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WATCHMEN ON THE WALLS OF ZION

"Son of man, I have made thee a watchman unto the house of Israel: therefore hear the word at my mouth, and give them warning from me. When I say unto the wicked, Thou shalt surely die; and thou givest him not warning, nor speakest to warn the wicked from his wicked way, to save his life; the same wicked man shall die in his iniquity; but his blood will I require at thine hand. Yet if thou warn the wicked and he turn not from his wickedness, nor from his wicked way, he shall die in his iniquity; but thou hast delivered thy soul." Ezekiel 3:17-19.

What is a Watchman? He is a military sentinel on the lookout tower whose work it is to warn the people within the city of approaching dangers. When he sees danger he is to blow the trumpet and give warning so that those inside the city can prepare to meet the enemy.

These words have a wider application in these verses in Ezekiel. When God spoke to Ezekiel, He was referring not only to physical danger, but also to spiritual danger that would result in the eternal death of a person if the warning is not heeded. Ezekiel, as a watchman, was told to warn the people of the dangers of eternal death if they do not repent. Here was the nation of Israel, captives in Babylon, their beloved city in ruins, and they were tempted to blame God for His neglect to protect them. Ezekiel, as the watchman, was told to inform the people of their spiritual danger. They were in captivity due to their own sin. This was not only physical captivity, but also spiritual captivity. Ezekiel was to show them the way to spiritual freedom. The failure on the part of this kind of watchman may result in the loss of souls, which is more serious than the loss of a physical body. The body can be raised to eternal life if the person is not spiritually dead, however, when a person's soul is dead there will not be much hope for them on the resurrection day.

Often we compare these verses to the unfaithful watchmen in the false religious organizations who are

misleading their flock. Could it be possible to have an unfaithful watchman in God's church today - a watchman who is not doing his duty in warning the members who are straying of their danger? Yes, it is very possible. It is a fearful position to be in - to be called as a spiritual watchman in God's church. It is a duty that bears weighty responsibilities.

Who are God's watchmen today? They are not only the ministers and leaders in the church, they are also every member who sees his brother overtaken in a fault. "Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual, restore such an one in the spirit of meekness; considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted." Galatians 6:1. "Moreover, if thy brother shall trespass against thee, go and tell him his fault between thee and him alone:" Matthew 18:15. Neither of these two references say that when you see a brother with a fault, or commit a trespass, that you are to go and call the church leader/minister and relate to him what you saw and send him to deal with the offender. Both of them say that *you* are to go. However there is a time when the minister is to step in as the watchman and that is in the case of open sin.

OPEN SIN

"Secret sins are to be confessed in secret to God; but, for open sin, open confession is required." DA, p. 811. "Every open sin is to be as openly confessed." MH, p. 229.

What is open sin? It is sin that is open for all to see. Sin that is a direct violation of the Ten Commandments, and is consistently practiced with little remorse on the part of the offender, and is of a public nature where many people (within and without the church) become aware of the situation, such as adultery, stealing, attending the theatre, drinking, dancing, etc. Perhaps the person does feel remorse but refuses to change their ways. They are giving Christianity a bad name. It is when a sin is committed in a very public setting giving a false representation of true Christianity.

Many people may witness this open sin and wonder about the standards and morals in God's church. Unless this type of sin is dealt with in as public a manner as it was committed, it will not be forgiven. Souls can be discouraged from the faith if they witness someone in open sin who is not repentant and who is consequently not disciplined by the church. Open repentance does not involve a quiet "sorry" to the church committee. It is more than this - it is a public confession in front of the church. If a soul is truly repentant they will grieve over the fact that they have disappointed the church and disappointed Christ and will have no trouble making this kind of confession. Those who do not want to make this kind of confession are not truly sorry for their sin. They would do the same sin again, but next time make sure they don't get caught. This type of sin is when the minister needs to step in and counsel, (showing the love of Christ to them), the members with the choices they have: either they make an open confession or they will be put on church discipline until they are ready to do so. The open confession is what will bring healing and restoration between the member and the rest of the body of Christ. This does not mean that the person is an outcast until such time as they repent. Jesus is calling to them as the prodigal son who wandered from the safety of his father's house and is waiting with as much love to restore them. The other members are all working together to encourage such a one to make the right decision for Jesus.

"To hate and reprove sin, and at the same time to show pity and tenderness for the sinner, is a difficult attainment. The more earnest our own efforts to attain to holiness of heart and life, the more acute will be our perception of sin and the more decided our disapproval of any deviation from the right. We must guard against undue severity toward the wrongdoer, but we must also be careful not to lose sight of the exceeding sinfulness of sin. There is need of showing Christlike patience

and love for the erring one, but there is also danger of showing so great toleration for his error that he will look upon himself as undeserving of reproof, and will reject it as uncalled for and unjust.

"Ministers of the gospel sometimes do great harm by allowing their forbearance toward the erring to degenerate into toleration of sins and even participation in them. Thus they are led to excuse and palliate that which God condemns, and after a time they become so blinded as to commend the very ones whom God commands them to reprove. He who has blunted his spiritual perceptions by sinful leniency toward those whom God condemns, will erelong commit a greater sin by severity and harshness toward those whom God approves." AA, p. 503/504.

"God holds His people, as a body, responsible for the sins existing in individuals among them. If the leaders of the church neglect to diligently search out the sins which bring the displeasure of God upon the body, they become responsible for these sins." 3T, p. 269.

"The church as a whole is in a degree responsible for the wrongs of its individual members because they countenance the evil in not lifting up their voice against it." 4T, p. 491.

May God help the church to do their duty, but to do it in the spirit and love of Christ.

SLEEPY WATCHMEN

It is possible for watchmen to fall asleep at the post of duty as they did in Ancient Israel.

"His watchmen are blind: they are all ignorant, they are all dumb dogs, they cannot bark; sleeping, lying down, loving to slumber." Isaiah 56:10.

The watchmen in Israel lacked the intelligence of a dog as they slept on, failing to give a warning when danger approached. "The ancient men, those to whom God had given great light and who had stood as guardians of the spiritual interests of the people, had betrayed their trust "Peace and

safety" is the cry from men who will never again lift up their voice like a trumpet to show God's people their transgressions and the house of Jacob their sins. These dumb dogs that would not bark are the ones who feel the just vengeance of an offended God." T5, p. 211.

"Let them alone: they be blind leaders of the blind. And if the blind lead the blind, both shall fall into the ditch." Matthew 15:14.

Is God being fair to allow the salvation of souls to be dependent on another person as to whether they are faithful in carrying out their responsibilities? In reality God is fair.

"We have been inclined to think that where there are no faithful ministers there can be no true Christians, but this is not the case. God has promised that where the shepherds are not true He will take charge of the flock Himself. God has never made the flock wholly dependent upon human instrumentalities." 5T, p. 80. Thank God that He is in ultimate control of His church, and may God help us to keep Him there.

"Those who have too little courage to reprove wrong, or who through indolence or lack of interest make no earnest effort to purify the family or the church of God, are held accountable for the evil that may result from their neglect of duty. We are just as responsible for evil that we might have checked in others by exercise of parental or pastoral authority as if the acts had been our own." PP, p. 578.

"To exalt a minister as perfection because he has not displeased any one by reproofing errors, not only brings a snare upon the minister, but brings disaster upon the people." RH 07-25-93.

ANCIENT ISRAEL

Adventism has been repeating the steps of Ancient Israel, and at some point in time they were also guilty of not being true Shepherds to their flocks, therefore there was a need for God to call for a Reformation amongst His faithful people.

"Woe be to the shepherds of Israel that do feed themselves! Should not the shepherds feed the flocks? Ye eat the fat, and ye clothe you with the wool, ye kill them that are fed: but ye feed not the flock. The diseased have ye not strengthened, neither have ye healed that which was sick, neither have ye bound up that which was broken, neither have ye brought again that which was driven away, neither have ye sought that which was lost; but with force and with cruelty have ye ruled them. And they were scattered, because there is no shepherd: and they became meat to all the beasts of the field, when they were scattered." Ezekiel 34:2-5.

"Woe unto the pastors that destroy and scatter the sheep of my pasture! Saith the LORD. Therefore thus saith the LORD God of Israel against the pastors that feed my people; Ye have scattered my flock, and driven them away, and have not visited them: behold, I will visit upon you the evil of your doings, saith the LORD. And I will gather the remnant of my flock out of all countries whither I have driven them, and will bring them again to their folds; and they shall be fruitful and increase. And I will set up shepherds over them which shall feed them: and they shall fear no more, nor be dismayed, neither shall they be lacking, saith the LORD..." Jeremiah 23:1-4.

It was a sad time in Ancient Israel and this has been repeated numerous times in the religious world, with some of the worst offences committed by the Pharisees in the days of Jesus and the Papal priests in the Dark Ages. There is more to the duties of ministers/leaders than to simply wait around as watchmen, watching for danger. In the mean time they are to actively work as shepherds to the flock. They are to feed the hungry, clothe the naked, heal the broken hearts, seek for those that are lost etc.

May God help the Reform church to not repeat the same mistakes that the fallen churches in past history have.

It is not easy being a shepherd - leader/minister for the Lord. Satan's attacks come against them with greater fury than the regular members. He

knows that if he can cause them to fall, there will be some that follow. "Smite the shepherd and the sheep will be scattered." We need to pray for our leaders that they will remain true to their calling and be faithful watchmen—warning us when we are in spiritual danger - helping the needy and at the same time that they would remain pure themselves.

ELLEN WHITE'S EXPERIENCE:

Ellen G. White faced difficulties early in her ministry when she was told to reprove the sins that were revealed to her in vision. She didn't want to. More than likely these people were much older than she was.

"It was a great cross for me to relate to the erring what had been shown me concerning them. It caused me great distress to see others troubled or grieved. And when obliged to declare the messages, I would often soften them down, and make them appear as favourable for the individual as I could, and then would go by myself and be in agony of spirit. I looked upon those who had only their own souls to care for, and thought if I were in their condition I would not murmur. It was hard to relate the plain, cutting testimonies given me of God. I anxiously watched the result, and if the persons reprov'd rose up against the reproof, and afterward opposed the truth, these queries would arise in my mind: Did I deliver the message just as I should? Could there not have been some way to save them? And then such distress pressed upon my soul that I often felt that death would be a welcome messenger, and the grave a sweet resting place.

