



The Reformation **Messenger**

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

"Let brotherly love continue. Be not forgetful to entertain strangers: for thereby some have entertained angels unawares." Hebrews 13:1,2

The Reformation Messenger



We Believe

The all-wise, loving God created all things in the universe by His Son, Jesus Christ; He is its Owner and Sustainer.

He met the challenge to His loving leadership and authority by reconciling the world to Himself through the life, death, and resurrection of His Son, the Word made flesh.

The Holy Spirit, Jesus' representative on earth, convicts of sin, guides into truth, and gives strength to overcome all unrighteousness.

The Bible is the record of God's dealings with mankind and the standard of all doctrine; the Ten Commandments are the transcript of His character and the foundation of all enduring reform.

His people, in harmony with God's word and under the direction of the Holy Spirit, call all men everywhere to be reconciled to God through faith in Jesus.

Bible prophecy reveals that earth's history will soon close with the visible return of Jesus Christ as King to claim all who have accepted Him as the world's only Redeemer and their Lord.

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SNARES OF SATAN

Have you ever felt that you have been caught in a trap, that you are not free; when you do not like the situation in which you are. The circumstances tie you down, and it maybe also the bad habits that hold you down as a victim to them, or any sin that you have not been able to overcome.

There are people who make their living by trapping animals. They set their traps and snares in the places where the animals normally go. Then they use baits, something that the animals like to eat, and they themselves go into hiding. When the poor creature is about to eat the bait, the trap closes on him and he is not able to get out anymore.

To catch fish many different baits and lures are used. The fish that is about to eat the tasty bait will himself be eaten by the fisherman.

The birds fly in the air and see a delicious fruit to eat, but as they approach it their feet are caught in a string and they cannot escape.

Some animals are hunted by poison that is

mixed in a seemingly good food.

So dear is freedom even to the animals that a fox that is caught in a trap has bitten his leg off in order to free himself.

You may say that these animals are foolish by reaching for the bait that will kill them. But they did not know that there was a hidden trap, until it was too late and they could not escape. They were deceived to believe that they are about to get something good when in reality they fell into the trap that killed them.

What about us? Are there traps and snares set for us to fall in? There most certainly are. On the right and left all along the way there are shares, traps and strings attached. There are poisons mixed in apparently good things. And millions after millions are caught in the snares of Satan. They are hoping to get something good but end up with misery, unhappiness and in the end, death.

Satan set up a snare for Adam and Eve and they fell into it, thinking that they will gain

something worthwhile, but in reality they lost it all.

Soon the whole world were caught in his snares except the family of Noah who alone escaped them.

In the time of Christ even the church of God was caught in his snares, being blinded and hypnotized by Satan that only few were able to escape his deceptions, and recognize Jesus as the only one who could set them free.

Especially in the time of the end, Satan is trying to deceive even the very elect. In the First World War in 1914, almost the whole church of God was deceived. 98% of the members decided to break God's commandments and only two percent in Europe escaped Satan's snares and remained faithful to God.

Satan is using many different baits on us. If one does not work, he tries another one.

David writes of one very common snare in what many are caught. "Let their table become a snare before them: and that

which should have been for their welfare, let it become a trap.” Ps. 69:22.

Paul writes, “Whose end is destruction, whose god is their belly.” Phil. 3:19. Satan has been very successful in using forbidden foods and drinks as a bait to lure Christians into his snares.

Flattery is also a bait that many cannot resist. “A man that flattereth his neighbour spreadeth a net for his feet. In the transgression of an evil man there is a snare.” Prov. 29:5, 6.

Rebuke is much safer to us than flattery and praise; it prevents us from becoming proud and self-exalted.

Another snare of Satan we find in the Psalms, “But were mingled among the heathen, and learned their works, and they served their idols: which were a snare unto them.” Ps. 106: 35, 36.

Unbelieving friends and companions are dangerous baits that Satan is using. People who are serving many idols of which some are entertainments, sports, ambition, and a thousand others, have a strong influence to lead others to follow their example.

Also false religion is a bait that Satan is using very successfully. Millions are caught in this snare. They are offered salvation without obedience. The closer the false religion is to the truth, the more deceptive it is. It is like a poison added to healthy food, which will kill the one who eats it.

A very deceptive bait that has destroyed many is the love of money. “But they that will be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and hurtful lusts, which drown men in destruction and perdition. For the love of money is the root of all evil: which while some coveted after, they have erred from the faith, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows.” 1 Tim. 6: 9, 10.

“The most earnest prayers should be solicited for those who are placed in prosperous positions. These men are in the greatest danger of losing their soul.” *Evangel.*, p. 561.

