in the warfare against sin. Christians will find their deepest convictions growing dull and nerveless if their personal lives do not validate the message they preach. Those who willfully reject the voice of their conscience will, first of all, violate their pure conscience. Secondly, they will begin to lose convictions as to the importance of the Christian principles which they thought important in the past. And thirdly, they will eventually reject the faith altogether, making shipwreck of their faith.

“Having a good conscience; that, whereas they speak evil of you, as of evildoers, they may be ashamed that falsely accuse your good conversation in Christ.” 1 Peter 3:16.

So getting back to the word “Freedom”, what can we conclude true freedom is? Is it not a “Conscience void of offence toward God.” ?

Just as I found peace in my driving when I learned all the rules and kept them, so we can find peace in our souls as we learn the “rules” of the Lord (the spirit of the law in the Ten Commandments) and conform our lives to them. Jesus is trying to tell us how to have peace and happiness. He is not trying to restrict our freedom, but rather He wants to give us TRUE freedom. If we are faithful in the laws of Health Reform, we will feel good

and be free from many of the diseases that afflict those disobeying the laws of health. If we adhere to the rules of Dress Reform, we would be free from “ten thousand unseen dangers.” Also we would be kept healthier. Many suffer ill health due to improper dress. If nobody stole, killed, committed adultery, coveted everyone kept all the Ten Commandments, what a free society we would live in. There would be no worries about having our homes broken into; no worries about walking down the street in the middle of the night. And even if the Sabbath were kept, we would get the rest we need and spiritual refreshment to face life in the next week. All of God’s rules and laws are ways in which mankind can live a fuller, happier and a more free and peaceful life.

Imagine a society with no laws. What kind of country would allow each individual citizen to interpret the laws according to their individual ideas? How many standards of law would we have in society. No, you must have a governing body to make rules and laws for society. In the same way, the kingdom of Jesus has one standard of truth with its Law that is to be obeyed to keep the peace.

While these laws and rules will never bring us into favour with God if we keep them, their obedience will show how much we really love the Lord, and the result will be seen in the happiness, peace and freedom that has been promised to us. He has promised us peace and we can find peace only while keeping His commandments and His laws. They really are not a yoke of bondage, contrary to the belief of many people, both Christian and non-Christian, today. If everyone kept the laws of God, what a wonderful society we would live in. In heaven everyone keeps His laws and rules, and someday, if we are faithful, God has promised us a new home in heaven along with the other redeemed, where we can live a life of peace, in true, eternal, everlasting freedom.

AMEN

Wendy Eaton

THE KING OF THE NORTH

One of the most important and interesting prophecies in the Bible is the prophecy in chapter 11, continued in chapter 12, of the book of Daniel.

This prophecy was shown to the prophet Daniel more than 2500 years ago and covers world history beginning from that time and continuing beyond our present day into the future. This prophecy helps us to see the things of the present time in the light of eternity. Its focal point is the church of God. The great nations have a role to play in the events of the world and at the same time they fulfil the plan of God in the world’s affairs where His church is existing among these nations. Sometimes the church of God is recognized and appreciated, other times it is hated and persecuted.

The great world nations have risen and fallen, yet the church of God remains. The gates of hell have not been able to prevail against it.

The prophecy of chapter 11, in the book of Daniel, begins with the mighty world kingdom Medo Persia in verse two. Verses 3 and 4 refer to the kingdom of Greece and its ruler Alexander the Great.

Verses 5-13 bring out the King of the South and the King of the North; their agreements and their wars. These kings were Egypt as the King of the South and Syria as the King of the North. Between these two kings existed Judea, Jerusalem and the people of God. They got trampled underfoot as the armies passed through their land.

In verses 14-30 the Romans enter into the picture. The Jewish people were under their rulership. It was Roman power that crucified Jesus and persecuted the early Christians.

In year 161 B.C. the Romans made an agreement with the Jews and had much control over them. In year 63 B.C. Judea was conquered by the Romans and became part of their kingdom. In year 70 A.D. the Romans destroyed Jerusalem and killed over 1 million Jews.

In verses 31-35 the papacy is prophesied along with the 1260 years of persecution of the Christians when over 50 million martyrs lost their lives.

Verses 36-39 bring us the prophecy of the French revolution in year 1789. Four years later all religion was banned in the country. In the years 1793-1797 all who professed any religion was killed.

In verse 40 the prophecy returns to the King of the South and the King of North. The title, King of North was not used when speaking of the Roman power or the Papacy either, when referring to the French. The territory, north of Palestine was now the kingdom of Turkey. As the world entered into the time of the end in 1798, another war broke out between Egypt and Turkey.

Other nations were helping them. France with Egypt and England with Turkey. Many ships there mentioned came from England, and some from Russia, to help the Turks.

Verse 41 shows that they passed through Palestine and some other countries. Some of the Arab countries escaped the war. They were out of the way when the armies passed through.

Verse 42 was fulfilled when the Turkish army conquered Egypt in the year 1801.

Verse 44 said that tidings of the east and north troubled the King of the North. Persia in the east and Russian in the north troubled the Ottoman Empire. In 1853 the Crimean War started, and continued the next three years. Later during the war England and France came to help Turkey and they gained victories over the enemy, Russia.

Verse 45 is also already partly fulfilled. The Muslims have planted their tabernacles right in Jerusalem. There are seven Muslem temples; one right on the spot where the temple of Solomon used to be. The most important temple is the mosque of Omar.

The second part of the verse is still in the future. The countries along the river Euphrates will dry up during the sixth plague, making the way for the kings of the East to come to the Battle of Armageddon. During this great Battle of Armageddon, Jesus comes.

“The derisive jests have ceased. Lying lips are hushed into silence. The clash of arms, the tumult of battle, ‘with confused noise, and garments rolled in blood.’ (Isa. 9:5) is stilled. Nought now is heard but the voice of prayer and the sound of weeping and lamentation.” G.C. 642

The prophecy of Joel is also fulfilled at that time. “Proclaim ye this among the Gentiles; prepare war, wake up the mighty men, let all the men of war draw near; let them come up; Beat your plowshears into swords, and your pruning hooks into spears: let the weak say, I am strong. Assemble yourselves, and come, all ye heathen and gather yourselves together round about: thither cause thy mighty ones to come down, O Lord. Let the heathen be wakened, and come up to the valley of Jehosophat: for there will I sit to judge all the heathen round about.” Joel 3:9-12

Where are God’s people at that time? “The people of God - some in prison cells, some hidden in solitary retreats in the forests and the mountains - still plead for divine protection, while in every quarter companies of armed men, urged on by hosts of evil angels, are preparing for the work of death.” G.C. p. 635.

Dear brothers and sisters, can we not see clearly that the end is right upon us. The Sunday Law will be

enacted very soon. Catholic and Protestant churches are urging the governments to enforce Sunday keeping. When the King of the North has been defeated and the way prepared for the kings of the East to come, the churches with the governments will bring the time of Jacob's trouble upon the people of God.

When will the great Mystic Babylon be revealed and receive the anger of the people? After Jesus has come and the people of God are delivered. Then we read in *The Great Controversy* page 655: "The people see that they have been deluded. They accuse one another of having led them to destruction; but all unite in heaping their bitterest condemnation upon the ministers. Unfaithful pastors have prophesied smooth things; they have led their hearers to make void the law of God and to persecute those who would keep it holy. Now, in their despair, these teachers confess before the world their work of deception. The multitudes are filled with fury. 'We are lost!' they cry, 'and you are the cause of our ruin'; and they turn upon the false shepherds. The very ones that once admired them most will pronounce the most dreadful curses upon them. The very hands that once crowned them with laurels will be raised for their destruction. The swords which were to slay God's people are now employed to destroy their enemies. Everywhere there is strife and bloodshed."

Let us study the prophecies of Daniel and Revelation with new interest, and make sure that the covering of the Lord will protect us during the Sunday Law and the Time of Trouble. This is my wish and prayer. AMEN

Timo Martin

SOWING TIME

"To what shall we liken the kingdom of God? It is like a mustard seed, which when it is sown on the ground..."

Mk. 4:30, 31.

The kingdom of God, the one we belong to by inheritance since we were adopted by our Creator and Father, is like a seed that has to be sown in the ground so that it may produce grain. *"Most assuredly, I say to you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the ground and dies, it remains alone; but if it dies, it produces much grain."* John 12:24.

What is the ground? Our heart. The enemy of souls has sown many poisonous seeds which, like the tares, grow very fast and tend to choke the tender plant so that it may not grow into full maturity to produce fruit. Whether this seed is covetousness, a desire to be the first, selfish ambition, etc. it all amounts to one thing: idolatry. This is the main culprit if our situation is the one described by Haggai 2:19: *"As yet the vine, the fig tree, the pomegranate and the olive tree have not yielded fruit."*

The Lord's orchard is rich and has plenty of trees, plants and herbs. There is the vine, whose fruit cheers both God and men; the fig tree, known for the sweetness of its fruit (Judges 9:11, 13), and the olive tree which produces oil to give light, and to soothe a wound and feed the hungry. But, what has happened to His olive grove and His vineyard? *"As yet"* they have not yielded fruit. There is one word in this verse which tells us that their condition is not so desperate as it may seem. This word is YET. What is keeping them from bearing fruit? The tares of idolatry sowed in the ground. What should be done with them? Let us read Isaiah 30:22 (l.p.) *"You will throw them away as an unclean thing: you will say to them: 'Get away!'"* What will happen then? Let us go on reading: *"Then He will give the rain for your seed with which you sow the ground..."* (Is. 30:23)

Only then will the blessings of heaven have an effect upon our life. The sweetness of the fig, the cheerfulness of

the vine, and the healing properties of the olive will be seen in our lives.