"I did not realize the danger and sin of such a course, until in vision I was taken into the presence of Jesus. He looked upon me with a frown, and turned His face from me. It is not possible to describe the terror and agony I then felt. I fell upon my face before Him, but had no power to utter a word. Oh, how I longed to be covered and hid from that dreadful frown! Then could I realize, in some degree, what the feelings of the lost will be when they cry! "Mountains and rocks, fall on us, and hide us from the face of Him

that sitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb.

"Presently an angel bade me rise, and the sight that met my eyes can hardly be described. Before me was a company whose hair and garments were torn, and whose countenances were the very picture of despair and horror. They came close to me, and rubbed their garments upon mine. As I looked at my garments, I saw that they were stained with blood. Again I fell like one dead at the feet of my accompanying angel. I could not plead one excuse, and longed to be away from that holy place. The angel raised me to my feet, and said: "This is not your case now, but this scene has passed before you to let you know what your situation must be if you neglect to declare to others what the Lord has revealed to you. But if you are faithful to the end, you shall eat of the tree of life, and shall drink of the river of water of life. You will have to suffer much, but the grace of God is sufficient." I then felt willing to do all that the Lord might require me to do, and I might have His approbation, and not feel His dreadful frown." 1T, p. 73,74.

REJECTING REPROOF

Often those people, who are in danger, don't realize it until the watchman blows the trumpet. Until such a time, they feel there is no danger and they live their lives according to that knowledge. It is possible that people don't see their danger spiritually also and God has sent watchmen to warn them of the danger they are in. Unfortunately, there are times when the people ignore the warnings of the watchman and reject them. It is not an easy job to be a spiritual watchman because human nature is such that it does not like to have its sins pointed out. Often the offender will verbally attack and berate the watchman and start to make excuses. Rarely do we see the offender say, "Thank you for pointing out my sin, I will try to improve on that point." Yet, the watchman must be true to his post. "Also I set watchmen over you, saying, Harken to the sound of the trumpet. But they said we will not hearken." Jeremiah 6:17.

Then God has to leave them alone to fall prey to the enemy since they refuse to listen. Spiritually, the watchman may have to take steps to separate such a person from the church of God, but it must be done in love for the errant soul.

"He that receiveth the seed into stony places, the same is he that heareth the word, and anon with joy receiveth it; yet hath he not root in himself, but dureth for a while; for when tribulation or persecution ariseth because of the word, by and by he is offended." Matthew 13:20, 21.

This type of person is not only offended at persecutions, but they become offended easily in general. When sins are pointed out, they become offended and threaten to leave. This makes the minister's duty more difficult, however he must still bring the truth to these people. As long as he has done it in the spirit of love, he will be guiltless before God. "Great peace have they which love thy law: and nothing shall offend them." Psalm 119:165.

"They rejoice for a season, for they think that religion will free them from difficulty and trial. While life moves smoothly with them, they may appear to be consistent Christians. But they faint beneath the fiery test of temptation. They cannot bear reproach for Christ's sake. When the word of God points out some cherished sin, or requires self-denial or sacrifices, they are offended. It would cost them too much to make a radical change in their life." COL, p. 47, 48.

"There will ever be a spirit to rise up against the reproof of sins and wrongs. But the voice of reproof should not be hushed because of this." ST 09-16-80

AFTER PROBATION CLOSES

"The people see that they have been deluded. They accuse one another of having led them to destruction; but all unite in heaping their bitterest condemnation upon the ministers. Unfaithful pastors have prophesied smooth things; . . . Now in their despair, these teachers confess before the world their work of deception. The multitudes are filled with fury. "We are lost!" they cry, "and you are the cause

of our ruin;" and they turn upon the false shepherds. The very ones that once admired them most will pronounce the most dreadful curses upon them." GC, p. 655,656.

A question for you to ask yourself is: "Will anyone come to me after probation closes and cry to me because I never gave them warning; never told them the truth of the time in which we live; never warned them of their spiritual danger?" I pray that no member or minister/leader in God's church will find themselves in this situation. It will be a great time of anguish for God's people without having this extra burden.

SEEKING THE LOST

The watchmen in God's church today are not only to stand by and watch for the enemy of souls giving warning when they see danger, and shepherd the flock within the church. They are to be as the True Shepherd and search for those who are outside the church; who have backslidden and departed. When Jesus saw He had one sheep missing, He left the 99 and went in search of that one. "God will work mightily with His ministers when their hearts are filled with love for poor lost sheep of the house of Israel. Hunt up the backsliders, those who once knew what religion was, and give them the message of mercy." CH, p. 533. "If

there is a backslider, the shepherd knows how to present the truth in such a manner that the soul will be convicted. He will leave the ninety and nine, and seek the lost sheep." PM, p. 220.

"Some ministers who profess to be called of God have the blood of souls on their garments. They are surrounded with backsliders and sinners, and yet feel no burden for their souls; they manifest an indifference in regard to their salvation. Some are so nearly asleep that they seem to have no sense of the work of a gospel minister. They do not consider that as spiritual physicians they are required to have skill in administering to souls diseased with sin. The work of warning sinners, of weeping over them and pleading with them, has been neglected until many souls are past all cure. Some have died in their sins, and will in the judgment confront with the reproaches of their guilt those who might have saved them, but who did not. Unfaithful ministers, what a retribution awaits you!" 2T, p. 506.

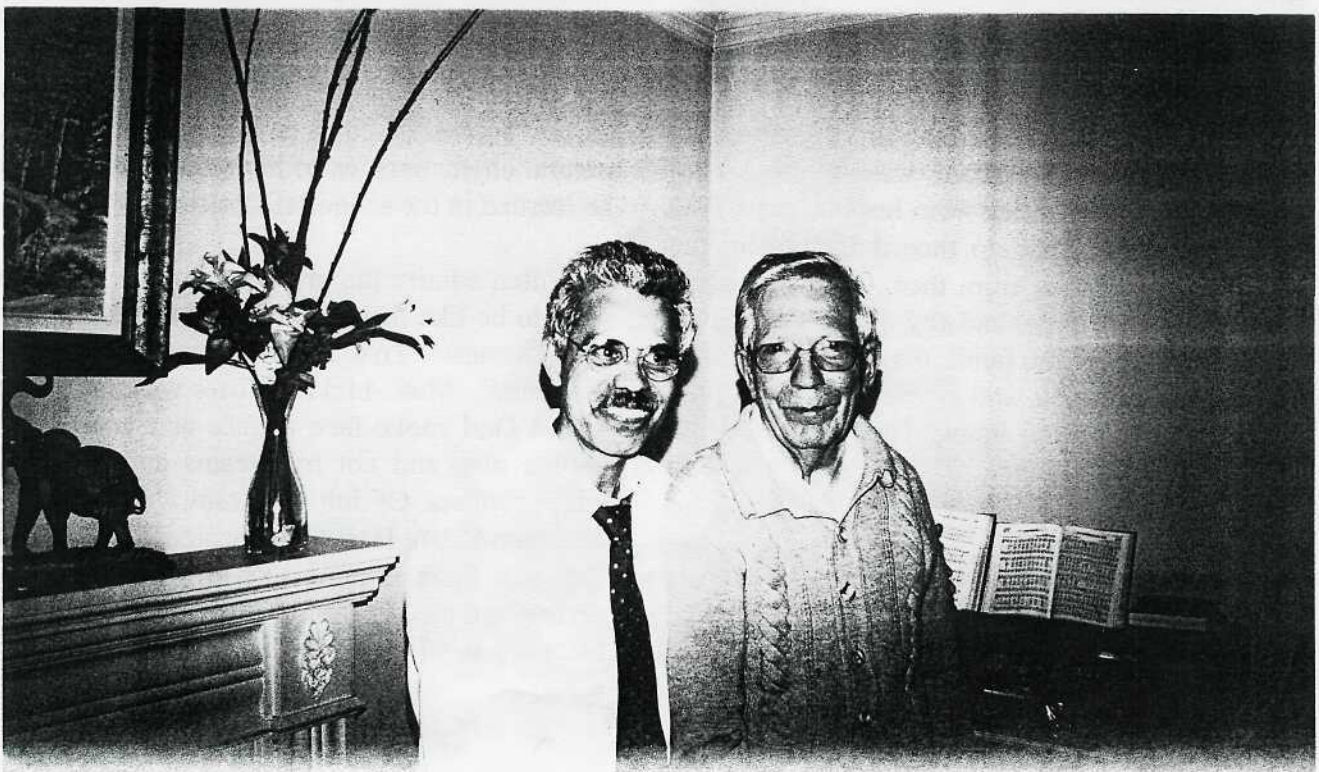
We are all called to be watchmen on the walls of Zion, to a greater or lesser degree, according to the influence we have outside of church as well as our position in church. If God allows a private sin in a brother to be revealed to you, then it is your duty to go and warn

the brother. You are not to tell anyone else, unless the brother refuses to repent. If an open sin has occurred, the minister of the church has a serious responsibility to bring the person to an understanding of the fact that they have placed themselves in a position away from Christ. It is also the duty of every church member to show the love of Christ to this erring brother or sister so that they may be won back into the fold of Christ.

"Thy watchmen shall lift up the voice; with the voice together shall they sing; for they shall see eye to eye, when the LORD shall bring again Zion." Isaiah 52:8. The spiritual watchmen on the walls of Zion rejoice together at the approach of the messenger bearing tidings of deliverance. The good news is that some will listen. Some will be rescued from the grasp of Satan, and this will be a great cause of rejoicing for the watchmen and the others within the city. They will all rejoice together with the angels of heaven who are rejoicing when one sinner repents and returns to the Lord.

We are living in a very serious time in this earth's history and may God help us as we help one another to reach the gates of the heavenly city. AMEN.

Wendy Eaton





HUMILITY

There was a beautiful angel, perfect in every way, perfect in wisdom, and very talented. He was also kind, loving and so gentle. He was God's masterpiece; the other angels admired him and obeyed him. Then something happened to this beautiful angel—he changed. He became a devil and the father of all evil and sin. What did it? What changed him? We read in Isa. 14:12-14, "How art thou fallen, O Lucifer?...For thou said in thine heart, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God... I will be like the most High." What changed this lovely angel to a devil? It was pride, self-exaltation.

