

The Reformation 

Messenger

Volume 8, Number 8

August 2001

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



Farewell Meeting at Canadian Conference



The Assyrian Gilgamesh Epic

Part IV

On the Mountains of Ararat

"And the ark rested in the seventh month, on the seventeenth day of the month, upon the mountains of Ararat." Genesis 8:4.

The Aftermath

After the flood, new mountain ranges sprung up where there had once been beautiful rolling hills or prairies, now barren mountain ranges with ugly boulders cluttered the landscape. Some lands remained under water while other areas, parts of the ocean floor were forcibly lifted to heights above sea level. Icebergs appeared. Water congealed to form two arctic poles, and large landmasses froze. The flood waters also evaporated to form clouds in the sky.

The Gilgamesh Epic recounts a sad and touching episode in which Ut-Napishtim looks out over the vast islandless sea and weeps.

"The landscape was as level as a flat roof. I opened the hatch, and light fell upon my face. Bowing low, I sat and wept, tears running down my face" (1).

Genesis also states that Noah, like Ut-Napishtim, opened the window of the ark and beheld the vast sea. "And it came to pass at the end of forty days, that Noah opened the window of the ark which he had made." **Genesis 8:6.**

By God's grace Noah had been mercifully and miraculously preserved through the greatest tempest of all time. He saw in the waters that those who had opposed and mocked his work were nowhere to be seen. It was a foreshadow of the last day when sin and sinners will be washed away, not by water, but by a lake of fire. Only those who remain true to the God of heaven will survive the coming catastrophe.

The Mountain Retreat

Ut-Napishtim, after having wept upon the sight of the expanse of the sea, beheld from his ship a mountainous region. The eleventh clay tablet of the Gilgamesh Epic states: "I looked about for coast lines in the expanse of the sea: In each of fourteen (regions) there emerged a (mountain) region. On Mount Nisir the ship came to a halt. Mount Nisir held the ship fast, allowing no motion" (1).

An inspired nineteenth century author's words corroborate the Gilgamesh Epic's point of view: "As the waters began to subside, the Lord caused the ark to drift into a spot protected by a group of mountains that had been preserved by His power. These mountains were but a little distance apart, and the ark moved about in this quiet haven, and were no longer driven upon the boundless ocean. This gave great relief to the weary, tempest-tossed voyagers" (2).

Gilgamesh's Mount Nisir corresponds with Genesis' Ararat mountains. "And the ark rested in the seventh month, on the seventeenth day of the month, upon the mountains of Ararat." **Genesis 8:4**. Both accounts coincide in declaring that the ship or ark landed on a mountain and not a river, sea, or lake.

Interestingly, the Genesis account refers not to Mount Ararat but to the mountains of Ararat. In fact, "Mount Ararat consists of two mountains, Great Ararat, 16,916 feet high, and Little Ararat, 12,840 feet high" (3).

In ancient times the Ararat mountains belonged to Armenia. Today, the mountain retreat belongs to Turkey. The name Ararat is a derivative of "Urartu" which was the ancient name for Armenia (4).

There is a long list of ancient historians and travelers who claimed to have seen Noah's ark on the Ararat mountains.

- Berossus, a Babylonian historian, wrote in 275 B.C. of "the ship that grounded in Armenia" (4).
- Flavius Josephus, a first-century A.D. Jewish historian who wrote the Antiquities of the Jews, says "the Armenians call this place ('Apobaterion') [meaning] 'the place of descent; for the ark being saved in that place, its remains are shown there by the inhabitants to this day'"(5).
- Nicolaus of Damascus, who wrote about universal history in the first century A.D., in his 96th book said that "there is in Armenia a great mountain called **Baris**, where many refugees found safety at the time of the Flood, and one man, transported on an Ark, grounded on the summit, and relics of the timbers were long preserved" (4,5).
- The most famous of travelers who claimed to have seen the ark is Marco Polo. "In his book Travels of Marco Polo he made an intriguing reference to the Ark: 'You must know that it is in the country of Armenia that the Ark of Noah exists on the top of a certain great mountain on the summit of which snow is so constant that no one can ascend; for the snow never melts and it is constantly added to by new falls. Below, however, the snow does melt and runs down, producing such rich and abundant herbage that in summer cattle are sent to pasture'" (4).

The ark landed on a rock and its remnants may still be there inside one of the rocky clefts of Mount Great Ararat, under its snowcaps, as a silent testimony of an ancient flood and of the survivors whom escaped catastrophe.

Messenger Pigeons

According to the Gilgamesh Epic, after seven days on Mount Ararat, Ut-Napishtim sends out on three consecutive attempts three different birds: a dove, a swallow, and a raven. First, the dove or messenger pigeon returned after finding no resting place. Next, Ut-Napishtim sends forth a swallow who also returned because it found no visible resting place. Finally, Ut-Napishtim's third attempt proved to be successful, because the raven did not return to the ship.

Gilgamesh Epic clay tablet XI says, "When the seventh day arrived, I sent forth and set free a dove. The dove went forth, but came back; since no resting-place for it was visible, she turned round. Then I sent forth and set free a swallow. The swallow went forth, but came back; since no resting-place for it was visible, she turned round. Then I sent forth and set free a raven. The

raven went forth and, seeing that the waters had diminished, he eats, circles, caws, and turns not round" (1).

The Biblical version of this episode is recorded in **Genesis 8:7-12**:

"And he sent forth a raven, which went forth to and fro, until the waters were dried up from off the earth.

Also he sent forth a dove from him, to see if the waters were abated from off the face of the ground; but the dove found no rest for the sole of her foot, and she returned unto him into the ark, for the waters were on the face of the whole earth: then he put forth his hand, and took her, and pulled her in unto him into the ark.

And he stayed yet other seven days; and again he sent forth the dove out of the ark; and the dove came in to him in the evening; and, lo, in her mouth was an olive leaf plucked off: so Noah knew that the waters were abated from off the earth.

And he stayed yet other seven days; and sent forth the dove; which returned not again unto him any more."

The **Gilgamesh Epic's** details correspond with the story in Genesis. Both accounts mention that birds were released to survey the land. Both accounts tell that there was a seven day waiting period before sending out a bird. Both accounts mention that a dove and raven were sent forth. Both accounts agree that on several occasions the birds returned to the vessel finding no resting place. Both accounts agree that it was not until the last attempt that the released bird did not return, signifying that there was dry land to walk on.

The differences between the two accounts are minor. The **Gilgamesh Epic** says that a dove was first sent out, whereas Genesis says it was a raven. The **Gilgamesh Epic** says that the raven was the last bird sent forth, whereas Genesis says that it was a dove. The **Gilgamesh Epic** says that a swallow was sent forth in the second attempt, whereas Genesis makes no mention of a swallow. The **Gilgamesh Epic** speaks of a total of three attempts of surveying the land through birds, whereas Genesis maintains that a total of four attempts were made. These minor differences attest that the two accounts were derived separately from a common origin: the Oral Bible.

Sacrificial Offering

Immediately after the flood and after releasing the animals, both **Ut-Naphistim** and Noah offered a sacrifice of thanks to God. Neither is said to have murmured upon exiting the ark, rather they seem to have viewed themselves as survivors, rather than victims. Worship was the first thing on **Ut-Naphistim's** and Noah's mind. The **Gilgamesh Epic** emphasizes that the sacrifice included "a libation [or drink offering] on the top of the mountains." Genesis adds that Noah built an altar and offered burnt offerings of "every clean beast and every clean fowl". Both accounts agree that the sacrifice was **pleasing** and acceptable to God. Both accounts state that God "**smelled** the sweet savor" from the sacrifice offered.

The **Gilgamesh Epic** on tablet XI states: "Then I let out (all) to the four winds and offered a sacrifice. I poured out a libation on top of the mountain. Seven and seven cult-vessels I set up, upon their pot-stands I heaped cane, cedar wood, and myrtle. The gods smelled the savor, the gods smelled the sweet savor, the gods crowded like flies about the sacrifice ... [and] the great goddess arrived" (1).

Since the ark had landed on the top of a mountain, it seems reasonable that there on the mountain top the first sacrifices were offered after the flood.

The number seven keeps reappearing as a sacred number in the narrative. Recall that according to the epic, it took seven days to build the ark, the deluge lasted seven days, a bird was sent out after waiting seven days on Mount Nisir, and Ut-Napishtim offered his thank offerings in "seven cult vessels." Seven denotes perfection. Drink offerings of cane, cedar wood, and myrtle are offered to the gods. Cane sugar is sweet and can give a sweet smell if brewed. "The gods smelled the sweet savor" and were pleased.

Being a pagan historical document, the Gilgamesh Epic contains extraneous variables which entered the narrative with the passage of time and through its transmission from generation to generation. In this episode several corrupted details may be noted.

First, the narrative is polytheistic, whereas Genesis is monotheistic. Secondly, the Gilgamesh Epic speaks of the "goddess" Ishtar, whereas the Bible makes no mention of any real female gods. Thirdly, the Gilgamesh Epic compares the gods to "flies", whereas Genesis compares God to mankind. Many of the ancients believed in insect gods, whereas the Bible presents a monotheistic God sharing our likeness and image. "So God created man in His own image, in the image of God created He him; male and female created He them." **Genesis 1:27**. Overall, the Genesis narrative appears more sublime, spiritual, and moral than the pagan accounts of the same events as contained in the Gilgamesh Epic.

"And Noah builded an altar unto the Lord; and took of every clean beast, and of every clean fowl, and offered on the altar. And the Lord smelled a sweet savour; and the Lord said in his heart, I will not again curse the ground any more for man's sake; for the imagination of man's heart is evil from his youth; neither will I again smite any more every thing living, as I have done." Genesis 8:20,21.

"Here was a lesson for all succeeding generations. Noah had come forth upon a desolate earth, but before preparing a house for himself he built an altar to God. His stock of cattle was small, and had been preserved at great expense; yet he cheerfully gave a part to the Lord as an acknowledgment that all was His. In like manner it should be our first care to render our freewill offerings to God. Every manifestation of His mercy and love toward us should be gratefully acknowledged, both by acts of devotion and by gifts to His cause" (2).

Rainbow of Promise

After the sacrificial offerings, the gods of the Gilgamesh Epic resolved not to eliminate mankind entirely again. There would be no second worldwide deluge to destroy humanity. Instead animals, famine, and plagues would appear to diminish the evil-doing of men. As to Ut-Napishtim, the gods blessed him and his wife and promised them immortality.

The eleventh clay tablet of the Gilgamesh Epic records the words of god Ea as saying: "On the sinner impose his sin, on the transgressor impose his transgression! Be lenient, lest he be cut off, be patient, lest he be dis[lodged]!"

Instead of thy bringing on the deluge, would that a lion had risen up to diminish mankind!...

Instead of thy bringing on the deluge, would that a famine had risen up to [lay low] mankind!

Instead of thy bringing on the deluge, would that pestilence had risen up to smi[te down] mankind!...

Standing between us, he touched our foreheads to bless us: 'Hitherto Ut-Napishtim has been but human. Henceforth Ut-Napishtim and his wife shall be like unto us gods'" (1).

The above pagan account runs a fascinating parallel with the Biblical account on the events which transpired after the flood. Like with the **Gilgamesh Epic**, Genesis records that God promises never to destroy mankind again with a worldwide deluge. "And I [God] will establish my covenant with you; neither shall all flesh be cut off any more by the waters of a flood; neither shall there any more be a flood to destroy the earth." **Genesis 9:11**.

Although the **Gilgamesh Epic** makes no mention of a rainbow covenant, it does state that the gods promised not to send another deluge to destroy all mankind. Yet Genesis does not ignore the token of the heavenly promise. As a token of God's mercy, as a seal of His covenant with mankind, God places the rainbow in the sky after each shower. "And God said, This is the token of the covenant which I make between me and you and every living creature that is with you, for perpetual **generations**: I do set my bow in the cloud, and it shall be for a token of a covenant between me and the earth. And it shall come to pass, when I bring a cloud over the earth, that the bow shall be seen in the cloud: And I will remember my covenant, which is between me and you and every living creature of all flesh; and the waters shall no more become a flood to destroy all flesh." **Genesis 9:12-15**.