“Solomon, by his alliance with unbelievers, secured an abundance of gold and silver, but his prosperity proved his ruin.” CH, p. 290.

“Affliction and adversity bring disappointment and sorrow; but it is prosperity that is most dangerous to spiritual life.” MH, p. 212.

Judas fell for this bait. He did gain money, but did not enjoy it very long.

Also Balaam fell into this snare but did not enjoy his gain either because soon after he lost his life.

All who commit sin are caught in Satan’s snares. He controls the mind and hypnotizes the person that he himself does not anymore realize his lost condition.

“I was shown Satan as he once was, a happy, exalted angel. Then I was shown him as he now is. He still bears kingly form. His features are still noble, for he is an angel fallen. But the expression of his countenance is full of anxiety, care, unhappiness, malice, hate, mischief, deceit, and every evil... As I beheld him, his chin was resting upon his left hand. He appeared to be in deep thought. A smile was upon his countenance, which made me tremble, it was so full of evil and satanic slyness. This smile is the one he wears just before he makes sure of his victim, and as he fastens the victim in his snare, this smile grows horrible.” EW, p. 152, 153.

Satan has set thousands of baits and lures all around us. If we fall into any of them it is very difficult to break loose from them.

“He that committeth sin is of the devil; for the devil sinneth from the beginning. For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that He might destroy the works of the devil.” 1 John 3:8.

Yet it is possible to escape from these snares; but not in our own strength. It is the great mercy of God that He helps us to be free from these snares of Satan.

“Blessed be the Lord, who hath not given us as a prey to their teeth. Our soul is escaped as a bird out of the snare of the fowlers: the snare is broken, and we are escaped. Our help is in the name of the Lord, who made heaven and earth.” Ps. 124: 6-8.

“Shall the prey be taken from the mighty, or the lawful captive delivered? But thus saith the Lord, Even the captives of the mighty shall be taken away, and the prey

of the terrible shall be delivered: for I will contend with him the contendeth with thee, and I will save thy children.” Isa. 49:24, 25.

“And ye shall know the truth, and truth shall make you free. If the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed.” John 8:32, 36.

Our work in this Reformation is to set the captives of Satan free.

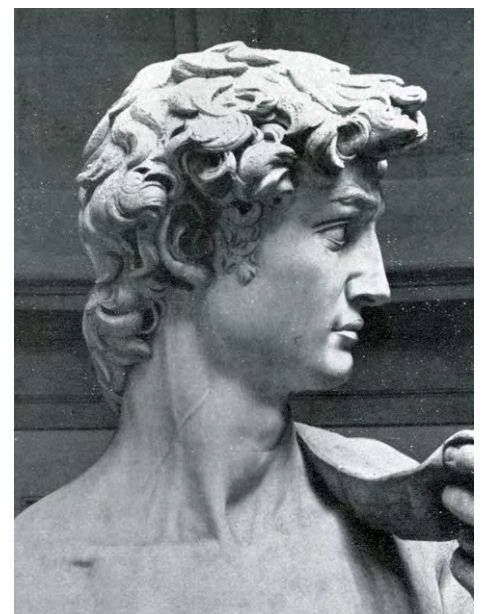
“Is not this the fast that I have chosen? to loose the bonds of wickedness, to undo the heavy burdens, and to let the oppressed go free, and that ye break every yoke?” Isa. 58:6.

“In meekness instructing those that oppose themselves; if God peradventure will give them repentance to the acknowledging of the truth; and that they may recover themselves out of the snare of the devil, who are taken captive by him at his will.” 2 Tim. 2:25, 26.

When someone is caught in Satan’s snare the process of destruction begins. Satan wants to make sure that there is no chance of escape. It is compared to a burning in a fire.

“And others save with fear, pulling them out of fire; hating even the garment spotted by flesh.” Jude 23.

Even Joshua the high priest, who was the highest religious leader was burning in Satan’s captivity. But the Lord came to his



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rescue. "And the Lord said unto Satan, the Lord rebuke thee, O Satan; even the Lord that hath chosen Jerusalem rebuke thee: is not this a brand plucked out of fire?" Zech. 3:2.

In Satan's captivity a person gets constantly more set in evil ways. He becomes more selfish, more proud, more covetous and so on. He must practice sin, because he is not free. Every sin that we commit weakens our faith until we lose it completely, and then there is no more hope of salvation.

As long as there is even a little hope the Lord will try to save us to the uttermost. "A bruised reed shall He not break, and a smoking flax shall He not quench: He shall bring judgment unto truth." Isa. 42:3.