Anyone who has ever worked in a garden knows that tares multiply rapidly and they are always a threat to the good grain. One has to be pulling the weeds out constantly. Flattering compliments, as well as harshness and coldness, may be the weeds that choke the plant. They may also be stones that don't allow the seed to sprout as a green blade above the surface of the ground.

But something else may have happened to our seed, and Haggai asks us this question: *"Is the seed still in the barn?"* (Haggai 2:19) The barn is where the grain is kept after the harvest. It is a storing place from where we provide the animals with food and take wheat to make our daily bread. The barn is built above the surface. It is not a cellar that is dug deep into the ground. The barn is our head -our mind. If we keep the seed there, if we never sow it on the ground of our heart, it will never sprout or produce wholesome grain to feed us and those around us. All the information we receive through the study of the Holy Scriptures and through hearing the word of God has to be sown into the ground of our hearts, and once watered and weeded it will produce good grain. When this grain fills our barn, our mentality changes, we are of one mind with Christ.

When there is an abundance of grain through right living and proper ministration of the word of God, then, it will happen as with Joseph in Egypt, that our barn will be full of the product of a good harvest. People will come to us from far away places where there is a famine, to buy from us without money and without price: *"Ho! Everyone who thirsts, come to the waters: and you who have no money, come, buy and eat. " "And he commanded the steward of his house, saying, 'Fill the men 's sacks with food, as much as they can carry, and put each man 's money in the mouth of his sack. "* (Is. 55:1; Gen. 44:1). Freely we have received and freely should we give. (Matthew 20:8)

So, where is our seed⁷ Is it in the ground with the tares of idolatry preventing it from growing⁷ Isaiah tells us/ *"Throw them away.- say to them 'Get away'"* (Is. 30:22) Is our seed still in our barn⁷ Is the truth still in our mind as a theory⁷ Now it is spring; now is the sowing season. Every seed has its own time to be put into the ground. It is in spring that the soil should be prepared and the seed buried into the earth. Take it from the barn and bring it into the field. Take it from your mind and allow it to be put into the soil of your heart. The distance is not so long. The sowing time is now, and it is short so there is no time to be wasted. We know well that time flies and soon the summer will come and then it will be over, and none of us wants to hear the words in Jeremiah 8:20: *"The harvest is past, the summer is ended, and we are not saved"* We all want to tell the Lord: *"Your plants are an orchard of pomegranates with pleasant fruits, fragrant henna, with spikenard and saffron, calamus and cinnamon, with all trees of frankincense, myrrh and aloes, with all the chief spices, a fountain of garden, as well as living waters..."* Songs 4:12-15.

May the Lord help us not to procrastinate any longer. AMEN

Teresa Corti

“BE FRUITFUL AND MULTIPLY”

Recently I v/as told that the first woman, Eve, was created after “God saw everything that He made, and behold, it was good. And the even and the morning were the sixth day. “ I I have always believed that Adam and Eve were both made on the same day. “For Adam was first formed, then Eve. “2 “And God blessed them, and God said unto them, be fruitful and multiply... “3

At first I feared that “through philosophy and vain deceit” my companions, and possibly others, have given “heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils. Now, the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith...” 4 “Therefore I said, hearken unto me; I also will shew mine opinion. Great men are not always wise: neither do the aged understand judgment.” 5 “A wise man will hear, and will increase learning; and a man of understanding shall attain unto wise counsels.” 6

“When a brother receives new light upon Scriptures, he should frankly explain his position, and every minister should search the Scriptures with the spirit of candor to see if the points presented can be substantiated by the Inspired Word.

“It is the duty of ministers to respect the judgment of their brethren; but their relations to one another, as well as the doctrines they teach, should be brought to the test of the law and the testimony; then, if the hearts are teachable, there will be no divisions among us.”

“God is leading a people out from the world upon the exalted platform of eternal truth, the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus... They will not be at variance, one believing one thing and another having faith and views entirely opposite...”

“God and heaven alone are infallible. Those who think that they will never have to give up cherished views, never have occasion to change an opinion, will be disappointed. As long as we hold to our own ideas and opinions with determined persistency, we cannot have the unity which Christ prayed.”?

“And out of the ground the Lord God formed every beast of the field, and every fowl of the air; and brought them unto Adam to see what he would call them: and whatsoever Adam called that living creature, that was the name thereof.” 8 “Shall not all these take up a parable against him, and a taunting proverb against him, and say,” 9 Be fruitful and multiply, when “there was not found a help meet for him?” “Our Lord Himself has given the command, ‘Be filled with the Spirit (Ephesians 5:18) and this is also a promise of its fulfilment.” 10

“Ah Lord God! Behold, Thou hast made the heaven and the earth by Thy great power and stretched out arms, and there is nothing too hard for Thee.

“In the selfsame day entered Noah, Shem, Ham and Japheth, the sons of Noah, Noah’s wife and the three wives of his sons with them into the ark. They and every beast after his kind, and all the cattle after their kind, and every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth after his kind, and every fowl after his kind, every bird of every sort.” 12 Of every clean beast, seven pairs were taken into the ark, and of every unclean beast two pairs, male and female. “Of fowls also of the air by sevens, the male and his female; to keep seed alive upon the face of all the earth.” 13

All these entered the ark in the selfsame day.

Therefore to say that Adam could not have named every living creature within a day, every even half a day, would be assumption. “Man was originally endowed with noble powers and a well-balanced mind. He was perfect in his being, and in harmony with God.” 14 “God made man upright; He endowed him with high intellectual powers, and presented before him the strongest possible inducements to be true to his allegiance.” 15

True, Adam became lonely, especially after he witnessed every living creature with its mate, enjoying each other and the world not marred by sin. “But for Adam there was not found an help meet.” 16 “Man was not made to dwell in solitude; he was to be a social being. Without companionship the beautiful scenes and delightful employments of Eden would have failed to yield perfect happiness. Even communion with angels could not have satisfied his desire for sympathy and companionship. There was none of the same nature to love and to be loved. 17

“And the Lord God caused a deep sleep to fall upon Adam, and he slept and He took one of his ribs, and closed up the flesh instead thereof. And the rib, which the Lord God had taken from man, made He a woman, and brought her unto the man. And Adam said, “This is now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh: she shall be called woman, because she was taken out of man.” 18 “What therefore God had joined together let no man put asunder.” 19

“Everything that God made was perfection of beauty, and nothing seemed wanting that could contribute to the happiness of the holy pair...” 20 “Thus the heavens and the earth were finished, and all the host of them. And on the seventh day God ended His work which He had made; and He rested on the seventh day, and sanctified it: because that in it He rested from all His work which God created and made.” 21 “Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy. Six days shalt thou labour and do all thy work. But the seventh day is the Sabbath of the Lord thy God: in it thou shalt not do any work, thou nor thy son, nor thy daughter, thy maidservant, thy manservant, nor thy stranger that is within thy gates. For in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea and all that in them is, rested the seventh day: wherefore the Lord blessed the Sabbath day and hallowed it.” 22 “Let us labour therefore to enter into the rest, lest any man fall after the same example of unbelief.” 23 Amen

Chester Cosby

	8) Genesis 2:19	16) Genesis 2:20, last part
1) Genesis 1:31	9) Habakkuk 2:6	17) PP pp. 46
2) 1 Timothy 2:13	10) MB pp. 21	18) Genesis 21-23
3) Genesis 1:28, first part	11) Jeremiah 32:17	19) Mark 10:9
4) 1 Timothy 4:1	12) Genesis 7: 13,14	20) PP pp.46
5) Job 32:10, 9	13) Genesis 7:2,3	21) Genesis 2:1-3
6) Proverbs 1:5	14) SC pp. 17	22) Exodus 20:8-11
7) TM pp. 29-31	15) PP pp. 49	23) Hebrews 4:11

THE LAST ENEMY

It was the 17th of October 1988 when a beloved sister intently searched the scriptures for a comforting prayer in an hour of deep despondency. The Lord led her to Psalm 139:23, 24...” 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.” The hopeful sister, thus, laid open her heart before the eye of a merciful God. “Only God, who knows our inmost thoughts, can lead us safely. We all need an infallible Guide.” (3BC p. 926)

She continued to pray intently, now with her own thoughts, gaining courage with each agonizing work. Many unbearable problems had overwhelmed her until she was irretrievably locked in a sea of frustration and loneliness.