In Prov. 16:18 we read, "Pride goeth before destruction." This is a law that God has made. How many proud rulers, kings, leaders, have fallen because of it. King Nebuchadnezzar had built a world empire, the greatest kingdom in the world and a beautiful palace for himself and he became proud of it. He thought, "Who could be against him, who could withstand him, was there an army stronger than his army, was there a king greater than him". Yes—there was a king greater than him; there was an army stronger than his army. Dan. 4:30-32 reads, "The king spake and said, Is not this great Babylon, that I have built for the house of the kingdom by the might of my power, and for the honour of my majesty? While the word was in the king's mouth, there fell a voice from heaven, saying, O king Nebuchadnezzar, to thee it is spoken; the kingdom is departed from thee. And they shall drive thee from men, and thy dwelling shall be with the beasts of the field: they shall make thee to eat grass as oxen, and seven times shall pass over thee, until thou know that the most High ruleth in the kingdom of men, and giveth it to whomsoever He will."

He had forgotten that there was a God in heaven. There is a king who executes judgment and who overrules. While the proud words were in his mouth a voice came from heaven, "The kingdom

is departed from thee until thou know that the most High ruleth." Where?—In the kingdom of men, and giveth it to whomsoever He will.

"Wherefore he saith, God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace unto the humble." James 4:6 Humility and meekness are some of the most beautiful characteristics we can have. The Bible speaks of "an ornament of meekness". Humility is the secret to success and to honour. James 4:10 says, "Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and he shall lift you up". When God, the king of the universe shall lift us up it is the greatest honour we can have. Jesus said, "The meek shall inherit the earth". And Paul writes in Phil. 2:3, "Let nothing be done through strife or vainglory; but in lowliness of mind let each esteem others better than themselves". This is the secret of unity and love among brethren; this is the secret of true fellowship. But this is one of the most difficult lessons to learn.

A humble man cannot be offended or hurt. No insult or abuse will offend him. He feels that he deserves this insult and this abuse. He actually feels that he deserves even worse treatment for his sins and that is death. But those wonderful characteristics of meekness and humility are one of the hardest lessons to learn. They are not natural characteristics of human beings but must be learned in the school of Christ.

We often admire the great men in the Bible and wish to be like them. Of John the Baptist, Jesus gave witness "That there has not risen greater than him". Matt. 11:11. Moses was a man with whom God spoke face to face as a man speaks with a man and not by dreams and visions as with prophets. Of Job God said, "And the Lord said unto Satan, Hast thou considered my servant Job, that there is none like him in the earth, a perfect and an upright man, one that feareth God, and escheweth evil?" Job 1:8.

Solomon was the wisest and the richest king in Israel. Also we admire apostle Paul the great apostle to the Gentiles and most of all Jesus Christ Himself. What was their greatness? What was the secret to their honour? The greatness of John the Baptist we find in John 3:30 in the words, "He must increase, but I must decrease". Very few people have spoken these words of themselves with a sincere heart. There are no words more humble, more submissive or more unselfish. When John spoke these words, he was in the best of his manhood. He had just accomplished a great revival. Thousands of people had come to him, to listen to his words and to be baptized. Now as he spoke the words that "He must increase and I must decrease" he meant that he must become smaller than he is now, less noticed, less admired, less wanted, and less accepted. I must be put aside and Christ must increase and become the center of attention.

What was the greatness of Moses? Was it his training in the court of Pharaoh? No, that time God could not use him yet until he learned the lesson of humility. His greatness was that he became the meekest man on the earth. It took 40 years of humble service to learn this characteristic. He was taken from the royal palace to care for sheep. This work was far below his talents and education, but it was necessary. The meekness he learned was his greatness and in importance far above his other talents.

Job was a great man of whom God gave the witness that he was a perfect man and that "There is none like him on the earth". His greatness is seen in his humility at the time when he had lost all he had and humbly he accepted it without complaining. It says in Job 1: 21, 22 "And said, Naked came I out of my mother's womb, and naked shall I return thither: the Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord. In all this Job sinned not, nor charged God foolishly."

Job understood that all good things come from the Lord and that is by grace that we have life and necessities, and if they are taken away the loving God must have a reason for it.

The greatness of Solomon we learn is in his own words, "I am but a little child, I know not how to go out or come in". 1 Kings 3:7. It was for his humble confession that God gave him wisdom and also riches and honour.

Paul, the great apostle of the Gentiles did not call himself good or faithful but the chief of sinners. His words, "For I know that in me...dwelleth no good thing..." Rom. 7:18, shows the humble opinion he had of himself.

The greatest example of meekness is our Lord, Jesus Christ. Paul writes of Him, "Let this mind be also in you that was in Christ Jesus". "Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: But made himself of no reputation, and was made in the likeness of men: And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross." Phil. 2:5-8

His humility is seen when He stooped down to wash His disciples' feet. He, the Creator and the King of the universe washing the dusty feet of sinful men. Little earlier His disciples had been arguing about who is the greatest among them and none of them would stoop so low as to serve each other in such a humble manner.

Should we not have this mind of Jesus? How wonderful would it be if we all would be so humble and so meek as Jesus was. Is there a reason or justification for human pride? Can a condemned criminal who is sentenced to death who is so helpless and worthless and only a child of dust, corrupted and selfish have some reason to feel proud of himself? Even the best of us are only instruments in the hand of God. Can a hammer or a saw build a house—certainly not. Therefore also without Christ we can do nothing. God needs different tools for different kinds of work. A builder is not always using a hammer or a saw in his work, he uses other tools also.

There was a time when Moses offered himself to work for the Lord, but the Lord did not use him for the next forty years until suddenly he was called into service as a special instrument in the hand of God. Again, later the Lord laid him down and called Joshua to continue the work.

Nothing could Moses have done if the Lord had not used him, and nothing can we do if the Lord does not take us into His hand and use us to do His work.

When we understand that without Him we can do nothing, then humility takes place in us. And with the humility comes a happy life because a humble person cannot be offended, he cannot be hurt. He realizes that he is worthy of death and therefore he deserves nothing. He has no rights nor claims.

Would we ask God to do justice to us and give us our rights, then He would have to put us to death, because this would be justice to us for this is what we deserve and this would be the only rights what belong to us. It is the mercy of God that we are living. It is by grace that we have a hope of eternal life. This is far more than we deserve.

It is a great privilege for a man to be used by God in His cause. God is calling humble workers to step into line. He is calling men and women who realize their own nothingness and helplessness. We read in the Spirit of Prophecy, "The minister for God should in an eminent degree possess humility. Those who have the deepest experience in the things of God are the farthest removed from pride and self-exaltation. Because they have an exalted conception of the glory of God, they feel that the lowest place in His service is too honourable for them." GW 142. "When men exalt themselves, feeling that they are a necessity for the success of God's great plan, the Lord causes them to be set aside. It is made evident that the Lord is not dependent upon them. The work does not stop because of their removal from it, but goes forward with greater power." DA 436. "Those men who are not called of God are generally the very ones that are the most confident that they are so called and that their labors are very important." EW 98. "Many a star that we have admired for its brilliancy will then go out in darkness." Test. Vol. 5, p. 81.

Will the work of God stop if these self-important men step out of it? Does God depend on men who are dust and yet exalt themselves above

others? Paul writes, "For ye see your calling, brethren, how that not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called: But God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise, and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty; and base things of the world, and things which are despised, hath God chosen, yea, and things which are not, to bring to nought things that are: That no flesh should glory in his presence." 1 Cor. 1:26-29.

A solemn warning is given us: "It is a dangerous age for any man who has talents which can be of value in the work of God, for Satan is constantly plying his temptation upon such a person, ever trying to fill him with pride and ambition; and when God would use him, in nine cases out of ten he becomes independent, self-sufficient, and feels capable of standing alone." Counsels on Health, p. 367.

How many excellent talents are wasted because of human pride and independent spirit. God cannot use them and therefore they must be removed from their positions by the shaking which the Lord has promised to do among His people. What remains after the shaking? "I will also leave in the midst of thee an afflicted and poor people, and they shall trust in the name of the Lord." Zeph. 3:12. The little remnant that remains after the shaking has no talent, no means, and no human greatness but they trust in the name of the Lord. Therefore, we must cast our glory to dust and trust in the name of the Lord for He is mighty, He is able and nothing is too difficult for Him.

The sooner we learn this lesson of humility the sooner the Lord can use us to finish His work on earth. May the Lord help us in this. AMEN

Timo Martin

**The joy that was set before Jesus
was that of seeing souls redeemed
by the sacrifice of His glory, His honor,
His riches, and His own life.
The salvation of man was His joy. 2T**

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EVIL!

Matthew 6:13



It is strange. It is interesting. It is maybe chance, or coincidence, that in an agonizing, groaning world, that the words evil, forces of evil, are so commonly used today by the news media: "Evil is Upon Us," "A Day of Evil", "An Evil Outrage", "Spotting Evil," "The Evil that Struck Us," "Forces of Evil," "Evil in Mans' Nature", "Denial of Evil," "The Satanic West," "Fighting for a Moral Planet,". These are fundamentally Biblical terms and concepts, Biblical language, yet they are openly and clearly used in reference to the Sept. 11th horrific attacks on New York City, and Washington.

Yes, this is interesting for the children of God, and believers; another sign of the times, although deplorable and grievously sad, yet, this should not entirely come to believers as some great surprise. It is not chance or coincidence, as the faithful do not believe in this as some strange unknown phenomenon as a circumstance or luck, as chance or coincidence is not applicable or existent in the believer's life. His trust is in Jesus Christ. In 1 Peter 4:12 we see, "Dear Friend, do not be surprised at the painful trial you are suffering, as though something strange were happening to you."

The use of the word "evil" in the secular worldly world most likely refers to a dictionary definition: anything that causes harm, pain, misery, disaster, calamity, unlucky, unfortunate...an evil hour. Yes, this in great part is true. Many are merely "nibbling around the edges", (of evil), trying to make sense of something non-sensible for them. The book of Genesis 41:3-4, treats evil as anything that's repulsive, or unpleasant or distorted. Many even speak and write today of a predominant righteous

anger; others of rage. The mood, the attitudes of the world are rapidly changing, innocents are bewildered, panicking, depressed, haunted with fear, grieving, unable to recover. Others are horrified, and disgusted. Why? The nature of evil seems to elude humanity. Evil has cast a grotesque shadow across the globe. Mankind universally is indescribably worried. Again, why? Because of unseen evil.