Genesis, like the **Gilgamesh Epic**, tells how God blessed Noah and his family while they were on the mountains of Ararat. "And God blessed Noah and his sons, and said unto them, Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth." **Genesis 9:1**. The **Gilgamesh Epic** adds that God touched Ut-Napishtim and his wife's foreheads to bless them. Although the contents of the blessings are different between the two accounts, they are not contradictory. The **Gilgamesh Epic** says that Ut-Napishtim is promised immortality. The Bible also promises immortality to all who overcome their sins when Jesus returns from heaven on the last day of earth's history. Genesis says that Noah and his family were blessed with the ability to reproduce and subdue the land. Although one day they would die, their genes, their teachings, and their customs would be carried on for millenniums as it has been till this day. Their Oral Bible would be passed on from generation to generation as attested by the strong correlation between the stories of the **Gilgamesh Epic** and Genesis.

Three Preachers of Righteousness

The book of **Ezekiel** mentions three natural consequences, instead of a deluge, which God would bring on mankind because of their sins and trespasses after the flood thus validating the words of Ea recorded in the epic. "Son of man, when the land **sinneth** against me by trespassing grievously, then will I stretch out mine hand upon it, and will break the staff of the bread thereof, and will send famine upon it, and will cut off man and beast from it.... If I cause noisome beasts to pass through the land, and they spoil it, so that it be desolate, that no man may pass through because of the **beasts**.... Or if I send a pestilence into that land, and pour out my fury upon it in blood, to cut off from it man and beast." **Ezekiel 14:13,15,19**.

Notice that the same three natural consequences are cited in both the Bible and the pagan epic as resulting from mankind's trespasses and sins: famine, beasts, and pestilence. Both accounts

declare that natural disasters can often be traced to mankind's sins and **trespasses--like** the sins of pollution, war, and meddling with genes.

Furthermore, **Ezekiel** cites these three sore judgments in the same context in which he speaks of **Noah--the Gilgamesh Epic's Ut-Napishtim**. Noah is ranked among the three holiest men of the Old Testament. He ranks with Job and Daniel in holiness and righteousness. Each of them was called by God to withstand the tortures of famine, beasts, and pestilence or disease. Daniel was cast into the den of lions. He withstood the trial of beasts. Job was afflicted with grievous sores. He withstood the trial of pestilence. And Noah withstood the great flood and descended into a barren and famish world immediately after the deluge. He withstood the trial of famine.

Ezekiel mentions these three great heroes three times in the context of the three natural disasters resulting from men's sins as a witness of **faithfulness** in times of apostasy and as examples to imitate. "Though these three men, Noah, Daniel, and Job, were in it, they should **deliver** but their own souls by their righteousness, **saith the Lord God.**" **Ezekiel 14:14.**

Like the three primary colors of the **rainbow--red, yellow, and blue--so** these three primary heroes of the past stand as tokens of righteousness in times of infidelity. If you were called to withstand the fiery trial of temptation, as Daniel in Babylon's idolatry and worldliness, as Job suffering from disease, poverty, and betrayal in Uz, and as Noah standing up to mockery, ridicule, and scoffing in the antediluvian world, would you also choose to be righteous? In times of trial, it is only the righteous who endure and see glory. Only those who see the invisible can accomplish the impossible. As if passing from a fiery furnace, the dross is melted away so the gold can shine in all its glamour.

As Jesus said, "as the days of Noe were, so shall also the coming of the son of man be." **Matthew 24:37.** To which Peter added, "but [God] saved Noah the eighth person, a preacher of righteousness, bringing in the flood upon the world of the ungodly." **II Peter 2:5.** Thus, only those who are righteous and preach righteousness through Jesus Christ will endure and overcome the coming deluge of famine, beasts, and pestilence which will overtake the world just before the return of Jesus in majesty. Such righteousness can be received only by faith and! kept only by obedience to His righteous law. May you and I also become a "preacher of righteousness" and take hold on eternal life as it was promised to Ut-Napishtim.

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By: **Idel Suárez, Jr., Ph.D.**

"ONE THING THOU LACKEST"

Can it be that the one thing we are lacking can take our salvation away? The rich young man to whom Jesus spoke these words had kept the commandments from his youth. Yet he felt that something was lacking. Therefore he came to Jesus with the question, "What shall I do that I may inherit eternal life?" Luke 18:18

The answer Jesus gave did not please him because it touched his idol, the things he loved.

Satan is pleased when a professed Christian holds on to one idol, or to one sin that he has not yet overcome and put away. We speak in the church much about righteousness which we must have. Yet many, after years in the church have not gained the perfect righteousness of Christ. The reason for it is not in God but in us. Something we have not yet sacrificed on the altar and because of this neglect we are often like this rich young man, lacking the perfect righteousness of Christ.

It was one sin that drove Adam and Eve away from paradise. And we by holding on to one sin cannot enter in.

"Our righteousness is found in obedience to God's law through the merits of Jesus Christ. We cannot afford to offend in one point, for if we do, we are pronounced guilty of all; that is, we are recorded in heaven as transgressors, as disobedient children, unthankful, unholy, who choose the depravity of Satan rather than the purity of Christ. An infinite sacrifice has been made that the moral image of God may be restored to man, through willing obedience to all the commandments of God. Exceeding great is our salvation, for ample provision has been made through the righteousness of Christ, that

we may be pure, entire, wanting nothing." Review & Herald Feb. 4, 1890

The one sin in our life doesn't need to be a great disobedience. Small sinful indulgences in eating and drinking will constitute a sin that will separate us from God, especially if we do it with knowledge.

Small neglected duties can do the same. The rich young man did not ask what sins he must stop doing to inherit eternal life, but he asked what good he must do.

Wasting precious time can be the sin that will make us guilty of all. Watching worldly programs on television is a sin that some have not overcome yet. Even sinful thoughts can destroy our salvation.

Jesus said, "He that is faithful in that which is least is faithful also in much: and he that is unjust in the least is unjust also in much." Luke 16:10

When we think of the smallest requirements in the word of God; often we pay very little attention to them. We tend to think that these small sins we can overcome anytime quickly and be perfect. But when the great tests do come upon us, all will fail who did not overcome the smallest sins, the smallest indulgences.

"These may seem to be little things, unworthy of notice, but the seed thus scattered brings forth a sure harvest. It is these little sins, so common that they are often unnoticed, that Satan uses in his service." B.C. 6 page 1080

"It is one of Satan's most successful devices, to lead men to the commission of little sins, to blind the mind of the danger of little indulgences, little

digressions from the plainly stated requirements of God. Many who would shrink with horror from some great transgression, are led to look upon sin in little matters as of trifling consequence. But these little sins eat out the life of godliness in the souls." B.C. 2 p. 1017

It is not possible to live a life with one wrong practice or with one sin. One sin leads into another, and unless it is overcome and put away, the result will be a multitude of sins.

"We need to guard against the first deviation from righteousness; for one transgression, one neglect to manifest the spirit of Christ, opens the way for another and still another until the mind is overmastered by the principles of the enemy." Test. Vol. 6 p 264

"A moment's carelessness may plunge a soul into irretrievable ruin. One sin leads to the second, and the second prepares the way for the third and so on.... If we swerve a single inch from duty, we are in danger of following on in a course of sin that will end in perdition." Test. Vol. 5 p. 540

"Those who venture to indulge in a known sin will be more readily overcome the

second time. The first transgression opens the door to the tempter, and he gradually breaks down all resistance and takes full possession of the citadel of the soul." BC 2. p. 997

We are to watch carefully for the little sins. The little beginnings will lead Christians to greater sins and separate them from God.

Even one wrong practice or one neglected duty can set us in the downward path, which will end in perdition.

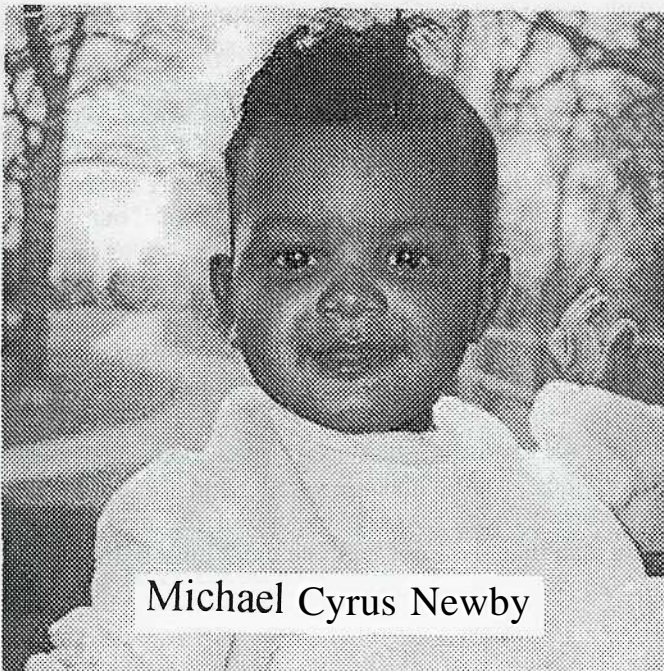
Satan may not tempt you to kill a person, but he will tempt you to dislike someone. He may not tempt you to rob a bank but he will tempt you to be unfaithful in tithes and offerings.

He may not tempt you to commit adultery but he will tempt you to indulge in sensual thoughts.

He knows that one little sin will lead us to greater sins.

Let us watch and pray that we will not lack even one thing but be faithful in all points with the help of God. AMEN

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ABIDE IN ME

"Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can ye, except ye abide in me. I am the vine, ye are the branches: He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing." John 15:4,5.

Truly to be a Christian, one must be abiding in Christ. This means that Christ comes first in every part of our lives. We have no life apart from Christ. Some like to have two lives, one that is lived among fellow Christians while at church, and another one while mingling with worldly associates during the week. This will never be acceptable to God.

In Ancient Israel, several of the ceremonial laws were given in order to remind the person of the need to have Christ living within their heart. We must be living all for Christ, or then we are none of His. Every small detail of life is to be directed to Christ. "Whether therefore we eat, or drink, or whatsoever we do, do all to the glory of God." I Cor. 10:31.

Back in Ancient Israel God directed every detail of life. They were told, what to eat, what to drink, what kind of clothing to wear, what to plant. Even building, buying and selling were directed by the Law of Moses. After He died on the cross, Jesus said He will give us a new covenant. "This is the covenant that I will make with them after those days, saith the Lord, I will put my laws into their hearts, and in their minds will I write them." Heb.10:16. Today, we do not have all these required details of the Ceremonial Law, however this statement in the Bible does not nullify the need for the moral law of the Ten Commandments. It is just that these minute directions were no longer needed.

To the careless reader some of these laws may seem unimportant, however, even if they

are no longer binding today, we can still study the Ceremonial Law and see the golden thread of truth God has in it for us.

CLOTHING

"Thou shalt not wear a garment of divers sorts, as of woollen or linen together." Deut.22:11. This may sound a little strange at first. What would it matter of you mixed these two fibres to make your clothing? The first thing that God did for Adam and Eve after they sinned was to make them clothing. Garments are a symbol of righteousness.

We have two choices of garments that we can wear. 1) "But we are all as an unclean thing, and all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags;" Isaiah 64:6. These garments are a favourite choice of many people today, including Christians. 2) "I will greatly rejoice in the LORD, my soul shall be joyful in my God; for he hath clothed me with the garments of salvation, he hath covered me with the robe of righteousness, as a bridegroom decketh himself with ornaments, and as a bride adorneth herself with her jewels." Isaiah 61:10. These garments are given to every Christian who repents and turns to the Lord with the fullness of his heart.

Before man sinned, his garments consisted of a robe of light. He lost that robe and attempted to make fig leaf garments for himself. This was not sufficient so the Lord made them temporary clothing that was acceptable for the time being. These clothes were made of animal skins. These clothes were to remind man that

something must die in order for their salvation to be obtained.