She pleaded and cried out to the Lord that He might give her the strength and wisdom to rationally convince her doctors and loved ones that she was truly and seriously ill. No one would lend a sympathetic ear to her pathetic complaints of a racking and gnawing pain *in* her afflicted abdominal area. The unfounded accusation was that she was suffering merely from anxiety and fright, but even more horrible, that she was pitiable and eccentrically insane!

Desperately praying further, she earnestly pleaded with the Lord to cleanse her absolutely, to deeply purify her body and soul, leaving her ego entirely behind and placing her life in His hands.

Pleading despairingly to the Lord again, she guardedly asked Him to help her reach the optimum limits of her strength for the impending trial ahead.

The excruciating abdominal pain now accompanied by a high fever, were unmistakable signs that something was critically wrong. However, the Lord compassionately responded within a day to her fervent prayers, by granting her all of her requests. The trial she faced became a blessing as she felt as if she was talking to Him face to face during this state of purification and healing. Miraculously those involved with her and dearest to her finally approached the Lord with awe and wonderment.

Now in retrospect, the “mysterious” illness she suffered through was of a one-year duration encompassing a series of questionable outcomes. She underwent two major operations and one gravely critical episode after the first operation which confined her to an intensive care unit for several days where she hung by thin threads to her dear life. It was during this “blessed trial” that she resolutely approached Jesus, as she never did before with an abiding faith. Her life was truly in the hands of a healing Lord, as she had offered up and promised earlier in her soft prayers.

In the intensive care unit the struggle begins as her life is pivoting on a hinge of life or death. Her blood pressure and pulse is rapidly approaching zero, yet she is inflexibly conscious and her courageous mind, in this stricken condition, is ritualistically functioning! In this inarticulate, sepulchral state she gathers enough strength to utter an audible prayer.. .perhaps a dying prayer.

She then becomes convulsively spasmodic, a terrifyingly strange condition as her life slowly ebbs and fades away. “The darkness of death is like the evening twilight; it makes all objects appear more lovely to the dying.” (Richter) “Men know not how soon the arrow of death may strike their hearts.” (MH 454) Will the ghastly death battle punctually waive or idly linger?

With her eyes closed she sees with a dauntless heart a glowing heavenly picture. Off in the celestial distance is the kingly head of Jesus fading away into the heavenly sky with His royal and billowing white garment of righteousness trailing behind Him down to the groaning earth. She gently lies on His delicate garment to ease the intolerably stabbing pains. Her languid pulse is no longer perceivable, breathing is very shallow and labored until it stops! She desperately clutches this white garment and murmurs in a soft whisper, “Lord, If you want to take my life now, I am yours, but if you don’t want me to die yet, I will live to be your humble servant and your messenger, praising Thee here on this bare earth.”

This macabre yet blessed scene lasted five hours, as she was informed later by the doctors and staff.

With a deep heave and a sigh her last breath leaves, and she slowly fades away into the throes of death. With a deathlike grip on the royal white garment, she finds her fragile strength leaving her, but suddenly her grip on the Lord’s garment returns. She relentlessly holds on, refusing to part with the divine Lord, knowing that she is dying. Her thoughts now aimlessly begin to wander as she is face to face with death.. “O death, where is thy sting? O Grave, where is thy victory?” (1 Cor. 15:55)... “am I prepared to pass in review before Thee Lord?” Popular theology represents the righteous dead as in heaven, entered into bliss and praising God with an immortal tongue, but Hezekiah could see no such glorious prospect in death. With his words agrees the testimony of the psalmist: “In death there is no remembrance of Thee: in the grave who shall give Thee thanks?” “The dead praise not the Lord; neither any that go down into silence.” (Psalms 6:5; 115:17) (GC 546)

She yearns with a devoted love for those she will soon leave behind, especially her generous husband and lovely daughter. She accepts this as God’s will, a natural circumstance of life, not painful or begrudging.

Her faithful thoughts now drift back to the radiant face of Jesus. Her ego does not exist anymore, but only appears as an infinitely small dot on the white garment. She is free at last, at peace, and has reached the ultimate limits of her strength she asked for in her earlier prayer. Her thoughts now are steadfastly fixed on Jesus on the cross, and how agonizingly humiliating it was as He hung there for so many bitter hours. Now she belongs totally to Jesus. She is going far away...Jesus is her Saviour now. She is no longer faintheartedly afraid for she knows that, “Friends, and loved ones, separated by death, will be united at the second advent.” (EW p. 16, 287) After a remote and stirring period she heard the alarmed but tender and angelic-like voice of the nurse saying... “she is coming back” Another academic question and the answer, “five hours”! Later she was told that for five hours she was grimly close to death.

This extraordinary, yet striking phenomenon of her bout with death and return to life was the buzzing and heartsearching talk of the hospital the next day. Many doctors made providential visits to her room during and after her confinement in the intensive care unit, to view this Lazarus-like patient. Her personal doctor said, “God must love you...He gave you life again.” She graciously remained silent at this, but knew it was confessedly true.

She was now filled with uncomplaining and serene patience, for “tribulation worketh patience.” (Rom 5:3) She was no longer in the clutch of lurking fear, but with reverence and Godly fear, for “fear of the Lord is a

fountain of life.” (Prov. 14:27) With the blessed fruits of patience and fearlessness, she was a miraculous and “professional” testimony to her newly “reverend” doctor who had subtle yet intimate knowledge of her dying prayers. He studiously and vigilantly observed her as a rejuvenated creation... a providential sign from God.

She gave herself to the Lord without being bewilderingly doubtful and by allowing no one to plant seeds of doubt in her heart. The Lord covered her with His radiantly healing white garment, giving her an all-embracing life and sufficient grace to shroud her husband and daughter who faithfully stood by this beloved sister.

She can now confidently claim “The promise of the kingdom, for the ‘mysteries’ of the kingdom are now revealed and are ‘at hand’”. “Then cometh the end, when He shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father, when He shall have put down all rule and all authority and power. For He must reign, till He hath put all enemies under His feet. *The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death.*” (1 Cor. 15:24-26)

This beloved sister poured out this precious and personal testimony to comfort and encourage other brethren and sisters in urgent spiritual need, and to give assurance to those facing death. She genuinely offered up prayers to our Lord in thanks with all her heart for His wondrous and tender mercy, abiding love and cherished gifts. “For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved.” (1 Cor. 10:13)

For divine and steadfast strength, “let the wicked forsake his way and the unrighteous man his thoughts, and let him return unto the Lord, and He will abundantly pardon.” (Isaiah 55:7)

Indeed the Lord forgives generously and the only path you have to take is through repentance to follow His heavenward way. Only then, after the Holy Spirit has touched your heart, can you properly understand how immeasurably great is the forgiveness of the Lord, and who saves by His precious blood. In the words of the Apostle Paul to the Philippians. “I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me.” (Phil 4:13) She found immense strength to overcome the most distressing and gravest crisis in her life.

Fresh inspiration was found in Psalm 103:2. 3 “Bless the Lord. O my soul, and forget not all His benefits: Who forgiveth all thine iniquities. *who healeth all thy diseases.*”

It may be oddly providential that Socrates wrote. “Be of good cheer about death, and know this of a truth. that no man can happen to a good man. either in life or after death”... And Sister EGW wrote. “Look to Jesus. Taist in Jesus, whether you live or die. He is your Redeemer. He is our Life-giver. If you fall asleep in Jesus He will bring you forth from the grave to a glorious immortality. May He give you peace and comfort and hope and joy from henceforth.” (2 SM p. 254)

Dear brethren and sisters, may the Lord comfort, strengthen and bless you. by this joyful and triumphant testimony. Remember that. “*The last enemy to be destroyed is death.*” (1 Cor. 15:26). but that, “*faith is a mightier conqueror than death*” (MH p. 62) for “*death is swallowed up in victory.*” (1 Cor. 15:52-54). Death is not the last sleep, but is the last and final awakening AMEN

John Theodorou. Athens. Greece

MIRACLE WORKERS AND THE REMNANT CHURCH

*“Sight to the blind, lame able to walk,
speech to the dumb. Bring along your
sick to our meeting and we will heal
them. “*

These types of slogans, advertisements, and handbills are very common these days. These public meetings are so popular that they have attracted thousands of people from all walks of life. In the past we did not find such meetings, but now like mushrooms, we see and hear both local and international miracle workers and healers.

Different groups under different teachings have organized themselves and present themselves under various names. They preach, heal the sick, sing, make a big noise, drive out devils and scream as in a state of trance. They do all these in the name of Jesus.

The Holy Bible gives a warning about these types of activities, which took place during the time of the Apostles. This same warning applies to us today, beyond a shadow of a doubt.

“Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world.” 1 John 4:1.

It is our desire to invite you to test the many groups and individuals who appear in the name of God. Let us accept this warning which comes to us from the Scriptures with great responsibility. Only the Bible can reveal to us that which is right.

How did Jesus build His church ?

Many miracle workers state that the Lord organized (or gathered) His church by performing miracles. If we carefully read the warnings Jesus has given regarding this, we would realize how wrong they are. Quite often when Jesus performed a miracle.