The thief on the cross seemed to be beyond help; but yet Jesus saw something good in him and did not neglect him, but in the last moments of his life, pulled him out of fire and saved him.

David had committed a grievous sin, and was stricken by remorse. He said, "For I acknowledge my transgressions: and my sin is ever before me." Ps. 51:3.

"There is no soundness in my flesh because of Thine anger; neither is there any rest in my bones because of my sin." Ps. 38:3.

There was no peace in his troubled soul. The burden of sin was heavy upon him until he fled to his Saviour. He writes of this experience, "In the Lord put I my trust: now say ye to my soul, Flee as a bird to your mountain." Ps. 11:1.

There he found peace to his soul. There his sin was washed away. Now he can say, "Great peace have they which love Thy law: and nothing shall offend them." Ps. 119:165.

Still today there is the city of refuge for the guilty sinner to escape, where Jesus is waiting with open arms to embrace even the greatest sinner and set him free from the chains of Satan. Do not let the fire of sin to consume any longer; today run to your Saviour, and you will find peace to your soul, and fullness of joy. **AMEN.**

Timo Martin, Canada

HAMILTON CHURCH COOKING CLASS

The Hamilton church had their second autumn cooking class on Sunday, November 19th, 2006, due to the enthusiastic response by the audience from the first class. The people at the October gathering were pleased with the information on health and the recipes they received and were eager for more knowledge on healthy living.

After Brother Evald Pedersen welcomed everyone to the cooking class, Brother Park gave the opening prayer, followed by his testimony on recovering from prostate cancer by using a raw food diet and juicing. He stated that 90% of his diet is now raw in nature. Brother Parks concluded his testimony by stating he was inspired by a doctor in New York, who had overcome her cancer by prayer and a raw food diet. He also praised the health reform message.

Brother Jerry Eaton gave a demonstration on massage therapy for bad backs. He manipulated the subject's shoulders and back muscles, illustrating how to stimulate and warm up the muscles. Jerry stated that a good chiropractor will warm the muscles before working on the sore area.

Brother Evald Pedersen, then gave his demonstration on juicing. He used carrots, celery stalks and a few pieces of beet, to make the juice. Most of the juice was made before the class started, and this was distributed in plastic glasses to the visitors. Everyone enjoyed the juice immensely.

Sister Gloria Ferguson showed the audience how to make Soya milk. She had three different flavours of Soya milk. She told the people how to add the flavours to the milk to get the different tastes. As Gloria was clearing her utilities from the presentation, Brother Jerry took the opportunity to tell the people of the practices relating to milk being extracted from cows. He mentioned that the milk in the stores contain pus and blood from the cows because the machines used to pump the milk from the cow's udders are not monitored correctly and the machines continue to pump beyond the time the cows have no more milk in their udders. One young visitor after hearing this stated that she will never drink milk again.

Sister Franziska Pedersen did a tofu cheesecake and oat crackers. She mentioned going to the grocery store and reading the label on the cracker box, and noticed how many more of the ingredients have chemical names rather than the food contents. She convinced the audience that it was easier and healthier to make your own.

Sister Fanny Ramirez did a cashew millet roast, which was tasty and easy to make.

The different dishes served were homemade whole wheat bread, chickpea/potato dish, cashew pimento cheese, cashew millet roast, tomato vegetable soup, lettuce tofu salad, Soya milk, corn bread and a garden salad with vinaigrette.

Everyone was pleased with the cooking class, the information received, recipes etc., the books and literature and the overall presentations. One woman stated that she was amazed that we could cook so many delicious tasting dishes without using meat.

We were truly blessed.

On behalf of the Hamilton Church,
Maurine Gerald



LAODICEA IS ADDRESSED

PART 2

“I know thy works, that thou art neither cold nor hot, I would thou wert cold or hot. So then because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spue thee out of my mouth” Rev 3:15, 16

We studied and examined the opening address of Christ’s letter to the Laodicean Church in “Laodicea Addressed.” I ended with seven thought provoking, mind exercising questions as follows:

What is our problem as identified by the Faithful and True Witness?

1. What is it that we don’t know?
2. What is it that has deceived us?
3. What does Jesus mean when He says that our works are neither hot nor cold but lukewarm?
4. Does Jesus mean that we are not doing enough works? I don’t think that is true. We are not lacking works, BUT our works have a problem .
5. What is wrong with our works?
6. Why is Christ’s spiritual evaluation of us negative?

Here are the two great principles – love to God and love to our neighbour, upon these two principles hang all the Law and the prophets.

Those who fail in their fulfillment of these vital principles though they

- Profess a knowledge of the truth
- Preach the Word
- And understand ALL mysteries

Shall eat of the fruit of their own doings, and be filled with their own devices.