We're entering a new and quite different evil climate of opinion in which security of life and property for many will be given absolute precedence over pity in the framing and execution of law and order... "Peace and security" is not the by-word for today, but in place of this is, "Wars and rumours of war." (Matt. 24:6) Evil words are on the increase predominating the new quips, and conversation: retaliation, attack, vengeance, no appeasement, bestiality, treachery, heinously, cowardice, perpetrators, terrorism, threats, foes, etc., are finding popularity in a jittery world.

Why is it so vitally important to know the true cause and source or origin of evil in the present time for believers and unbelievers alike? Also, how can we resist evil, battle evil, and even prevent evil? Firstly, God is love. The evil that is in the world comes not from His hands, but from our great adversary, Satan, whose work first has been to deprave man, and enfeeble and pervert his faculties. (FE 429)

God is in no way responsible for the entrance of sin, nor created sin. Sin is an intruder, for whose presence no reason can be given. It is mysterious, unaccountable; to excuse it is to defend it. Our only definition

of sin as written in the word of God is "the transgression of the Law." (1 John 3:4) This is the great law of love, which is the foundation of the divine government. Sin originated with him who, next to Christ, had been most honored of God and who stood highest in power and glory among the inhabitants of heaven. Before his fall, Lucifer, was first among the covering Cherubs, holy and undefiled. (Ezek 28:12-15, 17, 6; Isa. 14:13, 14) Lucifer came to earth to indulge the desire for self-exaltation; the desire to secure the service and allegiance of all created beings and loyalty only to himself and not his creator. Satan (Lucifer) is author, originator, and instigator of sin, all sin.

We are living in the last great crisis. The signs of the times are fast fulfilling. The spirit of God is gradually being withdrawn from the earth. Plagues, calamities, and judgments are already falling on the despisers of the grace of God. The calamities by land, sea and air, the unsettled state of society, the alarms of war, and barbarous, suicidal wars are portentous warnings and omens of disaster. They forecast approaching events of the greatest magnitude, clearly and loudly, even to the faintest soul.

The agencies of evil are combining their forces and consolidation. They are strengthening for the last great crisis. Great changes are soon to take place in our world and the final movements will be rapid ones. Conditions of things in the world show that troublous times are right upon us. The daily papers are full of indications of a terrible conflict in the making today, worsening in the near future.

Men, possessed of demons are taking the lives of innocent men, women, and children, little children. Every species of evil prevails. (Isa. 58:14) The spirit of prophecy (some 150 years ago) in a night season beheld magnificent buildings rising toward

heaven in New York City. As the scene passed fire consumed these supposedly fireproof buildings as if made of pitch. Firemen were unable to help.

There's not many educators or statesmen who comprehend the causes that underlie the present evil state of society. Leaders of government are not able to solve the problems of moral corruption in an evil world. (9T 11-14) If men would give more heed to the teaching of God's word, they would find a solution to the problems that perplex them and mankind.

The world is stirred with the spirit of war. The prophecy of the eleventh chapter of Daniel has nearly been fulfilled. Soon the scenes of trouble spoken of in the prophecies will take place. Also... "the curse has devoured the earth" (Isa. 24:1-8) ... "and they that dwell in it are desolate". Furthermore, ... "joy is withered away from the sons of men," (Joel 1:15-18, 12) We read on... "destruction upon destruction is cried; for the whole land is spoiled." The cities thereof were broken down." (verses 23-26). "Alas! For that day (of evil) is great, so that none is like it; the time of Jacob's trouble, but he shall be saved out of it." (Jer. 30:7)

Not all in the world have taken sides with the enemy against God. Not all have become disloyal. There are a few faithful ones. Who in the world are these? John writes, "Here are they that keep the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus." (Rev. 14:12)

Soon the battle will be waged more fiercely than now, between those who serve God and those who serve Him not. Satan is a diligent Bible student. He knows his time is short. "He's like a lion devouring as many souls as possible. (1 Pet. 5:8) He will work miracles and deceive many, if possible, the very elect. God's people are to take their stand in the living word: "It is written". This is the only foundation they can stand on securely.

Although God granted the prayer of Moses in sparing Israel, after Aaron permitted them to fall in apostasy, by terrible severity evil had to be put away quickly before it infected all. Moses called to the people, "who is on the Lord's side"? Let him come to me. All who repented and humbled themselves were spared. All others perished (PP 324). Guard, therefore, against the beginnings of evil, for we are now entering the beginning of the end...probationary period. The confederacy of evil has never been stronger than it is now. (GW 149)

There is a class of people, however, that are continually looking for some dreadful evil. They are constantly speaking and dwelling on scenes of evil. This corrupts your mind and soul. Furthermore, the habit of brooding over anticipated evil is unwise and unchristian. (PP 293-4)

Many are weighed down by the anticipation of future troubles. They are constantly seeking to bring tomorrow's burdens into today. A large share of their trials are imaginary. Jesus promises graces only for the day. He tells us not to burden ourselves with cares and troubles of tomorrow (5T 199)... "For sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof. (Matt. 6:34)

Many parents believe that evil and good can be learned indiscriminately, and at some future time good will predominate and evil will lose its influence. Yet, evil increases faster than good, and takes root more readily than good. (1T 212) All this may be possible, but what parent or who will venture this? Time is short! (1T 400) It's no time to just idly wait and see.

Evil is multiplying fast in the last days. Everything turned horribly wrong on Sept. 11. There's no way to escape the tragedy and evil of that fateful morning, as the towers crumbled. The tide of evil is sweeping over the world as not seen since Noah's day (PK 275). Why is this?

Evil is a result of disobedience and a departure from God's statutes - His law, the Ten Commandments. (PK 294-8) (5T 503) But, God has not left us to battle with evil in our own strength, nor left us alone to do so (2T 271) (MH 175-6) Our only safeguard against evil is, therefore, Christ dwelling in our hearts (MH 118). Man cannot resist evil without the Holy Spirit's help (SC 52).

Satan is boldly and brazenly manifesting his evil, deadly, foul, character to the wide world. In the New Testament he's commonly called the "Evil One", the "Adversary" "Accuser" (Greek - diabolos)...Devil..."And the great dragon was cast out, that old serpent, called the Devil, and Satan, which deceiveth the whole world: he was cast out into the earth, and his angels were cast out with him" (Rev. 12:9) He's prince of the demons and this world; an adversary of God and man.

As prince of this world, he perverts the scriptures, opposes God's work, hinders the gospel, works lying wonders, appears as an angel of light, and is the father of lies. The sinister character of Satan is: presumptuous, proud, powerful, wicked, malignant, subtle, deceitful, fierce and cruel.

Evil is heavily pressing and pursuing man in a restless, uneasy world. Man's seeking a refuge, a haven, security, peace, but much of it is in vain. Nothing makes sense to him! Seeing many evils cannot be avoided, (ML 88) It's here, there, everywhere! It's a reality we have to face!

What are the qualities, then, for man to resist evil and evil devices, and demonic influences, and their attacks? We are, firstly, living in the precious hours of probation. Why? So that we may remove every defect of character. Not only that we may obtain the future life, but also that we may be useful here. A good character has more value than gold, silver, or stocks. It will not be affected by panics, failures, and

catastrophes, or when all earthly passions are swept away from us.

Integrity, firmness, perseverance are qualities all should seek and cultivate. They give a power that's irresistible, a power that makes him strong to do good, strong to resist evil, strong to bear adversity, or calamity. It's here that true excellence of character shines. (4T 656)

Strength of character consists of two things; power of will, or self-control. Such men are true heroes. Although one's sensitive to abuse, he forgives his enemies. Knowledge is power; but intellectual ability, without goodness of heart, is a power for evil. Everyone is his own architect of character. Take heed how you build; on the eternal Rock. Many have changeable, discordant characters full of contraries. They have no aim or purpose in life, powerless, with no influence on others.

The little span of life we have given us should be wisely improved. God would have his church a living, devoted, working church...edifying, ennobling. God calls for strong brave souls, active, living Christians who are following the true Pattern of Jesus and can influence for God and what's right and proper.

Humanity, in a suffering, pitiful world is locked in a struggle between good and evil on this planet; at war with the unseen beings (Eph 6:12) and forces of evil, who seek to crush the righteous (1 Pet. 5:8) and can manipulate human hearts (John 13:2).

A fearful climatic confrontation is going on right now between the cosmic forces of good and evil and at some time in the very near future will result in the eradication of all evil along with those creatures (human or otherwise) who aligned themselves with it (Rev. 19-21).

But no matter how it all looks to you, good or evil, God is in firm control of history and nations. Therefore, don't panic...hold on!

Where's the radiant armor of God? (Eph 6:11, 13) Pick the right armor!

Then, KNOW THY ENEMY...KNOW THYSELF!

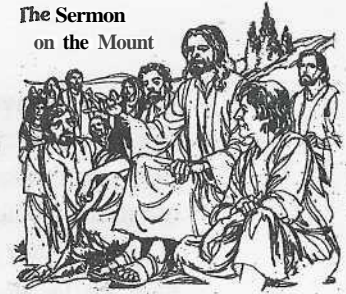
"Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me." (Psalm 23:4) AMEN

By: Br. John Theodorou
Athens, Greece

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The Editors.



CONDITIONS AND PROMISES

Jesus began His public ministry when He was already 30 years old and after He had won the big war against the devil in the wilderness. As he wandered in the city or by the shore of the Sea of Galilee He called some men to follow Him. But they were not the only ones who followed Him, since we read: *"His fame went throughout all Syria... great multitudes followed Him - from Galilee, and from Decapolis, Jerusalem, Judea and beyond the Jordan."* (Matthew 4:24, 25)

As He saw the crowd He went up on a mountain where He sat surrounded by His disciples and the big crowd. When everyone was seated He opened His mouth to utter words of heavenly origin. These words that brought up a complete set of new principles, words to which people's souls could not remain indifferent; simple words that entailed a condition and a promise, a condition set on the present and a promise foreseeing to the future. Words that led to the sad acknowledgement that one did not meet the requirements for such a high goal and that something had to be done in that regard.

