

The Reformation 

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EDITORIAL

Another year is drawing to its close. This has been so far a very eventful year. Many signs of the times have been fulfilled. We have witnessed earthquakes, wars, terrorism, famines, pestilences and many other signs which tell us that the end is very near. Many signs in the religious and political fields indicate that the Sunday law is not far away either.

We are hoping and praying that our people will awaken to realize the solemnity of the hour. The judgment in heaven will soon turn upon us and decisions will be made about our eternal destiny.

Many timely articles in "The Messenger" have brought the nearness of the end to our attention. The only question is, are we heeding them? Are we purifying our hearts? Are we reforming our habits and practices? Are we breaking the connections to this world and fastening our eyes to our Leader Jesus?

We are trying to make this "Messenger" magazine presentable and improve the quality and appearance of it. Our difficulty is in the unskilled labour. Children and young people on a voluntary basis do much of the work. Also we have continued to print it monthly which allows a very limited time to produce it. Some spelling errors have gone through at times, but we are thankful for our readers that they have tolerated them and have appreciated the efforts put out by the IMS publishing staff.

We are very thankful for the articles and the pictures that our members have contributed and like to encourage all to continue to send them. Even young children have written articles which have always been printed. This magazine is the Voice of our people, where everyone is invited to express their spiritual conviction and experiences.

We have no idea of the blessing that these messages have brought to our brothers and sisters and children; only eternity will reveal it to us. Some articles have been rather strong in one direction, while others have brought the balance into the messages.

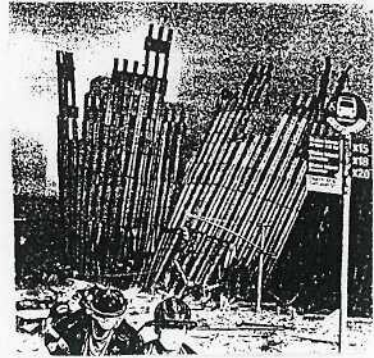
The last few weeks that we have left of this year, let us use them wisely, to redeem the time. As the angels took hold of Lot and his family in Sodom to lead them out, let them take hold of us also and lead us away from the world to the very atmosphere of heaven which is being brought to us here by the company of our heavenly visitors. "Those with whom Christ dwells will be surrounded with a divine atmosphere." M.B. p. 135

May the Lord bless you all, and we hope to hear from you soon. AMEN

THE EDITORS

Terror at the Twin Towers

By Idel Suarez, Jr., Ph.D.



The High Towers Fall

On Tuesday, September 11, 2001, the Twin Towers in New York City were devastated by hijacked airplanes. Some estimate that 4,700 persons may have died from the explosions. A total of four airplanes and 266 people lost their lives at the hands of Islam fundamentalist terrorists. The President of the United States of America, George W. Bush, said this was an act of war. This would be the first war of the 21st Century. He commented that the world would never be the same.

I was in San Francisco planning to take a flight back to my home in Tampa, Florida, but like thousands of other Americans, my travel plans were grounded. No planes were allowed to leave any U.S. airports for several days. Air traffic came to a standstill. Government officials scrambled to devise new strict airline and airport measures to prevent such terrorist events from reoccurring.

The morning paper of the San Jose Mercury News of Wednesday, September 12, 2001, had a large heading which said: "Day of Terror." Without a doubt, America and the world witnessed an awful act of terrorism. But why?

Bedeveling Evidence

The Philadelphia News for Thursday, September 13, 2001, published an Associated Press photograph of one of the Twin Towers billowing up in smoke. The face of Satan with an eerie frown appears in the dark cloud of smoke. "A higher-contrast version of the photo seems to bring into focus the face of the Evil One, complete with beard and horns and malignant expression..."

Although the Bible does not say that the Devil has a beard or horns, the photo does seem to depict the frown of some demon or fallen angel of destruction. The book of Job tells how Satan is behind many if not most acts of terror. It was the devil who inspired the middle-eastern Sabians to mercilessly slay the servants of Job with the edge of the sword and steal his oxen and asses. The devil also stirred the Chaldeans into three bands of terrorists and overtook the other servants of Job who were tending his camels and slew them at the edge of the sword. **Job 1:15,17.**

The evil terror did not stop. "The fire of God is fallen from heaven, and hath burned up the sheep, and the servants, and consumed them, and I only am escaped alone to tell thee." **Job 1:16.**

The fire that seemed to fall from heaven was not directly from God but the work of the devil as were the ancient terrorist acts on Job. The calamities of this world are the result of the workings of the devil and his angels who fell from heaven. They have been busily spreading misery throughout the world. Misery loves company.

Satan is behind all acts of terror and devastation. He delights in war. He started the first war in heaven and has continued his war on earth for thousands of years. The story of Cain killing his brother Abel has been repeated on a grander scale many times. Jealousy and hatred breed murder and death. Yet in spite of the enemy's actions, God is sovereign. Nothing can happen without God's consent.

The Law Forsaken

The book of Leviticus gives us some reasons for the calamity. We know that history repeats itself and whatever God foretold about Israel could be applied to any other government that claims to trust in God.

"And if ye shall despise my statutes, or if your soul abhor my judgments, so that ye will not do all my commandments, but that ye break my covenant; I also will do this unto you; I will even appoint over you terror... and cause sorrow of heart... And I will destroy your high places..." **Leviticus 26:15,16,30.**

The high places are destroyed and terror enters the stage of life when individuals, families, ethnic groups, and even nations disregard God's Ten Commandments. God says, "If you will not keep my commandments, I have no choice but allow terror and sorrow to be your portion."

New York's modern Tower of Babel fell. Like Babylon of old, many cried, "Babylon is fallen." The great towers of world trade and business that symbolize the financial prosperity in America have fallen. Why? Terror strikes because America has put God out of its business transactions and forfeited His caring and divine protection. His holy Sabbath day is not observed. Low wages are paid to the poor classes so that the rich classes can accumulate more money. The innocent babies are aborted, in lieu of promising and profitable careers. Lies and falsehoods are propagated through advertisements of products. Divorce and remarriage that disintegrate the family are chosen as viable options in the frenzy to achieve a higher level in one's business profession. Thus, God's Ten Commandments are disregarded under the excuse of making a dollar.

Zephaniah the prophet tells us that when fire destroys the high towers of a nation, sin is the underlining reason. Transgression of God's holy law invites terror to show its ugly head and brings trouble, distress, wasteness, desolation, darkness, gloominess, and thick darkness in its train.

"The great day of the Lord is near, it is near, and hasteth greatly, even the voice of the day of the Lord: the mighty man shall cry there bitterly. That day is a day of wrath, a day of trouble and distress, a day of wasteness and desolation, a day of darkness and gloominess, a day of clouds and thick darkness." **Zephaniah 1:14,15.**

Just think of the aftermath of the Twin Tower destruction. Great and thick dark clouds hid the New York skyline from view. Where the two towers shined under the bright sun and sometimes over the fog, now only a short steel skeleton and a huge mound of wasteness and desolation remained. Gloom, distress, and trouble filled men's hearts and minds as they bitterly cried looking at the loss of innocent lives and multiple financial enterprises.

"A day of the trumpet and alarm against the fenced cities, and against the high towers. And I will bring distress upon men, that they shall walk like blind men, because they have sinned against the Lord: and their blood shall be poured out as dust, and their flesh as the dung. Neither their silver nor their gold shall be able to deliver them in the day of the Lord's wrath; but the whole land shall be devoured by the fire of His jealousy: for he shall make even a speedy riddance of all them that dwell in the land." **Zephaniah 1:16-18.**

The high towers of New York fell under the fire of explosions. The human blood was poured out and flesh was burnt even as dung is burnt in the bush for fuel. Neither the silver, gold, or large dollar reserves were able to stay the massacre, or deliver the victims from the fire and speedy riddance of the attack on America. From a human standpoint it was an act of terrorism, but from a divine standpoint it was the result of sin. What is sin? Sin is the transgression of God's Ten Commandments.

New York Terror Foretold

The fall of the huge business towers by fire were foretold long ago in the Testimonies. Ellen G. White had a vision of the New York City skyscrapers and their demolition by fire. She wrote:

"On one occasion, when in New York City, I was in the night season called upon to behold buildings rising story after story toward heaven. These buildings were warranted to be fireproof, and they were erected to glorify their owners and builders. Higher and still higher these buildings rose, and in them the most costly material was used. Those to whom these buildings belonged were not asking themselves; 'How can we best glorify God?' The Lord was not in their thoughts."

"As these lofty buildings went up, the owners rejoiced with ambitious pride that they had money to use in gratifying self and provoking the envy of their neighbors. Much of the money that they thus invested had been obtained through exaction, through grinding down the poor. They forgot that in heaven an account of every business transaction is kept; every unjust deal, every fraudulent act, is there recorded."

"The scene that next passed before me was an alarm of fire. Men looked at the lofty and supposedly fireproof buildings and said: 'They are perfectly safe.' But these buildings were consumed as if made of pitch. The fire engines could do nothing to stay the destruction."
Testimonies for the Church, volume 9, pages 12, 13.

Is not this a clear prediction of what took place on Tuesday, September 11, 2001, in Manhattan, New York City? Did not the lofty fireproof buildings meet their destruction by fire? Was not the alarm of fire and fire engines heard in the streets? Although the prediction seems to have been fulfilled, it will be repeated in a grander scale as the day of the Lord approaches.

Fire As Divine Judgment

Fire is frequently a sign of divine judgment. Even when the evil one uses it to bring desolation, it is part of God's sovereign permissive plan. The Holy Scriptures clearly declare that when fire appears and does its destructive work, it is usually a sign of God's displeasure. Of course, there are always exceptions like in the case of Job where it accomplished its purifying work.

The Apostle Paul says, "Every man's work shall be made manifest: for the day shall declare it, because it shall be revealed by fire; and the fire shall try every man's work of what sort it is. If any man's work abide which he hath built thereupon, he shall receive reward. If any man's work shall be burned, he shall suffer loss: but he himself shall be saved; yet so as by fire." **I Corinthian 3:13-15.**

The Apostle Paul draws an allegory between a building caught by fire and the character of a person tested by the fires of life. Certain materials that make up the building are easily burnt like wood, hay, and stubble. Yet other materials like gold, silver, and precious stones endure the test of burning flames. So it shall be in the day of judgment, when all shall have to give account before the trial bar of Jesus Christ. Whosoever has not perfected his human character shall suffer loss. Whosoever has built his or her life upon the solid foundation of Jesus Christ shall endure the judgment and be found worthy of eternal life.

"For our God is a consuming fire." **Hebrews 12:29.** Hence, those who have been justified by faith and sanctified by obedience are prepared to meet their Creator and Redeemer. The trials of affliction as if by fire, only serve to purify their character. If death surprises them, it only serves to seal their holy character for eternity. Yet those who are unprepared to meet their Lord, fire serves to reveal their unrighteousness and seal their fate. Death only comes as a prelude of the fiery finite hell that awaits the unbeliever and disobedient after the great white throne judgment.

The prophet Isaiah writes that fire and terror are the result of disobeying God's Ten Commandments. It serves as a sign and a curse to a nation, to a country, and even to a superpower that disregarding God's sacred law has detrimental and irreversible consequences. Both Isaiah 5:24 and Isaiah 24:5,6 present the same principle.

"Therefore as the fire devoureth the stubble, and the flame consumeth the chaff, so their root shall be as rottenness, and their blossom shall go up as dust: because they have cast away the law of the Lord of hosts, and despised the word of the Holy One of Israel." **Isaiah 5:24.**

"The earth also is defiled under the inhabitants thereof; because they have transgressed the laws, changed the ordinance, broken the everlasting covenant. Therefore hath the curse devoured the earth, and they that dwell therein are desolate: therefore the inhabitants of the earth are burned..." **Isaiah 24:5,6.**

A Spiritual Wake Up Call

The Day of Terror is a spiritual wake up call to seek God while He may be found. It prompts us to look in and to look up. We need to look in and identify the sins and iniquity that are separating us from God and eternity. We need to look in and confess our transgressions to God. We need to look up to heaven in faith and with hope of forgiveness. We need to look up for guidance and protection from the things that will overtake and ensnare our world.