In the Old Testament God intended that man's clothing would remind him of the heavenly garments that will finally clothe the redeemed. "He that overcometh, the same shall be clothed in white raiment;" Rev. 3:5. "And to her was granted that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white: for the fine linen is the righteousness of the saints." Rev. 19:8.

So why did God require Israel to not mix the two types of cloth? Their clothing was to be a constant reminder of the clothing that the redeemed would wear. It is impossible to wear our own garments of "filthy rags" and the pure, spotless, "garments of righteousness" at the same time. We must either wear one or the other. The requirement to not mix the fabrics kept in their minds the fact that they cannot mix even one small thread of the love of the world into their garment of righteousness. We cannot serve God and mammon in our daily life, at work, at school or among friends.

While this was a physical reminder of the garments of righteousness not being mixed with the filthy rags of our self-righteousness, some try to mix the two spiritually. Or they see the holes in their filthy rags and try to patch them up. It will never work. Jesus said, "No man putteth a piece of a new garment upon an old; if otherwise, then both the new maketh a rent, and the piece that was taken out of the new agreeth not with the old." Luke 5:36.

The person who tries to mix the old and the new will end up in disaster. His cloth will be ruined and when he appears before the Judge of the universe he will not be covered with the robe of Christ's righteousness.

From the clothing that Ancient Israel was counselled to wear, they were reminded daily of the need of wearing the robe of Christ's righteousness - the need to have Christ as a very real part of their lives.

THE OX

Another law that was given in Ancient Israel to point out a person's connection with the Lord was that of: "Thou shalt not plough with an ox and an ass together." Deut 22:10.

Not only were they unequal in size, but the ox was a clean animal and the donkey an unclean animal. Although both were useful animals, they were never to be yoked together.

Before Jesus went to heaven, He prayed to His Father, "I pray not that thou shouldest take them out of the world, but that thou shouldest keep them from evil." John 17:15.

If we compare the unclean ass to the world we can understand what God is trying to tell us. He did not pray that His disciples be separated and live the life of a hermit, rather He prayed that they would be preserved from the evil surrounding them. So also, God does not ask us to separate ourselves from the world. We may use the world, however we are not to yoke up with the world. I have heard of some independent Christians who want to "opt out of the system." Meaning they want to have no connection with the world in things like driver's licences, Medicare numbers, credit cards and various other legal documents which they avoid obtaining. This is not God's will. We can use these tools that the world uses, we are

just not to yoke up with the world. "Be not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? And what communion hath light with darkness? And what concord hath Christ with Belial? Or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel? And what agreement hath the temple of God with idols? For ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God; and they shall be my people. Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you," 2 Cor. 6:14-17.

We often understand these verses to mean that marriage with unbelievers is forbidden in the Bible. While this is true it also goes further to mean that in all areas of life we are not to hold close ties with unbelievers, whether in confidential friends, or business partners. Worldly businessmen are governed by worldly principles, which may be contrary to Godly principles, and unconverted friends cannot understand the struggles with sin that the child of God experiences every day.

The only one we are to yoke up with is Christ. He says, "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." Mat. 11:28-30. If we want Christ to help us through the trials and perplexities of life, we must be yoked up to Him. He is a much more reliable helper than anyone on this earth.

PLANTING

Even in planting their seeds there was a lesson to show their dependence on Christ. "Thou shalt not sow thy vineyard with divers

seeds; lest the fruit of thy seed which thou hast sown, and the fruit of the vineyard, be defiled." Deut. 11:9. This law had a temporal advantage as well as a spiritual lesson. First of all this would preserve the seed quality by preventing inferior varieties resulting from cross breeding. Also, if you plant wheat and oats together, the oats become ruined and the wheat injured.

The spiritual lesson is very similar to the ox and the donkey law. To associate with evil companions will have a damaging effect on the Christian. "Be not deceived: evil communications corrupt good manners." 1 Cor. 15:33. Just as the wheat, which we need for our daily bread, is damaged by mixing it with other seeds in the field, so true Christians, however faithful, may lose their way by these "evil communications" which will mingle with the good, producing an inferior form, or a corruption of, the original true Christianity. Evil companions led King Solomon, the wisest man who ever lived, astray. He thought he was wise and strong enough to stand faithful, but he was not.

This counsel of avoiding "evil communications" means not only avoiding unchristian friends who will lead us in the wrong way, but also it includes any communication that we allow to enter the avenues of our mind. Corrupting influences today surround us everywhere. It is difficult to walk in a shopping mall without having music played for our subconscious minds to pick up and more often than not it is not Christian music. There is the TV, newspapers, magazines, novels etc., but the truth is still the same that they corrupt good minds.

"But we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord." 2 Cor.

3:18. The only safety is to try to avoid these evil communications as much as we can, and allow Jesus to fill our hearts and minds. Whatever we behold the most, that is what we will become "whether of sin until death, or of obedience unto righteousness." Rom. 6:16. If we constantly behold evil, we become evil and today TV is one of the most corrupt things through which sin can enter our minds if not carefully controlled. However we must make sure that we do not allow newspapers and magazines to draw our minds away from Christ either. One of the greatest dangers is in doctor's offices or other offices waiting for appointments as they often have all sorts of magazines lying on the table waiting to waste your time. Sister White counsels us to "Keep your Bible with you. As you have opportunity, read it; fix the texts in your memory. Even while you are walking the streets, you may read a passage, and meditate upon it, thus fixing it in the mind." *Steps to Christ*, p. 90. We can pray, as did King David, "Turn away mine eyes from beholding vanity; and quicken thou me in thy way." Ps. 119:37.

It would be good to make a budget of our time - see how much time we spend in serving self, and see how much time we spend serving the Lord and filling our minds with the things of eternity. Hopefully, our scale is not unbalanced.

JUDGMENT

We are living in the Judgment Hour of this earth's history. While this may cause alarm to those who are not ready to meet Jesus; those who have not made Him a part of themselves and who insist on continuing to wear their own filthy garments, his truth can be a cause of rejoicing to God's true believers.

It is a solemn and serious time in which we live, but we know that the end of all things is at hand

and soon we will go home to meet our Saviour. We will meet Jesus, with whom we have yoked up to on this earth - through whom we have found a sure Help, Counsellor and Guide in time of need. We have filled our minds so much with Him and His love that we can't wait to meet Him.

The more often that something is mentioned in the Bible, the more important it is and Judgment is mentioned over 1000 times in the Bible. It is more serious than death itself. Death may separate friends for a brief period of time until the resurrection, but judgment separates friends and family forever. No one can escape it. People may try to ignore it and put the thought out of their minds, but this will not be a solution, they will still have to face it, whether they like it or not.

The decisions of earthly courts may be corrupt, as some judges have been known to make their decisions according to bribes. The more money a person has, the more opportunity for them to obtain the best of lawyers who can win the case for them and sometimes the guilty have been able to go free this way. In the heavenly court there is no chance for the guilty to walk free. No amount of money can buy their freedom. "So then every one of us shall give account of himself to God." Rom. 14:12.

Jesus does not want anyone to be lost and He has made ample provision for the salvation of anyone who comes to him. In earthly courts, often parents have sacrificed all their worldly possessions and finances to secure the freedom of their children. Do you think that God would allow all of the earth to perish under Satan's rule without also making an effort to save them? No, Jesus gave up everything; He put it all on the line for you and me - will you not accept His way today?

"God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten

Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish but have everlasting life." John 3:16. Not one person can face their life record in the books of heaven, unless belief in Christ and a love for His service is a part of that book. Christ, the heavenly advocate will plead the cause of anyone who surrenders his or her life to Him. He says, "I, even I, am he that blotteth out thy transgressions for mine own sake, and will not remember thy sins." Isaiah 43:25.

Who can reject such infinite love? Our scarlet robe, all torn and filthy, He has promised to take away and cover us with the robe of His righteousness so that when the great Judge looks down on us He will only see the sacrifice of His beloved son. What more could heaven have done for the salvation of man?

It is a serious time in which we live. It is time to separate our affections from the things of this world and to abide in Christ. We must allow Him to put on us His robe of righteousness and take away our filthy rags - not just cover or patch our filthy rags, but take them away. Then we must yoke up with Christ only and not allow evil communications to detract us from our service to the Lord and once we have truly surrendered to Christ, we will be ready in the judgment. It will not be a time of fear but a time of rejoicing because we will not have to face the Judge in our own garments. May God help us each to be ready so we can meet on the sea of glass and together sing the song of Moses and the Lamb.

Amen.

W. Eaton



God's Will for Us - His Perfect and His Permissive Will

We are told in Scripture that Christ (who is the sanctifier) was also sanctified for our sakes, and therefore He was on the same plane of sanctification as we are, and we can call Him our brother (as well as our great Exemplar).

John 17:19 And for their sakes I sanctify myself, that they also might be sanctified through the truth.

Heb 2:10,11 For it became him, for whom are all things, and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings. For both he that sanctifieth and they who are sanctified are all of one: for which cause he is not ashamed to call them brethren,

DA pg 294 God takes men as they are, with the human elements in their character, and trains them for His service, if they will be disciplined and learn of Him. They are not chosen because they are perfect, but notwithstanding their imperfections, that through the knowledge and practice of the truth, through the grace of Christ, they may become transformed into His image.

Christ suffered the things that we must suffer, to give us an example. He takes us as we are, into a partnership with Himself, that we might come into harmony with Him. In this sense, we become His apprentices, following His example.

FLB pg 139 Conversion is a work that most do not appreciate. It is not a small matter to transform an earthly, sin-loving mind and bring it to understand the unspeakable love of Christ, the charms of His grace, and the excellency of God, so that the soul shall be imbued with divine love and captivated with the heavenly mysteries. When he understands these things, his former life appears disgusting and hateful. He hates sin, and, breaking his

heart before God, he embraces Christ as the life and joy of the soul. He

renounces his former pleasures. He has a new mind, new affections, new interest, new will; his sorrows, and desires, and love are all new Heaven, which once possessed no charms, is now viewed in its riches and glory; and he contemplates it as his future home, where he shall see, love, and praise the One who hath redeemed him by His precious blood. The works of holiness, which appeared wearisome, are now his delight. The Word of God, which was dull and uninteresting, is now chosen as his study, the man of his counsel. It is as a letter written to him from God, bearing the inscription of the Eternal. His thoughts, his words, and his deeds are brought to this rule and tested. He trembles at the commands and threatenings which it contains, while he firmly grasps its promises and strengthens his soul by appropriating them to himself All need to understand the process of conversion. The fruit is seen in the changed life.

In order to receive the transformation talked about, we must perfectly understand the will of the Master.

1 Thes 4:1-3 Furthermore then we beseech you, brethren, and exhort you by the Lord Jesus, that as ye have received of us how ye ought to walk and to please God, so ye would abound more and more. For ye know what commandments we gave you by the Lord Jesus. For this is the will of God, even your sanctification, that ye should abstain from fornication.

Titus 2:11, 12 For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men, Teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world.

1 John 3:2, 3 Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet

appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is. And every man that hath this hope in

him purifieth himself, even as he is pure.

As we read these passages of Scripture, we see that God's will for us involves sanctification, holiness in our lives, and for us to reflect Christ's character and life.

Phil 2:12, 13 Wherefore, my beloved, as ye have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling. For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure.

In this verse of Scripture, we read that we are to 'work out our own salvation' yet it is God who works in us to achieve this. We though, have a part to play we must know and do the will of God.

Heb 10:35, 36 Cast not away therefore your confidence, which hath great recompense of reward. For ye have need of patience, that, after ye have done the will of God, ye might receive the promise.

Rom 12:2 And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect will of God.

If there is a perfect will of God (as this verse has stated) is there a secondary will of God? This verse seems to hint that there are two wills of God, and if there are two wills of God, then shouldn't we want to know what that second will is? We can find out, if we examine the history of the children of Israel.