The Sermon on the Mount was not only addressed to that anonymous crowd on the hills of Palestine 2000 years ago, but it was meant for men and women throughout the centuries up to our days - the end of times.

A certain parallel may be drawn between this sermon and some of the letters to the churches in the book of Revelation which also entail a condition and a promise regarding the life to come.

"Blessed are the poor of spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven." Humbleness is the

top virtue in a Christian character. To be humble is to be Christlike. Jesus' invitation is for us to learn from Him gentleness and meekness. The kingdom of heaven inhabited only by beings who live in total surrender to God's will and praising His holy name can only belong to someone who can fit into such an environment, someone whose heart is not in rebellion, is not proud and has no tendency to feel superior.

The addresses at the church of Laodicea are deprived of this blessing. They are not qualified to possess the kingdom of heaven because what characterizes them is self-sufficiency, they think they are rich and have need of nothing. They lack the naivety and meekness of a little child which are necessary to accept everything by faith and live by it.

Among the crowd listening to Jesus there were thousands (if not all) who did not meet this condition and could have stood up already at the first blessing and gone back home. The same may happen in the church of Laodicea, but he who has ears can hear also the message that says that Jesus is at the door and wants to dine with us. To dine with Jesus means to receive from him the cup of wine, the symbol of his blood shed for us, and to eat the bread He breaks, the symbol of His torn body. It means to have a very close communion with Him. It is only through this unique relationship that we may be overcomers. The promise to all overcomers is: *"to sit at the Lord's throne"*, in other words, the kingdom of heaven is his, the same promise given at the Mount of Blessings.

Therefore, is the fact that we may acknowledge there is pride in our heart a

reason to leave the church or stop listening to Jesus' words? By no means! Nebuchadnezzar, whose pride was as outstanding as the hanging gardens in the gorgeous city he had built, says: *"And those who walk in pride He is able to abase."* (Daniel 4:37)

"Blessed are those who mourn for they shall be comforted." Many mourning souls were sitting around Jesus on the slopes of the mountain, many widows and orphans and also many believers who were disappointed by the attitude of the priests in the temple and the many rules of the Pharisees, sincere souls who yearned for the living God and a living religion.

Many such mourning souls filled the church of Ephesus where the Nicolaitians had distorted the truth and the church of Pergamus as they saw the leaders compromising with the worldly authorities. To them there is also a promise: to eat of the tree of life and manna, and to have a new name engraved on a stone. What bigger comfort can there be than to have the assurance of eternal life to be restored to God's image – to pass from being a Jacob (supplanter) to being an Israel (overcomer with God)! Yes, those who mourn will be comforted!

"Blessed are the peacemakers for they will be called of God." There are two ways of making peace: one is by convincing the enemy, in a humble and loving way, that he is wrong, a work that can be done only through the power of the Holy Spirit, and the other one by compromising. The latter was the one chosen by the leaders of the church of Pergamus who, tired of persecution abandoned their principles of faith for the sake of security. Thus the church began to lose its light and to adopt pagan practices, imitating the ceremonial rites of heathen cults and the garments of the emperors. Such kind of peace does not last long because it is not based on love but on fear and *"there is no fear in love."*

Jesus is the Prince of peace. He came to reconcile the world with the heavenly Father and those who receive Him are given the possibility to become children of God. Christ's disciples cannot be other than peacemakers since they are His ambassadors through whom God pleads the world to be reconciled with Him! God's children are called to be faithful by all means and they are given the promise to become pillars in His temple. Pillars sustain the weight of the whole building and believers who do not compromise, who hear the voice of the Spirit and are imbued with brotherly love, as is the case of the church of Philadelphia, are the pillars, that is to say the support of the spiritual building that is God's church. Only he who can love his brethren, his family in Christ, is able to be an ambassador of peace and bring the message of reconciliation, since the world will believe that God sent Christ when they see unity among His followers. (John 17:21)

"Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven." Jesus was presenting a religion that, if lived out, would arise persecution. He was pouring a blessing as well as giving a promise to those who would be courageous enough to live according to principle instead of tradition.

The church of Smyrna knew what price had to be paid to keep the doctrine pure and live according to the Master's teaching. *"All who desire to live godly, in Christ Jesus will suffer persecution"*. (2 Timothy 3:12) The Roman emperors took care of fulfilling this prophecy by punishing the believers for the purity of their childlike faith in the hope that they were going to make them renounce it in view of the cruel treatment they received. But to them the crown of life, although invisible, was more precious than the laurel wreath of the pagan heroes. Although it was a highly tried and poor church the Lord considers it rich, just the opposite of the church of Laodicea that thinks

it is rich but the Lord sees it in a miserable condition.

The crowd that heard the Sermon on the Mount on that glorious day could not remain the same. A great appeal was addressed to their conscience and since *"He taught them as one having authority, and not as the scribes"* (Matthew 6:29), they followed Him even as He came down from the mountain because in Him was to be found the solution for their shortcomings. Neither can we remain indifferent to these words or to the messages in the epistles to the churches dictated by Him who has the two-edged sword (Revelation 2:12) *"that pierces even the division of the soul and spirit and of joints and marrow and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart."* (Hebrews 4:12)

Most of the churches receive an appeal: *"Repent"* and many of those who listened to the sermon "in vivo" were reminded of what Jesus' forerunner, John the Baptist, had been preaching in the wilderness: *"Repent, for the*

kingdom of heaven is at hand". If it was at hand then, how much more must it be now, or as Paul says: *"Now it is high time to awake out of sleep, for now our salvation is nearer than when we first believed."* (Romans 13:11) Our SALVATION is nearer because *"the Son of Man has come to SAVE that which was lost."* (Luke 19:10)

Do you feel, dear brother and sister that you are lost in the church? Do you wonder if there is still any hope for you? Yes, there is. We only have to heed and respond to the message to the church that had lost its first love: *"Remember from where you have fallen and repent."* (Revelation 2:9)

May the Lord's grace lead us into repentance, grant us again the gift of forgiveness and fill our lamps with oil that we may be counted among the wise virgins upon whom all the blessings of the Sermon on the Mount may be richly poured. AMEN

Teresa Corti

Vegetarian Diet Protects Against Heart Disease.

Research recently published in the Journal of clinical pathology reveals that the high salicylic acid content of fruits and vegetables may be the reason why vegetarians suffer less heart disease and bowel cancer than meat-eaters.

Salicylic acid is the main component of the common aspirin, widely prescribed to reduce the risk of heart attacks. Researchers analyzed the blood samples of 37 vegetarians and 39 meat and fish-eaters in their early 40's. They found that the levels of salicylic acid were up to 12 times higher in vegetarian samples.

The authors suggest that as even very low levels of dietary salicylic acid inhibit pro-inflammatory enzymes, this could explain why a diet rich in fruits and vegetables protects vegetarians from serious illness like heart disease and bowel cancer.

This does not mean, however, that you should abandon any medications your physician has prescribed for you if you are under his care for heart disease, but should be consulted first; or with a health-care provider.

Fruits and vegetables are best eaten raw and not combined for best effect and at 5-hour intervals; no eating between meals - even fruit or vegetables juices, but only water.

Dr. John Theodorou, Greece

WE MUST PREPARE or COME HOME WITH ME

"And he causeth all, both small and great, rich and poor, free and bond, to receive a mark in their right hand or in their foreheads, and that no man might buy or sell, save he that had the mark or the name of the beast, or the number of his name." Revelation 13:16,17

Here is a clear prediction that a mark will be enforced, and we know that mark is the mark of apostasy, the false rest day, the change of the Sabbath from Saturday, the seventh day, to Sunday, the first day.

"The Sabbath will be the great test of loyalty, for it is the point of truth especially controverted...While one class, by accepting the sign of submission to earthly powers, receive the mark of the beast, the other, choosing the token of allegiance to divine authority, receive the seal of God." GC p. 605

Everyone will receive the seal or the mark. While the day in each case is a sign, the sign represents an experience, an experience of total allegiance to God on the one hand, or total submission to man on the other. And the way to prepare for this overwhelming surprise is to get in the habit of looking heavenward to Jesus rather than depending on men.

Now, what's going to happen to the people that depend on men? "That no man might buy or sell, save he that had the mark." Those who are depending on men will be forced, literally forced, into submission. This is a very interesting text because it is quite in harmony with the spirit of the present generation.

Today it would be unpopular to advocate a death decree against people who keep Saturday. At the moment the atmosphere is one of the ecumenical spirit, of pulling together for peace. But on the other hand, economic sanctions, as they are

called, are looked upon as proper coercive weapons. The United Nations has been called upon at various times to enforce sanctions.

People are prepared for the idea that if there are those who will not cooperate, perhaps the best way to deal with them is just to cut off their bread and butter.

Therefore God's children are to be prepared, to settle two important things:

1. One is that we are willing for God to provide for us in as meager or generous a way as He sees best, and the other;
2. is that we will do our best to work with Him to provide in preparation for that day.

"The Protestant world have set up an idol sabbath in the place where God's Sabbath should be, and they are treading in the footsteps of the Papacy. For this reason I see the necessity of the people of God moving out of the cities into retired country places, where they may cultivate the land and raise their own produce." S.M. book 2 p. 359

Written in 1897, this is one of the early calls to get our people out of the cities into retired country places, where they may cultivate the land and raise their own produce and bring their children up with simple, healthful habits.

But the faithful children of God are going to be prepared when an overwhelming surprise will fall upon the whole world.

Noah was well prepared before the flood. The people back there were just as much surprised as though there had been no warning. They ate and drank and married and gave in marriage, until the day that Noah entered into the Ark. They knew not until the flood came, and took them all away;

so shall also the coming of the Son of man be." Matthew 24:39.

The world is going to be just as surprised today as though they had never been warned; and yet God in His love is warning them, and will continue to warn them until every soul gets the warning, just as in Noah's day.

The people who heed the warning, God's remnant people, along with keeping the Sabbath, will break loose from the confederacies. They will break loose from the situations that would make it impossible for them to obey God's law and they will establish themselves out in the country in "retired places" where they can "raise their own produce," and "bring the children up with simple, healthful habits."