He commanded that it should be told to no man. Jesus did not want the news of miracles to be spread abroad, instead He wanted the news of miracles to be suppressed. Let us consider two examples out of many.

When Jesus said, “Talitha Cumi” and raised Jairus’ daughter from the dead, what was His advice to the people who were gathered? “And He charged them straightly that no man should know it; and commanded that something should be given her to eat.” Mark 5:43.

In another incident when Jesus healed a deaf and dumb person, He charged them that they should tell no man. Mark 7:36. It is true that this news was spread abroad by many. It is also true that great multitudes gathered around Jesus for worldly and physical blessings. Jesus disapproved of those who drew towards Him because He performed a miracle. And so today He disapproves of those who gather or organize a church based on miracles.

Jesus organized His church not by attracting the crowds with His miracles, but by every life giving word of Truth that proceeded out of His mouth. Concluding the Sermon on the Mount, what did Jesus say?

“Therefore, whosoever heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them, I will liken him unto a wise man, which built his house upon a rock.” Matthew 7:24.

We ought to build our belief and faith not on healings and miracles, but upon the Rock which is the sure Word of Truth.

The Bible warns us regarding the last days.

Through the prophecies, the Holy Scriptures warn us of the miracle workers in the last days. “And many false prophets shall rise, and shall deceive many.” Matthew 24:11. “For there shall arise false Christs, and false prophets, and shall shew great signs and wonders; insomuch that, if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect.” Matthew 24:24.

“And I saw three unclean spirits like frogs come out of the mouth of the dragon, and out of the mouth of the beast, and out of the mouth of the false prophet. For they are the spirits of devils, working miracles, which go forth unto the kings of the earth and of the whole world, to gather them to the battle of the great day of God Almighty.” Revelation 16:13, 14.

These miracle workers become so powerful, so much so that the scriptures speak of the Antichrist’s power. I “And he doeth great wonders, so that he maketh fire to come down from heaven on the earth in the sight of men.” Revelation 13:13.

The scriptures speak further of the Antichrist’s power. “Even him, whose coming is after the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders, and with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish; because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved.” 2 Thessalonians 2:9, 10.

What is the end for such people?

“And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie: that they all might be

damned who believe not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness.” 2 Thessalonians 2:11, 12.

Having witnessed these miracles and wondrous works, how many people have shunned the Truth that is revealed in the Scriptures? They have been deceived by these miracles and they walk in eternal darkness. They failed to look for Truth in the word of God, which is the only source of Truth, instead, they looked to the miracle worker and his wondrous works. There would be no turning back for such people; they would be left believing a lie.

Regarding these groups of miracle workers, Jesus spoke in the Sermon on the Mount of an unmistakable prophecy, which is taking place right now. Let us read the book of Matthew 7: 21,22,23, very carefully.

“Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven.” v. 21.

People may shout out “Lord, Lord,” but they will not enter into the kingdom of heaven. Only those who do the will of the Father will enter in.

Verse 22: **“Many will say to me in that day, 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?”**

If you read v.22 carefully you will see that this is not a simple saying, but a **prophecy**. Through this prophecy Jesus said that the people who are doing wonders and miracles would come to Him in the last day and recite to Him everything that they have done. This prophecy also says that they worked miracles in the name of Jesus and not hi the name of any other god.

If this is a prophecy then it must be fulfilled. Those who are going to say to the Lord “We did many wonders and miracles hi your name” have to be existing these days (hi these last days) performing these miracles right now. Actually if we look around we can see many miracle workers performing in the name of “Jesus”. What is the end of them?

Verse 23. **“And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me ye • that work iniquity.”**

When Jesus says here “I never knew you” what does He mean? In any day, even in the day when you were performing the miracles, “I was not with you and I didn’t know you at all.” That is what He meant. In that case when they shouted, “Jesus, Jesus,” and performed those miracles, with whose power did they do them? Dear reader, this is something for you to think about.

In that day when they tell Jesus of the wonderful things they have done, it is the truth and not a lie. They worked miracles, shouting the name of the Lord. But Jesus rejects them saying He never knew them. Why is that? Jesus gives His reason hi Verse 21.

These words of Jesus **“But he that doeth the will of my Father,”** proves that they did not do the will of the Father. Now what does the will of the Father mean? **I delight to do Thy will, O my God: yea, Thy Law is within my heart.” Psalm 40:8.**

The law of God was not active hi their hearts. They despised it. They provided wrong interpretations from the books of Romans, Corinthians, Galatians, and Colossians stating that the law is null and void. They connected the ceremonial law (Law of Moses) to the moral law, (Law of love) and abolished the law of love (the Ten Commandments). As *if* hi a trance they begin shivering and speaking hi tongues that no man understands and say that the Holy Spirit is hi them the -law is not necessary.

Read Proverbs 28:9, **“He that turneth away his ears from hearing the law, even his prayer is abomination.” “Sin is the transgression of the law.” 1 John 3:4.** (The law of love, the Ten Commandments).

Jesus was crucified because we transgressed His law of love. **“For the wages of sin is death;”** (eternal death) **Romans 6:23.** But Jesus paid the penalty for our sins on the cross. Through faith hi Jesus’ sacrifice, we received forgiveness of sins and the gift of God, which is the Holy Spirit. Why did we receive the Holy Spirit? The main reason for the outpouring of the Holy Spirit in the new covenant is clearly seen in the prophecy of Ezekiel.

“A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you: and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you a heart of flesh. And I will put my Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep my judgements, and do them.” Ezekiel 36:26,27.

Why does He give His Spirit (The Holy Spirit)? “So that ye shall keep my commandments, and do them.”

Now, all these workers say they do these wondrous things under the outpouring of the Holy Spirit, whereas they go against the law of God. Jesus Himself says hi **Matthew 5:18**, “**For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled.**” But these people say that this law is null and void.

It is true that individually, man breaks the law of God. No man is perfect. If man looks back at the past week of his life, undoubtedly he would see that he has broken the law of God. But the question is, as churches, do they accept the law of God? Before a law is obeyed, it should be accepted. There is no church today among the miracle workers that will accept the fact that the law of God is still valid. They give their own interpretations quoting various Bible texts and say that the law is not valid to those who believe. But what does the Apostle Paul say?

“Do we then make void the law through faith? God forbid: yea we establish the law.” Romans 3:31.

Satan wants to trample, pull down and destroy God’s heavenly law. He has his agents around the world to do this very work. These are the churches that conduct meetings for miraculous healing. They despise the law of God. Due to this very fact, it is clearly understood that the Holy Spirit is not with this class of people and hi the last day the Lord says, “I never knew you.”

Who are they who really know the Lord?

“And hereby we do know that we know Him, if we keep His commandments. He that saith, I know Him, and keepeth not His commandments, is a liar, and the Truth is not in him.” 1 John 2:3,4.

They do not know Him. The Lord also says, He does not know them. Since, by faith they opened not their hearts for the Holy Spirit to lead them to the law of love which is the righteousness of Christ, in the last day the Lord will drive them from His presence.

Dear friends, we are now living in the last days. The Second Coming of Jesus is at hand. How do we recognize God’s church (as mentioned in the Scriptures, the Remnant Church) in these last days? Not by working miracles or screaming in tongues. God has given two distinct signs in which to recognize His remnant church in the last days. These two signs are signs of identification proving that they are the remnant people of God. Let us search from the scriptures as to what these signs are.

“And the dragon was wroth with the woman, and went to make war with the remnant of her seed, which keep the commandments of God, and have the testimony of Jesus Christ.” Revelation 12:17.

The dragon is the symbol of Satan. The woman symbolizes the church of God. (or the people of God.) Two signs denote the remnant of her seed.

1. Those who keep the law of God.
2. Those who have the testimony of Jesus.

What is the testimony of Jesus? Thus saith the Scriptures, **“The testimony of Jesus is the Spirit of prophecy.” Revelation 19:10.** (last sentence)

The Holy Spirit has bestowed many special gifts upon God’s people. The spirit of healing, spirit of speaking in tongues, spirit of working of miracles and several other gifts. Different people received different gifts according to God’s will. **1 Corinthians 12:8-12.**

But in the last days what type of “spirit” shall be given to the remnant people of God?

In the Bible we find two special books of prophecy. They are the books of “Daniel and Revelation.” These two books are full of prophecies. God has separated these two books for those who are living in the end time, for them to read and understand the prophecies written there. (**Daniel 2:4,9,10, Revelation 1:3.**) The remnant people will reveal to the world its right explanations and they will live according to the prophecies.

The remnant people will also be accepting and keeping the law of God. Not by their own power or might but by the grace of the Holy Spirit which is given them. They did not touch the law or try to change it (**James 2:10, Ezekiel 22:26.**) They accept the whole law including the fourth commandment, (**Exodus 20:8-11.**) Obedience through their faith reveals that the Holy Spirit is with them, (**James 2:17,18**)

On the day of Pentecost, the Holy Spirit was poured out upon the apostles with great power. They received special gifts and they did mighty works.