Eze 20:7, 8, 11, 24, 25 Then said I unto them, Cast ye away every man the abominations of his eyes, and defile not yourselves with the idols of Egypt: I am the LORD your God. But they rebelled against me, and would not hearken unto me: they did not every man cast away the abominations of their eyes, neither did they forsake the idols of Egypt: then

I said, I will pour out my *fury* upon them, to accomplish my anger against them in the midst of the land of Egypt . . . And I gave them my statutes, and showed them my judgments, which if a man do, he shall even live in them Because they had not executed my judgments, but had despised my statutes, and had polluted my sabbaths, and their eyes were after their fathers' idols. Wherefore I gave them also statutes that were not good, and judgments whereby they should not live.

Here we read how the perfect will of God for His people was trampled upon, and so a secondary will was presented for them to walk in, which was the way (the will) they wanted.

Mat 19:3-8 The Pharisees also came unto him, tempting him, and saying unto him, Is it lawful for a man to put away his wife for every cause? And he answered and said unto them, Have ye not read, that he which made them at the beginning made them male and female, and said, For this cause shall a man leave father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife: and they twain shall be one flesh? Wherefore they are no more twain, but one flesh. What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder. They say unto him, Why did Moses then command to give a writing of divorcement, and to put her away? He saith unto them, Moses because of the hardness of your hearts suffered you to put away your wives: but from the beginning it was not so.

Again we are referred to the children of Israel for an illustration of God's perfect and His permissive will. We read how Moses (through the instruction of God) gave permission for the Israelites to divorce (an illustration of God's permissive will) yet Jesus confirmed that it was God's intention that man should remain together, and 'let no man tear them asunder', and that it was designed to be this way from the beginning (God's perfect will).

2 Sam 12:7, 8 And Nathan said to David, Thou art the man. Thus saith the LORD God of Israel, I anointed thee king over Israel, and I delivered thee out of the hand of Saul; And I gave thee thy master's house, and thy master's wives into thy bosom, and gave thee the house

of Israel and of Judah; and if that had been too little, I would moreover have given unto thee such and such things.

God blessed David by giving him more than one wife. Plurality of wives was not the design in the beginning - God's perfect will was for one marital partner — however His permissive will allowed David more than one wife.

1 Sam 8:4-11, 19-22 Then all the elders of Israel gathered themselves together, and came to Samuel unto Ramah, and said unto him, Behold, thou art old, and thy sons walk not in thy ways: now make us a king to judge us like all the nations. But the thing displeased Samuel, when they said, Give us a king to judge us. And Samuel prayed unto the LORD. And the LORD said unto Samuel, Hearken unto the voice of the people in all that they say unto thee: for they have not rejected thee, but they have rejected me, that I should not reign over them. According to all the works which they have done since the day that I brought them up out of Egypt even unto this day, wherewith they have forsaken me, and served other gods, so do they also unto thee. Now therefore hearken unto their voice: howbeit yet protest solemnly unto them, and show them the manner of the king that shall reign over them. And Samuel told all the words of the LORD unto the people that asked of him a king. And he said, This will be the manner of the king that shall reign over you: He will take your sons, and appoint them for himself, for his chariots, and to be his horsemen; and some shall run before his chariots Nevertheless the people refused to obey the voice of Samuel; and they said, Nay; but we will have a king over us; That we also may be like all the nations; and that our king may judge us, and go out before us, and fight our battles. And Samuel heard all the words of the people, and he rehearsed them in the ears of the LORD. And the LORD said to Samuel, Hearken unto their voice, and make them a king.

God, against His perfect will, gave the people a king, according to His permissive will.

Ex 23:20-23, 27-28 Behold, I send an Angel before thee, to keep thee in the way, and to bring thee into the place

which I have prepared. Beware of him, and obey his voice, provoke him not; for he will not pardon your transgressions: for my name is in him. But if thou shalt indeed obey his voice, and do all that I speak; then I will be an enemy unto thine enemies, and an adversary unto thine adversaries. For mine Angel shall go before thee, and bring thee in unto the Amorites, and the Hittites, and the Perizzites, and the Canaanites, the Hivites, and the Jebusites: and I will cut them off I will send my fear before thee, and will destroy all the people to whom thou shalt come, and I will make all thine enemies turn their backs unto thee. And I will send hornets before thee, which shall drive out the Hivite, the Canaanite, and the Hittite, from before thee.

God's perfect will was to send hornets before the people to remove all their enemies, however this perfect will was given on a condition. This would only happen if they obeyed the Lord's voice... but we know the result, how they had to fight to obtain the land that God had said He'd provide for them, and this became His permissive will.

Ps 78:18-22, 27-31 And they tempted God in their heart by asking meat for their lust. Yea, they spake against God; they said, Can God furnish a table in the wilderness? Behold, he smote the rock, that the waters gushed out, and the streams overflowed; can he give bread also? Can he provide flesh for his people? Therefore the LORD heard this, and was wroth: so a fire was kindled against Jacob, and anger also came up against Israel; Because they believed not in God, and trusted not in his salvation He rained flesh also upon them as dust, and feathered fowls like as the sand of the sea: And he let it fall in the midst of their camp, round about their habitations. So they did eat, and were well filled: for he gave them their own desire; They were not estranged from their lust. But while their meat was yet in their mouths, The wrath of God came upon them, and slew the fattest of them, and smote down the chosen men of Israel.

Yet another illustration is given, of God's perfect will and His permissive will, and the Scriptures are full of many more illustrations also. These

God's Will for Us - His Perfect and His Permissive Will

all show us, that the apprentice of God must learn, somehow and if the apprentice has a strong will of his own, God says, "All right. Here's My permissive will. Do what you want - I'm giving you laws according to your desires I will give you what you desire then" Why does He do this? We find the answer in the following passage of Scripture.

Eze 14:1-6 Then came certain of the elders of Israel unto me, and sat before me. And the word of the LORD came unto me, saying, Son of man, these men have set up their idols in their heart, and put the stumbling-block of their iniquity before their face: should I be inquired of at all by them? Therefore speak unto them, and say unto them, Thus saith the Lord GOD; Every man of the house of Israel that setteth up his idols in his heart, and putteth the stumblingblock of his iniquity before his face, and cometh to the prophet; I the LORD will answer him that cometh according to the multitude of his idols; That I may take the house of Israel in their own heart, because they are all estranged from me through their idols. Therefore say unto the house of Israel, Thus saith the Lord GOD; Repent, and turn yourselves from your idols; and turn away your faces from all your abominations.

God tells Ezekiel, "See these people coming? They've got idols in their hearts and they are going to ask for something from Me. Tell them exactly what they want, according to their idol desires." Why does He say this? Because, if we the apprentices don't really want to co-operate with Him, then He gives us what we want, the way we want it, until we mess things up and want His perfect will and way.

God does have a permissive will and this is exercised when ignorance and self-will press upon God. He gives us what we want, until we suffer, and then after we've suffered and we're down on our knees, we cry out to Him, "help", and He kindly says "Well look, you got what you wanted, and it wasn't so good. Now look at My perfect will - which way do you want to go?"

When we finally plead for mercy, after we have done our own will, the

following passage of Scripture comes into operation.

Acts 17:30, 31 And the times of this ignorance God winked at; but now commandeth all men every where to repent: Because he hath appointed a day, in the which he will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom he hath ordained; whereof he hath given assurance unto all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead.

So, we have learnt how in the past when God's children stubbornly resist His will, God's permissive will comes into action. We are going to be judged by Jesus - by His example, and therefore at the time of our ignorance God winked, now He has given us Jesus Christ, who shall judge us all.

Rom 9:27, 28 Esaias also crieth concerning Israel, Though the number of the children of Israel be as the sand of the sea, a remnant shall be saved: For he will finish the work, and cut it short in righteousness: because a short work will the Lord make upon the earth.

EW pg 67 I saw that those who of late have embraced the truth would have to know what it is to suffer for Christ's sake, that they would have trials to pass through that would be keen and cutting, in order that they may be purified and fitted through suffering to receive the seal of the living God, pass through the time of trouble, see the King in His beauty, and dwell in the presence of God and of pure, holy angels. Some of us have had time to get the truth and to advance step by step, and every step we have taken has given us strength to take the next. But now time is almost finished, and what we have been years learning, they will have to learn in a few months. They will also have much to unlearn and much to learn again.

Time is short, and we need to make a decision. We need to be able to distinguish between God's permissible and perfect will for us, and build up the ways of old, the foundations which were laid for us - which is God's perfect will for us, as so often it has been discarded.

Isa 58:12 And they that shall be of thee shall build the old waste places:

thou shall raise up the foundations of many generations; and thou shalt be called, The repairer of the breach, The restorer of paths to dwell in.

God isn't going to return until His foundations are restored, and the breach, repaired. He shall not return until we are obedient to His perfect will.

COL pg 69 Christ is waiting with longing desire for the manifestation of Himself in His church. When the character of Christ shall be perfectly reproduced in His people, then He will come to claim them as His own.

Jude 24 Now unto him that is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy

He can present us faultless because He can keep us from falling, if we will be a submissive apprentice - and that's all that God is asking us to do; follow in the footsteps of Jesus. Learn how to pray, learn how to study, learn how to repent, learn justification and then follow the process of sanctification through and understand God's perfect will in this matter. For...

Deut 4:29-31 But if from thence thou shalt seek the LORD thy God, thou shalt find him, if thou seek him with all thy heart and with all thy soul. When thou art in tribulation, and all these things are come upon thee, even in the latter days, if thou turn to the LORD thy God, and shalt be obedient unto his voice [*His perfect will*]; (For the LORD thy God is a merciful God;) he will not forsake thee, neither destroy thee, nor forget the covenant of thy fathers which he swore unto them.

By John Thiel
Australia

Joy which brings no sorrow
with it _____
is the result of an
indwelling Saviour.
TM 390

ADOPTED CHILDREN

Galatians 4:4-7

There is "an old Irish legend of a ruler who wished to leave his kingdom to the cleverest of his three sons. He took the first son on a long journey. On the way, he said, 'Son, shorten the road for me.' The oldest son was overwhelmed by the task, gave up, and they returned home. They king embarked on the same journey with the second son and said again, 'Son, shorten the road for me.' Like his older brother, the boy was daunted by the request, gave up, and they too returned home. The king then took the youngest son on the long journey. Once again he said, 'Son, shorten the road for me.' The youngest launched into a story so long and so engrossing that before the king knew it, he had completed the long journey."

Reflecting on this dilemma in which many pastors, parents, workers, and all kinds of caring people find themselves today: that no matter how good or sincere they are, they can't lessen the number of miles (kilometers) on the road, even for people they deeply love. They just can't walk that long way for those people. But, like the king on the road, I know that just having a companion on some part of the road, can make the long, lonely walk seem shorter, and make the journeys, however difficult, infinitely more bearable.

Have you ever considered the Apostle Paul's journeys? All those roads he traveled throughout Israel, modern Turkey, modern Greece and Italy? All that walking and, knowing Paul, all that talking? In Greece, even today, there is an astounding symmetry of the Roman roads, and the care with which they were built throughout their vast empire is incredible. Always exactly fifteen feet wide with a curb on either side and a gutter in the cities; all roads did indeed lead to Rome - and they made Paul's missionary journeys infinitely easier.

Imagine Paul and Silas, Paul and Timothy, Paul and Barnabas, Paul and Luke, walking along for miles (km) after hot dangerous mile (km) through those small villages and over those mountains and deserts, and forest, talking, working out their theology as they went, telling stories, reflecting on the Scriptures, Jesus, and the truth. Although Paul never uses the metaphor of faith as a journey in the same way that we modern Christians often do, his life was a journey of faith after his encounter with the risen Christ on a road. The road to Damascus: when Paul was blinded

by God's penetrating light and was overwhelmed with the voice that cried out, "Saul, Saul, why dost thou persecute me?" (Acts 9:1)

Paul conceives of Christ's Spirit as the stimulus within every Christian working to bring about obedience to God's will, (Luke 12:12) and His law. The kind of obedience typified in the life and work of Jesus the Christ. When the apostle talks about God sending the Spirit of God's Son into our hearts, crying, "Abba! Father!" it is one of the few instances outside the gospel tradition where the literal words of Jesus are preserved in their original Aramaic form.