Those who cherish suspicion and imagine evil, reveal that they are NOT carrying out the principles of this Law, and they pursue a course which brings upon themselves the evils which they imagine:

God will not be trifled with. His Word is to be cherished and obeyed 18MR:2

Not all who profess to keep the Sabbath will be sealed. There are many, EVEN among those who teach the Truth to others who will not receive the seal of God in their foreheads.

1. They had the light of Truth
2. They knew their master’s will
3. They understood EVERY POINT OF OUR FAITH, BUT They had NOT corresponding works. Maranatha p. 240.

These two verses (Rev 3:15 & 16) are the key to Christ’s entire message to Laodicea. They are its most important section, and if we want to understand what He is telling us in this letter, we must clearly understand what He is saying in these two verses. The reason they are so important is that these two verses are Christ’s evaluation of Laodicea’s spiritual condition. All the rest of His letter is based on that evaluation.

The Faithful and True Witness begins His evaluation of Laodicea by saying:

“I know thy works” – verse 15. What does He mean?

Jesus is not talking about our church activities. He is talking about our spiritual works collectively as well as our individual lives – our behaviour, our actions. If our spiritual behaviour as a people is wrong, then our church works will naturally be affected also. They may be just a fair showing of the flesh. What does the True Witness say about our

works? How does He evaluate them?

First, we need to recognize that Laodicea is not lacking in works. Christ makes that clear when He assures us, "I know thy works" (verse 15). The issue is not that we don't demonstrate enough works. We have plenty of works, but there is something wrong with them. What is the problem with our works?

According to the Faithful and True Witness, the problem with our works is that they are neither hot nor cold, but lukewarm. That is the evaluation He gives. Notice that Christ's words allow for three kinds of works: hot works, cold works, and lukewarm works. What does Jesus mean by hot works? By cold works? By lukewarm works?

Remember that the book of Revelation is written in symbols that must be defined by the Word of God as a whole. If we look carefully at the New Testament, we will discover that it describes human spiritual behaviour – our works – in three categories. These three types of works are works of the flesh, works of faith, and works of law. I believe these correspond to Christ's reference to cold works, hot works and lukewarm works in His message to Laodicea. If we are going to understand what Jesus is saying, we need to understand what each of these kinds of works are and why He refers to them as He does.

I would suggest that when Jesus speaks of "cold works", He is referring to what the New Testament calls "works of the flesh". Paul says, "I am carnal (fleshly), sold under sin" (Romans 7:14). He means, "I am a fallen, sinful man". The New Testament consistently uses the word flesh in a spiritual sense to refer to our fallen, sinful natures. So works of the flesh are the sins we commit, our sinful behaviour. Paul clearly describes them: "Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these: Adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, envying, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like." (Galatians 5:19-21). If we were to describe the works of the flesh in one word, it would be sin!

Paul reinforces this point in Romans 7. He says, "I know that in me (that is, in my flesh) dwelleth no good thing, for to will is present with me; but how to perform that

which is good I find not" (verse 18). Paul is saying that his flesh, that is, his sinful nature, is incapable of doing good because of the sin that lives there. "I delight in the law of God after the inward man", he continues, "but I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members (flesh)... So then with the mind I myself serve the law of God; but with the flesh the law of sin." (verses 22,23,25). The apostle admits that left on his own, without the help of the Holy Spirit, all he can do is to acknowledge in his mind that God's law is good, but in his flesh (sinful nature) he is a slave to sin. This is why Paul reminds the Christians in Rome, "There is none righteous, no not one... There is none that doeth good, no not one" (Romans 3:10, 12)

That is why Paul declares, "The carnal (fleshly) mind is enmity against God; for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be." (Romans 8:7) In other words, the flesh can do nothing good. Jesus said to Nicodemus, "That which is born of the flesh is flesh." (John 3:6). The flesh is unchangeable. Jesus is telling Nicodemus, "Your foundation is all wrong. You are trying to do the will of God by the flesh. But the flesh will always remain sinful You need to be born from above; you need to have another power, the power of the Holy Spirit within you."

Why should we identify "works of the flesh" or sinful acts with the "cold works" Jesus speaks about in His message to Laodicea?

In Matthew 24, Jesus is prophesying about conditions in the last days, the days in which you and I are living. He says, "Because iniquity shall abound, the love of many shall wax cold" (verse 12). Here, Jesus identifies the word cold with iniquity, or sinful acts.