In the same way before the great and dreadful day of the Lord is come, for the last time, this power will be poured out again to bring the truths of God's Word to the whole earth. **Joel 2:28,29.**

In that day, the remnant people of God, who have received the Holy Spirit through faith, will perform mighty miracles and do wonderful works.

But before that day comes, Satan will deceive the people with his wonderful works through them that do not have the Law of God or His Spirit. He will cause them to disbelieve the Truth, saying the Holy Spirit has been poured out. These are the people Jesus referred to in His Sermon on the Mount when He said, in the last days, He would drive them away. **Matthew 7:23.** While these classes of people are already around us working miracles, are we going to be one of them, or partakers of their works?

Dear friends, Satan knows that he has but a short while more, so he is busy deceiving the maximum amount of people. His agents, (those through whom he works) are all around us today. Before your very eyes they will carry out their wonderful works. They are surrounded by many. As the remnant people of God, let us turn to the unfailing word of God. Let us question as to where these spirits came from; let us study the prophecies. Let the warnings of our Lord be ever in our minds. Awake and in prayer, let us wait for the Second Coming of Jesus and the power of the Holy Spirit. While the investigative judgment is taking place in heaven, let us not live according to our will but let us surrender our lives to the law of God which is the law of love. Let us pray and ask the Lord for that great promise given through the prophet Ezekiel, saying the Holy Spirit will establish in our hearts the law of love which is the measure of the righteousness of Christ. Let us flee from all satanic powers. Let us lift up our hearts and look above.

“Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God and keep His commandments for this is the whole duty of man. For God shall bring every work into judgement, with every secret thing, whether it be good or whether it be evil.” Ecclesiastes 12:13,14.

All praise and glory be to the Lord forever and ever!

Sunil Joseph, Sri Lanka Translated by Sister Mavis Ingram

CURRENT SCENE Part 1

From Samuele Bacchioci's "End-time Newsletter" - October, 2000

What did the Pope say about the Office of the Inquisition's letter?

"Last Sunday (October 1, 2000), following the Mass and the canonization ceremony of Chinese saints, the Pope sought to repair the damage done by the Declaration to relations with other religions. The Pope said that the document had been misinterpreted because the Catholic church recognizes that other religions have "precious elements of salvation." The claim that "the one Church of Christ subsists in the Catholic Church," represents for the Pope, "not human merit, but a sign of God's fidelity."

"In his homily, the Pope attempted to make more acceptable the claim that the true Church of Christ "subsists" only in the Catholic Church by attributing the responsibility for such a choice to "God's fidelity." In my view, this explanation hardly repairs the damage done by the Declaration Dominus Jesus. On the contrary, it makes matters worse, because it gratuitously assumes that God chose the Catholic Church to serve as the only true Church of Christ on earth, with power to dispense salvation.

"This interpretation of the Church of Christ as a hierarchical organization subsisting in the Catholic Church, is clearly negated by the witness of the New Testament, where the Church consists, not of a hierarchical organization, but of believers who have responded to the Gospel invitation. The very term "Church" derives from "Ekklesia," which is the compound of two words, "Ek-out" and "Kaleo-called." The term suggests that the church is made up of believers who have been called out from the world "to declare the wonderful deeds of him who called [them] . . . out of darkness into his marvelous light" (1 Pet 1:9).

"The fundamental problem with the Vatican Declaration and with the Pope's latest clarification, is a blatant misinterpretation of Scripture to justify traditional Catholic teachings. This is evident even in the final exhortation of the Pope's homily: "May Mary, to whom the Lord on the Cross entrusted us as our Mother, help us to grow together in faith in Christ." Nowhere the NT suggests that Christ on the Cross entrusted His followers to the care of Mary—a godly woman who rests in the tomb awaiting the resurrection morning. The Gospel tells us that

Jesus entrusted Mary to the care of John, the beloved disciple (John 19:27), and not the Church to the care of Mary-

“The Vatican arrogance in claiming that “the one Church of Christ subsists in the Catholic Church,” should serve as a warning to all Christian churches, including God’s true church. The church invisible consists of those “faithful souls in Christ” but God has always had a faithful remnant, who keep His commandments and thus make up the visible church.

“In his homily, the Pope attempted to make more acceptable the claim that the true Church of Christ “subsists” only in the Catholic Church by attributing the responsibility for such a choice to “God’s fidelity.” In my view, this explanation hardly repairs the damage done by the Declaration Dominus Jesus. On the contrary, it makes matters worse, because it gratuitously assumes that God chose the Catholic Church to serve as the only true Church of Christ on earth, with power to dispense salvation.

The SDA church and homosexuality

“This article is comprehensive and compelling in its analysis of the major Biblical and non-biblical arguments commonly used to legitimize homosexual lifestyle. This study is urgently needed today when “Adventist” homosexuals are coming out of the closet and clamoring for acceptance. A recent issue of SCANNER, a newsletter published by the Glendale City SDA Church, reports that “going by conservative estimations, there are at least 5,000 gay Adventist in Southern California.”

“The presence of Adventist homosexuals is not limited to California. There exists a national organization known as “KINSHIP,” which functions, to use its own words, as “a support group for gay and lesbian Seventh-day Adventists.” Its aim to convert Adventists to its belief that “God can bless a committed homosexual relationship.”

“They want the church to accept homosexuality as a natural gift from God. The influence of this ideology can be seen and felt in SDA college campuses where some students openly discuss their homosexual or lesbian relationships in the students’ newspapers.

“Next to the issue of ordaining women as elders and pastors, homosexuality is the “hottest potato” item on today’s theological menu. It is so “hot” that anyone attempting to touch it is bound to be “burned.” To challenge the morality of homosexuality in today’s climate of “enlightened” ethical sensitivity is considered “wrong-spirited and wrong.” Those who dare to do so are often perceived as “uninformed,” “un-compassionate,” and “judgmental” (as

in the case of Christ’s disciples, who condemned a congenially blind person as a sinner [John 9]).

“Already, in certain quarters of the SDA church, individuals who forthrightly express their views on the twin ideological issues of women’s ordination and homosexuality are considered “divisive,” “controversial” and “extreme fundamentalists.” These uncomplimentary labels have exerted powerful psychological pressure on some church

leaders and scholars either to endorse the unbiblical practices, or at a minimum, to remain silent. But should Bible-believing Adventists be intimidated by these labels? Should they remain silent or neutral when established biblical doctrines are being undermined? The courage of biblical convictions requires that we “prove all things and hold fast to that which is good” (1 Thess 5:21; cf. 2 Tim 4:1-5).

“Let it be stated at the outset, that all manner of sin, including homosexuality, can be forgiven, provided we admit our wrongdoing, repent, and turn away from it. But there can be no forgiveness when sinners are in denial-when they insist that their lustful desires and practices are not sinful, when they re-interpret Scripture to justify their sins, and when they defiantly maintain that they will not turn from their sinful ways. Such is the case today with a sin called homosexuality. **Non-Biblical Arguments for Homosexuality & Responses**

1. ‘To learn the truth about homosexuality, talk to real homosexuals’

“For many advocates of gay theology, it is not sufficient to trust the Bible writers as the dependable source of truth on this matter. They argue that in order to learn the truth about homosexuality, we must update our knowledge by actually listening to homosexuals themselves. This seems to be the point in some recent Adventist publications.

“For example, one Adventist mother wrote that after she had spent “years of reading, observing, and eventually talking to people,” her homosexual son finally confirmed to her that indeed, “homosexuality is a condition, not a behavior. Whatever may cause a homosexual orientation, it is not something a person chooses.” Her son “told us that from his earliest memories he knew he was ‘different.’” She also reported learning that God may change a persons’s sexual orientation only “on rare occasions,” and that one can be a homosexual and be “deeply spiritual.”⁴

“A Princeton Theological Seminary professor of Old Testament Language and Literature, an ordained elder in the Presbyterian Church (USA), best articulated why we supposedly need to go to homosexuals themselves to learn the truth about homosexuality: “I used to believe that homosexual acts are always wrong. Listening to gay and lesbian students and friends, however, I have had to rethink my position and reread the scriptures. . . . I have no choice but to take the testimonies of gays and lesbians seriously. I do so with some comfort, however,

for the scriptures themselves give me the warrant to trust that human beings can know truths apart from divine revelation.”

Response to Argument #1

“We must offer a sympathetic ear to the pains and genuine struggles of homosexuals. But Bible-believing Adventists need to ask whether the testimonies and claims of homosexuals are an adequate basis to learn the truth about homosexuality. Are homosexuals, by virtue of their experience, more qualified than the Bible writers to speak on homosexuality? The inspired writers of the Bible served as dependable spokespersons for the Creator of human sexuality. Is the attempt to justify homosexuality on the grounds of personal experience or empirical studies, rather than biblical revelation, a legitimate starting point for any investigation regarding sexual morality? Are the testimonies and claims of homosexuals necessarily true?