The events of terror at the Twin Towers cause men's hearts to fail them "for fear, and for looking after those things which are coming on the earth." **Luke 21:26.** It should serve as an alarm clock to awaken us from our spiritual slumber and worldly drowsiness. It should motivate us to engage in a meaningful introspection and self-analysis of our goals and mission in life.

Upon viewing the fall of the high towers in New York, one is struck with one's own finiteness and vulnerability. Death usually comes without any notice. It strikes like a thief in the night, like a terrorist with the element of surprise and the sting of death. One is struck with the uncertainty of life and the unpredictability of potential distress.

In the midst of such an arena of insecurity, Jesus counsels us to watch and pray, to believe and obey, to share and behold His salvation. His coming is drawing nigh. The signs of the times announce His soon return in glory. Don't allow that day to come upon you unaware. Don't allow the cares of this world to leave you in spiritual darkness. Choose today to seek the Lord and to hide under His wings of safety.

"And take heed to yourselves, lest at any time your hearts be overcharged with surfeiting, and drunkenness, and cares of this life, and so that day come upon you unawares. For as a snare shall it come on all them that dwell on the face of the whole earth. Watch ye therefore, and pray always, that ye may be accounted worthy to escape all these things that shall come to pass, and to stand before the Son of man." **Luke 21:34-36.** Amen.

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SOMEBODY SAID THAT IT COULDN'T BE DONE, BUT HE WITH A CHUCKLE REPLIED, THAT "MAYBE IT COULDN'T BUT HE WOULD BE ONE WHO WOULDN'T SAY SO TILL HE'D TRIED." SO HE BUCKLED RIGHT IN WITH THE TRACE OF A GRIN. IF HE WORRIED, HE HID IT. HE STARTED TO SING AS HE TACKLED THE THING THAT COULDN'T BE DONE. AND HE DID IT. SOMEBODY SCOFFED: "OH, YOU'LL NEVER DO THAT. AT LEAST NO ONE EVER HAS DONE IT." BUT HE TOOK OFF HIS COAT AND TOOK OFF HIS HAT AND THE FIRST THING HE KNEW HE'D BEGUN IT. WITH A LIFT OF HIS CHIN AND A BIT OF A GRIN. IF ANY DOUBT ROSE HE FORBID IT: HE STARTED TO SING AS HE TACKLED THE THING THAT COULDN'T BE DONE, AND HE DID IT. THERE ARE THOUSANDS TO TELL YOU IT CANNOT BE DONE, THERE ARE THOUSANDS TO PROPHECY FAILURE; THERE ARE THOUSANDS TO POINT OUT TO YOU, ONE BY ONE, THE DANGERS THAT WAIT TO ASSAIL YOU, BUT JUST BUCKLE RIGHT IN WITH A BIT OF A GRIN, THEN TAKE OFF YOUR COAT AND GO TO IT. JUST START IN TO SING AS YOU TACKLE THE THING THAT CANNOT BE DONE, AND YOU'LL DO IT.

THE SHORTCUT

In this age that we live, everyone seems to be in a hurry to get from one place to another. To speed up the journey we look for shortcuts to reduce the travel time. Perhaps we may cut out 5 min. from our journey by taking a shortcut. We pore over our street directories to find out the quickest way from one point to another. In modern day society, people want things done and they want them done *NOW*. They want to buy things but they don't have the money so they use their credit cards hoping to pay later... sometimes this later causes great financial distress, as there is a danger of over-spending. People are very impatient these days in all aspects of life it seems.

Sometimes, however, the shortcut does not prove to be beneficial as in the overuse of a credit card - or it may be fraught with danger.

I read a story that happened to a family one winter during a snowstorm. They were travelling home on the main road when the traffic slowed to a crawl. Realizing that it would be a long time before they arrived home, the driver decided to take a short cut on some side roads. They must have been side roads like the ones I was used to in Vancouver, BC when we lived in Canada. They rarely see a snow plough on the side roads - those are reserved only for the main roads. Well this man did decide to try a short cut and it led through some country roads to a point where the river had overflowed the road. Needless to say the vehicle got stuck while trying to cross that river and the family ended up having to abandon the vehicle for the night and walk the rest of the way home. The short cut did not prove to be a short cut after all. Far better would it have been for them to remain on the main road, even

though the traffic was only moving at a snail's pace.

In our spiritual lives we often try to take short cuts. We read in Revelation 14:12, "Here is the patience of the saints: here are they that keep the commandments of God; and have the faith of Jesus." Two elements are shown here to be of vital importance in each of the saints' lives. Those that will be found ready to meet Jesus will be those that are keeping the commandments and those who have learned patience. We will have to learn to be patient and to wait on the Lord.

The Lord has shown great patience with us. We, like the Prodigal son, have wandered away from the Father's home and He is patiently waiting for us with open arms. When will we come back? He waits and waits. Finally, when we do turn back, He is thrilled and all of heaven bursts into singing. Some wait too long . . . my prayer is that you, who are reading here, will not try the Lord's patience.

Moses: The Lord wishes to see His followers also have patience. We can learn from the great men in the Bible. Moses learned patience by tending sheep in the wilderness. He was ready to fight for the freedom of the Israelites, but instead the Lord made him wait 40 years. Those must have been 40 long years for him. Finally at the age of 80 he was sent on his mission. He tried to take matters into his own hands by killing the Egyptian, but his plan backfired and he was banished from Egypt to a life of a shepherd, to learn the necessary patience he would need to lead the host of Israel.

Abraham needed to learn patience and therefore God made him wait until he was 100 years old before his son of promise was born. He had to wait longer than he expected. When Abraham first

arrived in Canaan, God promised him that his seed would take possession of the land. Abraham and his wife, Sarah, had no children, and Abraham was about 75 years old at the time. Even so, Abraham believed God's promise and trusted that the Lord would provide a male heir. Yet it was not until Abraham was 100 years old that Isaac was born.

Abraham tried to take a shortcut by listening to his wife and taking Hagar for a second wife. He thought this would speed up the plan of God. Once again, we see disaster in the family. This shortcut did not bring peace and happiness to the family of Abraham. Rather it brought discord and jealousy; finally Abraham was forced to send away his son and second wife in order to keep peace in the family. Abraham should have patiently waited for God to fulfil His promise. He finally did learn patience through all the mistakes along the way.

Abraham was commended for his patience, but it was a hard learned lesson. Receiving the fulfilment of the promise was a long and painful process for Abraham, but in the end, he learned to trust God fully. "And so, after he had patiently endured, he obtained the promise." Heb. 6:15. Then we see him promptly act when God gave His final test to Abraham, "And Abraham rose up early in the morning, and saddled his ass, and took two of his young men with him, and Isaac his son, and clave the wood for the burnt offering. And rose up and went unto the place of which God told him." Gen. 22:3. Now he had perfect trust in God. He may not have understood God's reasoning behind this request, but he didn't question. He got up right away and fulfilled the commission.

We also are to patiently endure while waiting for God to fulfil His promises in us.

Jacob. We read of Jacob also trying to take a short cut. He lost patience and faith in God, that God would give him the promised birthright. He didn't think God could deliver on the promise and, along with his mother, he felt that there was a need to use deception in order to bring about the promised blessing. Perhaps they told themselves that they were fulfilling God's will with their act of deceit. Here again we see great unhappiness in trying to take matters into our own hands, rather than leaving things to God, waiting for Him to deliver on His promise. This act of deception meant that Jacob would be a fugitive for 20 years, before being able to return back to his home country. Again we see Jacob resort to scheming when faced with trouble while living with his father-in-law, Laban. Laban did start to change his wages after some time causing distress to Jacob, but rather than trusting God to give him increase, he thought of a way to increase his own herd, while Laban's did not grow as quickly (Gen. 30:37-43). Then when God commanded Jacob to return to his own country, he did not have the courage to tell Laban. He rather thought of a plan to escape while Laban was away shearing sheep, this was easier than having to face Laban with the possibility of Laban refusing to let him take his goods with him, as they all originally came from Laban.

After reconciling with Laban, he then returned but in fear of his brother's wrath. Through the many great struggles he endured, he finally learned to trust in God and have complete faith that He will deliver on His promises. His reunion with Esau proved to be peaceful. Jacob should not have tried to scheme in order to avoid facing difficult situations. If he would have trusted in God he

would have spared himself a lot of grief. Although their ends may have agreed with God's promise, the manipulative means used by Rebekah and Jacob had unforeseen consequences. All this resulted because Jacob was unwilling to wait on God, and allow the Lord to accomplish His promises in His own time and way. Never will we have to sin in order to accomplish God's will.

The disciples of Jesus had waited for three and a half years for Him to take the throne of David, yet He did not. How long would they have to wait? Peter was losing patience. He was ready to fight and take the throne by force as we see him using his sword in the Garden of Gethsemane when the angry mob came to arrest Jesus. Jesus answered Peter by saying, "Put up again, thy sword into his place; for all they that take the sword shall perish with the sword." Mat. 26:52. Then Peter went as far as to deny Jesus. He sadly lost patience, but the Lord in His mercy forgave this poor, broken man. Peter became a pillar in the church of God after this experience, but what heartache he had to endure after his denial.

Many times the shortcuts we try to take, cause us more pain and suffering than we would have endured had we never veered from the strait and narrow way. "Jesus invites us to come to Him and He will lift the weights from our weary shoulders and place upon us His yoke, which is easy, and His burden, which is light. The path in which He invites us to walk would never have cost us a pang had we always walked in it. It is when we stray from the path of duty that the way becomes difficult and thorny. The sacrifices which we must make in following Christ are only so many steps to return to the path of light, of peace and happiness. Doubts and fears grow by indulgence, and the more they are indulged, the harder are they to overcome. It is safe to let go every earthly support and take the hand of

Him who lifted up and saved the sinking disciple on the stormy sea." T4, p. 558.

God has a reason for making us wait. It is not simply to watch His created beings suffer and test their patience. He makes us many promises in His Word and He has utter confidence that He can fulfil every one of them. But His promises usually are not carried out for us immediately. He wants us to realize that He is not a vending machine, dispensing treats at the push of a button. Nor would we expect to be able to call Him up and tell Him to send us what we need by overnight express. Like Abraham, we must receive His promises in faith, with great patience.

Often in the workplace many of us face this concept every day. We accept contracts for products and services, days, weeks or months in advance of the actual delivery. Yet, we believe they will come at the right time. Trusting and waiting is a part of every day life.

God has a time schedule and we are not to ask God to deliver on our time schedule, rather we are to go by His. God wants to make us *grow* rather than just *giving* things to us. He cultivates faith and perseverance by doing His work in our lives in His way and in His time. "Looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith." Heb. 12:2.

Christ is to be our pace setter in the Christian race. As we allow Him to lead, we will hopefully avoid the tendency to run ahead of God. Instead we need to keep in step with the Lord. We can do this by adopting God's values and focusing on His desire for us rather than blindly running after what we want. This may require an attitude adjustment on our part. When we make a habit of turning to God for direction, over time our values will come to conform to His own. By keeping our eyes on Christ, we will develop the discipline we need to follow His

will in everything we do. "While we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen are temporal: but the things which are not seen are eternal." 2 Cor. 4:18. "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.

ONLY ONE WAY

Yet our whole Christian walk is not passively waiting for God to tell us when to make the next move. We need to submit all our plans and purposes to His leading. When the Lord tells us to go, we are not to hesitate. Also we are not to wait in idle expectancy. This is what many Christians would like to believe, but we are to work as though this were our last day on earth, asking God to direct and guide us.

Some try to look for an easier way to heaven. Many Christians think that it is unnecessary to deny one's self and keep the commandments. We will get to heaven if we only say that we love Jesus, we don't need to prove it. There is no easier way other than overcoming sin. Every sin must be put away by the time the Latter Rain is poured out upon God's people. Those that haven't done this preparatory work will be shaken out from God's church. There is even danger in God's church of believing that Jesus doesn't require real perfection, however Jesus did say, "Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father in heaven is perfect." And I don't see any sin in the Father, therefore we too must overcome all sin in order to be Christlike.