For Paul, who spoke Greek, Hebrew and Latin, and probably not Aramaic, those words uttered by Jesus are obviously important. Abba, the Aramaic word for "Father", put into Greek letters followed by its equivalent. (Mk 14:36; Rom. 8:15, 16). Why is this important? They symbolize Christ's willingness to fulfill His commitment to be the Son of God in an absolute sense that the early church preserved them as originally spoken.

"Abba! Father!" were words kept by the early church in their original form, because they were words of a prayer used by those who prayed to be faithful in God's call under very difficult circumstances. "You have not received the spirit of bondage; but you have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father." (Rom. 8:15) The phrases, spirit of bondage and Spirit of adoption are parallel. Perhaps we could say, in a better sense, 'the state of the mind that belongs to slavery,' and the 'state of the mind that belongs to adoption.' The outcome of the former is fear; the outcome of the latter is the ability to pray and to address God as Father. What a privilege!

Because of changing values, lifestyles and acceptances, adoption is a difficult process in our time. It used to be much easier to adopt a child years ago. Until recent years, adoption was a widely practiced way of giving children a new community of love and acceptance. However, still "there is a special work to be done for the children more advanced in years. Let families of our faith who in the churches can do so, adopt these little ones, and they will receive a blessing in so doing." (WM 232-36) "The question of adopting a child, especially an infant, involves most serious responsibility. It should

not be lightly regarded... The question to settle is this; in doing this shall I be merely gratifying my own wishes, or is it a duty the Lord has appointed for me? Is this His way or a way of my own choosing? Carefully search our hearts and study our motives. Many hearts are centered on their affection and not Christ. (WM 232-36) Perhaps God has withheld this blessing and has a wise purpose for withholding it. It should not be taken as evidence that it is your duty to adopt a child. In some cases it might be advisable. But if the Lord bids you so to take an infant to bring up, then the duty is too plain to be misunderstood. Great consideration must be exercised in the work we undertake. We are not to assume large burdens in the care of infant children. This work is being done by others. Let families who can do so adopt the little ones, and they will receive a blessing in so doing. (6T 246, 47) (WM 232-36)

But Paul says we are all adopted when it comes to our relationship with God. Nobody has a deeper relationship because of blood or genetic ties than any other person. We are all - every one of us - adopted children. Like a parent who loves the child whether it was born into the family or adopted into the family, God loves us all the same. It doesn't matter. We are all heirs however we came to the family table and altar. In the case of our status as Christians, however, the situation is even more compelling, because we are all adopted, and we are all heirs. Nobody has more status than anybody else. What, however, are the prerequisites to adoption as God's children? "Those who receive Him and believe in Him become the Spiritual children of God. They are adopted into the royal family; and as they seek to do the will of God, they become conformed into His image." (SD 230). "It is also conditioned on obedience to God's commandments." (SD 15) Also, "all who enter into a covenant with Jesus Christ become, by adoption, the children of God." (SD 15) (2 Cor. 6:17, 18)

"God is our Father, a tender parent, solicitous for His spiritual children. He is pledged to be the protector, guide, counselor, and friend, of all who are obedient to Him." (SD 14)

There is a story of an old man who ran a cotton gin mill near a cotton plantation in a country town of Louisiana, in America. He began talking about religion one day to one of the truck drivers waiting in line to unload their cotton. He said something memorable, "You know, Gene, when we get to heaven, it's gonna be like bringin' your cotton to the gin. We all came by different roads and different means. But God ain't gonna ask you what road you

took. God is gonna wanna know, "How good is your cotton?"

We often forget the essentials of the faith. So easily we get caught up in doctrinal disputes and territorial arguments and power plays and division in the church that we forget the truth and the Law. "Many Church members rely on the pastor, preacher, or leader to keep their weak faith alive and to take the place of Scriptures as man's guide. They ought not to hand their weight on the minister or leader." (6T 134) (GC 595) (WM 111)

God does not care about our labels and who meets human standards. In God's infinite grace, we are called to remember one essential fact: we will, everyone of us, come before God at that Great Banquet, that time of feasting and joy, when God will include some people we have despised - the last, Jesus calls them - and exclude others - the first - and we will be surprised. It doesn't matter about our achievements or our standards of righteousness but about faith and how it has borne fruit.

For many it is impossible to be a good Christian in the church, if the church identifies itself too closely with the rest of the world and culture, "we are to be a peculiar and distinct people, separate from an unbelieving world." (1T 286) Many of the members of any church, I would venture, are nothing more than names on a church membership list. They are not loyal, committed members who give their lives to Christ through the church. If their faith has made no difference in their caring, in the way they spend their money and time and energy, then it is no wonder that evil people use the church for wicked purposes. It is no wonder, then, that the church condemns or minimized its weakness in our time if it has made little or no difference in the way people live. A sanctified Pastor most likely sees this all the time: so many people talk about their faithfulness to the church but withhold their very lives from God. They forget their vows and/or covenant with Christ. "They are not educated to bear responsibilities." (GW 198) They suffer from spiritual amnesia!

A kind of spiritual amnesia plagues us and haunts us, until we realize we are all children of God's reviving grace, adopted, everyone of us, but heirs.

We shall inherit the Kingdom! AMEN

Dr. John Theodorou
Greece

WHAT ABOUT MOVING FORWARD?

"Lord, it is good for us to be here, if you wish, let us make here three tabernacles: one for You, one for Moses and one for Elijah."

Matthew 17:4

On a very special occasion, six days after Jesus had been teaching His disciples very important things for their spiritual life, He chose three of them who had accompanied him to witness a very special event up on a high mountain. Previously He had revealed to all of them that He was to be killed, to be resurrected and later come back in His glory and that there was a cross for anyone who would like to follow Him. He showed them that the value of a soul was more precious than the whole world and that there was a reward waiting for everyone at the end of His work on earth.

He allowed six days to pass by so that these teachings could be well assimilated by these men with faulty characters and little faith but eager for something better than the routine of a mortal life. On the seventh day He called impetuous Peter and the two so-called "sons of thunder", John and his brother James, to give them a living testimony of what He had been teaching them.

Once on the mountain, having left the noise and worries of this world behind, suddenly, the Master was transfigured and the divine glory enfolded Him. Both His face and garments shone brightly. Soon, two imposing figures made their appearance, two characters the disciples had read about in the Scriptures. These were Elijah, the Tishbite, the prophet of God who had been translated to heaven in a chariot of fire without seeing death, and Moses, the humblest man upon this earth, who had resigned to the Pharaonic court and throne and was used by God to deliver His people from

captivity in a heathen land. Although he was the physical and spiritual leader of a huge crowd, he did not enter the promised land, because of one act of disobedience. He had given free expression to his choleric temperament instead of hiding himself in Christ. Although the devil claimed him as his, God's mercy and love rescued him from the fetters of death, and translated him to heaven. And there stood, these two great men, at both sides of Jesus, their Redeemer, the One who by the sacrifice He was about to make had already, centuries before, gathered early fruit for the heavenly granary. There they were, as a symbol of both the ones who would ascend to heaven alive at Jesus' second coming and the ones who would be resurrected, by God's grace, to enjoy eternal life.

It was something too glorious to remain silent and Peter, as it usually happened with him, felt he had to speak and so he said: *"Lord, it is good for us to be here, if you wish, let us make here three tabernacles: one for You, one for Moses and one for Elijah."*

He was used to, at the feast of tabernacles, which was a memorial of the time the Israelites had left Egypt and dwelt in the wilderness for 40 years, make and lodge for a week in those improvised dwellings made of *"branches of palm trees, and bough of leafy trees and willows of the brooks."* (Leviticus 23:40) He found that it would be wonderful to make such tabernacles for Jesus and His heavenly guests so that they might all dwell there because *"it is good for us to be here"*, he said.

Peter was spiritually shortsighted and could not see further than his nose. He did not understand the real symbolism of the apparition and of Jesus' transfiguration and was ready to settle down then and there; the whole plan of redemption was still an enigma to him and his vision was limited to what his eyes could see.

"If you wish, let us make tabernacles". Thanks to the Lord that He did not wish, that He still does not wish! He does not want just a few of us to enjoy the brightness of His glory, but He wishes those who have had the privilege of seeing Him in His divine nature to be heralds of His second coming in glory. He does not want for us to be suspended between heaven and earth as was the case of the tragic end of Absalon whose beautiful and rich locks were entangled on the branches of a tree, but to be genuine and legal citizens of heaven. He does not want for us to be satisfied with our temporary dwellings, even if they are in the middle of nature and flanked by heavenly beings, but He wants to provide us heavenly dwellings in the city of gold and precious stones, where life will be perpetuated and where we shall have access to the tree of life.

Only if our understanding and hearts are opened by the Holy Spirit as it was in the case of the disciples on the way to Emmaus and of Lydia, that woman from Thyatira who first heard and accepted the gospel in Macedonia, shall we be able to understand the magnitude of God's plan for and with us.

Have we understood it? Or are we maybe happily settled down in an tabernacle, enjoying our well-equipped earthly dwelling, surrounded by nature, having now and then a vision of heaven through our study of the Bible or a spiritual sermon but somehow not fully understanding why, in spite of it all, there is a certain emptiness in our soul, a lack of real peace and joy?

Let us not wonder why anymore! Let us remember the purpose of Christ's sacrifice and stop being a Peter. We are not meant to dwell

on the top of a mountain on this earth, isolated from the world, enjoying the presence of spiritual beings. Our commission is to go down to the valley, where people are still possessed by demons and looking for deliverance among Jesus' disciples. We, as such, have been given that power to set them free. Unlimited power has been granted us. *"Heal the sick, cleanse the lepers, raise the dead, cast out demons"* (Matthew 10:8), commanded Jesus to His newly called disciples before He sent them to work.

How many people have we healed? How many lepers have we cleansed? How many dead have we raised and how many demons have we cast out? The result is very discouraging if not maddening, and maybe the reason is that we still say what Peter said. *"It is good for us here"*. Our aspirations are still limited to this environment that is familiar to us. We think that as long as there is a time of grace and we have the opportunity we are entitled to enjoy the harmless pleasures of this life. We are afraid to fly higher in the wings of faith.

Although we know how fragile our tabernacle is, although we are well aware that it takes a 7 scale Richter earthquake to leave us homeless - if not lifeless - in a matter of seconds, we still somehow manage to block the idea out of our mind. We think those catastrophes happen elsewhere and that we, as God's children, are always safe under His wings, and are given the chance and privilege to send help to the victims. It is so easy and comfortable to sit at our ebony desk or under our parasol in the garden and write a cheque for a generous amount to relieve the suffering of the poor and needy! Is this what Jesus asked us to do? He said: "Unless your righteousness exceeds the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, you will by no means, enter the kingdom of heaven." (Matthew 5:20)

Jesus left His throne in heaven, the adoration of the angels, an atmosphere of purity and love and came down to this valley of misery so that you and I may have access to the heavenly city,

so that we may ascend not only with our imagination or divine inspiration by physically, to the wonderful kingdom of God the Father.