“Assuming even that homosexual orientation is part of a person’s constitutional make up (just as a person’s color or gender is), can true knowledge about that condition can only be accurately obtained by persons with that kind of sexual identity? If so, does this mean, for example, that one has to be black, African, and a woman in order to fully understand and accurately address the pains of people in that category? By analogy, could Jesus, a single Jewish male, have understood the experience of, say, Maria, a single-parent Hispanic woman? 2.

“People Are Born Homosexual”

“When advocates of pro-gay theology assert that people are born gay, they actually go beyond the generally accepted view that genetics and environmental factors influence a person’s behavior. They suggest that homosexuality is largely caused by a person’s genes. They cite “scientific studies” which allegedly offer conclusive proof that people are born gay. Response to Argument #2

“First, although future studies may one day bear this out, the research findings often cited as evidence of the “born a gay” condition are, at best, inconclusive and are questionable at worst. I am not suggesting that genetics has no influence toward a homosexual predisposition. I contend simply that the studies often cited for the claim that “people are born gay” are not as conclusive as proponents would have us believe.

“Second, even if one could prove that homosexuality originates in the genes, the hormones, or the environment, would this make homosexuality morally legitimate? Does being “born” alcoholic, pedophile, or gay make alcoholism, pedophilia, or homosexuality right? It seems that “the studies” are put forth to imply that homosexuality is not a sin to be repented of, but a mark of one’s identity to be celebrated.

“Third, the studies are flawed because they are based on the deterministic philosophy of behaviorism. In such a view, people have practically no choice in their moral actions and therefore may not be held morally accountable for their actions. Human behavior, according to behaviorism, is largely, if not exclusively, predetermined by one’s environment and one’s genetic code. But behaviorism or biological determinism is incompatible with the Bible’s view of man. Human beings are created in the image of God and endowed with freedom of choice. We cannot correlate a belief in behaviorism’s naturalistic philosophy with the biblical doctrine that we are accountable to God for our conduct (the doctrine of judgment). Furthermore, this “I did not choose, I cannot change” philosophy raises serious questions about Christ’s power to help us “overcome all hereditary and cultivated tendencies to sin” (The Desire of Ages, p. 671; cf. The Ministry of Healing, pp. 175-176).

3. “Homosexual Orientation Is God-given”

“Many homosexuals claim that since childhood they have always had homosexual feelings. Hence, they say, their “natural” homosexual tendencies are from God. Response to Argument #4

“Scripture nowhere suggests that if a thing seems natural it is inevitably God-given. On the contrary, the Bible teaches that many “natural” states and desires are not of God and are contrary to His will.

“For example, “The natural man does not receive the things of God” (1 Cor 2:14). Before conversion, we “were by nature the children of wrath” (Eph 2:3). “The carnal mind is enmity against God, for it is not subject to the law of God, nor indeed can be” (Rom 8:7). Scripture teaches that we are a fallen race, born in sin: “Behold, I was brought forth in iniquity” (Ps 51:5; cf. Jer 17:9; Rom 5:12). Sin has marred our physical and spiritual natures (1 Cor 15:1-54; John 3:5-6). We cannot therefore assume that because something is natural or inborn, it must be God-ordained.

4. “Homosexual Orientation Is Morally Neutral”

“From the assumption that people are born gay, proponents argue that we should view homosexuality as a neutral expression of human sexuality. Like heterosexuality, homosexuality can be rightly used or abused. The abuse is wrong. But, they argue, homosexuality within a loving, consensual, and monogamous relationship is morally right. Response to Argument #4

“Dust because homosexuality may be natural or inborn (an unproven assertion), is it morally neutral or legitimate? If we would demonstrate conclusively that adultery, incest, pedophilia, violence, and lying are inherited, would we be justified in considering them legitimate or neutral? Should the standard for morality be determined by what is inborn?

“Contrary to this teaching of the “born a gay” gospel, the Bible teaches that homosexuality is immoral.

Like other sexual deviations, any practice or lusts outside the context of a loving, consensual, monogamous, heterosexual marriage is an abomination (Lev 18), whether that practice or “orientation” is inborn or acquired. “And immoral behavior cannot be legitimized by a quick baptism in the gene pool.”⁹

“Morality is not determined by what is, even if inborn. The Ten Commandments and God’s pre-fall order provide the moral guidelines for whether homosexuality is moral and immoral. The leap from what is (alleged “facts” of the homosexual condition) to what ought to be (the morality of homosexuality) is too large for us to make.

5. “Changing the Homosexual Orientation Is Difficult and Rare”

“Proponents claim that because homosexuality is an inbred condition, the homosexual has no (or very little) hope of ever changing. And since there is no hope or possibility for the homosexual to change, any changes must come from the institutions of society, including education, law, and religion. Response to Argument #5

“The oft-repeated claim that “changing one’s homosexual orientation is difficult and rare” almost suggests that it is impossible to change one’s sinful tendencies. This may indeed be the case if the work of transformation is a human work. But if God performs this operation, as Scripture and Ellen G. White teach, then changing a person’s sinful orientation is not “difficult and rare.”

“Even if we suppose that it is “difficult and rare” to change the homosexual condition and that no amount of prayer, counseling, and effort of any kind can make a homosexual easily change his orientation, do the “difficulty and rarity” of change make homosexuality less sinful? Definitely not. The statement of one former homosexual is worth quoting: “There is no contingency factor in any scriptural reference to any kind of sin, in either the Old or the New Testament. We never read anything like: Thou shalt not do thus and so! (Unless, of course, you tried hard to change, went for prayer and counseling, and found you just couldn’t stop wanting to do thus and so. If that’s the case, then thus and so is no longer sin. It’s an inborn, immutable gift and you can [feel free to] indulge in it!)”

“Second, the “it’s difficult and rare to change” doctrine, if accepted, leads to a “once a sinner, always a sinner” doctrine. Since I will deal with this argument in the next section, here I will simply mention that this cardinal pillar in the “born a gay” doctrine challenges Christianity’s “born again” promise. It implies that even after conversion, an addict to drugs or alcohol or a habitual or compulsive liar or sexual pervert will always remain as they were. But thousands of miraculous conversions and transformed lives in our day negate this pro-gay argument that changing one’s sinful orientation is “difficult and rare.”

6. “Once A Homosexual, (Almost) Always A Homosexual”

This is where the logic of biological predestination eventually leads; People are born gay; it’s difficult and rare to change their condition; they will always remain gay. If anyone has to change, it must be the institutions of society and the church, not the homosexual. The laws of society and the Bible must change to accommodate the homosexual who, once gay, will always be gay. Response to Argument #6

“Perhaps the most important question the issue of homosexuality raises is whether Christ has power to help people overcome sin in their lives. This is of course an important question if homosexuality is sin. It forces us to answer the question of whether the transforming power of God is more effective than the impotent power of psychological therapy. The testimony of Scripture exposes the lie that “once a homosexual, always a homosexual.” Homosexuals can be, and have actually been, changed through the transforming power of Christ.

“Writes the apostle Paul: “Do you not know that the wicked will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived: Neither the sexually immoral nor idolaters nor adulterers nor male prostitutes nor homosexual offenders nor thieves nor the greedy nor drunkards nor slanderers nor swindlers will inherit the kingdom of God. And that is what some of you were [past tense]. But you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of God” (1 Cor 6:9-11 NIV, emphasis mine).

“Similarly, Ellen G. White stated unequivocally that “a genuine conversion changes hereditary and cultivated tendencies to wrong” (*Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*, vol. 6, p. 1101). Indeed, “Those who put their trust in Christ are not to be enslaved by any hereditary and cultivated habit or tendency. Instead of being held in bondage to the lower nature, they are to rule every appetite and passion. God has not left us to battle with evil in our own finite strength. Whatever may be our inherited or cultivated tendencies to wrong, we can overcome through the power that He is ready to impart” (*The Ministry of Healing*, pp. 175, 176). Again, “Christ has given His Spirit as a divine power to overcome all hereditary and cultivated tendencies to evil, and to impress His own character upon His church” (*The Desire of Ages*, p. 671).

“In short, “We are a spectacle unto the world, to angels, and to men. Angels and men are taking note of us to see what manner of spirit we are of, to see whether we are meeting the approval of heaven. You may feel that you cannot meet the approval of heaven, You may say, ‘I was born with a natural tendency toward this evil, and I cannot overcome.’ But every provision has been made by our heavenly Father whereby you may be able to overcome every unholy tendency. You are to overcome even as Christ overcame in your behalf. . . . Christ died on Calvary that man might have power to overcome his natural tendencies to sin. But one says, ‘Can I not

have my own way, and act myself?—No, you cannot have your way, and enter the kingdom of heaven. No ‘my way’ will be there. No human ways will find place in the kingdom of heaven. Our ways must be lost in God’s ways” (*Advent Review and Sabbath Herald*, Feb. 23, 1892, emphasis mine). 7. “There’s A Difference Between Being A Homosexual And Practicing Homosexuality”

“Discussions on homosexuality often define it in two ways: (a) homosexual orientation, inclination, or tendency—an inborn, sexual attraction, predisposition, or desire toward a member of one’s own sex, and (b) homosexual behavior or practice—an erotic activity with a member of one’s own sex, an activity that may or may not be morally right.