Besides "works of the flesh", the New Testament quite commonly uses a related term to describe sinful behaviour; it speaks of "works of darkness" (Ephesians 5:11). In Bible lands, daytime and light are synonymous with heat; nighttime and darkness are identified with cold. God was a cloud to the Jews by day during the Exodus and a pillar of fire at night. By God's grace, He kept the Israelites warm at night and protected them from heat in the daytime.

Apart from God's grace, the nights would have been unbearably cold. So works of darkness are the same as cold works. And both refer to sin, to works of the flesh.

What, then, are "hot works"? They must be the opposite of "cold works". If cold works represent works of the flesh, what would be the opposite? Would it not be "works of faith"?

In Galatians chapter 5, Paul is contrasting the works of the flesh with the fruits of the Spirit. He says, "Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh. For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; and these are contrary the one to the other." (verses 16, 17). So the fruits of the Spirit are in opposition to the works of the flesh. And the fruits of the Spirit are the same as "works of faith". Jesus Himself makes this connection.

For example, Jesus said, "He that believeth on me (i.e. has faith in me), the works that I do shall he do also; and greater works than these shall he do; because I go unto my Father" (John 14:12). Now why would Jesus' followers be able to do even greater works because He was returning to His Father? Jesus answered this question in one of His last recorded conversations with His disciples before His death.

"If I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you, but if I depart, I will send him unto you" (John 16:7). In other words, "If I don't go to My Father, I will not be able to send you the Holy Spirit."

When we walk by faith, the Holy Spirit who lives in us will produce in our lives the works of Christ – works of faith. Works of faith always have their origin in the Holy Spirit. Faith says, "I am making myself available to you, Lord Jesus, because there is nothing good in me." Works of faith are the result of Christ living in us by faith. Paul says, "I am crucified with Christ, nevertheless I live, yet not I, but Christ liveth in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God who loved me, and gave Himself for me." (Galatians 2:20).

How does Christ live in me?
Through the Holy Spirit. Paul says:

"Ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any man have not the Spirit of

Christ, he is none of his. And if Christ be in you the body is dead because of sin; but the Spirit is life because of righteousness.” (Romans 8:9, 10)

In works of faith, the Holy Spirit is actually the One doing the works; I am simply bearing fruit. When I look at works of faith from my perspective, they are not works; they are simply the fruit of the Holy Spirit, who is living in me.

Paul commends the believers at Thessalonica for their “work of faith” (1 Thessalonians 1:3). He urges Titus to affirm in his churches that those who have faith in God should maintain good works (see Titus 3:8). And James deals with works of faith as evidence of justification. “Was not Abraham our father justified by works, when he had offered Isaac his son upon the altar? Seest thou how faith wrought with his works, and by works was faith made perfect?” (James 2:21, 22)

“Works of faith” and “the fruits of the Spirit” are, therefore, synonymous. These are the “hot works” Christ refers to in His letter to Laodicea.

We have seen, then, from the Scriptures that “cold works” represent “works of the flesh”. “Hot works” represent “works of faith”. What do “lukewarm works” represent? Lukewarm works represent a mixture of hot and cold works – an attempt to mingle works of the flesh with works of faith. The Bible describes these as “works of the law.”

What does the Bible have to say about works of the law? A good starting point is Galatians 2:16, where Paul uses the phrase three times:

“Knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law, but by the faith of Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Jesus Christ, that we might be justified by the faith of Christ, and not by the works of the law: for by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified.”

In the next chapter, Paul gives the reason why works of the law cannot justify us. “As many as are of the works of the law are under the curse: for it is written, Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them.” (Galatians 3:10).

What, exactly, does Paul mean by this phrase, “works of the law?” He defines it for us in Philippians 3:9. He says that he wants to be “in him (Jesus Christ), not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ.” Righteousness that comes from works of the law is self-righteousness – a righteousness that is produced by self. Works of the law represent a self-righteousness produced through one’s own efforts. We have a word for that in English; we call it legalism. The Greek language in the New Testament times did not have a single word that was equivalent to what we mean in English by the term legalism. So Paul used the expression “works of the law” to express the same idea. Whenever you come across the phrase “works of the law” in Paul’s writings, you can substitute the word legalism and you will have the right idea. It refers to our efforts to keep the law as a means or method of salvation.

We have said that the cold works Jesus speaks about in His letter to Laodicea represents works of the flesh, or sin. We said that hot works represent works of faith, the fruit that is produced in our lives by the power of the Holy Spirit. Jesus, however, says that He knows Laodicea’s works and that they are neither hot nor cold, but lukewarm. I believe that these lukewarm works represent works of the law – a legalistic self-righteousness that attempts to obey the law as a means of salvation. Let’s see why this is so.