"We are not to locate ourselves where we will be forced into close relations with those who do not honor God. A crisis is soon to come in regard to the observance of Sunday... We are to place ourselves where we can carry out the Sabbath commandment in its fullness and we are to be careful not to place ourselves where it will be hard for ourselves and our children to keep the Sabbath.... There are troublous times before us." S.M. Book 2 pg. 359

One of the agencies that will have a part in bringing about this boycott over the Sunday law is the labor unions. In recent years we have seen the churches, both Catholic and Protestant, linking up with the labor unions in the drive for Sunday laws.

"The trade unions will be one of the agencies that will bring upon this earth a time of trouble such as has not been since the world began." SM book 2 p. 192

There is warning after warning on this. "The word of the people of God is to prepare for the events of the future, which will soon come upon them with blinding force." Ibid.

"Those who claim to be the children of God are in no case to bind up with the labor unions that are formed or that shall be formed. This the Lord forbids. Cannot those who study the prophecies see and understand what is before us?" SM Book 2 p. 144

See how the different parts of the world's program all fit together and the different parts of God's program fit together. If you were the devil and you were trying to get people into the confederacies where would you have them live? In the cities...But if you had Heaven's point of view and you were trying to keep people away from these confederacies, where would you have them live? Out in the country. It's just that simple. "There followed another angel, saying, Babylon is fallen, is fallen, the great city, because she made all nations drink of the wine of the wrath of her fornication." Rev. 14:8

"He cried mightily with a strong voice, saying, Babylon the great is fallen...And I heard another voice from heaven, saying, Come out of her my people." Rev. 18:2-4

I want to ask you something. Where does the person have to be that says "Come out?" He has to be out. If we are partakers of the spirit of this world, if we are in the unknowns and combinations of this world, how can we give the message; "Come out"? And if our hearts, like Lot's poor wife, are in Sodom, how can we urge anybody to leave it? It's true we must visit the cities to give them that message, but it will be to say "come home with me". That's what Enoch did, didn't he? Oh, dear brethren and sisters, let us get that spirit to say, "Come out".

But we will never be able to give that message, as we should unless we have a true understanding of the values of country living and a real appreciation of the blessings of country life. Lot didn't have that. How many converts did he get as he preached there? Not one! He wasn't enthusiastic about leaving Sodom. He went down there in the first place because of the pressure from his family. He "pitched his tent toward Sodom". Gen. 13:12. He probably had no intention of moving in, but it seemed more convenient as time went on. He would have greater advantages commercially and socially; and it worked out that way. He was an honored man in Sodom. I believe he thought it was a fine thing to have influence that he could use for God; but did it accomplish anything as far as the people of Sodom were concerned? Not a thing.

Why? Because he had the "city mind". He didn't have the "country mind".

How different was Abraham's contact with Sodom. Gen. 14. It was a wonderful experience when he saved the lives of people and the King of Sodom.

Oh, dear brethren and sisters, do you see how vital it is that we cherish the privileges, the royal privileges, of living in the country, rather than thinking it is a sacrifice?

When Lot was called out of Sodom, the angels of God had to pull him out - literally. Then the Lord said, "Lot, see the mountain. Flee! Escape for thy life!"

"Oh now!" he says "I can't go up there, some evil would overtake me." He had become so used to city streets and city conveniences, he was afraid of country life. So he picked up a little city and said, "Couldn't you let me there? Won't you spare that one?" And the merciful Lord said, "All right". You see what I mean.

My dear brethren, he didn't understand. He didn't appreciate the goodness of God in making it possible for him to live in the country. He went to Zoar, but soon left it to live in a cave. Zoar was destroyed as Sodom had been. And there is recorded the awful story of the immoral conduct of his daughters. They had learned it down there in the city, just as young people are learning it in the cities today. What a terrible record; but it's written there for us, because Jesus says, "As it was in the days of Lot thus shall it be in the days when the Son of man is revealed." Luke 17:28, 30.

And that's the great problem today. People are so wedded to these advantages, social, political, commercial, educational, that it is hard to break them loose. But read this:

"But ere long there will be such a strife and confusion in the cities that those who wish to leave them will not be able. We must be preparing for these issues. This is the light that is given me." SM book 2p. 192

One of the greatest things that we need to do to resist these pressures is to get our minds in shape so that we think as God thinks instead of the way the world thinks. Jesus came down here and took our poverty that we might share heaven's riches, and those who get the spirit of thy message will be willing to be poor in order that they may save their children, rather than be rich in this world for a few days. "Who will be warned?" We say again, "Out of the cities." Do not consider it a great deprivation, that you must go into the hills and mountains, but seek for that retirement where you can be alone with God, to learn His will and way... I urge our people to make it their lifework to seek for spirituality. Christ is at the door. This is why I say to our people, "Do not consider it a privation when you are called to leave the cities and move out into the country places." SM book 2 p. 355, 256

If we consider it a privation to live in the country we won't stay there long. Sooner or later, we'll be back to the city. We will pay our money down and so much a month for who knows how long in order to get this or that and the other thing. We'll have to get in this harness. We'll have to be driven by the lash. We'll have to be chained like the galley slave and work our lives away so that our children can have all these so-called marvelous advantages and conveniences that modern city life offers.

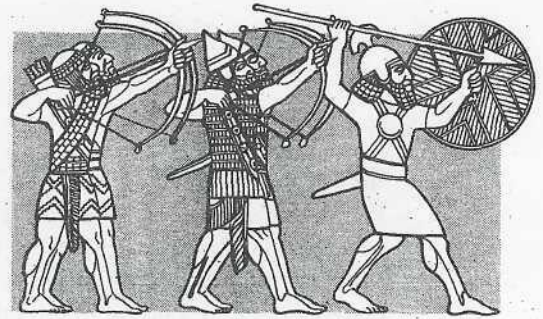
But all the while, out in the country with God are rich treasures in contact with nature: the glow of sunshine, unobscured by the city's smog, the glories of the flowers, the trees, the lakes, the mountains, the fellowship of working with God instead of just working with machines! Shall we count our blessings? Shall we rejoice in the privileges of royalty? And meanwhile, not as hermits, but as Enochs, as evangelists, let's reach out and say to the weary multitudes, to all who will listen, "Come out".

May our dear Lord Jesus Christ put in our hearts such a view of what's ahead as shall stir us to do our best to gather in His remnant in this last hour. AMEN

Alin Emanuel Sirbu, Finland

WAR!

Matthew 24:6



War in the Hebrew Bible almost always refers to armed struggle between nations. In the New Testament, war refers to a spiritual or cosmic conflict against evil. War is a constant feature in the history of Israel from its beginnings up to the destruction of the second temple. Periods of peace seldom appeared or occurred, and the Bible emphasizes them. "And had rest 40 years." (Judg. 3:11). "The Lord has given me rest now on every side." 1 Kings 5:45); 2Chron. 14:5), and so forth.

Israel was both a nation and a people of Yahueh, its God. As a nation it lived among other nations and subject to the struggles—military, economic, social, political—that are common to all nations. All in all, the Israelites have marked, in the days of the second temple with long periods of continuous warfare; earlier with border disputes, later with wars of liberation with imperial control, the principal cause was religious. Struggles were to preserve a national identity based on the temple in Jerusalem and the Jewish religious laws. So, there were basically two types of wars of defense and expansion, and holy wars compulsory for the whole nation.

As a people, the Israelites were constantly being reminded that they were to put their trust in the Lord since God had chosen them to be his "treasured possession". (Deut. 14:2) and had entered into a covenant with them (Ex. 19:5-6). He fought their battles, and drove out the enemy (Deut. 9:4-6). Yahueh is called a warrior (Ex. 15:3). "God of hosts", was interpreted to mean he leads an army or wages war. This was the only way that Israel could be preserved, a small nation, surrounded by more powerful nations; God fighting their battles for them.

Particularly objectionable to many are the wars in which the Israelites have commanded by

Yahueh to exterminate a people, "men, women, young, and old, oxen, sheep, and donkeys (Josh. 6:21) with the sword. (Deut. 20:16-18), as a safeguard against idolatry.

War, both in Israel and the ancient Near East was, in some respects a religious act. God was to be consulted before going to war (1 Kings 22:5). War was "sanctified". The camp was a holy place, where God Himself was present (Deut. 20:4). There was to be nothing unclean. Terms of peace were to be offered, but if rejected, then the Israelite army was to carry out the Lord's judgment (v. 10-14).

There were laws of war in the temple period; encouragement by priests of troops assuring them of God's support (Deut. 20:1). Other sources indicated that kings and military leaders consulted oracles, including the Holy Ark (Judg. 20:27), the Ephod, the Urim, or prophets. (1 Sam. 30:7; 14:41; 28:6). A Canaanite custom was appealing to spirits of the dead (i.e. soul) (1 Sam. 28).

The priests and the holy ark even accompanied the army on the battlefield. (1 Sam. 4:4; 30:7). Further, to gain God's help, the troops would make sacrifices prior to battle. (Judg. 6:20-26; 20:26)—sometimes even human sacrifices, as in the story of Jephtha's daughter. (Judg. 11:39) or of the son of the king of Moab. (2 Kings 3:27). Further, laws of war concerned exemption from serving. Others with spoils of war, prisoners, and prohibition of cutting down fruit trees in conquered lands.

The laws of war were fixed and had much in common throughout the ancient Near East. Warriors were drawn from the peasantry, fighting in off-agricultural seasons. Wars were not usually "declared"; it was naturally assumed that the strong were free to take possession of

the lives and possessions of the weak. Only by keeping a strong army could a nation prevent potential enemies at bay, and the only satisfactory alternative was to accept all his demands, without going into battle.

Israelite military inferiority forced the tribes also to deception of the enemy, finding it difficult to penetrate fortified cities by force and resorted, thusly, to other means, such as sending spies, as in the capture of Jericho (Josh. 8-12). Night or dawn attacks were also sprung, as well as other surprise attacks (Josh. 10:9) or provide a ruse (Judg. 7:16). All in all, they used small maneuverable units (Gideon's 300) (Saul-David 400-600). Israel's bitterest rivals were the Philistines. Here was a personal duel between two warriors (David and Goliath), another form of war. Finally the Israelite tribes united into a single kingdom; political unity brought about a standing, well-trained and equipped army.