“On the basis of this distinction, some writers argue that homosexual orientation or condition (also referred to as “ontological” or “constitutional” homosexuality or “inversion”) is a permanent and unchangeable part of the individual’s constitutional make up. It is like the color of a person’s skin—a non-behavioral trait, morally neutral, and a condition from which no one can change. On the other hand, they argue, we must judge homosexual practice or activity according to morally acceptable norms. “Being a homosexual is not sin,” they claim, but “homosexual sexual activity is sinful—it is apart from God’s will.”

Response to Argument #7

“Many have embraced this argument uncritically. But the argument is meaningless, if not misleading and erroneous. Is homosexuality something that you are (like being black or elderly or handicapped or female), or is it something sinful you do, cherish, or lust for (like adultery, or incest, or lying)? This question goes to the heart of the pro-homosexual claim that “there is a difference between being a homosexual and practicing homosexuality.”

“Let’s think a little more carefully: Can a person really be a homosexual without practicing homosexuality?”

“The fallacy of the above statement becomes obvious when we change the sin of homosexuality to that of adultery or polygamy. The statement will then read: “There is a difference between being an adulterer and practicing adultery”! “There’s a difference between being a polygamist and practicing polygamy”! These statements are meaningless: An adulterer is a person who practices adultery; a polygamist is one who practices polygamy; and a homosexual is one who practices homosexuality!”

“But more than this, the argument that a difference exists between being a homosexual and practicing homosexuality is also a subtle error. Though few realize it, this pro-gay argument elevates the sin of homosexuality to a morally-neutral mark of a person’s identity. Rather than distinguishing between being a homosexual and practicing homosexuality, it is more theologically sound to distinguish between the temptation to act upon one’s sinful homosexual tendency (being tempted itself is not wrong) and actually choosing to cherish and act upon that temptation (a wrongful choice). If allowed to stand unchallenged, the distinction made by pro-gay advocates between “being homosexual” and “practicing homosexuality,” would raise a number of theological and ethical questions.

“First, the Bible writers do not adopt today’s distinction between homosexual orientation (condition) and homosexual practice (behavior)—between inversion (constitutional homosexuality) and perversion (the abuse of homosexuality). Biblically, such a dichotomy is a questionable rending of actions and attitudes. For how can the practice of homosexuality be wrong, and yet the cherished inclination toward or the longing for that action be neutral? Jesus dismissed this argument when he stated that the sin of adultery includes lusting in the heart after a woman (cf. Matt 5:27, 28; 1 Jn 3:15). Obviously, a person who has an orientation or strong desire towards a sinful act needs as much help to overcome that inclination as the individual who has already succumbed to or acted upon that sinful desire—whether it be lying, stealing, adultery or killing, etc.

“Second, homosexuality is no more inborn than adultery, polygamy, bisexuality, or bestiality. They are all distortions of human inclinations and sexuality. If homosexual orientation excuses the sin of homosexual desires, does it not imply that other sinful orientations (such as compulsive lying, compulsive adultery, compulsive racism, compulsive stealing, compulsive disobedience to authority, etc.) should all be excused as irreversible sinful conditions? Wherein, then, lies the power of God’s transforming grace?

“Third, we are all born morally corrupt, with weaknesses and tendencies to evil (Ps 51:5; 143:2; cf. 14:3; 1 Kings 8:46; Prov 20:9; Rom 3:23; 7:14-24; 1 Jn 1:8). But does the universal human sinfulness mean that our sinful tendencies or propensities are morally neutral, and therefore, not something to be repented of or overcome by the power of Christ (Rom 7:25; 8:1; Eph 2:1-10; John 1:13; 3:5; 2 Cor 5:17)? Because we are all morally corrupt, provision has been offered for rebirth (“Ye must be born again” [John 3: 5]). This spiritual rebirth is an actual rebirth at the moral level. When homosexuals (or adulterers) are born again, they cease to be homosexuals (or adulterers; see 1 Cor 6:9-10). They may be tempted by those sins; but unless they cherish, yield, or act upon them, they cannot legitimately wear those sins as badges of identity (James 1:12-15)! “If anyone be in Christ, he is a new creature; old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new” (2 Cor 5:17). 9. “God Does Not Want Homosexuals to Give Up ‘Who They Are’”

“Based on the assumption that people are born gay, and on the basis of texts like Psalm 139:13 (“For

you created my inmost parts”) and Psalm 100:3 (“It is he that hath made us and not we ourselves”), pro-gay advocates maintain that peoples’ homosexual orientation or condition is part of their identity, defining who they are as sexual human beings. Consequently, it is argued: “Since God made me the way I am, and since I have had my orientation from my earliest memories, why shouldn’t I express my God-given sexuality? Why would God ask me to change something which He Himself has given me?” Response to Argument #8

“The fact is that God wants every one of us, including homosexuals, to give up something we have had all our lives— ourselves, our sinful selves. The Bible condemns all forms of self-love or self-indulgence as expressions of idolatry and presents self-denial as the hallmark of Christian discipleship (Lk 14:26-27; cf. Rev 12:11). The only way really to find one’s self is by losing it (Mark 8:34-37). We cannot change ourselves; but Christ can change us if we truly want to be changed from our besetting sexual tendencies. Edited by Jerry Eaton Part II in next month’s *Messenger*

MISSION REPORT FROM ALBERTA, CANADA

Summer 1999: I spent one or two days each week going to a nearby town, distributing literature. I especially enjoyed approaching the young people on the street and offering them information on abortion, drugs etc. They were, for the most part, polite and receptive. How many of them actually followed up and read, that I don’t know, but the seed has been sown.

Summer 2000: Because of the extra strain last year of trying to rush through my work at home in order to go to town, I decided this year to confine my efforts to the times when we regularly make our town trips.

For years I have been distributing literature on the streets of Olds and all other towns and cities I happened to be passing through. One of my special places turned out to be *in* front of a Lucky Liquor outlet which happens to be next to a soup and sandwich cafe where my mother often has gone for a meal. Since I eat my own food, I usually waited in the car, read, and “watched for souls as he that must give an account”.

When someone approaches to go in or comes out of the liquor store, I offer him/her an article explaining the deleterious (bad) effects of alcohol.

Some absolutely refuse the information, but many have received it, and a few have noticeably been grateful. I remember one man in particular who gave me the impression that this stimulus was what he needed to decide to quit for good. God had sent me and him there for that purpose.

A few weeks ago I was doing my regular thing of approaching the people, when suddenly a worker from the soup/sandwich/ice cream cafe approached me angrily and demanded that I leave the premises. (I hadn’t realized that this was a private mall.) She said that they were losing customers because of me. Apparently someone had complained about what I was doing. She didn’t stop to think that many, many people are losing loved ones by accidents caused by alcohol, ill health, sanity and money due to this menace to society.

Well, “We ought to obey God rather than men.” Acts 5:29. (See also verse 27 & 28). However, we haven’t been back to that area, and there are lots and lots of other places to work. In fact, a helper is greatly needed out here. May God send one at the right time. AMEN

Sister Kathleen Ross

CHILDREN'S CORNER

DON'T FORGET THE LORD

Bill came running to the dockside, where his father was standing, his heart pounding with excitement. "Hey dad!" he yelled, "John Smith said he will take us out for a ride in his boat tomorrow if we want to go with him. Can we go?"

Bill held his breath, waiting for his dad's answer. He *had* to say yes. In all the time they had come on vacation to Rockford Beach, John Smith had never offered to take them out in his boat before. John was quite a few years older than Bill, and Bill envied his easy-going life. With his own boat he had the freedom to go for rides in the ocean any time he felt like it. When his father died of a heart attack, John inherited an old fishing boat and immediately dropped out of school.

Dad hesitated, "Tomorrow is Sabbath, Bill. We'll be going to church."

"Oh *dad!*" said Bill, his hopes dashed. "Do we *have* to go to church when we're on vacation?" He scowled and then he added, "Besides, I'm getting too big for church and Sabbath school. John never goes."

"We're Christians in our family," dad said gently, "And we go to church every Sabbath. We're never too old to go to church."

"But I don't get anything out of it, dad."

"How much do you put into it, Bill?"

Bill dropped his head. He didn't put much into it, he knew. He fooled around hi children's Sabbath school when he could get away with it, and didn't really listen to the sermon very much. Usually he tuned out and had his mind on all the things he would like to be doing with his worldly friends out at the park. It seemed such a waste of time to spend a couple of hours each week in church when there were so many other exciting things to do.

"Ask John if he can take us on Sunday," said dad. "I'll be glad to go then."

Fortunately John agreed, and Bill was happy again.

Somehow Bill got through Sabbath. He was sorry he had to spend two hours of such a beautiful day in a stuffy church, but when Sunday dawned as beautiful as Sabbath he was satisfied.

Early hi the morning they went to meet John on the dock. "It is very kind of you to take us out, John," dad said to the teenager.

John nodded. "Glad for some company," he replied.

"Does your boat have a powerful engine?" dad asked.