There is only one way, only one road. Jesus said, "Strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life and few there be that find it." Matt. 7:13.

"We are to do all that we can do on our part to fight the good

fight of faith. We are to wrestle, to labour, to strive, to agonize, to enter in at the strait gate." *Faith and Works*, p. 48.

"Through all our trials we have a never-failing Helper. He does not leave us alone to struggle with temptation, to battle with evil, and be finally crushed with burdens and sorrow. Though now He is hidden from mortal sight, the ear of faith can hear His voice saying, Fear not; I am with you. "I am he that liveth, and was dead; and, behold, I am alive forevermore." Rev. 1:18. I have endured your sorrows, experienced your struggles, encountered your temptations. I know your tears; I also have wept. The griefs that lie too deep to be breathed into any human ear, I know. Think not that you are desolate and forsaken. Though your pain touch no responsive chord in any heart on earth, look unto Me, and live." DA, p. 483.

"Men and women who profess to be disciples of Christ and to keep all the commandments of God will have to feel in their daily lives the true spirit of agonizing to enter in at the strait gate. The agonizing ones are the only ones who will urge their passage through the strait gate and narrow way that lead to life eternal, to fullness of joy and pleasures forevermore. Those who merely seek to enter in will never be able. The entire Christian life of many will be spent in no greater effort, than that of seeking, and their only reward will be to find it an utter impossibility for them to enter in at the strait gate." T2, p. 479/480.

"Be not discouraged; be not fainthearted. Although you may have temptations, although you may be beset by the wily foe, yet if you have the fear of God before you, angels that excel in strength will be sent to your help, and you can be more than a match for the powers of darkness. Jesus lives. He died to make a way of escape for the fallen race, and He lives today

to make intercession for us, that we may be exalted to His own right hand. Hope in God." T2, p. 591/592.

The Lord will never ask anything of you that it is impossible for you to do, while connected with Him. If He asks you to overcome every sin, He will make it possible to do so. It is we who are stubborn and uncooperative. We want to do things our way.

"Man is allotted a part in this great struggle for everlasting life; he must respond to the working of the Holy Spirit. It will require a struggle to break through the powers of darkness, and the Spirit works in him to accomplish this. But man is no passive being, to be saved in indolence. He is called upon to strain every muscle and exercise every faculty in the struggle for immortality; yet it is God that supplies the efficiency. No human being can be saved in indolence. The Lord bids us: 'Strive to enter in at the strait gate...'" 8T, p. 65.

Running ahead is always a concern for a Christian. Each of us must examine our motives before we act. By cultivating an attitude of patient waiting and looking to the Lord for guidance, we can give God control over the direction of our lives. We need to keep in step with God through daily submission of our plans and our hearts to Him, working diligently while we still have time to work.

There are no shortcuts to heaven. There is only one way and may God help us to find the way and prove faithful in this battle of life that we are in the midst of, that we may come off victorious when Jesus comes in the clouds of glory - a wonderful event that is not too far in the future. "Take ye heed, watch and pray: for ye know not when the time is." Mark 13:33. AMEN

Wendy Eaton

THE SECOND MILE

“And whosoever shall compel thee to go a mile, go with him twain.”

Matt. 5:41

There was a rule that a Roman soldier could ask a Jew to carry his burden anytime. If they refused they were punished severely. This made the Jews very bitter against the Romans. They expected to hear from Jesus some denouncement of the Romans, but instead of condemning the oppression by them, He told the Jews to do more for them than what they required.

Did Jesus go beyond the law? Did He tell His hearers to do more than what the law required?

Many professed Christians have difficulty obeying the letter of the law which is the first mile required. The second mile is the spirit of the law which is an expression of love. The letter is fulfilled by walking the first mile. The second mile goes beyond the dead letter.

Jesus gave an example of it to us. The letter of the law does not say that someone should die for a guilty person. Yet Jesus died goes beyond the letter and gave His life for a guilty sinner. Then He said, "This is My commandment, that ye love one another, as I have loved you. Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends." John 15:12-13.

The commandment of love goes far beyond the letter of the law.

The rich young man said to Jesus that he had kept the commandments of God from his youth up. He had walked the first mile. When Jesus presented to him the second mile he went away sorrowful.

The law requires also tithing. Some members pay 20 percent of their income. They go the second mile, while others are cutting short of the 10 percent tithe.

When Abraham's servant Eliezer asked Rebekah for a drink of water, she did exactly as Eliezer asked and then offered to draw water for his camels also. This was the sign that Eliezer expected. It was the second mile that made the difference. If she had not gone the second mile, Eliezer would not have asked her to be the wife of Isaac.

God Himself is practicing the second mile system. When Solomon asked for an understanding heart, God fulfilled his request and added also riches and honour to him.

This is how we can compare the first mile to the letter of the law and the second mile to the spirit of the law.

The letter says, "Thou shalt not kill" but the spirit of the law says, "Love your enemies, do good to them that hate you."

The letter of the law says, "Thou shalt not commit adultery," but the spirit of the law condemns sinful thoughts even.

"Paul says that as 'touching the righteousness which is in the law' - as far as outward acts were concerned - he was "blameless" (Phil. 3:6); but when the spiritual character of the law was discerned, he saw himself a sinner. Judged by the letter of the law as men apply it to the outward life, he had abstained from sin; but when he looked into the depths of its holy

precepts, and saw himself as God saw him, he bowed in humiliation and confessed his guilt." S.C. 29-30

"In the parable, Christ exalts the Samaritan above the priest and the Levite, who were great sticklers for the letter of the law of the Ten Commandments. The one obeyed the spirit of these commandments, while the others were content to profess and exalted faith in them; but what is faith without works?... It is impossible for those who profess allegiance to the law of God to correctly represent the principles of that sacred Decalogue while slighting its holy injunctions to love their neighbour as themselves." Test. Vol. 4 p. 58

Unless we love our neighbour as ourselves we cannot keep the law of God correctly. The priest and the Levite thought that they have kept the law blamelessly as Paul had, yet without love they only had kept the dead letter.

"Nicodemus had read these scriptures with a clouded mind; but he now began to comprehend their meaning. He saw that the most rigid obedience to the mere letter of the law as applied to the outward life could entitle no men to enter the kingdom of heaven. In the estimation of men, his life had been just and honorable; but in the presence of Christ he felt that his heart was unclean, and his life unholy." D.A. 174

"The scribes and Pharisees appeared to be very punctilious in living out the letter of the law; but Christ said to his disciples, 'Except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no case enter into the kingdom of Heaven.' What a startling declaration was this!" R.H. April 30, 1895

"Outward conformity to the letter of the law was not sufficient. The very principles of the law must be planted in the heart, and love to man must be revealed in the character, words, and actions." S.T. Oct. 29, 1896

The commandments are an expression of Love. "For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments." 1 John 5:3

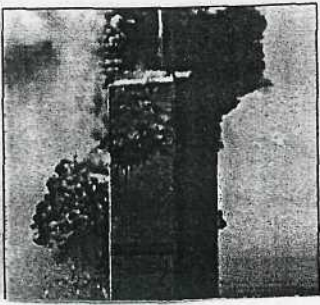
If love to God and to our fellowmen is lacking, then our obedience to the law is not perfect. We must go beyond the mere letter and understand the deep meaning of the spiritual law. In other words, the law must be written in our hearts. We must love the law as David did and if we love it, then we will meditate on it day and night. (Ps. 1:2) Then the second mile will not be a burden to us, but a pleasure and a joy.

AMEN

Timo Martin

"Perhaps the boldest thing, the most revolutionary change the Church ever did, happened in the first century. The holy day, the Sabbath, was changed from Saturday to Sunday. "The Day of the Lord" (dies Dominica) was chosen, not from any directions noted in the Scriptures, but from the Churches sense of its own power. The day of resurrection, the day of Pentecost, fifty days later, came on the first day of the week. So this would be the new Sabbath. People who think that the Scriptures should be the sole authority should logically become 7th Day Adventists, and keep Saturday holy." (Saint Catherine Catholic Church Sentinel, May 21, 1995)

"Roman Catholics acknowledge that the change of the Sabbath was made by their church, and they cite this change as evidence of the authority of the church to legislate in divine things, and declare that Protestants, by observing the Sabbath as thus changed, are recognizing her power. The Roman Church has not relinquished her claim to supremacy; and when the world and the Protestant churches accept a Sabbath of her creating, while they reject the Bible Sabbath, they virtually admit this assumption. They claim the authority of apostles and Fathers for the change; but in so doing they ignore the very principle which separates them from Rome, -- that "the Bible and the Bible only, is the religion of Protestants." The papist can see that they are deceiving themselves, willingly closing their eyes to the facts in the case. As the Sunday institution gains favor, he rejoices, feeling assured that it will eventually bring the whole Protestant world under the banner of Rome." 4SP 280



TRAGEDY!

2 Corinthians 4:17

Looking for a meaningful definition of tragedy, we find a few rather clear interpretations, but still somewhat obscure; a fatal event, calamity, disaster. But most emphasis is in reference to its relationship with literature, art, drama, etc., in acting and writing. Looking deeper for meaning, as the word tragedy is basically a Greek word, we find further that the Greek definition breaks the word into two components; "tra-goidia", "trag(os)—goat; oide—song; "goat song"! Strangely explained as the wearing of goat skins accompanied by songs to dances honouring their God Dionysios in a ritual form... a senseless, meaningless definition. Searching further for a clearer meaning, we find; "a distressing, pitiful event." "I hate definitions", Benjamin Disraeli.

No matter how extensively we search for meaning to this elusive word, tragedy, all this does not satisfy or answer everyone's needs or comfort us for our time with all of its perplexities and circumstances. "Meaningless! Meaningless!"... says Solomon, the Teacher. "Utterly meaningless! Everything is meaningless." (Ecc. 1:2). "For man," Solomon soberly said, "is still under the sun." He continues to vainly reason about life, philosophizing with a world-view. So, "nothing is new under the sun"... then and today. Yet, man's life, then and more so today, is one of sadness: "labour, vexation of spirit, oppression, grief, mourning, brooding." These are words of Solomon, son of David, and King of Israel and Judah in the 10th Century B.C. noted for his wisdom, and author of Proverbs, Canticles, Ecclesiastes, and Wisdom of Solomon; hence a very wise man.

For much of the world today life seems senseless. Many, including journalists, writers, commentators, statesmen, educators, religious leaders, and Christians alike are vainly trying to make sense out of the nonsensical tragedy of September 11, 2001 in New York City. "What is the point of life," King Solomon asked. "You

work hard and someone else gets all the credit. You struggle to do good and evil people take advantage of you. You accumulate money, and it goes to spoiled heirs. You seek pleasure and it turns sour. And everyone—rich and poor, good or evil—meets the same end. We all die!" There is only one fitting word to describe this life, he says: "meaningless!"

However, here is a sober echo of a message with meaning for our age, our time, for those poor souls trapped in despair, and living in a meaningless world without God. No century has seen such rapid progress (Dan 12:4), and yet such utter despair and fear. What is the purpose of life anyway? Is there any ultimate meaning? Is that all there is?

Man is still living in a world, "under the sun", a stunned world lived on only one level, a world apart from God, and without any belief, or hope in an eternal afterlife. It's a life only for the here and now; "Eat, drink and be merry, for tomorrow we will die" (1 Cor. 15:32; Is. 22:13), and "But boast not thyself of tomorrow for thou knowest not thyself what a day may bring forth." (Prov. 27:1). This is hedonism; a doctrine that merely pleasure or happiness is a way of life; the sole or chief good in life and that moral duty is fulfilled in the gratification of pleasure-seeking instincts and dispositions. The Old Testament Bible prophet, Hosea, described as "a prophet at once affectionate and fiery", wrote, "My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge: because thou hast rejected knowledge, I will also reject thee, that thou shalt be no priest to me: seeing thou hast forgotten the law of thy God, I will also forget thy children."—a terrible and searching indictment.