In David's reign there was never a day of peace. Other Israel monarchies followed. Mighty armies rose and fell. The standard method of warfare for the Israelites was ambushing the enemy in narrow mountain defiles and passes, by large, well-equipped forces, taking advantage of the difficult terrain, hills, and mountains of Samaria, or Judah. Fortified cities were under siege in the Near East, sometimes for many months or years. The Jews also defended themselves in fortified cities.

Weaponry was primitive, cruel, but effective: archers, spears, slingers, flaming oil, stones, battering rams, iron swords, axes, mining beneath walls, bronze shields, helmets, javelin, catapults, (for darts and stones, siege ramps.

Alexander the Great, instrumental in the prophetic sense with the statue of Nebuchadnezzar in his dream displayed a superiority over the traditional oriental armies with his Greek formations and tactics. Chariots were not used, but cavalry were commonly employed, and even elephants after that of the Persians. The Egyptian army defended themselves by studding the battlefield with sharp nails—the first "mine field" in history.

War and the military organizations of the Jews are documented by recent findings of scrolls in caves in the Judean Desert: the Scroll of the War of the Sons of Light against the Sons of Darkness.

War and warfare in the Bible and the history of the early Israelis seems for many, far and remote, even unimportant. Yet for the children of God, and believers of the word of God in faith, we can clearly understand the continuing wickedness of man from earliest times to the astounding present and its bizarre turn of events.

But, we have a message for the world and the spirit for presenting it. God's word contains weapons for our warfare. However, there's an increasing warfare being waged by forces of evil against the spread of the gospel. (Ev. 489, 168). The church is engaged today in warfare that will increase with intensity. (MM 96). There is little time for peace. The time in which we live is a time of intense excitement and utmost confusion. Ambition and war absorb the minds of men; their attitudes and beliefs. The unbelieving world will have something to think about soon--strife, war, and bloodshed with famine, pestilence, raging everywhere. Other nations are engaged in this war; alliances and coalitions are quickly joining forces.

"And then men's hearts, fail them for fear, and for looking after those things which are coming on earth." (1T 268, 6T 32). They have not made God their refuge and He will not be their consolation then, but will laugh at their calamity, and mock when their fear cometh. They have despised and trampled upon the truths of God's word. (1T 269).

Earthly governments maintain dominion by war. The warfare between good and evil is still fierce and cruel and beyond all imagination, much the same as with the ancients. The weaponry then, although primitive by our worldly standards today, killed without mercy, just the same. The weapons of warfare today are mightier, deadlier, and sophisticated and they kill, too without mercy.

But unless the human agent brings his will into harmony with the will of God, unless he forsakes his idols, every idol, and overcomes every wrong practice, he will not succeed in the warfare but will be finally overcome. Those who would be conquerors must engage in conflict with unseen agencies of war; inward corruption must be overcome and every thought must be brought into subjection to Christ. (CT 238).

Paul presents before us the spiritual warfare and its reward in contrast with the various Olympic games instituted among the heathen in honour of their gods for a perishable crown for the winning competitors. This is not so in the Christian warfare, where all may run this race and may be sure of victory, and immortal honour. Paul says, "so run that ye may obtain it." He explains the conditions necessary to be successful: "And every man that striveth for the mastery is temperate in all things."

Multitudes in the world are witnessing this game of life in Christian warfare. This is not all. The monarchs of the universe and myriad of angels are spectators of this race, anxious to see who will be the overcomers and win the crown. The reward is in accordance with the persevering energy and faithful earnestness. Paul says, "I, therefore, so run, not as uncertainly." He says further, "we are made a spectacle unto the world, and to angels... and men." The world should, therefore, be no criterion (or pattern) for us. (4T 33-35).

We are living in truly perilous times. The thousands that perished Sept, 11th, in the crushing rubble; these poor souls had no choice. We still have that choice, but we need that grace that will make us valiant in fight, in warfare, turning to flight the armies of the aliens. Dear brother, dear sister, you need more faith, more boldness and decision, a choice in your labours. You need more push and less timidity... our warfare is aggressive now! Your efforts are too tame, you need more force in your labour, or you will be disappointed in its results. (Ev. 297-8).

Let the people understand you have a message that means life, eternal life to them if they accept it; the last message of mercy to a perishing world. Talk to souls in peril. This is the spirit's power for victory. The Christian life is a game of life, it is a life of warfare. (Ev. 297).

Contrary to a widely held view, the position of the New Testament is not total pacifism (appeasing, neutral, not warlike, mild tranquil). Jesus stated that "wars and rumors of war" are part of the present world order. (Matt. 24:6-7), and said bluntly that he had not come to "bring peace to the earth but a sword". (Matt. 10:34). When Jesus' disciples were about to face the hostile world, he advised them to sell their robes to buy a sword (Luke 22:35-36). Paul recognized that the governing authorities maintain order with the sword and urged his readers to be subject to such authorities. (Rom. 13:1-7).

At the same time, Jesus is not reported to have commanded His followers to use warfare as a means of conquest (contrary to the method of the emperor Constantine). He apparently rejected the implication that He lead a messianic war (John 6:15). He rebuked the disciples who used the sword against those who had come to arrest him (Matt. 26:51-53); He pointedly told Pilate that if His kingdom "were from this world", his soldiers would be fighting to defend Him. (John 18:36).

Jesus Christ, the Worshipper, and Master, now became a "reformer", in John 2:15-16. The temple was turned into a market of trade, a traffic in sacrificial animals and money changing controlled by the Sanhedrin for its financial interest. Jesus, incensed at the sacrilege, went into action and with a whip drove the men and animals out of the temple area and upset the money changers tables and with the coins. These were drastic, strenuous measures. His Father's house had been perverted into a house of merchandise.

A deeper level or lesson than the removal of corruption may have, by the expulsion of the animals in anticipation of the day when the temple and its sacrifices would be gone and the

final sacrifice of the lamb of God be achieved (John 2:21; 1:29).

But, the incident recalled to the disciples a passage in a Messianic psalm, 69:9, "Zeal for thy house will consume me." This zeal, which cost Him opposition at the moment, would eventually cost Him His life. (John 2:19). It was drastic action, zealotry for the truth and righteousness.

Ardent zeal is needed to stir up sluggish energies of God's people. (MYP 25). Becoming zealous pulls souls out of the fire. (1T 152). But with a heart that is aglow with zeal. (2T 234). But, is manifested only by doing something! This zeal is not a warring, fiery, furious, false or rash zeal. (5T 305, TT 565), but holy, sanctified, untiring zeal. Now is the time, the opportunity to show zeal for God. (6T 440).

Like ancient Israel, the church is composed of the people of God and is under severe attack from enemy forces from without and within. Unlike Israel, however, the church is not today of the nations of a waning world rather it is international, composed of people from all nations. Its warfare is not against "enemies of blood and flesh" but rather against demonic forces intent on destroying God's redemptive work. (Eph. 6:12). The author of 1 Peter urged his readers to "abstain from the desires of the flesh that wage war against the soul; yet at the same time they were told to submit "for the Lord's sake," to every human institution, whether emperor or governor. (1 Peter 2:11-14).

According to the apocalyptic view of the book of Daniel, the kingdoms—each more terrible than the other or preceding—according to Nebuchadnezzar's dream, would be destroyed at the end by the second coming and action of Jesus Christ Himself. (Dan. 2:44, 45). And the God of Heaven rules over all monarchs and

kings of earth and nations as King Nebuchadnezzar witnessed.

The final triumph over warfare and evil will be brought about by one who is called Faithful and True, who comes with the armies of heaven to smite the nations. (Rev. 19:11-15). At last the dreams of the prophets and saints of old will come true. "They shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning hooks; nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more." (Isa. 2:4; Mic. 4:3).

"And I saw a new heaven and a new earth; for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away... And I, John, saw the holy city, Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven... and I heard a great voice, saying, Behold the tabernacle of God is with men, and he shall dwell with them, and they shall be his people... and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes, and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither pain, for the former things are passed away... he that overcometh shall inherit all things, and I will be his God, and he shall be my son... and the leaves of the tree of life shall be for the healing of the nations... Behold, I come quickly and my reward is with me, to give to every man, according as his work shall be."

"Blessed are they that wash their robes (do his commandments) that they may have right to the tree of life and may enter in through the gates into the city." (Rev. 21, 22).

"Worship God." AMEN.

John Theodorou
Greece



CORRECTION !

In the November issue of the Messenger a spelling mistake was done. In the article "A Complete Dependence" on page 16 on the second column the verse quoted from Job 14:13 should read GRAVE instead of grace. The editors regret this error.

ASLEEP IN JESUS

On November 1, 2001 our dear Sister Elise Luoranen passed away from this life peacefully during her sleep. For five years she was fighting cancer and for a while she thought that she had been cured from it by operation, chemotherapy and other treatments, but then one year ago it surfaced again in her body, and finally she succumbed to the disease.

She was born on the 27th of June, 1948 in Tampere, Finland. At the age of 15 she came to Canada and a year later she was baptised into the church. Later she moved to northern Canada where she was teaching the native Indians. She finished her University education and also attended Teacher's College. This qualified her to teach and also to work as a Registered Nurse in the hospital. All her life she worked hard.

She continued her teaching and the nursing career to the very end while being more sick than the patients for whom she worked.

Knowing that she would not live very long she made all the preparations in her final days, confessing her sins, asking forgiveness and preaching the word of God to all who came to see her, including the doctors and nurses. While her body was wasting away, her mind was clear to the end.

Beside her death bed a note was found on which she had written, "If I am unconscious, please don't try to wake me up if I don't wake up on my own." She said that she had made peace with God and was not afraid to die.

She is survived by her 19 year old son, Adam. Her wish was to see her son again at the coming of the Lord. We all have this blessed hope to see our sister, Elise again at the resurrection morning which hope will bring comfort to her sorrowing relatives and friends.

Leila McTavish



A SHELTER IN THE STORM



"A typhoon is coming!" she muttered. Old Mrs. Lee sat down heavily on the rock beside the path, unwound the faded blue cloth at her waist, and began to wipe away the droplets of perspiration gathered on her face. It had been a hard day, and she still had a long way to hobble on her small bound feet. The westering sun blazed relentlessly over the plain. Not a trace of a breeze ruffled the blanket of heat that lay heavy on the land.