When a person goes about to establish his or her own righteousness through obedience to the law, who is doing the works – the Spirit or the flesh? Obviously, it is not the Holy Spirit at work. It is the individual self. So the flesh is the source of the works that are being done. However, the works themselves resemble the same works as the Holy Spirit produces by faith in the life of the Christian. Outwardly, it may well be hard to tell the difference. For example, two individuals may both be visiting the sick. One is doing so as a result of his own attempt to obey the law and thereby deserve salvation. The visible actions may look the same, but the source and motivation of the action are quite different. In other words, the flesh that belongs to sin, cold works is doing outwardly the things that actually belong to the Spirit and faith (hot works). In this sense, works of the law are lukewarm works – a legalistic mixture of cold and

hot, of the flesh imitating the Spirit.

You remember the young man who came to Jesus asking, “What good thing shall I do, that I may have eternal life?” (Matthew 19:16) Jesus replied, “If you want to go to heaven by doing something good, you must keep the law.”

And the young man asked, “Which law? What specifically do You mean?”

“The six commandments that refer to our relationship with each other,” Jesus answered.

What did the young man say next? “I’ve kept all these things since I was in the primary division of Sabbath School.” (verses 17 – 20)

The works this young man had been doing all his life were works of the law. “Works of the law” is the flesh trying to be good. So the works themselves look a lot like the works of faith. For example: Does a person whose life is filled with works of faith keep the Sabbath? Certainly, he does. Does the person whose life is filled with works of the law keep the Sabbath? Of course. What is the difference? The difference may not be apparent outwardly. When we find a person keeping the Sabbath, the question is not: “Are you keeping the right day?” The question is: “Are you keeping the Sabbath based on works of faith or on works of law?” That’s the important question.

So the difference between works of faith (hot works) and works of law (lukewarm works) is the motivation behind them, the reason for doing what we do. The acts themselves may be quite similar outwardly.

On the other hand, works of the law and works of the flesh are altogether different; the contrast between them is quite clear. Both originate from the flesh, but they are extreme opposites. The works of the flesh (cold works) are sinful acts – adultery, hatred, lying, etc. The works of the law (lukewarm works) are righteous acts – on the surface. That is why they are lukewarm – because the flesh is pretending to do the work of the Spirit. The cold is mixing itself with the hot. Works of law look good on the outside and therefore are very deceiving. It is very difficult to convince a self-righteous person that his outwardly good acts are all wrong.

Ellen White identifies Laodicea’s problem in these same terms and agrees with the idea

that lukewarmness is self-righteousness. She says, "Your self-righteousness is nauseating to the Lord Jesus Christ... These words (Revelation 3:15 – 18) apply to the churches and to many of those in positions of trust in the work of God." (The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary, 7:963)

So, what is Laodicea's main problem? Self-righteousness.

Jesus told a parable about a king who invited a great number of guests to his son's wedding feast. He provided special garments for each guest to wear to the banquet. But one man refused to wear the garment and attended in his own clothes. He was clothed in his own self-righteousness. "My suit is clean", he told the king, "I don't need your garment." Ellen White comments on this parable, "Self-righteousness is not the wedding garment. A failure to follow the clear light of truth is our fearful danger. The message to the Laodicean church reveals our condition as a people." (Review and Herald, 15 December 1904).

She also gives this insight into Christ's opinion of our self-righteousness: "There are those who profess to serve God, while they rely upon their own efforts to obey His law, to form a right character, and secure salvation, Their hearts are not moved by any deep sense of the love of Christ, but they seek to perform the duties of the Christian life as that which God requires of them in order to gain heaven. Such a religion is worth nothing." (Steps to Christ, 44).

Lukewarmness, a legalistic self-righteousness, is altogether worthless in the eyes of Jesus. In fact, in His message to Laodicea, the Faithful Witness makes a shocking statement. "I would rather you were cold than lukewarm," He says (Revelation 3:15).

Does this mean that Jesus would prefer we actually go out and do sinful things, works of the flesh, rather than be lukewarm and try to do good things for the wrong reasons? Apparently so. Why would He say such a thing?

Once, Jesus told the self-righteous Pharisees that it would fare better with Nineveh in the judgment than it would with Israel (Matthew 12:41). When Jonah preached to the people of Nineveh that unless they

repented they would be destroyed because of their wickedness (works of the flesh), they responded positively and repented before God. Nineveh's problem was open sin – the wicked works of the flesh – and they knew it. It wasn't difficult for God to convince them of their sinful condition.

But when God told the Israelites that their works of the law were all wrong, they felt insulted and rejected Him. They were blind to their condition because the works they were doing looked so good on the outside. These works came from the flesh, but they looked so good! We will find that Laodicea has the very same problem. Laodicea is blind to her true condition because her lukewarm works look so good on the outside.