The highest living standard we may have set for us or reached cannot be compared with the glory of our heavenly dwellings. We have been called to be priests and kings, a peculiar people and if we keep this in mind and allow it to enter our heart we shall not say: *"It is good for us here, let us make tabernacles."* But we shall live in tents, as Abraham did, be always on the move following the Lord's instructions carefully because we are strangers and pilgrims in this world and *"wait for the city whose builder and maker is God."* (Hebrews 11:1))

But before we ascend we must descend. Before we are taken in the arms of our guardian angel to Mount Zion we must be taken in the wings of faith to the valley of affliction to relieve people's suffering, to the valley of decision (Joel 3:14) to help people decide for salvation and eternal life. Before we increase we must decrease. Before we live we must die. Before we may be used by God we must surrender to His will. Before He may work through us we should stop working for Him and remember what Isaiah, the prophet who had a great revelation of God's throne and glory and whose lips were cleaned with coal from the altar said before he could be an ambassador of heaven: *"You have also done our works in us."* (Isaiah 26:12)

We are absolutely incapable of doing anything and we have not been called to make our own plans and have the Lord sign them, but to follow His instructions as Noah did when he built the ark, or Moses when he made the tabernacles in the wilderness. We are to be obedient as the servants at the wedding in Cana to whom Jesus said: *"Fill the water pots with water and they filled them". Take it to the master and they took it."* (John 2:7,8)

As Peter, John and James were having that wonderful experience on the mountain and amazement filled their hearts, the voice of God

the Father was heard: *"This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased. Hear Him!"* Mary had said to the servants at the wedding in Cana: *"Whatever He says to you, do it."* (John 2:5) Two commands are given to us: to hear Him and to do what He tells us and He certainly does not tell us *"conform to this world"*, *"It is good for you here"* but *"take up your cross and follow me"*, *"In my Father's house are many mansions...I go to prepare a place for you, and if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself; that where I am there you may also be."* John 14:2,3.

Where is Jesus today? We all know the answer: *"Sitting at the right hand of God"* (Colossians 3:1) Where may we also be? *"To him who overcomes I will grant to sit with Me on My throne, as I also overcame and sat down with My Father on His throne."* (Revelation 3:21) This is the promise of a long-suffering God to His self-sufficient church at the end of times. This is the reward to everyone who opens the door of his heart to the divine messenger and accepts His sacrifice of love. To dine with Him, to eat His body and drink His blood (John 6:54) and who are not scandalized by these words as were the many followers who left Him because they could not understand what an intimate communion He wanted to have with each one of them. This is the promise to those who are sick and tired of the mediocrity of life upon this earth and do not say: *"It is good for us to be here"* but suffer as they realize that they themselves are delaying His coming.

May the Lord help us not only to understand but also to believe, appreciate and long for His high goal for each one of us. AMEN

Teresa Corti



CANADIAN FIELD CONFERENCE

Who has a God as great as our God

Deuteronomy 4:7

Friday, July 6, 2001

We opened our annual field conference with our theme song, "Mine Eyes Have Seen the Glory." Then the president of the Canadian Field, Br. Kanagarajah extended a warm welcome to all the churches represented at the conference and to all those who came from far countries to be with us.

Br. Ivo Ivonov, from Montreal spoke to us some encouraging words. He asked the congregation "what makes Christianity different from all other religions?" "What brought us here today?" It is our love for our Lord Jesus Christ. God is our present help in time of trouble. John 15:15. Jesus is the best friend that we could ever have. We are not promised a smooth way but that there will be trials and difficulties. Yet, God has promised deliverance from all sin. Worry is blind and cannot discern the future, yet Jesus has already prepared the future for us. The great Jehovah loves you. His arms are always open to accept you. Jesus has a wonderful plan for our lives. Trust Him. Give your life completely to Him.

Our Sabbath opening service was given by our visiting brother Joshua Martinez from Arlington, Virginia. We were happy and blessed to have Br. Joshua with us as well as his wife and mother. Br. Joshua spoke to us about Elijah - a man with great zeal for God. He was a man used by God to bring a message. The people of God had forsaken the Lord and therefore the Lord had said that no rain would come until He would say it would rain. This is symbolic of the Holy Spirit. When we are baptized we receive the

early rain; the latter rain is when the church is faithful to God's commandments.

We need to receive the early and the latter rain. Otherwise, we won't be able to stand in the time of trouble. That is what Elijah had and therefore was able to stand before the king.

At each conference we need to come closer to the Lord. The Lord is saying 'change your ways'. We must become like an Elijah. Elijah served a living God inwardly and outwardly and may we do the same.

Sabbath, July 7, 2001

After our Sabbath School, conducted by Br. Enrol Fletcher, we entered the divine service. Br. Kanagarajah welcomed all to our conference again. The Scripture reading was taken from Hebrews 1:12 and followed by special songs.

We were honoured to have our dear Br. Antonino Di Franca, the General Conference President, to give the divine service to us. He brought many greetings from brothers and sisters all over the world.

Br. Di Franca spoke to us along the following lines: Human beings were created to be together with one another and with God. God wants to be near to each one of us. Yet, people today, have become estranged to God and a separation exists between us and Him. Sometimes it seems that God is not in our lives and it feels like we are left alone.

But God will never leave us. God is guiding His church. Demonstrating that we love each other reveals the relation that we have with God. Now is the time to improve our relationships. The Lord is knocking at our heart's door. He is willing to take our hands and guide us. May we feel the Lord's hands on us every day and every hour leading us, until we reach our eternal home - until we reach heaven.

After lunch the Toronto Youth presented their program. Their theme was "forgiveness" and this was demonstrated to us through songs and short plays. God is praised and happy to hear young voices praising him.

We were delighted to have Br. Gary Foster visit us again from Kentucky, USA. Br. Foster was newly ordained as a minister at the American Union conference just the week before. He told us that we are in a war. The enemy we fight against is very real. Satan is intruding his presence everywhere. Evil angels are following us every moment. In The Great Controversy pg. 589 we are told that Satan has control of everyone who does not have the special protection of God. Yet, we have a big brother, Jesus Christ, who can fight our battles for us at every moment of every day that Satan is trying to attack us.

Love is a power that we cannot resist. Satan will flee if he encounters a church filled with love. We need to start acting as brothers and sisters in the Lord. Br. Foster pleaded with the congregation that we would 'stay close to Jesus'.

In the Missionary Meeting and Testimony period, held by Br. Timo Martin, the baptismal questions were asked of four dear souls that were preparing to take their stand for the Lord. They were sisters Shartery Garcia, Teresa Borrera, Fanny Ramirez and brother Kenny Urizar.

Afterwards we heard testimonies from several people which were an encouragement to each one of us. Br. Timo said to us that 'We can praise God that we are here today'. Also, we were favoured by several special songs.

Following dinner we heard a musical presentation by the Streetsville Youth. The theme was "The Triumphs of His Grace". Through narration, Bible verses and song we heard about Jesus' love, death and resurrection again where He triumphed over death so that we may have everlasting life. All of the Streetsville young people joined in at the end to sing "I have decided to follow Jesus."

In the following meeting, held by Br. Antonino Di Franca, we were happy to have another dear soul to take his stand for Jesus. Sandrino Guerra decided to join God's church and to be baptized the next day.

Br. Di Franca spoke to us about how the reform began in a very difficult time. It was a time of war. The reformation suffered very much but lived out the victory. God is near to us. Are we able to find Jesus?

False gods and the true God cannot exist together. We should have the same goal as God. Communion with God will draw Him near to us. Communion with God will bring forth fruit.

Jesus promised that He will be with us always. He is faithful in His promise. May we say, 'Speak Lord, so that we can do Thy will.'

For our Sabbath closing meeting, Br. Evald Pedersen, said to us, 'It is wonderful that we have a God as great as our God.' We have a God that is love and takes care of us. Today's conditions are like those that existed in Sodom and Gomorrah. Yet, God has promised that as long as we are on His side, He will still be with us and will never

forsake us. While we were enemies, Jesus died for us.

Sunday, July 8, 2001

On Sunday morning, all of heaven was smiling as Br. Kanagarajah baptized four precious souls in Lake Ontario. It was a time of great rejoicing for the entire congregation that were assembled.

Back at the church Br. Kanagarajah gave words of admonishment and encouragement to the four souls that were baptized and the one sister who was accepted into the church. The right hand of fellowship to the SDA Reform Church was extended to each along with a Bible verse being read to them.

Afterwards, each gave a testimony to praise God for His goodness and that they would remain faithful till the end.

Before closing the conference Br. Kanagarajah had a special announcement to make. Sister Rose Powell was introduced as a new Canadian Field Bible Worker. Sister Rose spoke on how the Lord had led her to come to this decision to work for Him. We

need to pray for Sister Rose and her family that God may use her to further His message in these last days.

To close the conference we had many specials and farewell messages by the leaders and visiting ministers. We thank each one who participated for their encouragement and may God bless all who attended.

With the final hymn "God be with you till we meet again" the conference closed with a final blessing by Br. DiFranka.

Throughout the conference we were privileged to have many special songs of praise. Let us all who attended this conference remain in the Spirit and share our experiences with others is my wish and prayer. AMEN

(Conference summary - written by the Canadian Field Secretary)

It is better to endure cheerfully every inconvenience than to part with peace and contentment. AH 156



Baptism at Canadian Field Conference

If you love something, set it free; if it was yours then it will come back to you. If it doesn't then it wasn't meant to be.

Where is the love chapter in the Bible? You may say 1 Cor. 13, and there it is defined, but where is it mentioned more than in any other chapter of the Bible? It is in 1 John, and let's read 4:7-9 (19 references in one chapter) And here we have 4. Of all things that we're supposed to accomplish while on this earth, there is nothing more important than learning how to love. In fact, many Christians would say that that is the main reason why we're here.

But, you say, the world is anything but a loving place. There are all kinds of hatred, bloodshed, greed, revenge, lust, war - so how did God think that we could learn about love here? There are so many counterfeits of love, or just outright unloving things that happen down here. And the church? It is said that the Christian army is the only one to shoot its wounded. Too often, people come to church to find understanding, respect, love and fellowship, but find only contention, variance, and backbiting.

In the world, and worldly churches, there are lots of people making money putting on seminars on how to love, how to open up and be real. But God's church is called with a higher calling: to behold Jesus so clearly that we become like Him. And if there was anyone who knew how to love, it was Him. To not just talk about love with our lips, but show the love of God in the church and out of it. Gal. 6:10

In the gospel's simplicity we are to go forward sharing the love of God with everyone we meet, especially those who are the household of faith. Gal. 5:6 This context shows us that we must have a faith that works by love. We must share the truth of God's word, but speak it always in love. And if there is anyone wounded what is our place? Gal. 6:1,2 (In this same context we see the necessity of working out our salvation with love in restoring those who are wounded by the enemy.)

You see, many get tired in the warfare against self – the world, flesh and devil, and they need help. What many are looking for is a hand-out, but God's people can offer the wounded a hand-up into the love of God. Isn't that much more necessary than merely material things? And the church that is the depository of more truth than any other- by necessity must also show more love than any other. The church appears enfeebled and defective to human sight; but it is the one object upon which God delights to bestow His supreme regard. Yes, the church needs to be constantly warned, encouraged and uplifted. When we see difficulty arise in the church, we cannot try to hold people in human strength because we must all be kept in the truth by the power of the living God.

Matt. 18:7 "Offenses must come, but woe to him who brings that offense. We are not to cry: "Stay Thy hand, O God," when we see difficulties in the church, because God has His own means of purifying the church. He knows the ones that are His, and He will sort out the wheat from the tares. In this process, He may use heresies, He may use problems with sins that are held on to, He may use roots of bitterness when people cannot and will not forgive - but in all of this, we can still behold His love guiding and guarding His church. 1 Cor. 11:19 (If other means fail, then God will allow heresies to come in amongst you, separating the wheat from the chaff.)

Jesus came to this earth as a vulnerable, helpless baby - and what He accomplished by the means of the truth. But this is a message about love, right? So what does love have to do with truth? Everything. What is love founded upon? Truth. Love, if it's real – must be true. Truth is about freedom - freedom to be one's self, freedom to obey God - no matter what the consequences, freedom to be what God wants me to be, without the interference of man. Remember: if you love something, set it free.

In the year 1860 in the deep south of the U.S. there were many slaveholders, and many slaves. But a few years before, a book called "Uncle Tom's Cabin" had been written and published by a daughter of a preacher, and this book had made such an impact on the practice of buying, selling and keeping slaves, that some Christians were quietly either buying slaves to set them free, or leading them through the underground railroad to Canada, where they could be free. Picture how you would have felt, if you were a slave: obstinate, not wanting to serve another master, but coming up on the auction block. So the bidding goes on, and finally you are sold to

the highest bidder. Though he seems a good man, you tell him, "I'm not going to work for you, master', but then he tells you that he bought you to set you free. You would fall down at his feet and say, "What can I do for you, I will work gladly, willingly, because you bought me my freedom."