If you live on this level of life, you can conclude that life is truly meaningless... "nothing was gained under the sun" (Eccl. 2:1). Furthermore, "What good will it be for a man if he gains the whole world, yet loses his soul"... and life? (Matt. 16:26). But, Hosea pleads with the

people to repent (2:7; 7:10; 14:2). The word he uses can mean both "turn" and "return". The word does not have the subtlety of the Greek "metanoia", which signifies a change of heart and mind resulting in the change in the way a person lives. Turn back, it says. Come back home. Turn around and face the facts of moral and political decay, of misery and guilt, of God's forgiveness and grace. Face the God from whom you have been running away and who has been eagerly seeking you.

The Teacher, furthermore, examines the world around him to see if others have found answers to the hardest questions of life "under the sun". But, to his disappointment, he finds the same old pattern repeated over and over again... "there is nothing new under the sun." (Eccl. 1:9).

Man, "under the sun", might from his own experience mistakenly think that the earth would continue indefinitely as it is now; to be born, toil, suffer, to experience some temporary joy, which is nothing in view of eternity, to leave it all behind, and then to simply die. All these attractions, and temptations in life—work, food, drink, pleasure, success, prosperity, fame, the teacher decided—are "meaningless"... "chasing after the wind." (Eccl. 1:16). None gave the ultimate satisfaction or hope.

Job, the Old Testament prophet and patriarch who underwent afflictions with fortitude and faith, also asked the hardest questions of life. In Job's anguish, he sometimes questioned the character of God Himself, demanding a personal explanation. Is it, then God's fault? Many today, in the wake of the unspeakable horror of the New York tragedy, as Job, blame God for the wickedness of man, the unfairness, injustice, and meaningless around us. They are pleadingly and listlessly asking themselves... why God?... but why?!

But, Solomon the wise teacher, searching for meaning, found: "God made man upright, but men have gone in search of many schemes." (Eccl. 7:29). He discovered also, "unfairness of life"; people don't get what they deserve, claims the teacher. Good men suffer while wicked men prosper. Everything seems determined by time and chance. The teacher's doubts about the

afterlife (Eccl. 3:20) affected all his thinking and the thinking of many today, because he saw the utter unfairness of life around him. If one has a solid belief in the afterlife, then he will have and show confidence that God will ultimately judge all people with fairness...justice will prevail!

Yet, "there is a time for everything and a season for every activity under heaven." (Eccl. 3:1). These are not normal times we are living in. It's a weary round of a turbulent life. It's a time of crisis; fear, anger, mourning, rage, horror and shock. But of these, anger and fear predominates. Anger will destroy you before it destroys anyone else (Prov. 14:17;19:29;29:22). Fear of people is unnecessary if you trust God (Prov. 3:25, 26).

It's a time, also to find balance, and strength in our lives. Remember, "a wise man keeps himself under control." (Prov. 29:11.) It's a time to support one another. It's a time to edify one another. It's a time to edify the church. It's a time to take one long step back in our fragile lives and refresh ourselves with many blessings in remembrance of these things. It's a time to carefully reexamine our hearts, our faith, our direction, our deeds, our unseen lives.

We're living in a crushing, warring world that does not seem to have any order anymore. It seems that the basis of life is tragedy! Satan is manifesting himself openly and brazenly. It is difficult for many to realize that tragedy exists and to accept it, or cope with it, and that it will always exist in this artificial life, until they have had experiences on the outward surface of life. We read in 2 Cor. 4:16, "For which cause we faint not; but though our outward man perish yet the inward man is renewed day by day." Michelangelo said a wonderful thing. "The more the marble wears, the better the image grows."

Yet, it seems that our inner selves, for many, experience more sorrow than joy in life; that life is only sorrow. Jesus Christ was a man of sorrows. So, "sorrow awaits all Christians all along the way to heaven." (MH 247). But, on the other hand, "bearing great sorrows, in turn, enables a Christian to comfort others." (2SM 274).

Tragedy, stark tragedy, is something in which all forces make for disaster. Apostle Paul, in writing about human life, always wrote from the Bible standpoint, that the basis of many things is not reasonable, but tragic.

Sin has made an abysmal gap between God and the human race. Many times when we try to explain our lives logically or with human reasoning, we find disappointingly that things just don't work out that way.

When Lucifer and one-third of the angels with him were expelled from heaven it was an evil day that changed the universe! The recent tragedy on September 11, 2001 in New York City was also an evil day which changed the world! Anxiety, stress, crying is common. Many are overwhelmed, scared, helpless, stunned. These are normal reactions for the most part in the face of tragedy and diverse happenings in our lives. Many, in addition, feel as if some part of them has died. They live in anguish, persistent emptiness, and numbness.

They cannot, sorrowfully, even function normally or perform the simplest daily tasks. Scientists refer to this state in one way as post-traumatic stress syndrome. Many seek counselling, others stay home, or isolate themselves and ponder over past events. For many others it has become a world of woe, pain, inconvenience and lost talent. We read, however, from the Apostle Peter in 1 Peter 4:12, "Dear friends, do not be surprised at the painful trial you are suffering, as though something strange were happening to you."

What are you doing through these difficult trials and woes? Are troubled souls seeking you out for comfort... salve for their anguished eyes? What advice are you giving troubled Christians, friends, sorrowing souls, your family, your children, when tragedy strikes? First, begin with yourself! Are you fit? Or are you sick, weak, frail and feeble? Not only is there a dire need at this time to exercise your faith but your body as well, caring for it, strengthening it, nourishing it with live foods. If you have anxiety or stress, share it with other friends or believers, your pastor, family, elders, but first take it to the Lord in prayer... fervent prayer. "Where no counsel

is, the people fall: but in the multitude of counsellors there is safety"... and (power) (Prov. 11:14). And "keep your sorrow before God. (SC 100).

Next, and perhaps most importantly, serve the Lord, work for the Lord, with dedication and love. There's no greater escape, in my opinion, from anxiety and stress, and sorrowing than witnessing for the Lord; bringing perishing souls to the Lord... leading them to Jesus. "Taste and see..." and change... doing good to others. "Live such good lives among unbelievers that though they accuse you of doing wrong, they may see your good deeds and glorify God." (1 Pet. 2:12).

Tragedies can refine believers and give us an opportunity to prove our faith; the result working out for our benefit. "Remember, too, that suffering (tragedy) is temporary, to be endured only for a little while (1 Pet. 1:6; 5:10). Although experiencing a tragedy can be unpleasant, it can produce something of great value: an abrupt or sudden change in attitudes and beliefs. A sorrowing heart as a result of tragedy is touched by God's heart of love, as it is His purpose to bring joy out of sorrow. (SC 100, 5T 216).

We are merely travel-weary pilgrims, in a groaning world. More tragedies are forthcoming... worldwide, with greater severity... Jacob's time of trouble, the plagues. "For the great day of his wrath is come, and who shall be able to stand." Rev. 6:17).

Trials and tragedies are God's workmen, ordained for the perfection of character. However great the depravation and suffering of the Christian, however dark and inscrutable may seem the way of Providence, he is to rejoice in the Lord, knowing that all is working for his good. (RH May 6, 1902).

The things of this world are temporal, enduring only for a time, while the things which are not seen are eternal, enduring through endless ages. To secure this infinite treasure is to gain everything, and lose nothing. (MS 58, 1900).

During World War II, Britain's Prime Minister, Winston Churchill broadcast an announcement of the victories of the allied forces when they swept across North Africa and were about to launch the invasion of Sicily. Churchill summed up his announcement with these words: "This is not the end. This is not even the beginning of the end. But, it may be the end of the beginning."

It's not the end of the Lord's ministry when He ascended into the heavens. That was just the end of the beginning. When He ascended, the Holy Spirit came down to us, His followers, doing extraordinary things in His name. His ministry now continues in Heaven, before the Father's throne, hearing our prayers, interceding for His people, sealing the saints in their foreheads. This is the beginning of the end for mankind.

Returning again to the original premise for a plausible definition of tragedy, we tend to still struggle for a universal label, for an accurate meaning. President Franklin Delano Roosevelt vividly identified Dec. 7, 1941 as "a date which will live in infamy." (Pearl Harbour). September 11, 2001 is referred to by many today as "ever since September 11", a shortened version for this "new date of infamy". "Tragic events" is euphemistic and antiseptic, and "the catastrophe in New York and Washington" is too long and shallow. "Terrorist massacre" is accurate since massacre means "indiscriminate killing of large numbers", but this has not been widely adopted. The Prime Minister of Great Britain, perhaps, comes closest to all in a speech referring to Sept. 11 "as marking a turning point in history, where we confront the dangers of the future and assess the choices facing humankind." He continues, "It was a tragedy. An act of evil." Nevertheless, Sept. 11 is a day that will cause people, governments, church leaders, world-wide, to reflect, consider, change, and make a choice. What choice are you making?

The Defense Department adopted the name, "Operation Enduring Freedom", Enduring means "tolerating", as well as "persevering"... to remain firm under adversity; a name referring to the campaign on terrorism and "evil".

The Gospel reads, "But the Lord is the true God, He is the living God, and an everlasting King: at His wrath the earth shall tremble, and the nations shall not be able to endure His indignation." (Jer. 10:10). We read on, as the Lord says, "But he that shall endure unto the end, the same shall be saved." (Matt. 24:13) Endure! Endure! "Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil." (Eph. 6:1).

Life is full of perplexity and tragedy in a sceptical and wistful world; a world in which with an intent feeling, man is yearning, but with little expectation or gratification in life, of hope or peace. Love is waning. The main thrust of our witnessing, and ministry, therefore, needs to be positive, affirmative today. The people of God, passing through a story time, yet precious time are called to comfort those passing through an equally tragic time, with, "What we have seen and heard we declare to you, so that you and we together may share in a common life, that life which we share with the Father and His Son Jesus Christ." (1 John 1:3).

The real tragedy of Sept. 11 was not in the thousands of deaths, although it was heart-breaking. .. death spares no one and can be swift, ghastly, and premature. It's not death that is the supreme tragedy, a loathsome tragedy in itself, but death without Jesus Christ! If there is anyone that does not know Jesus or accept Jesus Christ as Saviour, the stony tragedy of death is every crueler by eternal separation from God. (2 Thess. 1:9; Heb. 10:31).

Do not suffer this supreme, ultimate tragedy. Trust in Jesus now. Depend on Him. Seek to let him live His life through us. Come nearer to God, by your devotion and love for Him; by obedience and faith, manifested by your good deeds for those in tragic need.

That is the clinching and soul-sufficing answer to TRAGEDY! AMEN.