"Oh, it's good enough on days like this when the water's not too rough," John replied casually. "Of course, the harbor mouth is a bit tricky to get in and out of, no matter what the weather is like. There is a strong current and freak waves - ever since they built that jetty half a mile north of here. She takes a bit of handling to get her in and out safely."

"How about a radar?" Bill asked.

"I haven't bothered with it," John said briefly. "It's too expensive. Besides, when the weather is bad, I just don't go out. I can come and go as I like."

"That is certainly a nice life," dad commented, "But don't you get bored?"

"No, not really," said John, "I'm a natural born drifter. There is no place to go hi a hurry. No pressure. Let the rest of the world break its neck in their rush. I am not going to. I like to take it easy."

Bill looked at his dad to see what effect John's words were having on him. But dad's expression didn't betray his feelings. John's way of life did seem attractive, but somehow Bill felt there had to be more to life than just drifting hi and out with the tide. Bill figured he would enjoy it for a while, but not forever.

Soon they began to chug their way out of the harbor. There

were not many boats out today. The water inside the harbour was like glass and the boat cut through it with ease. Even the stretch through the harbour mouth was uneventful, although Bill could see heavy swells rising and falling, and the jagged black rocks at the base of the jetties looked ominous. Bill knew that Rockford Beach harbor had a reputation for being treacherous. He remembered last summer when they were on vacation here; even the harbour patrol boat capsized and was smashed to pieces.

Once they were far enough out to sea, John cut the engine and let the boat drift for awhile. They enjoyed relaxing in the peaceful, quiet ocean, swaying to and fro. For more than an hour they sat relaxing on the boat. John sat with his back propped up against the cabin with his hat pulled over his eyes. For all Bill knew, he could be sleeping.

Bill felt sleepy too. The ocean shone like polished steel, and the gentle rocking of the boat added to his sleepy feeling. He stood up and moved to the other side of the boat where he would feel more of a gentle breeze. Far out to sea, the horizon was lost in a yellowish-gray haze, and the usually deep blue sky had a thin wash of mist over it. Bill hoped it didn't mean a change in the weather. He leaned over the side and watched a jellyfish float lazily by, and just out from the bow a fish jumped. In a few minutes he leaned back against the cabin and

rested.

Bill wasn't sure how long he sat there. Suddenly he realized he was feeling cold. He stood up and looked out to sea. The horizon was no longer there. The gray haze had become a bank of mist and rolled across the water.

Just then John tried to start the engine. Bill joined his dad on what should have been the landward side of the boat, but the shoreline had disappeared.

Bill moved into the cabin where John was coaxing the engine to life. At last it caught, and the boat began to move. John swung the bow in the direction of the coast. "The wind shifted," he muttered. "I must have fallen asleep."

"The fog is pretty thick," dad said, stepping into the cabin.

"I know, I know," said John looking worried. "I should have kept my eye on that fog bank. It's been out there for days, just waiting for a change in the weather."

Dad looked worried too, but he didn't say anything. They chugged along for a while trying to peer through the damp fog. Bill looked at his dad, hoping for some encouraging sign. But dad had his head bowed. *Was he praying?* Bill wondered.

Eventually John changed direction slightly. "We can't be too far off shore now," he said. He cut the engine completely. The silence was almost deafening after the roar of the engine.

"What did you stop for?" Bill asked.

"Shh! I'm listening," John said.

Bill listened too, but all he could hear was the gentle lapping of the water and an occasional splash as a fish jumped. The mournful wail of a seagull sounded overhead. Suddenly Bill heard another sound - a gentle hum at first but growing louder. Then Bill jumped as a deep horn blasted out of nowhere, echoing over the water. The hum became a roar.

John leapt into action. Bill had never seen him move so fast. He jabbed a button on the far side of the cabin and another blast of a horn filled the damp air. Suddenly a ship loomed out of the mist. The next moment it swerved as it saw their boat. The bow of a pleasure yacht sliced through the water only a few feet away.

"Phew! That was close," John said. Dad didn't speak, and Bill's legs had turned to jelly.

"Here, Bill," John said, "You man this horn. See that clock there with the second hand on it - every two minutes push that button, just like I did. Every two minutes now. Have you got that?"

Bill nodded. He felt jittery.

John started the engines, and the boat began to move. Then he asked dad to go up into the bow to be a lookout for them. "I'll move us in slowly. The boat's gone, but others will be caught in this. You listen for their horns and direct me from up front," John said. Then he muttered, "Sure wish I had a radio. Could use some communication right now."

They moved cautiously through the fog like a phantom ship. Then after about ten minutes John cut the engines again. He put his head outside the cabin and listened.

"Hear that?" he called to dad. "Two high pitched wails a minute apart. That's the harbour fog horn." Then he turned to Bill. "Keep manning that horn," he said, "We're not through the worst of this yet. It'll be no joke finding the harbour mouth in this fog." The boat began to move again.

Bill wondered how on earth they would manage in the channel. The memory of those jagged black rocks came flooding back.

Just then dad waved his arms and John slowed the boat to a crawl. He stuck his head out of the cabin. "What is it?" he called.

"A boat ahead - portside," dad shouted.

They floated gently ahead and then out of the mist, the gray hull of the harbour patrol appeared. A patrolman stood at the bow, a megaphone at his mouth.

"Need help?" he called.

"Sure do!" Jim yelled back.

"Follow us," called the patrolman and the motorboat swung around and headed for the harbour entrance.

Dad came back into the cabin. "Praise the Lord for someone to follow," he said his serious face white with strain. "Someone who knows the way ahead."

"You can say that again!" John said with feeling, his eyes steadily on the green and red lights of the patrol boat.

Safely home at last. Bill sipped a cup of warm tea and gazed at the logs in the fireplace. It had been a scary experience out there alone, with no communication, but his father seemed calm through it all. He had seen his father praying a lot and perhaps that is what made him calm. Even John had noticed his father's calmness and wondered about it. Maybe his own life of drifting is not the way that he should be living. It was no help in an emergency.

Bill sat thinking, maybe that is what going to church is all about - communication. How could you expect God to suddenly answer your prayers in an emergency, if you never talked to Him before? In fact, Bill was so worried and scared that he didn't think to even ask the Lord for help as his father had done. Bill decided that he would be in church the next week for sure and without any complaints. He would learn to communicate

with Jesus as his father had done so that when the next emergency comes he too can be as calm as his father, trusting in Jesus to protect them. Yes, he now understood the value of going to church and listening to the sermons. The Word of God had new meaning for him and so Bill started to remember to take Jesus with him wherever he went.

“Seek the **LORD** and his strength,
seek his face continually.”
1 Chronicles 16:11.

*Being out of touch with you, O Lord,
is like being lost in a fog. Forgive
me for thinking I can take care of
myself. Please guide me so my life
will turn out right.*

Kohlrabi in the kitchen

You’ve noticed this bizarre looking vegetable, but you’ve never felt brave enough to try it... right? Well, it doesn’t bite, but you can!

Introducing kohlrabi

- Kohlrabi, pronounced kohi-RAH-bee, is a popular veggie in Hungary, Germany and China.

It is not a root vegetable, but a tuber that grows *above* the ground! It is turnip shaped, about the size of a tennis ball and comes in green, white or violet, depending on variety. Dark green stems and leaves grow out from this tuber in all directions.

- It is the mildest tasting member of the cabbage family. The flavour is similar to broccoli stems, or a cross between a radish and a cucumber. The leaves taste like kale or collards.

How to buy it

- Choose bulbs no larger than two to three inches in diameter. Larger ones are tough and fibrous. Smaller ones are more delicate, don’t require peeling and have a more mellow taste.
- If leaves are attached, look for crisp, firm, deeply coloured leaves.
- Avoid cracks, visible fibres and soft spots.

Storage tips

Store leaves and bulb separately in plastic bags in the refrigerator. The leaves will last a day or two, the bulb up to a week.

Kitchen time

Large bulbs need trimming and peeling to remove the fibrous underlayer just below the skin. Small, fresh kohlrabi need no peeling.

- You can eat it raw or cooked.
- Don’t be surprised when you buy a violet coloured kohlrabi and it turns khaki green when cooked. That’s normal.

Salad time

- Use raw or blanched kohlrabi in salads.
- Make coleslaw, substituting shredded kohlrabi for cabbage.
- Slice some kohlrabi, carrots and cucumbers into match sticks. Shred green onions into lengthwise strips. Dress Asian style with toasted sesame oil, soy sauce, garlic and salt.
- Let kids try some raw kohlrabi sticks dipped in a creamy salad dressing.

Basic stuff

- Steam, boil or cook kohlrabi slices in the microwave until tender. Serve with butter and salt, or olive oil.
- Large kohlrabi are perfect for stuffing. Peel, parboil, hollow out, stuff, then bake or braise,
- Add kohlrabi to soups or stews during the last 20 minutes of cooking.

Culinary companions

Parsley, dill, oregano, chives, marjoram, basil, thyme, nutmeg, caraway, fennel, garlic, shallot, green onions, lemon, soy sauce, sesame, oil and ginger.



Michael Cyrus Newby, two and half months old.