This is the kind of love Jesus loves us with, isn't it? And He asks us to love one another, with the same kind of love. That is what church should be all about - loving others unconditionally in the truth. This means accepting others as they are, but because we love one another so much, we help one another to reach the standard of Christ.

What God demonstrated to us by giving His Son to redeem us from our sins on the cross of Calvary, is that He loves us with an everlasting love that was stronger than death. He made it forever sure that our consciences would be free, because Satan cannot force us to sin; He cannot even read our thoughts. GC 510

The cross shows us how ugly and costly a thing sin is, and even though God could, He does not force us to worship Him. You see, He wants the intelligent, free will decision from all of those who love Him, that they will give from their hearts. How much He loves us to give us free will. And it's actually kind of scary, if you think about it. . . . We are not sure of what we are going to do next sometimes, but God knows, because He can see the end from the beginning.

2 Sam. 23:15-17 Now here, David poured out the drink offering to the Lord -why? Because he didn't feel himself worthy of so great a sacrifice - only the Lord was worthy, and He knew it. But a little later in David's life, when he was at the peak of his prosperity - he did feel himself worthy, and that was what led him to commit the sins of adultery with Bathsheba and murder of her husband. This is what sinful independence is all about, isn't it? Feeling ourselves worthy, so we are no longer dependent upon Christ, but only depending upon ourselves - our strength, our wisdom - in short, all of our own resources. But this is not love.

How can God get us out of depending upon ourselves? He often uses suffering. And suffering is like a megaphone used by God to get us to wake up to our necessity of Him. And David did suffer, when Nathan, the prophet came to him and said **you are the man**,. He knew that he was guilty, and had actually pronounced judgment upon himself, (He lost four of his own sons). And oh, how his conscience troubled him then. He had to retrace his steps back that long, slow and difficult pathway to repentance.

Have you ever tried to be kind and show love when you were in pain - whether it was mental, emotional or physical pain? Spiritual pain? It's not so easy, is it? And we start talking about showing love even when we are provoked, falsely accused or slandered. These things cause pain, too. No way, we can do that without the love of God working in our hearts.

We can only be free, truly free with the truth. And Jesus is the way, the truth and the life. You see, all relationships are founded upon truth. And when we are free in the truth, then by faith and love we serve one another. For love to grow there must be trust, and for trust to exist there must be vulnerability.

Ezek. 36:25-27 You see, saving faith is actually a transaction: we first trust God by faith, are vulnerable to Him, if you will, then give Him all of our impure, unclean hearts, and He gives back to us a new, soft heart to obey Him with. And to show others this kind of unconditional love with the heart that He provides.

If God's people are the poorest in the land, having no material things, they can be rich in the love of God. Of all the things that there are in the world, that is the one thing that there is not so much of. And that is the one thing, that the world is starving to find. A Sister that I know was always trying to force her eldest daughter, Tanya to have faith, be faithful and follow through with what she knew to be right, and of course, there was the human reaction, of her daughter rejecting the whole thing outright. Now though, that life and the Lord have brought Tanya many lessons, she is starting to see that what her mother taught her was actually pretty right. But it took that sister setting her free, letting her make her own experience, before she could make that experience, and see it for herself.

If you love something, set it free, then if it was yours to love, it will come back to you, if it doesn't then it wasn't meant to be. And the only way that love can be real and lasting, is if it comes from a completely free heart that is open and vulnerable. The Lord Jesus was completely vulnerable, so much so that He died upon a cross to make that love true for us in real terms. He was completely accessible and open with all of those who came to Him. And may He help us to be the same with others that are in need of Him. AMEN

By Jerry Eaton



"CRUCIFY HIM! CRUCIFY HIM!"

These were the words that angry mob hurled at Pontius Pilate when he attempted to release Jesus from fulfilling the law. "The broken law of God demanded the life of the sinner."

1 'Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with Him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin.' 2 "For (God) hath made Him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him." 3

"Crucify Him! Crucify Him!" These same words are today echoed by the scribes and Pharisees of spiritual Babylon. These words are also secretly cherished like water by the tares growing in our Lord's vineyard. "The tares represent a class who are the fruit or embodiment of error, of false principles. 'The enemy that sowed them is the devil.'" 4

In essence, they say, "Crucify Him! Crucify Him! Again! And again! Crucify Jesus! Each and every time I sin!" Or, would you prefer to lay your hands upon the head of the Lamb of God and slit His throat? "The blood, representing the forfeited life of the sinner, whose guilt the victim bore, was carried by the priest into the holy place and sprinkled before the veil, behind which was the ark containing the law that the sinner had transgressed. By this ceremony the sin was, through the blood, transferred in figure to the sanctuary." 5

These deluded souls are in agreement with Satan. "Satan represents God's law of love as a law of selfishness. He declares that it is impossible for us to obey its precepts." 6 "If those who hide and excuse their faults could see how Satan exults over them, how he taunts Christ and holy angels with their course, they would make haste to confess their sins and to put them away. Through defects in the character, Satan works to gain control of the whole mind, and he knows that

if these defects are cherished, he will succeed. Therefore he is constantly seeking to deceive the followers of Christ with his fatal sophistry that it is impossible for them to overcome." 7

"Hatred of sin is vital to full salvation. Humanly speaking, no man is safe until he has learned to hate sin as deeply as he formerly loved it. He may resist sin; he may even flee from it, but as long as there is a lingering love of sin in the heart, he is not on safe ground. As love of good is vital, so also is hatred of evil. It may truly be said that our capacity for love of the good is measured and balanced by our capacity for hatred of evil. Of Christ it is said, 'Thou hast loved righteousness, and hated iniquity; therefore God, even Thy God, hath anointed Thee with the oil of gladness above Thy fellows.' Hebrews 1:9. In Christ, love of righteousness was accompanied by a hatred of evil. Because of these two attributes, He was anointed for His work by God. This combination of love and hatred must be in every Christian. They are fundamental in Christianity..." 8

"And Elijah came unto all the people, and said, How long halt ye between two opinions? If the Lord be God, follow Him: but if Baal, then follow him..." 9 "Know ye not, that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey; whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness?" 10 "The disciple is not above his master: but every one that is perfect shall be as his master." 11

"Jesus answered them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Whosoever committeth sin is the servant of sin. And the servant abideth not in the house forever: but the Son abideth ever. If the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed." 12 "He that committeth sin is of the devil; for the devil

sinneth from the beginning. For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that He might destroy the works of the devil." 13 "Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, He also Himself likewise took part of the same; that is, the devil, and deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage." 14

"Christ is ready to set us free from sin, but He does not force the will; and if by persistent transgression the will itself is wholly bent on evil, and we do not desire to be free, if we will not accept His grace, what more can He do? 15 "fearful will be the doom of that soul of whom the pleading Saviour shall finally declare, he 'is joined to idols, let him alone.'" 16

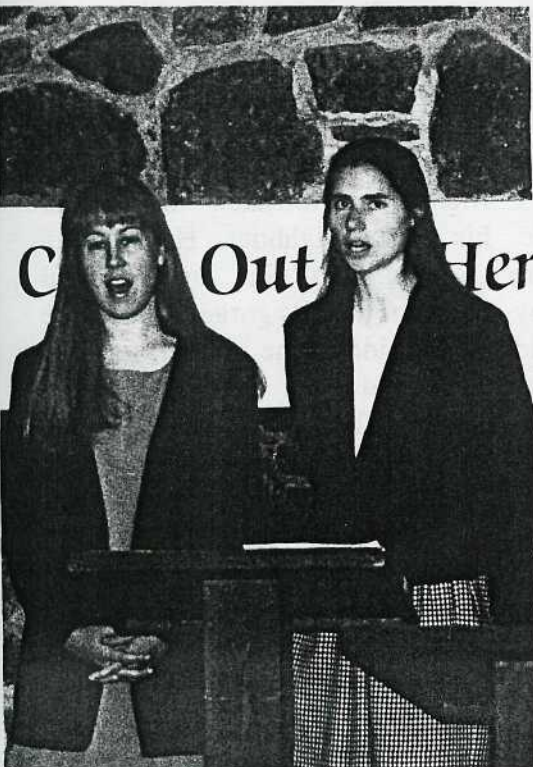
"I call heaven and earth to record this day against you, that I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing: therefore choose life, that both thou and thy seed may live: that thou mayest love the Lord thy God, and that thou mayest obey His voice, and that thou mayest cleave unto Him: for He is thy life, and the length of thy days: that thou mayest

dwell in the land which the Lord sware unto thy fathers, to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob, to give them" 17 Amen. "And if it seem evil unto you to serve the Lord, choose you this day whom ye will serve; whether the gods which your fathers served that were on the other side of the flood, or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land ye dwell: but as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord." 18 AMEN

- 1) PP p. 63
- 2) Romans 6:6
- 3) 2 Corinthians 5:21
- 4) COL p. 71
- 5) GC p. 418
- 6) DA p. 24
- 7) GC p. 489
- 8) TSS p. 15
- 9) 1 Kings 18:21
- 10) Romans 6:16
- 11) Luke 6:40
- 12) John 8:34-36
- 13) 1 John 3:8
- 14) Hebrews 2:14, 15
- 15) SC p. 34
- 16) PP p. 165
- 17) Deuteronomy 30:19, 20
- 18) Joshua 24:15

"No man can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon." Matthew 6:24

Chester Cosby



U.S. Conference in Maryland

The Beginning of the Seventh-day Adventist Message in South Africa (part 2)

If you remember from last month, John Wessels, a wealthy businessman living in South Africa was instrumental in bringing missionaries to South Africa to preach the Seventh-day Adventist message. He financed the missionaries travel expenses and after they were settled, he built a sanitarium because he was convinced that medical missionary work was a key element in the preaching of the SDA message. When everything seemed to be going well, according to God's plan, something strange happened.

Some of his wealthy friends came to him and said, "We would like to take some of our vacations at the sanitarium that you built. The sanitarium really has quite a reputation and we want to be close by. But, you know we drink a little and we puff a little, and we like to play cards. We certainly don't want to give up those things when we come and visit your sanitarium. Would you consider building a few rooms, we'll pay for it, where we can have a smoking room and where we can serve a little ale and then a place where we can play our cards undisturbed?"

Great Grandpa thought about that for awhile, and decided perhaps not to do it. But they prevailed on him and finally he thought, "Well it shouldn't do any harm because they won't be mixing with the other patients." So he allowed them to do it.

One week later (now remember it took at least three to four weeks at that time for a letter to arrive from North America), but one week later after he made the decision a letter arrived from Ellen G. White telling him that she had been shown in a vision that he was not using his finances and his influence correctly. A second letter came. A third one came. The fourth one came, and after the fourth one he became quite perturbed and he said, "What does this little old lady over in America know about my

business anyway? It's my money. And I will do with it as I please." So he did.

Then something strange began to happen. At this time he had the monopoly on all the feed stores, supplying the farmers for their supplies, their grain, their implements, and their fertilizer. He had the monopoly in the whole country, but one by one he started losing his stores. He couldn't figure out why.

One day he went up north to sell one of his ranches because he needed to cover some debts. While he was up there he received a telegram from his brother, who was the business manager at the sanitarium. The telegram was very short but very succinct. It said, "Sanitarium burnt down. Come home immediately."

He took the first train that he could find and it took him 2 days to travel the 800 miles home. When he finally pulled into the Capetown Station, he was met by his brother Henry. There he told Henry, "It's too bad that the sanitarium burnt down, but I'm sure glad we have insurance and we can recoup our financial losses." Henry hung his head and said, "John, I meant to tell you this before but I tried to economize because of the bad turn that some of our businesses have taken and I did not renew the insurance. There was quite a bit of money owing on

the expansion of the sanitarium."