John Theodorou
Greece



A COMPLETE DEPENDENCE

"If He should gather to Himself His Spirit and His breath, all flesh would perish together; and man would return to dust." Job 34:14, 15

We do not belong to ourselves. Our life is not ours; it is not due to the good functioning of our vital organs that we are kept in life, but only to God's grace who sustains us through the power of His Spirit. *"The Spirit of God has made me, and the breath of the Almighty gives me life."* (Job 33:4) How many people live many years in spite of the fact that they may have a feeble heart, a single kidney, unhealthy lungs, clogged arteries, and even terminal diseases? Although the power of darkness is the one who holds the scythe of death in its hands, he cannot make use of this power unless the Almighty God entitles him to do so. God's grace can plead for long with a soul in the hope that it will surrender to His love. The Scriptures tell us that life is given to us for a certain concrete period of time and with a certain precise purpose: *"He...has determined their preappointed times and boundaries of their habitation so that they should seek the Lord..."* (Acts 17:26, 27) Job knew this very well and declares; *"Since his days are determined, the number of his months are with You; You have appointed his limits, so that he cannot pass."* (Job 14:5) He also knew that all his suffering was just a trial of faith so that he might prove to the human and the holy beings that he trusted and loved His God no matter what: *"For I know that my Redeemer lives, and He shall stand at last on the earth; and after my skin is destroyed, this I know, that in my flesh I shall see God, whom I shall see for myself, and my eyes shall behold, and no another."* Job. 18:25-27. And that through this trial his character might be fit for eternity, since only by genuine faith can

we obtain salvation. Job, well aware of this fact, declares; *"When He has tested me, I shall come forth as gold."* (Job 23:10)

Death is not a threat to him who lives by faith. On the contrary, it is a blessing and very much wished by those who serve the Lord faithfully, as Job did. He pleads with the Lord; *"Oh, that you would hide me in the grace, that you would conceal me until your wrath is past, that you would appoint me a set time and remember me!"* Job 14:13. He knew that the end of the world would come and the wrath of God would be poured without compassion upon the wicked. Although the children of God would be protected by their almighty and loving Father, they would still have to go through a time of great affliction. He pleads that he may be hidden in the grace until everything is over to resurrect later to eternal life because: *"Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord...that they may rest from their labors, and their works follow them"* Rev. 14:13

The Lord, in His great mercy did not grant Job his petition at the time he asked for it, but healed him from his sickness and rewarded his patience giving him double of the animals he had lost. *"Fourteen thousand sheep, six thousand camels, and a thousand yoke of oxen and one thousand female donkeys" and the same number of children as the evil one had deprived him of: "Seven sons and three daughters"*. (Job 42:12, 13)

The apostle Paul had the same conviction as Job regarding death and he declares: *"For to me, to live is Christ, and to die is gain. But if I live in the flesh, this is the fruit of my labor: yet what I shall choose I wot not. For I am hard pressed between the two, having a desire to depart and be with Christ, which is far better. Nevertheless, to remain in the flesh is more needful for you."* (Philippians 1:22-24) He knew that death is just a sleep, that *"the dead know nothing."* (Eccl. 9:5) He could rest in the grace until the Lord would come in the magnificent way in which He describes it to encourage the Thessalonians to continue living by faith. But the debt he feels toward the Lord for the hope of salvation and to his fellowmen, both Jews and Gentiles, is so big that the power of the Spirit gives him the certainty that he will continue living in the flesh, but walking in the Spirit, to bring fruit for the heavenly kingdom, to be a blessing to others, to edify the churches and carry the good news "to all nations, tribes and languages."

The same Spirit who led him to declare: *"Woe is me if I do not preach the gospel!"* (1 Cor. 9:16), decided for him: *"I shall remain and continue with you all for your progress and joy of faith."* (Phil. 1:25) *"If He should gather to Himself His Spirit and His breath, all flesh would perish together, and man would return to dust."*

Our Creator has the last word about our final destiny, the One who, *"Blew into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living being."* (Gen. 2:7) He is the One who can withdraw his breath and make that dynamic ensemble of bones, muscles and nerves turn into a heap of dust. As David declares: *"You take away their breath, they die and return to their dust"* (Ps. 104:29) and his son Solomon corroborates: *"All are from dust, and all return to dust"* (Eccl 3:20)

May the Lord give us the awareness that life is a precious gift that is in His power to deprive us of any moment and may He give us the wisdom to live it according to His will for our own benefit and His glory. AMEN

Teresa Corti



The East-European workers ' seminar in Hungary - August 9-29.2001.

PERFECTION! IS IT POSSIBLE?

HP 64.3 We need a deep insight into the nature of Christ and into the mystery of His love, "which passeth knowledge" (Eph. 3:19). We are to live in the warm, genial rays of the Sun of Righteousness. Nothing but Christ's loving compassion, His divine grace, His almighty power, can enable us to baffle the relentless foe and subdue the opposition of our own hearts. What is our strength? The joy of the Lord. Let the love of Christ fill our hearts, and then we shall be prepared to receive the power that He has for us.

It is clear that we need to have a deep understanding of the nature of Christ if we are to have strength in our Christian walk, and overcome the relentless foe. The wise man mentioned in Luke 6:48, 'dugged deep' to build his house on a solid, rock foundation, and if we are to cling to Christ, and not be overcome by the deceptions of our foe, we also need to 'dig deep' into the subject of the nature of Christ.

John 1:14 And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth.

Who was the Word?

John 1:1-3, 14 In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made... And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth.

In John chapter one, we are told that the Word was God and created all things, and came in flesh to dwell among us. Colossians 1:13-16 tells us that it was the Son of God (Jesus) who created all things. Therefore we can see that the Word is another name used to describe Jesus.

Why did the Word become flesh ?

Hebrews 2:14-18 Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same; that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil; And deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage. For verily he took not on [him the nature of] angels; but he took on [him] the seed of Abraham. Wherefore in all things it behoved him to be made like unto [his] brethren, that he might be a merciful and faithful high priest in things [pertaining] to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people. For in that he himself hath suffered being tempted, he is able to succour them that are tempted.

Ephesians 2:13-22 But now in Christ Jesus ye who sometimes were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ. For he is our peace, who hath made both one, and hath broken down the middle wall of partition [between us]; Having abolished in his flesh the enmity, [even] the law of commandments [contained] in ordinances; for to make in himself of twain one new man, [so] making peace; And that he might reconcile both unto God in one body by the cross, having slain the enmity thereby: And came and preached peace to you which were afar off, and to them that were nigh. For through him we both have access by one Spirit unto the Father. Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellowcitizens with the saints, and of the household of God; And are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner [stone]; In whom all the building fitly framed together groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord: In whom ye also are builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit.

ST, April 7, 1898 [Christ] came to reveal to the heavenly universe, to the worlds unfallen, and to sinful men, that every provision has been made by God in behalf of humanity, and that through the imputed righteousness of Christ, all who receive Him by faith can show their loyalty by keeping the law. As the repenting sinner lays hold of Christ as His personal Saviour, he is made a partaker of the divine nature.

The Word became flesh to accomplish a number of things. Jesus came to lawfully reconcile us to God, and to deliver us from death, which was the lawful consequence for sin (see also 2 Corinthians 5:18, 19 & Isaiah 61:1). This He did that He might be familiar with our situation, and a faithful and understanding intercessor between God and us. He also came to show to all the worlds God's infinite love and mercy, and to prove Satan's charges against God (that we can't keep the commandments that God has given us), false.

What was Christ's experience in the flesh like?

Isaiah 53:2-9 For he shall grow up before him as a tender plant, and as a root out of a dry ground: he hath no form nor comeliness; and when we shall see him, [there is] no beauty that we should desire him. He is despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief: and we hid as it were [our] faces from him; he was despised, and we esteemed him not. Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows: yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted. But he [was] wounded for our transgressions, [he was] bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace [was] upon him; and with his stripes we are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the LORD hath laid on him the iniquity of us all. He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth: he is brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he openeth not his mouth. He was taken from prison and from judgment: and who shall declare his generation? for he was cut off out of the land of the living: for the transgression of my people was he stricken. And he made his grave with the wicked, and with the rich in his death; because he had done no violence, neither [was any] deceit in his mouth.

Hebrews 4:15 For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as [we are, yet] without sin.

FLB 49.2-4 We should have no misgivings in regard to the perfect sinlessness of the human nature of Christ. He is a brother in our infirmities, but not in possessing like passions. As the sinless One, His nature recoiled from evil. He endured struggles and torture of soul in a world of sin. His humanity made prayer a necessity and privilege. He could have sinned; He could have fallen, but not for one moment was there in Him an evil propensity. In taking upon Himself man's nature in its fallen condition, Christ did not in the least participate in its sin. He was subject to the infirmities and weaknesses by which man is encompassed. . . . He was touched with the feeling of our infirmities, and was in all points tempted like as we are. And yet He "knew no sin." He was the lamb "without blemish and without spot."

Christ came to this earth in our sinful flesh, having our emotions (sorrow and grief) and also having the infirmities and weaknesses that we have. He was in all points tempted as we are, and He could have sinned, but He didn't.

What does it mean, that He had no 'evi propensity'?

1SM 94, 95 These were real temptations, no pretense. Christ "suffered being tempted" (Heb. 2:18)... The Son of God in His humanity wrestled with the very same fierce, apparently overwhelming temptations that assail men— temptations to indulgence of appetite, to presumptuous venturing where God has not led them, and to the worship of the god of this world, to sacrifice an eternity of bliss for the fascinating pleasures of this life.

5BC 1128,29 Never, in any way, leave the slightest impression upon human minds that a taint of, or inclination to, corruption rested upon Christ, or that He in any way yielded to corruption. He was tempted in all points like as man is tempted, yet He is called "that holy thing." It is a mystery that is left unexplained to mortals that Christ could be tempted in all points like as we are, and yet be without sin.

5BC 1103.8 The human nature of Christ was like unto ours, and suffering was more keenly felt by Him; for His spiritual nature was free from every taint of sin. Therefore His desire for the removal of suffering was stronger than human beings can experience. How intense was the desire of the humanity of Christ to escape the displeasure of an offended God, how His soul longed for relief, is revealed in the words, "O my Father, if this cup may not pass away from me, except I drink it, thy will be done."

In His spiritual nature, Christ had no inclination to evil, but His human nature and flesh was subject to the same hormones, feelings and temptations that we have. Thus He was truly tempted in all points as we are, yet was without sin.

If Jesus was able to sin and fall, how did He resist the temptations facing Him ?

MS 140, 1903 In every possible way Satan sought to prevent Jesus from developing a perfect childhood, a faultless manhood, a holy ministry, and an unblemished sacrifice. But he was defeated. He could not lead Jesus into sin. He could not discourage Him, or drive Him from the work He had come to this earth to do. From the desert to Calvary the storm of Satan's wrath beat upon Him, but the more mercilessly it fell, the more firmly did the Son of God cling to the hand of His Father, and press on in the blood-stained path.

Isaiah 42:1,4,6 Behold my servant, whom I uphold; mine elect, [in whom] my soul delighteth; I have put my spirit upon him: he shall bring forth judgment to the Gentiles... He shall not fail nor be discouraged, till he have set judgment in the earth: and the isles shall wait for his law... I the LORD have called thee in righteousness, and will hold thine hand, and will keep thee, and give thee for a covenant of the people, for a light of the Gentiles;

Letter 32, 1899 When Jesus took human nature, and became in fashion as a man, He possessed all the human organism. His necessities were the necessities of a man. He had bodily wants to be supplied, bodily weariness to be relieved. By prayer to the Father He was braced for duty and for trial.

FLB 49.3, 4 His [Jesus'] humanity made prayer a necessity and privilege.

Hebrews 5:7-9 Who in the days of his flesh, when he had offered up prayers and supplications with strong crying and tears unto him that was able to save him from death, and was heard in that he feared; Though he were a Son, yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered; And being made perfect, he became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him.

Christ Jesus in His walk on earth clung to the hand of His Father. Prayer and supplications were a necessity for Him, if He were to walk a perfect and obedient life as an example to us. Jesus relied wholly on His Father's strength.

Did Jesus have any advantages over us with which to overcome sin?

1SM 252 The Majesty of heaven undertook the cause of man, and with the same facilities that man may obtain, withstood the temptations of Satan as man must withstand them. This was the only way in which fallen man could become a partaker of the divine nature.

RH, Feb 18, 1890 It was a solemn reality that Christ came to fight the battles as man, in man's behalf. His temptation and victory tell us that humanity must copy the Pattern; man must become a partaker of the divine nature... [The] plan of God, devised for the salvation of man, provided that Christ should know hunger, and poverty, and every phase of man's experience. He withstood the temptation, through the power that man may command. He laid hold on the throne of God, and there is not a man or woman who may not have access to the same help through faith in God. Man may become a partaker of the divine nature; not a soul lives who may not summon the aid of Heaven in temptation and trial. Christ came to reveal the Source of his power, that man might never rely on his unaided human capabilities... Christ, by his own example, made it evident that man may stand in integrity. Men may have a power to resist evil--a power that neither earth, nor death, nor hell can master; a power that will place them where they may overcome as Christ overcame. Divinity and humanity may be combined in them.