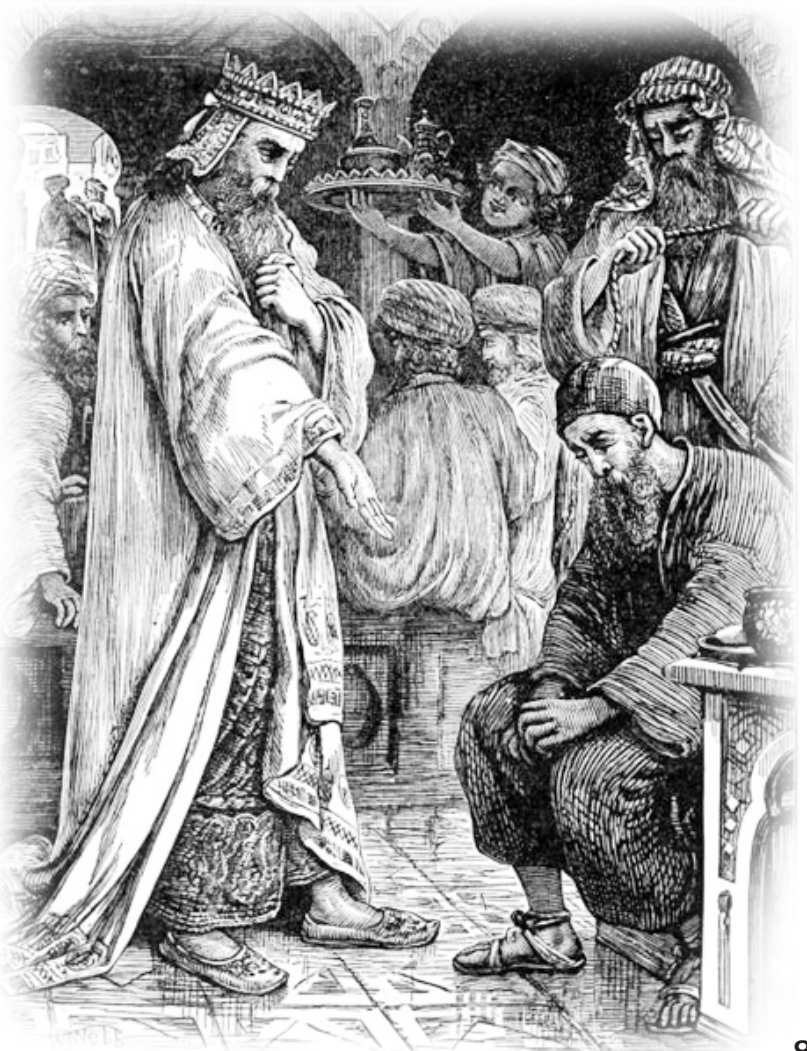
Her Legalistic Self-righteousness.

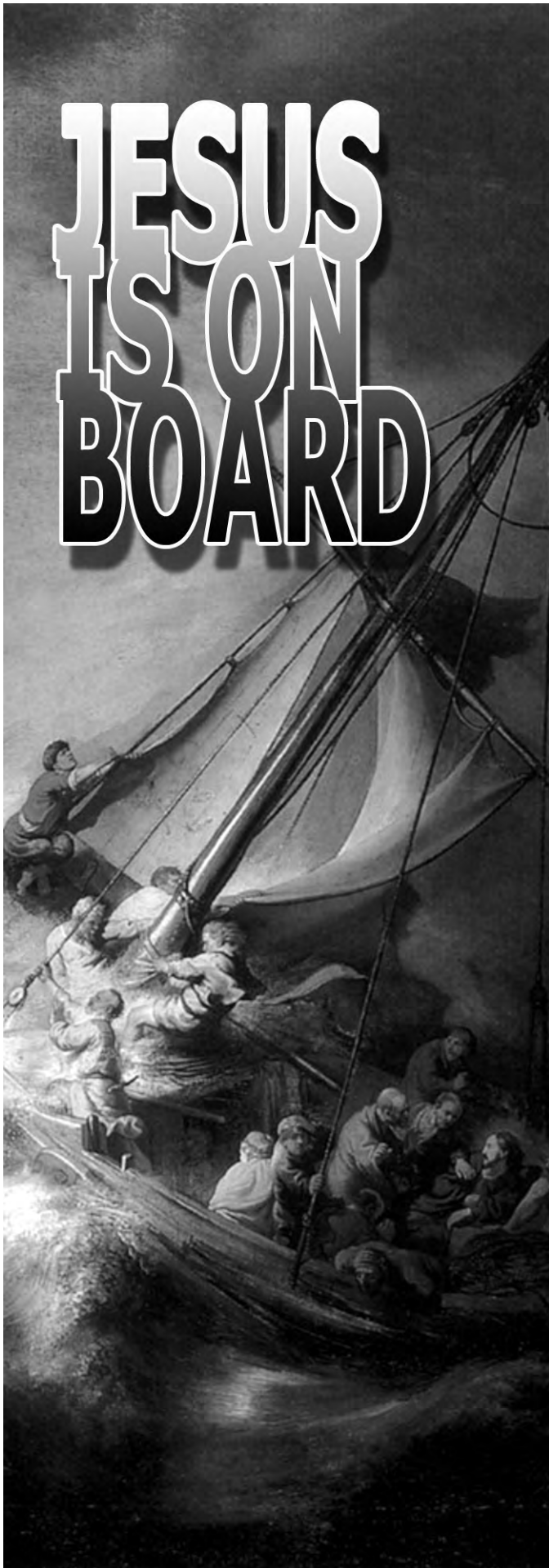
One of the hardest things for us to do is to recognize our true condition. As long as we don't understand what we are really like, then the Faithful and True Witness's counsel is meaningless to us. Once we recognize our condition, we are well on our way to the solution.