Great Grandpa had lost most of his business. He had two stores left and he had kept his favourite ranch, the one which he always said he would go to and retire. It was called, Beau Fontaine, meaning "Beautiful Fountain."

Finally it came to the point when he decided that the only way out to cover his debts (because now those people who were his friends before were pressing him to get their money) was to sell his last ranch. So he went up north and he sold Beau Fontaine. 28 days after he sold that piece of property, they discovered on that ranch, the richest diamond mine this world has ever known by the name of Kimberly. Twenty-eight days.

He went back to Capetown, literally a broken man. All of his friends had forsaken him, except his old neighbour Henry Van Druitten. As for his beautiful mansion with its gorgeous furniture on the side of the hill the creditors came and even took that. Under South African law at that time, there were only three things that he could keep: kitchen or dining room furniture, a sewing machine if they had one, and bedroom furniture. Up to this time the letters kept coming from E.G. White. To date there were 69 letters of which 64 were unopened.

On the day that he had to

move out to the outskirts of town where the poorest of the poor people lived, he found a little two-room shack and Henry van Druitten brought an ox cart with two oxen. They took out the bedroom furniture, the old sewing machine, and the dining room furniture. As they turned the hutch in the dining room on its side to get it out the door, 69 letters fell from its top shelf.

Grandpa took those letters and he put them into his overcoat pocket, which he was wearing because it was a cold winter's evening. There this despondent, broken man went to the outskirts of town, where the poor people lived.

By candlelight that evening he took out those letters all written by Ellen G. White. Only the first five were opened. They had postmarks on them from San Francisco, Seattle, Washington, New York, Boston, Frankfurt Germany, Sydney Australia, and Oslo Norway. He arranged these in the chronological order of their postmarks and he started to read them. In these letters he had read his whole life story. (Most are now filed at Andrews University) Ellen White had predicted that the sanitarium would burn to the ground. She predicted that three fire departments would come to the rescue, but there would be nothing that they could do. And that's the way it happened. Three fire departments came, and nothing that they tried could stop that ravenous fire.

So when I visited the site 12 years ago before leaving South Africa, her quote came to mind, that "never as long as time shall last, will there ever be a building on that site.... The rains, the wind going through the trees and the grass will be a mute testimony to what might have been."

What might have been? That's not all she told him in those letters. She reminded him of his wealth, and then she made two significant statements.

The first one was that if he had used his influence and Ms finances correctly the Anglo-Boer war in South Africa would never have been. Do you know what that means? That means that thousands of lives would never have been lost.

Then she makes the most significant statement that to me, I've ever heard, and she said, "John, if you had used your influence and your means, which God entrusted to you, correctly, the Government of South Africa would be well disposed to the Seventh-day Adventist Church and message." Do you know what that means? That very well means that the Government of South Africa may have been, a Seventh-day Adventist Government. Today this country is in the news a lot because of hatred between black and white. If, at the helm, there were people who were "well disposed to the Seventh-day Adventist message", just think, how the course of history could have been different!

As he read the remainder of those letters, they told him so many things about incidents at the sanitarium, that he thought no one knew about. She wrote to him about the special favours to some of the doctors, the special favours to some of the patients, and his lack of getting money for the educational work. He vowed, as he read the last letter at just about sunrise the next morning, that if the Lord would give him another chance, he would do his best to live up to the counsel of the Spirit of Prophecy. He prayed for many months. Finally he was convicted, to start up his feed business again.

He started with a small store and again the Lord blessed him. Pretty soon he had a good business going. Soon he developed that business and purchased more property and again the Lord blessed. At this time not only was there a diamond rush in South Africa, but there was also a gold rush. On one property of his they discovered gold, and today the family is still operating the mine, called The Wessels Gold Mine. Much of the funds that has been generated from that mine has gone into missionary work. But never again, would the Lord give him the equivalent of his first opportunity.

Would you like to know how much money has been taken out of the DeBeers Consolidated Mine at Kimberly? In today's money, 18.5 billion dollars. Could you begin to understand what that would have meant for the Lord's work?

But Great Grandpa decided to do the best with what he had. He had sent one son, my grandfather, my mother's father, over to Battle Creek to study. While there he wrote home and said, "We are building a church here, I'd like for you to help." So Great Grandpa wrote a cheque for 10,000 pounds, today's equivalent to \$150,000 and he said, "Here use it for the church." And Grandma, from her own funds, also wrote a cheque for 10,000 pounds and said, "Here install an organ." So the first pipe organ in the denomination was installed in Battle Creek in the Old Tabernacle.

There is another sideline too that is interesting. Old Doctor Kellogg, when he started his Kellogg business, was aided by funds that were a loan from Great Grandpa to him.

However, he and Great Grandma felt impressed that there

was more that they could do. As they discussed their finances, they thought that they wanted to make another gift. Just the week before they had heard that Mrs. White was travelling to Australia and that she would be there for at least three or four months, so they decided to write a cheque for a certain amount and mail it to Australia. It took 26 days, minimum, for a letter to arrive from South Africa by ship to Australia.

Sister White was in Australia, working with the brethren, planning to establish a school. In a vision (which has been kept on record) she saw a clearing of land with trees on one side, and trees on the other and a six-foot long furrow - six inches wide and six inches deep - in the middle. Without any trace of horses, oxen, tractors (which they didn't have then) or any implements of any kind to have dug this furrow, there was just the furrow. In the vision the Lord told her, "This would be the place to establish the school."

The next morning, Tuesday morning, as they were leaving to go and search for a piece of property they picked Sister White up with the buggy. They started off in a certain direction and she asked, "Where are you going?"

"We're heading out towards a place where we think we should look for property."

"No, turn around go this way," She insisted.

"No we can't go that way. The property out that way is so poor." In those days they called the soil in that area, 'sour soil'. "You cannot establish a school there. The school must be established where you can have, agriculture." Thus they argued with her, but Sister White would not give in.

"We've got to go in this direction." She was adamant now. And they finally gave in and went her way.

After driving most of the day, they were hot, tired and hungry. As they were rounding a bend in the dusty little road, Sister White suddenly yelled, "Stop!" They helped her off the buggy and she walked into a clearing. There they found, a six-foot long furrow, six inches wide and six inches deep without a trace of human hands or implements, and she told them, "This is the piece of property we're going to buy. Find out who owns it."

They threw their hands up in despair and said, "Number one we don't have the money. Number two, this is a rotten part of the country."

"Just follow those instructions," she firmly replied.

To prove her wrong, they took some samples of the soil very quietly that evening to the university, which is today the University of Australia, Sydney campus. They gave it to one of the agricultural experts and said, "Test this soil for us." The next morning, when the conference office opened, there was a gentleman sitting in front of the office waiting for them. He said, "Where did you get this soil? I don't know of any soil around here that is so rich and so good." What they had found was that there was a pocket of land surrounded by this rotten 'sour soil'.

One hurdle was crossed and now they faced the biggest hurdle, the money. In the office, they kept asking her, "Where are we going to get the money?"

She knew her Bible well and simply replied, "The Lord will provide." Wednesday came, then

Thursday. Then Friday morning and still no money. The owners of the property had given them only until Friday to come up with the money. They were desperate, and very despondent. The mood at the conference office was very gloomy that day. Then in the mid-morning mail came a letter with a postmark on it from Capetown, South Africa.

Remember it was mailed at least 26 days before. As they opened that letter they found in it a cheque in Great Grandmother's handwriting made out to a bank in Australia (it was a cashier's cheque) for the exact amount of money that they needed to buy Avondale College.

I do not like to moralize at the end of a story but if you ask me what I think of world events, I have an answer. If you ask me what I think of the fate in history, I may have an answer. If you ask me what I think about the counsel of the Spirit of Prophecy, it should be obvious to you that I have a very definite answer and that I believe in it.

Now I have a question that I have to ask you to think about. God gave Great Grandpa 18+ billion dollars that He entrusted in his care, and He trusted him to be an instrument through which He could work. Great Grandpa failed, but because He is a God of love, He gave him a second chance. This second chance was not the equivalent of the first.

You all have talents, whether they be talents of speaking, talents of leadership, talents of money (wealth is not a sin as many people may think) or some other talent. God expects you to use your talents, you are stewards of them, don't waste them. You are not guaranteed another chance. God will help you if you ask him.

ARE YOU EXHAUSTED?

"COME UNTO ME, ALL YE WHO LABOR 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 FOR YOUR SOULS. FOR MY YOKE IS EASY, AND MY BURDEN IS LIGHT,"

"Jesus invites you, in words that touch the heart with their compassionate love and pity...

Do you pour out your trials and grievances into human ears? Do you go for help to those who cannot give you rest? Have faith in God. Believe in the precious promises. GO TO JESUS in childlike simplicity, and say, "LORD, I have borne these burdens as long as I can, and now I lay them upon the BURDEN-BEARER." DO NOT gather them up again, but leave them all with JESUS. GO AWAY FREE, for JESUS has set you FREE. He said, 'I WILL GIVE YOU REST.' Take HIM at HIS word. Instead of your own galling yoke of worry, wear the yoke of CHRIST. He says: "MY YOKE IS EASY AND MY BURDEN IS LIGHT." Learn of HIM; for He is 'meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls."

FIX YOUR EYES UPON JESUS! He is the LIGHT of the world, and HE declares, "He

that follows Me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the LIGHT OF LIFE."

"When the books of remembrance shall be opened, your words, your deeds of love, will be acceptable before God; your robes, washed in the blood of the LAMB, will be spotless; the righteousness of CHRIST will be put upon you, and you will be given a new, an immortal name." RH 9/16/1890.

If you have a heavy burden, it's not the burden of JESUS, for HIS burden is light. You may put it down, and take HIS light one. If your yoke is hard, it isn't the yoke of JESUS, for HIS yoke is easy. You may put your hard yoke down, and take HIS. YOU need feel no guilt in getting rid of your hard one, and taking HIS - for HE said to do it. HIS YOKE IS EASY, AND HIS BURDEN IS LIGHT. AMEN.

Sister Kathleen Ross
Alberta, Canada

If such would find true happiness, their minds must first receive the right discipline. They must learn to have faith and confidence in God.

Becho 15 October 1893

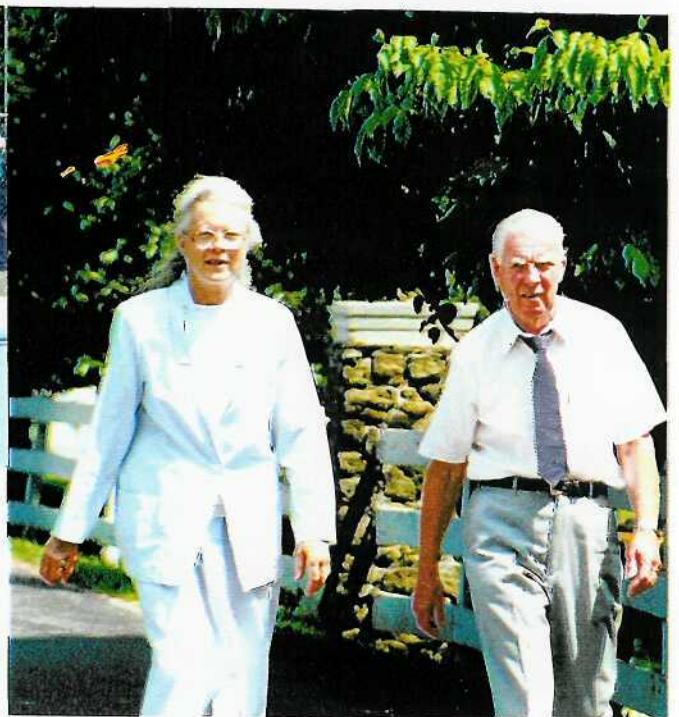
Should not Christians publish throughout the world the joy of serving Christ? Those who in heaven join with the angelic choir in their anthem of praise must learn on earth the song of heaven, the keynote of which is thanksgiving. 7T 244



Baptism at Canadian Field Conference



U.S. Conference in Maryland



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