2 Samuel 2:33 God [is] my strength [and] power: And he maketh my way perfect.

Jesus did not have any advantages over us with regards to the facilities that aided Him in resisting evil. He required prayer and the strength of His Father to help Him overcome, and we have access to the same power from the Father.

Are we, as Christ's followers to overcome sin?

Matthew 5:48 Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect.

Romans 6:4-8, 11-15 Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also [in the likeness] of [his] resurrection: 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. For he that is dead is freed from sin. Now if we be dead with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with him... Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord. Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, that ye should obey it in the lusts thereof. Neither yield ye your members [as] instruments of unrighteousness unto sin: but yield yourselves unto God, as those that are alive from the dead, and your members [as] instruments of righteousness unto God. For sin shall not have dominion over you: for ye are not under the law, but under grace. What then? Shall we sin, because we are not under the law, but under grace? God forbid.

Leviticus 20:7 Sanctify yourselves therefore, and be ye holy: for I [am] the LORD your God.

1 Thessalonians 4:3,4 For this is the will of God, [even] your sanctification, that ye should abstain from fornication: That every one of you should know how to possess his vessel in sanctification and honour.

It is our sin which separates us from God, and our sins which maintain this separation (Isa 59:2). He requires of His followers obedience to His law. Several times in scripture He has given us instructions to 'sin not', and although we as finite humans are unable to stop sinning in our own strength, He offers us the power to enable us to overcome sin, and be conquerors of evil.

Are we able then, to live a sinlessly perfect life on this earth as Jesus did?

ST May 14, 1902 Christ came to give moral power to man; to elevate, ennoble, and strengthen him. He came to prove the falsity of Satan's charge that God had made a law which man could not keep. While possessing man's nature, Christ kept the Ten Commandments. Thus He proved to the inhabitants of the unfallen worlds and to human beings that it is possible for man perfectly to obey the law. He vindicated God's justice in demanding obedience to His law. Those who accept Christ as their Saviour, becoming partakers of the divine nature, are enabled to follow His example of obedience to every divine precept.

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.

SC 51.2 Jesus says, "What things soever ye desire, when ye pray, believe that ye receive them, and ye shall have them." Mark 11:24. There is a condition to this promise--that we pray according to the will of God. But it is the will of God to cleanse us from sin, to make us His children, and to enable us to live a holy life. So we may ask for these blessings, and believe that we receive them, and thank God that we have received them.

UL 228 And Enoch walked with God: and he was not; for God took him. Gen. 5:24. Enoch was a public teacher of the truth in the age in which he lived. He taught the truth; he lived the truth; and the character of the teacher who walked with God was in every way harmonious with the greatness and sacredness of his mission. Enoch was a prophet who spake as he was moved by the Holy Ghost. He was a light amid the moral darkness, a pattern man, a man who walked with God, being obedient to God's law--that law which Satan had refused to obey, which Adam had transgressed, which Abel obeyed, and because of his obedience was murdered. And now God would demonstrate to the universe the falsity of Satan's charge that man cannot keep God's law. He would demonstrate that though man had sinned, he could so relate himself to God that he would have the mind and spirit of God and would be a representative symbol of Christ. This holy man was selected of God to denounce the wickedness of the world, and to evidence to the world that it is possible for men to keep all the law of God... Enoch walked with God and "had the testimony that his ways pleased God." This is the privilege of every believer today. It is man dwelling with God, and God taking up His abode with man. "I in them, and thou in me," says Jesus. To walk with God and have the witness that their ways please Him is an experience not to be confined to Enoch, to Elijah, to patriarchs, to prophets, to apostles, and to martyrs. It is not only the privilege but the duty of every follower of Christ to have Jesus enshrined in the heart, to carry Him with them in their lives; and they will indeed be fruit-bearing trees.

RH Dec 22, 1885 Through the plan of redemption, God has provided means for subduing every sinful trait, and resisting every temptation, however strong. God has made it for our interest, in every sense, to live soberly, righteously, and godly in the present life, that we may form characters worthy of the future, immortal life. His commandments are not grievous, and in keeping them there is great reward. Nothing that he has enjoined can we neglect or disregard without injury in this life, and the sacrifice of that life which is to come.

Our Heavenly Father hates sin, for it is sin that separates us from Him, so He has provided a means by which all human beings can overcome sin - by relying on His strength, and looking to Jesus, the One who made this possible. By doing this, we are enabled to keep the law to every divine precept. There are those who think we cannot live a sinlessly perfect life, and that is true to some extent, *we* cannot conquer sin in our own strength, however we, like Enoch, if we trust in God and look to Him, asking Him to reveal to us our sins and asking Him to give us strength to overcome them, may keep all the law of God, and live a sinlessly perfect life on this earth through the righteousness of Christ.

How are we able to achieve a perfect life?

MB 141-143 The belated traveler, hurrying to reach the city gate by the going down of the sun, could not turn aside for any attractions by the way. His whole mind was bent on the one purpose of entering the gate. The same intensity of purpose, said Jesus, is required in the Christian life. I have opened to you the glory of character, which is the true glory of My kingdom. It offers you no promise of earthly dominion; yet it is worthy of your supreme desire and effort. I do not call you to battle for the supremacy of the world's great empire, but do not therefore conclude that there is no battle to be fought nor victories to be won. I bid you strive, agonize, to enter into My spiritual kingdom. The Christian life is a battle and a march. But the victory to be gained is not won by human power. The field of conflict is the domain of the heart. The battle which we have to fight--the greatest battle that was ever fought by man--is the surrender of self to the will of God, the yielding of the heart to the sovereignty of love. The old nature, born of blood and of the will of the flesh, cannot inherit the kingdom of God. The hereditary tendencies, the former habits, must be given up. We cannot, of ourselves, conquer the evil desires and

habits that strive for the mastery. We cannot overcome the mighty foe who holds us in his thrall. God alone can give us the victory. He desires us to have the mastery over ourselves, our own will and ways. But He cannot work in us without our consent and co-operation. The divine Spirit works through the faculties and powers given to man. Our energies are required to co-operate with God. The victory is not won without much earnest prayer, without the humbling of self at every step. Our will is not to be forced into co-operation with divine agencies, but it must be voluntarily submitted. Were it possible to force upon you with a hundredfold greater intensity the influence of the Spirit of God, it would not make you a Christian, a fit subject for heaven. The stronghold of Satan would not be broken. The will must be placed on the side of God's will. You are not able, of yourself, to bring your purposes and desires and inclinations into submission to the will of God; but if you are "willing to be made willing," God will accomplish the work for you, even "casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ." 2 Corinthians 10:5. Then you will "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." Philippians 2:12, 13... The only hope for us if we would overcome is to unite our will to God's will and work in co-operation with Him, hour by hour and day by day. We cannot retain self and yet enter the kingdom of God. If we ever attain unto holiness, it will be through the renunciation of self and the reception of the mind of Christ. Pride and self-sufficiency must be crucified. Are we willing to pay the price required of us? Are we willing to have our will brought into perfect conformity to the will of God? Until we are willing, the transforming grace of God cannot be manifest upon us.

COL 331 Christ has given us no assurance that to attain perfection of character is an easy matter. A noble, all-round character is not inherited. It does not come to us by accident. A noble character is earned by individual effort through the merits and grace of Christ. God gives the talents, the powers of the mind; we form the character. It is formed by hard, stern battles with self. Conflict after conflict must be waged against hereditary tendencies. We shall have to criticize ourselves closely, and allow not one unfavorable trait to remain uncorrected. Let no one say, I cannot remedy my defects of character. If you come to this decision, you will certainly fail of obtaining everlasting life. The impossibility lies in your own will. If you will not, then you can not overcome. The real difficulty arises from the corruption of an unsanctified heart, and an unwillingness to submit to the control of God.

1 Thessalonians 5:17-24 Pray without ceasing. In every thing give thanks: for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you. Quench not the Spirit. Despise not prophesyings. Prove all things; hold fast that which is good. Abstain from all appearance of evil. And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and [I pray God] your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.

A sinlessly perfect life on this earth is achieved only through much prayer and voluntary co-operation with God.

Is a perfect life instantly attained?

Mark 4:26-29 And he said, So is the kingdom of God, as if a man should cast seed into the ground; And should sleep, and rise night and day, and the seed should spring and grow up, he knoweth not how. For the earth bringeth forth fruit of herself; first the blade, then the ear, after that the full corn in the ear. But when the fruit is brought forth, immediately he putteth in the sickle, because the harvest is come.

COL 65 The germination of the seed represents the beginning of spiritual life, and the development of the plant is a beautiful figure of Christian growth. As in nature, so in grace; there can be no life without growth. The plant must either grow or die. As its growth is silent and imperceptible, but continuous, so is the development of the Christian life. At every stage of development our life may be perfect; yet if God's purpose for us is fulfilled, there will be continual advancement. Sanctification is the work of a lifetime. As our opportunities multiply, our experience will enlarge, and our knowledge increase. We shall become strong to bear responsibility, and our maturity will be in proportion to our privileges.

AG 285.3 If we come to God in faith, He will receive us and give us strength to climb upward to perfection. If we watch every word and action, that we may do nothing to dishonor the One who has trusted us, if we improve every opportunity granted us, we shall grow into the full stature of men and women in Christ... Christians, is Christ revealed in us? Are we doing all in our power to gain a body that is not easily enfeebled, a mind that looks beyond self to the cause and effect of every movement, that can wrestle with hard problems and conquer them, a will that is firm to resist evil and defend the right? Are we crucifying self? Are we growing up into the full stature of men and women in Christ, preparing to endure hardness as good soldiers of the cross?

ML 95.1 Striving all diligence, add to your faith virtue; and to virtue knowledge; and to knowledge temperance; and to temperance patience; and to patience godliness; and to godliness brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness charity. For if these things be in you, and abound, they make you that ye shall neither be barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ (2 Peter 1:5-8). These words are full of instruction, and strike the keynote of

victory. The apostle presents before the believers the ladder of Christian progress, every step of which represents advancement in the knowledge of God, and in the climbing of which there is to be no standstill. Faith, virtue, knowledge, temperance, patience, godliness, brotherly kindness, and charity are the rounds of the ladder. We are saved by climbing round after round, mounting step after step, to the height of Christ's ideal for us. Thus He is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption. All these successive steps are not to be kept before the mind's eye, and counted as you start; but fixing the eye upon Jesus, with an eye single to the glory of God, you will make advancement... By taking one step after another, the highest ascent may be climbed, and the summit of the mount may be reached at last. Do not become overwhelmed with the great amount of work you must do in your lifetime, for you are not required to do it all at once. Let every power of your being go to each day's work, improve each precious opportunity, appreciate the help that God gives you, and make advancement up the ladder of progress step by step. Remember that you are to live but one day at a time, that God has given you one day, and heavenly records will show how you have valued its privileges and opportunities. May you so improve every day given you of God that at last you may hear the Master say, "Well done, thou good and faithful servant."

Through the power that Christ gives us, we can all live a perfect life, but this perfect life is not instantly attained, as we must die to sin in all its forms first and surrender ourselves totally to Christ. The Christian walk is a gradual process of advancement. We are told to climb upward to perfection on the Christian ladder of growth, however do not be deceived that this is an easy thing to do. We cannot expect Him to change us fully if we are not surrendering ourselves entirely to Him each day, and co-operating with Him. He wants us to put in some effort.

We must not become overwhelmed at the amount of work needing to be done in us, for we are not required to do it all at once. We are only required to make advancement step by step. If we faithfully live up to the light given to us by God, overcoming through His strength each sin He reveals to us, then we shall be perfect at every stage of development in our life.

Why is knowledge of these things important to us?

COL 67, 69 Christ is seeking to reproduce Himself in the hearts of men; and He does this through those who believe in Him. The object of the Christian life is fruit bearing--the reproduction of Christ's character in the believer, that it may be reproduced in others... 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.

Christ has not already returned because His people did not believe in this message of sinless perfection through Christ's righteousness. He is waiting for His character to be perfectly reproduced within His people, and then He shall return.

How will we know we are perfected?