She started to sing, "The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want," but her mouth was too parched. Her cracked voice subsided, and she lapsed into a little breathless hum.

Early that morning she had left her crippled son, Kang, sitting on the doorsill of their hut, while she trudged to the market. Her stock of merchandise was the neat bundles of cloth shoes she carried in each hand. She was not a very tall person and she had joined the other country folk on their way to town that day.

To her surprise she had found the town abuzz with talk about a big storm sweeping inland from the eastern ocean. Mrs. Wang, a Christian friend, market basket over her arm, greeted her with the news: "It's due here by tonight or tomorrow." Then added sympathetically, "I hope you'll be all right." The Christians of the town church knew the dilapidated state of her home because they had been out there once for a cottage meeting.

The old lady shuffled on to where she conducted her simple business, part of a blanket at the side of the road. She rented this corner from Mrs. Lo who used the rest of the blanket for her own display of cotton goods. Mrs. Lo was a younger woman, and often she had one of her children with her.

"How can they be sure about the weather?" Mrs. Lee asked her friend.

"I don't know, but my husband saw the notice on a piece of paper. It was

posted on the wall of the police station. It warns of a great wind coming this way."

"Times have changed indeed. It is a puzzle to me, but then I am just an ignorant old woman."

Mrs. Lo did not dispute this fact but began to lay out her goods in front of her. Business was slower than usual. A bean curd seller, Uncle Ho, came along and taunted old Mrs. Lee good-naturedly:

"Nobody wants new shoes when it is going to rain. They would just get soggy and break open at the seams the first day. You ought to be selling old shoes, and everybody would be sure to buy."

"After the rain everyone will need new shoes, so I will just wait until then," she replied. "Be sure and come back to buy a pair."

"Who? Me? Do you take me for an official? Straw sandals are all that I can afford," and off he sauntered.

In the lull that followed, Mrs. Lo turned to her elderly companion and said, "Old one, you ought to do something today about the roof of your house. Why, my husband is busy right now patching the tiles on our home. He says that he doesn't want the storeroom flooded like the last tune."

"Yes, I was just thinking about buying some straw, for the thatch on my house is thin in many places. It leaks all over, but worse than that - the main beam has slipped out of its joint at one end, and it may come down at any time. It is right over the cook stove, so I look up at it when I make food and wonder how long it will last."

"You'd better get some men to fix that before the storm comes. The typhoon has already destroyed many

houses on the coast, and yours will collapse for sure!"

The old lady thoughtfully held the small roll of money in her hand. This was all the money she had. "I'll go around town and see what straw I can buy. Then, too, I'll ask some of my neighbours to help push that ridgepole back into place. Most of them are here at market today. Will it trouble you to watch over my wards while I'm gone?"

"Certainly not. It's no trouble. You go right ahead, and may you be lucky."

"No, no Mrs. Lo, it's not luck. It is the Heavenly Father who looks after us. I wish that you would trust Him and His Son, Jesus Christ." And old Mrs. Lee edged off down the street.

Some time later she came back to the roadside stand and took her seat beside Mrs. Lo once more. She pursed her lips and then shook her head.

"No help yet," she said to Mrs. Lo's look of inquiry. "It's not the season for straw, and there's not much available. With the threat of this storm it has sold out quickly, and at a great price. Three times the regular price."

"My, what a profit! Well, there's nothing you can do, but what about the beam?"

"Would you believe it? I must have talked to twenty of my neighbours about helping with the beam, and they all are busy with one thing or another. Such excuses! Still there must be a way. I know there is."

Thus it was that she made the trip home, thinking a lot about her problems and praying to the Lord about them. At the halfway mark she sat down and thought some more. Doubts filled her mind. Had she tried hard enough to get help? Why had she put off getting the straw until

now? Wasn't she just an old fool? The only thing that gave her peace was to think about Jesus instead of herself. He knew. He understood her trouble. She would trust Him.

With a lighter heart she made the rest of the way home. Kang, her son, was waiting for her. His welcome rang out before her aging eyes could make out his form in the doorway. Of all the seven babies she had mothered only this one had lived. He had been sturdy as a youth. Then one day he had been forced to join the Chinese army and disappeared for a while. Only recently had he reappeared at home dressed in his patched military uniform, limping along with a crutch. He was no longer useful as a soldier; so he was sent home. For her his return had been like a resurrection from the dead, and she daily thanked God for her son.

She hastened to tell Kang about the approaching storm. "The government sends messages like lightning, though how they do it, I don't know. We are told to prepare for big winds. When I heard, I tried to buy straw to mend our leaks, but I couldn't get any. Then I spoke to all our neighbours I could find, trying to get someone to help fix the centre beam. It would only take them a short time, but, no, they all had an excuse."

"I wish that I could get up and do something about it," Kang said. Together they went into the house and looked up at the roof. Glimmers of light showed through in various spots. The son suggested, "Let's move our boxes up on the bed platform. I'll bring the chickens in, too."

"I better save what vegetables I can from the garden," the old woman replied, and both began to collect their few possessions into the room opposite the kitchen and the misplaced beam.

Later as they sat down to a scanty supper of herbs and cooked rice, the weather changed abruptly, and the wind began to blow. Their nearest neighbour, Mr. Chang, appeared in the doorway.

"Hello," he said, "you ought not stay in this house tonight, old lady Lee. You'll get soaking wet, and besides it's not safe."

"Oh, Mr. Chang, would you help us get that beam straightened out? We have a pole here we can reach it with." The old lady put down her bowl and chopsticks as though ready for action.

"I couldn't do it, old lady Lee. It would take several strong men. Look, why don't you come over and spend the night at our house?"

"Yes," chimed in Kang, "Why don't you go, Ma? I'll stay here and watch everything."

"I don't want to go. If anything happened to you, you would be all alone. I'll just stay and trust God to take care of us. Thank you, Mr. Chang."

"Humph," Mr. Chang exclaimed. "You are a strange one." He backed out and disappeared into the night.

Old Mrs. Lee folded her hands in her lap and raised her wrinkled face upwards. "Lord," she prayed, "Lord, You know I tried everything I could do. I tried to buy the straw and couldn't. I tried to find a man to fix that beam, and they were all unwilling. I don't think that I should leave Kang here alone. Now Lord, I plead with You to take care of the roof tonight. Pity Your children and care for us. For Jesus' sake, Amen."

Across from her in the shadows Kang added his "Amen," too, and very thankful he was to have a mother with such confidence in God's help.

The storm increased in intensity, and gusts shook the bamboo frame of the house. The two of them retreated to the bed platform. It was so cluttered with all their possessions that they did not have much room to lie down. Outside, the bamboo trees creaked and groaned as they were flailed about. Would the roof hold as it strained and heaved?

Suddenly there was a grinding sound and a loud thump, but the roof did not fall. They were both praying now,

Kang having formed some prayers of his own in the desperation of the moment. When the wind let up a little, he lit a candle and peered fearfully upward. By the feeble flicker he saw the beam - it was there, and when he strained his eyes he saw that the wind had shaken the beam back into its socket again rather than bringing it down!

"Praise the Lord!" said the lady when she saw what happened. A warm sense of peace folded them both. The wind might howl, but it had helped them.

Later the rain came as a flood. They could hear the streams of water pouring down outside, but strangely there were no drips within. Kang went around from time to time to find out what leaks there were, but everywhere the earth floor was dry.

"Ma," he said, "I can't understand it. There aren't any leaks. We have a leaky roof, but it doesn't leak."

"Praise the Lord!" she replied. "This is very wonderful. God is taking care of us."

Across the plain thousands of families cowered in their homes, fearful of the night and the power of the storm. When the morning dawned it was still drizzling and the countryside was a mess of mud and water. Kang stepped gingerly outside and looked up at the roof. "Ma," he called, "Come and see!"

Together they looked in wonder at what the wind had done. The roof was padded with large wads of new straw. Some had blown across from neighbour Chang's thick roof and plugged the holes in theirs!

Without a word Kang began to hobble across to Chang's house to tell the news, but halfway there he turned with a grin on his face and waved to his mother. Her face crinkled with smiles, and then she went in. She must light the fire to make breakfast. As bits of dried leaves and twigs lit under the old cooking pot, the smoke from the clay stove blinded her with tears. "Praise the Lord," she said in a thin whisper and brushed the tears away.



How Was Your Day?

"How was your day?" my mother asked.

"My day was wonderful". I replied.

The day started out like this...

I woke up late for school,
I didn't get to comb my hair,
Take a shower or eat breakfast
I thanked God for waking up this morning

I arrive to Biology class late
We had a pop quiz; which I got an F
In chorus Mr. Armstrong ask me to do a solo
My voice crack, everyone laugh

I went to the restroom, when I walked
out, tissue was on my shoe.
At lunch I had no money to buy food.
All I had was a few crackers that I found

6th period was the best.
Everyone was laughing how my hair was
Even the teacher
Ms. Dooley was giving out grades

She said my grade out loud
Which was a D. Again I miss the school bus
It took me 2 hrs. to get home
When I arrive, I went to my room and prayed

I thanked God for the best day I ever had.
And for sparing my life to see another day.
For health, clothes to wear and food to eat
I thanked Him for His son Jesus Christ

For dying on the cross for my sins
I thanked Him for strength and not forsaking me
And for being there no matter what

"When upon life's billows you are tempest tossed, When you are
discouraged, thinking all is lost, Count your blessings, name them one by
one, And it will surprise you what He hath done."



Birthdays are Happy Occasions.



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Richard Eaton
Australia



I Met the Master

I had walked life's way with easy tread,
Had followed where comforts and pleasures led.
Until one day in a quiet place
I met the Master face to face.

With station and rank and wealth for my goal,
Much thought for my body but none for my **soul**,
I had entered to win in life's mad race,
When I met the Master face to face.

I met Him and knew Him and blushed to see
That His eyes full sorrow were fixed on me;
And I faltered and fell at His feet that day,
While castles melted and vanished away.

Melted and vanished and in their place
Naught else did I see but the **Master's** face.
And I cried, "Oh, make me meet
To follow the steps of Thy wounded feet."

My thought is now for the souls of men,
I have lost my life to find it again,
E'er since one day in a quiet place
I met the Master, face to face.