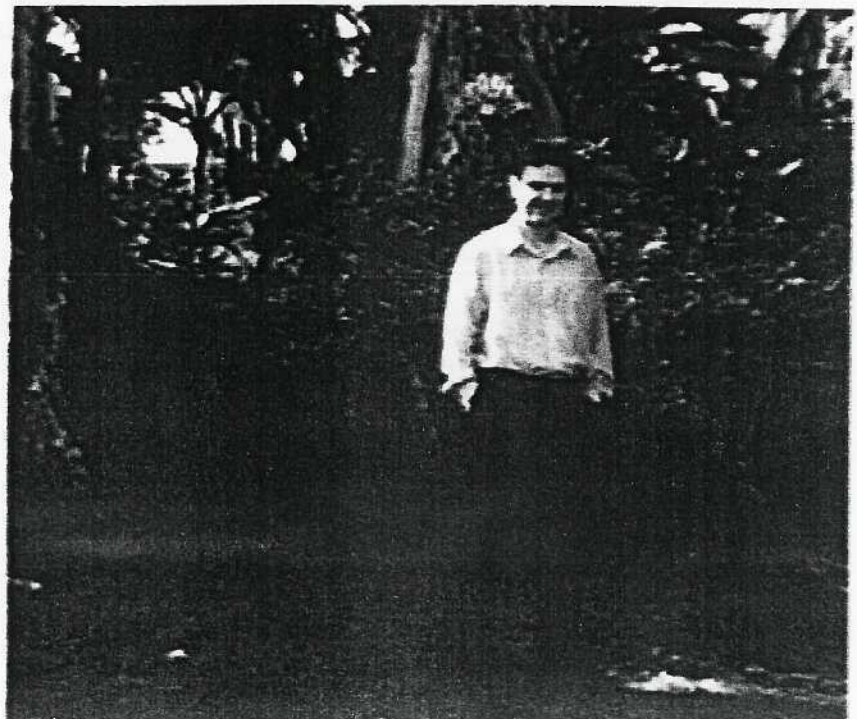
1 John 3:2 Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is.

1 John 4:17 Herein is our love made perfect, that we may have boldness in the day of judgment: because as he is, so are we in this world.

AMEN.

Jodyne Higgins
Australia

Catalin Stanculeasa in Costa Rica.



CONTENTMENT

But godliness with contentment is great gain. 1 Timothy 6:6

Are you content with what you have? Or do you always want more than you need? We must seriously think about this because it may determine our salvation. In the Bible there are many people who became greedy and wanted more than they needed, often with disastrous results. In the next few paragraphs we are going to take a look at the troubles they got themselves into because of this lack of contentment, which is really sin.

First we have David who was a great king of Israel and throughout most of his life served God very well. However, just at the prime of his reign, when he had everything he could possibly want, he coveted after something that was not his. At this time David probably had 20 wives or more but then when he was on the rooftop he saw a very beautiful women named Bathsheba bathing herself. The very minute he looked at her he sinned and he should have stopped right there, but instead he fed his lust and invited her over to talk for a while. After that David tried to do the right thing with getting Bathsheba back to her husband but he had already gone too far. From there David basically murdered Bathsheba's husband so he could marry her and although he felt some amount of guilt he thought nobody would ever learn of

his great sin. Somebody did learn though. God saw the whole thing and He could not let sin go unpunished. He sent His prophet Nathan who rebuked David and, although David was very, very sorry and confessed his sin, his sin would be punished. The first born of Bathsheba died soon after birth and David's own son Absalom ended up chasing him through his own kingdom. So indeed it would have been much better if David would have been content with the many things he had been blessed with.

Another example of people who were not content with what they had were the children of Israel. These people were receiving the best food possible every morning and night. Manna, which was what the angels in heaven ate, was extremely healthy and whoever ate it had amazing physical stamina. Despite all this the children of Israel demanded meat - put straight, dead carcasses. The Lord saw that what they were asking for was sinful but He gave them what they wanted. All the people of the congregation that ate the meat got a horrible sickness and many of them died. Also some of the camp of Israel became very dissatisfied with how much authority Moses had. On one occasion Moses' own brother and sister, Aaron and Miriam, felt that they did not have near enough power and Moses had

too much. They began discussing it and thinking of ways to improve the situation, however Moses overheard them and was deeply hurt. The Lord ordered that Miriam must be punished, and despite her words against him Moses pleaded that the punishment would not have to be accomplished. "And Moses cried unto the Lord, saying, Heal her now, O God, I beseech thee." Numbers 12:13.

Korah, Dathan, and Abiram also complained bitterly against Moses and they even tried to start an uprising that would go back to Egypt. They also got their just punishment. What all the individuals did not realize is with authority comes a lot of responsibility. Not only that, Moses had gone through 40 years of training and many tough experiences before he could even think about leading one million people. In the end the person who the Lord chose was the best for the job because not only was Moses very, "meek, above all the men which were upon the face of the earth" (Numbers 12:3), he was also a very kind leader. If Israel had been content with the leader God had chosen, the food they were given to eat and how God was leading them in the wilderness, they would have had a much easier journey from Egypt to Canaan.

King Ahab was a man whose greed also got the better of him and led him to do a horrible sin. Not too long after the revival in Israel, Ahab was in his palace. Then he spotted a very beautiful vineyard and just like king David, even though he had many of his own, he wanted that vineyard at all costs. King Ahab's covetousness quickly took over as he went to talk to the owner of the vineyard, Naboth, a very good and faithful man. Naboth pointed out to Ahab that it was against the Law of Moses to give away ancestral land, but Ahab wanted that land so badly he went and told his wife, Jezebel, of his problem. Jezebel hated all Israelites who still obeyed the true God so she quickly made plans to kill him. After he was stoned Ahab was happy and went to take possession of the vineyard. While in the vineyard Elijah met Ahab and rebuked him saying, "In the place where dogs licked the blood of Naboth shall dogs lick thy blood even thine." 1 Kings 21:19. Ahab became so

greedy that his conscience was virtually dead and all he could think of is, "what can I do for myself."

Are we any better than these people from the Bible? Although we think that we would never kill people or commit sins like they did in the Bible just to have something we like, we are in just as much danger today as they were back then. In fact today there are so many more exciting and expensive things available that it is very easy to start wanting more and more. Even if we don't kill in order to get what we want so badly, we are still breaking the tenth commandment if we are not happy and content with what we have. "Thou shalt not covet." In the end, we will be judged not only by the actions we have committed, but also by those actions which we would have done if we had the opportunity, or if we knew we would not get caught. Sometimes we avoid doing things because we don't want to get caught and be embarrassed. But this is sin also. Sometimes we want the

latest and best modern inventions even if we can't afford them. John the Baptist told the soldiers to be, "content with your wages." Luke 3:14. What we often don't realize is that what God gives us is the best. Ultimately the only way we will be happy in our lives is to follow God's plan. So it is my wish and prayer that we will seriously think about what way we are heading in our lives, are we constantly wanting better stuff and being distracted by the things of this world, or are we happy even if we live in a hut realizing that we will have a mansion in heaven? "And having food and raiment let us be therewith content." 1 Tim.6:8.

"Let your conversation be without covetousness; and be content with such things as ye have: for he hath said, I will never leave thee nor forsake thee." Hebrews 13:5.

AMEN

Richard Eaton

IT ISN'T ENOUGH

IT ISN'T ENOUGH TO SAY IN OUR HEARTS THAT WE LIKE A MAN FOR HIS WAYS, IT ISN'T ENOUGH THAT WE FILL OUR MINDS WITH PAENANS OF SILENT PRAISE; NOR IS IT ENOUGH THAT WE HONOR A MAN AS OUR CONFIDENCE UPWARD MOUNTS, IT'S GOING RIGHT UP TO THE MAN HIMSELF, AND TELLING HIM SO THAT COUNTS; IF A MAN DOES A WORK YOU REALLY ADMIRE, DON'T LEAVE A KIND WORD UNSAID, IN FEAR THAT TO DO SO MIGHT MAKE HIM VAIN AND CAUSE HIM TO 'LOSE HIS HEAD.' BUT REACH OUT YOUR HAND AND TELL HIM, 'WELL DONE,' AND SEE HOW HIS GRATITUDE STARTS; IT ISN'T THE FLOWERS STREWN ON THE GRAVE, IT'S THE WORD TO THE LIVING IMPARTS.

.... ANONYMOUS



JACK, THE LITTLE HOME MISSIONARY

Some people think you have to be an adult before you can be a missionary and go to a foreign land, but here is a story of a 5-year-old boy who was a missionary for the Lord. Jack was just five years old when his mother became quite ill. She was so ill that she could no longer care for Jack and had to be taken to the hospital for a short while. His father went to work every day so Jack could not stay home during the time his mother was in the hospital, so it was decided to send him to live with Uncle Jim and Aunt Martha for a while. Jack had never been away from his mother before so he was a little frightened, however mother and father had taught him that Jesus would be with him all the time and he did not have to be afraid, as long as he remembered his prayers every night.

Father put Jack on the train, and he travelled all alone for the whole day. When he reached the town of Elmwood, Uncle Jim met him at the station and took him home to a pretty white house where Aunt Martha had a hot dinner waiting for him.

Uncle Jim and Aunt Martha were kind to Jack, but just as soon as he sat down at the

table he knew that they did not do things the way mother and father did. They did not bow their heads and thank Jesus for the food before eating, and they did not talk about the things that mother and Jack always talked about.

When Jack was tucked in bed that night in a room all his own and Aunt Martha had kissed him good night, he whispered, "I always say my prayers at home, and kneel down by my bed with mother. Will you help me tonight?"

"You just say them tonight, child," said Aunt Martha, as she smoothed the fluffy pink blanket over him and turned out the light. "You are big enough to say your prayers alone, I'm sure." Jack did not know that Aunt Martha had never prayed out loud in all her life, and that she did not quite know how to begin.

Jack had four little friends to play with living near Uncle Jim's house and he had a happy time each day playing with them and with his new red wagon that Uncle Jim had brought home. He heard often from home as father called often especially on Friday night to wish Jack a Happy Sabbath and encourage him on the

Sabbath day. Aunt Martha did help him study his Sabbath lesson. Sometimes she had to look up some texts in the big Bible that was kept up on the shelf. When she first took it down, it was all covered with dust.

"I haven't looked into this Bible since I was a little girl about as big as you are, Jack," she said as she blew the dust off the cover.

"Don't you ever go to church or Sabbath School?" he asked.

"Oh, no, child! I haven't time to go. I am far too busy trying to keep up with my housework here at home," Aunt Martha answered.

Jack sighed, for he wished that his uncle and aunt would take him to Sabbath school. He always went every Sabbath at home. Every night he prayed that they would learn more about Jesus and soon go to church. Mother had taught him always to pray to Jesus and ask Him to help others learn about the Bible.

Two months had passed when two very exciting things happened: Uncle Jim came home with a new car; and that same afternoon a letter came from father,

telling Jack that he could come home in a few days. Jack was so glad that he clapped his hands for joy, until Aunt Martha said: "Are you so glad to leave us? I won't know what to do without my little boy here to help me." Aunt Martha had grown to love Jack.

"On, no, Aunt Martha," Jack replied quickly. "I'll miss you, too; but I want to see mother. And then I'll be glad to go to Sabbath school again and hear the stories about the missionaries. That is what I want to be when I grow up; I'll go away and tell the heathen people about Jesus."

Just then a shout came from Uncle Jim. "Hurry up," he called, "and I'll take you for a ride in the new car!"

The new car ran so smoothly that they scarcely seemed to be moving at first. Then Uncle Jim began to drive faster and faster and faster, although Aunt Martha begged him to slow down.

"Jim," she said, "This mountain road is getting so steep that if you should meet another car around one of these curves you would upset all of us."

Hardly were the words out of her mouth when Uncle Jim swung around a turn, and there, right in front of them, was another car. Uncle Jim turned quickly to the edge of the steep grade to try to pass, but it was too late. The car

wheels went over the edge of the road, and they began to slide down. Far below they could see the river and the big rocks along the edge. Jack was praying, "Dear Jesus, please save us, and do not let us get hurt."

Just then there was a terrific jolt. Jack was thrown against the edge of the seat, hitting his head such a hard blow that he lost consciousness.

When he awoke, they were all back up on the road. His aunt was holding him in her lap and crying. Uncle Jim was wiping his eyes and was talking to Aunt Martha.

"Are you all right, darling?" Aunt Martha said, as she brushed Jack's hair back from the big bruised place on his forehead.

"What is it?" was all the little boy could say at first. Then he remembered. "Jesus *did* save us, didn't He? I prayed to Him, and I knew He would."

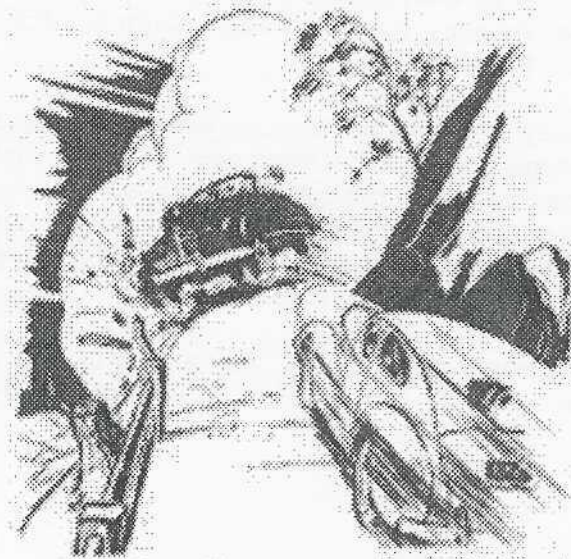
And Jesus had saved them, for their car had caught on the only big tree stump on

the whole mountainside, and there it had stayed long enough for them to crawl out.

Jack had not been home very many weeks before mother received a letter from Uncle Jim and Aunt Martha, and the best part of the whole letter was this:

"Tell your dear little boy that he does not have to wait to grow up to be a real missionary. He has taught us to love Jesus; and when he comes again to visit us, we will go to church and Sabbath school with him. We are looking forward to another visit from our little home missionary."

So you can be a missionary at any age. Just remember to take Jesus with you wherever you go. Remember to pray and read your Bible even if those around you are not. Your influence can help them to find Jesus also. And you don't have to go to a far-away country to be a missionary. You can be a missionary in your own home.





A LITTLE GIRL'S PRAYER

One night I had worked hard to help a mother in the labor ward; but in spite of all we could do she died leaving us a tiny premature baby and crying two-year old daughter. We would have difficulty keeping the baby alive, as we had no incubator. (We had no electricity to run an incubator). We also had no special feeding facilities.

Although we lived on the equator nights were often chilly with treacherous drafts. One student midwife went for the box we had for such babies and the cotton wool the baby would be wrapped in. Another went to stoke up the fire and fill a hot water bottle. She came back shortly in distress to tell me that in filling the bottle, it had burst. Rubber perishes easily in tropical climates. "And it is our last hot water bottle!" she exclaimed.

As in the West it is no good crying over spilled milk, so in Central Africa it might be considered no good crying over burst water bottles. They do not grow on trees, and there are no drugstores down forest pathways. "All right," I said, "Put the baby as near the fire as you safely can, and sleep between the baby and the door to keep it free from drafts. Your job is to keep the baby warm."

The following noon, as I did most days, I went to have prayers with any of the orphanage children who chose to gather with me. I gave the youngsters various suggestions of things to pray about and told them about the tiny baby. I explained our problem about keeping the baby warm enough, mentioning the hot water bottle. The baby could easily die if it got chills. I also told them of the two-year-old sister, crying because her mother had died. During the prayer time, one ten-year-old girl, Ruth prayed with the usual blunt conciseness of our African children. "Please God," she prayed, "Send us a water bottle. It'll be no good tomorrow, God, as the baby will be dead, so please send it this afternoon."

While I gasped inwardly at the audacity of the prayer, she added byway of a corollary, "And while You are about it, would You please send a dolly for the little girl so she'll know You really love her?"

As often with children's prayers, I was out on the spot. Could I honestly say, "Amen?" I just did not believe that God could do this. Oh, yes, I know God can do everything. The Bible says so. But there are limits, aren't there? The only way God could answer this particular prayer would be by sending me a parcel from the homeland. I had been in Africa for almost four years at that time, and I had never, ever received a parcel from home. Anyway, if anyone did send me a parcel, who would put in a hot water bottle? I live on the equator!

Halfway through the afternoon, while I was teaching in the nurses' training school, a message was sent that there was a car at my front door. By the time I reached home, the car had gone, but there, on the verandah, was a twenty-two pound parcel. I felt tears pricking my eyes. I could not open the parcel alone, so I sent for the orphanage children. Together we pulled off the string, carefully undoing each knot. We folded the paper, taking care not to tear it unduly.

Excitement was mounting. Some thirty or forty pairs of eyes were focused on the large cardboard box. From the top, I lifted out brightly colored knitted jerseys. Eyes sparkled

as I gave them out. Then there were the knitted bandages for the leprosy patients, and the children looked a little bored. Then came a box of mixed raisin and sultanas—that would make a nice batch of buns for the weekend.

Then, as I put my hand in again, I felt... could it really be? I grasped it and pulled it out—yes, a brand-new, rubber water bottle!

I cried. I had not asked God to send it; I had not truly believed it could happen. Ruth was in the front row of the children. She rushed forward, crying out, "If God has sent the bottle, God must have sent the dolly, too!"

Rummaging down to the bottom of the box, she pulled out the small beautifully dressed dolly. Her eyes shone! She had never doubted. Looking up at me, she asked: "Can I go over with you, Mummy, and give this dolly to that little girl, so she'll know that Jesus really loves her?"

That parcel had been on the way five whole months. Packed up by my former Sabbath school class, whose leader had heard and obeyed God's prompting to send a hot water bottle, even to the equator. Ad one of the girls had put in a dolly for an African child—five months before—in answer to the believing prayer of a ten-year-old to bring it "that afternoon."

"Before they call I will answer!" Isa 65:24



Sister TundeMartinez with baby Elena.

"A WONDERFUL SAVIOUR IS JESUS MY LORD"

Every time I receive a Reformation Messenger it inspires me to write. But few articles get past the scratch paper. Why is this? Why does my inspiration disappear without much fruit?

The garden can teach much about perseverance. When you start a garden from a weedy-sod area you learn to start small and keep at it. If you can just keep a small patch clear and gradually expand the area - well, in a few years you have a large productive garden that is relatively easy to care for - if you keep at it. (So bear with me in my infancy as a writer.)

Well, can I learn anything from my garden? Does it relate to my spiritual life? Of course we know it does.

Nothing succeeds like success.

The best way to increase faith is to exercise faith.

Now to my spiritual weedy, sod-like self. Sin is hard to eradicate. It is deep-rooted like thistles. When you least expect them, there they are - just where you thought you had them totally under control. But there are several secrets to win over them.

One - Don't cut them down. They only come up again, and a thistle has a root many feet deep, so forget digging for them. Wait until they are in full bloom, then pull them. This really sets them back and often kills them totally.

Two - Before a heavy rain cut their stems a few inches high and the water will enter the stems and drown them.

Three - Can them. When they appear put a can over them.

Spiritual Lessons:

One - Sometimes sin has to come to full bloom in the life before it is really efficient to destroy it. This can be painful, even embarrassing, to have these ugly things in your life until the time is right to effectively eradicate them.

Two - Drown sin with God's love. Instead of dwelling on it, and mourning over it, drown it with the love and faith and hope and joy. A wonderful Saviour is Jesus My Lord. When I really learn to believe and know that Jesus wants to save me and that He is more than Able and Willing to see me through to the end, and is totally able to give me final victory, if I exercise trust in Him and pray without ceasing, sin ceases to appear desirable, it ceases to exist.

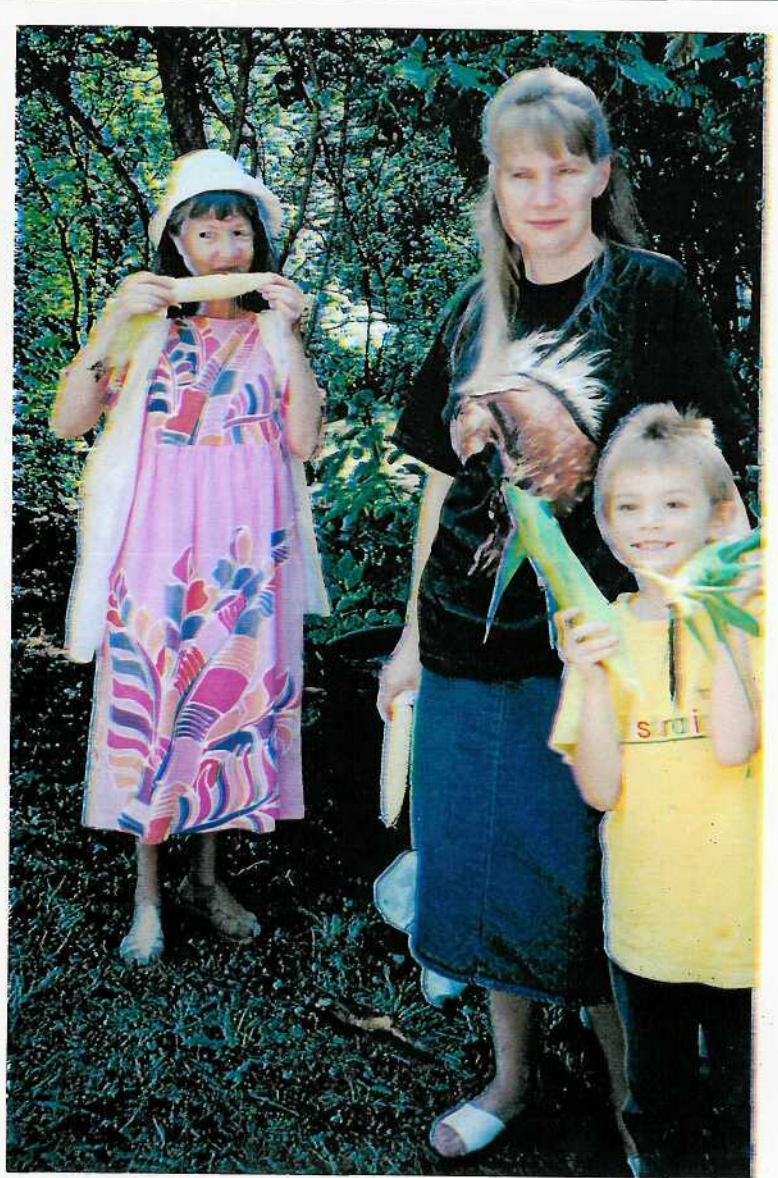
Three - Some sins die from lack of attention. The less you fuss with them or see them the better.

AMEN

Sis. Kathleen Ross, Alberta, Canada

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Corn-roast at the farm.



Be kind to the Animals.

A scenic autumn forest with a waterfall and fallen leaves. The background shows a lush green forest with a waterfall on the right side. The foreground is covered in fallen yellow and orange leaves. The text is centered on a white rectangular background.

One who cares

*Friends may say they care,
But when you are alone and in despair,
In this world of confusion they are nowhere near. I*

*But I will be there
To help you to find a solution
In this world of confusion.*

*When your heart is full of fear,
And your eyes are filled with tears,
Have no fear – I will be near
To dry your tear,
And comfort you in your hour of despair,
To show you I really care.*

*When you are used, abused and confused,
And it seems to your trials there is no end;
And you just can't comprehend
The wrong from the right,
I will be around to show you the light.*

*When your back is against the wall - call -
You feel you are about to fall,
And you have reached the end -
Remember I'll be your friend.*

*Place your hand in mine,
My lips will utter words ever so kind.
In your hour of despair have no fear.
Remember, I'll always be near
To show you how much I do care.*

By Roderick Stubbs, England