You see, a doctor must first find out what is wrong with the patient before he can give him the correct medicine. Does the True Witness know what is wrong with us? The answer is obvious. Can He heal us? Most certainly; He is the Great Physician. But before a doctor can perform an operation on you,

he or she must obtain a signed surgical permission – at least in Australia. Likewise, before Jesus can cure us, He must get our permission to take out our hearts of stone and replace them with hearts of flesh. The moment we give Him permission, the cure is available. But we must first recognize our need, we must admit that His evaluation of our condition is accurate. We must admit that our problem is self-righteousness, which looks so good on the outside but is so nauseating to Christ.

But why does God object so to self-righteousness? Although it has its shortcomings, isn't self-righteousness better than no righteousness at all? Isn't it better to be lukewarm than to be cold? If your child is trying his best to please you, does that make you angry or happy? Naturally, it makes you happy. Yet here is a church that is trying its best to please God, and God is sick about it! Why? The answer is crucial. Why does Jesus say He would prefer Laodicea was cold than lukewarm? Anonymous





“And the same day, when the evening was come, He saith unto them, Let us pass over unto the other side. And when they had sent away the multitude, they took him even as He was in the boat.” Mark 4:35, 36

Cast Off

Jesus did not, with any urgency, make a sharp command to cross over to the other side. But, simply made a promise to His disciples. He didn't say, “Let us perish in the middle of the Sea of Galilee.” But, He promised His disciples that they would cross over to the other side... a heartfelt promise. And the disciples obeyed.

“Jonah ended up in a storm because of his disobedience, but the disciples got into a storm because of their obedience to the Lord.” (Wiersbe).

Boat Ministry

Now, the Lake of Galilee is 13 miles long at its longest, and 8 miles wide at its widest. At this particular part it was about 5 miles across.

Jesus was teaching the multitude from this boat, Peter's boat. He often used a boat as His “pulpit.” (Mark 2:9). It gave him a place to speak away from the press of the massive crowds, provided good acoustics, a probably beautiful backdrop, and gentle breeze. We can imagine some critics crying out. “You can't do that! Teaching belongs in the synagogue,” or some other objections. But, Jesus knew that teaching from a boat suited His purposes well enough, teaching them many things by parables.

As Is

Now, the teaching from the boat was over; He was weary after a long day of ministry. He was craving for a period of rest. And so He bade his disciples to cross the lake. They took Him even as He was. They did not wait to provide any accommodations for the passage. They had not waited till any cloaks were brought, or supplies. They had not sent a messenger ashore. Weary, and probably hungry, they had taken Him even as He was.

We must take Him as He was.

- Not as we wish Jesus was.
- Not as we wish Jesus should be.
- Not as we wish Jesus could suit us.
- Not as others may present Jesus.
- Not as you might see Him in the lives of others.

Stirred Up

“And a great windstorm suddenly arose” (a squall). The Sea of Galilee is well known for its sudden, violent storms, much like the Mediterranean Sea. The severity of this ferocious storm is shown by the reaction of the Lord's fisherman-turned-disciples, some of them seasoned fishermen. Terrified, they cried out, “we are perishing!”

In fact, many of the disciples were very experienced fishermen and sailors, and they were naturally frightened and feared “perishing in this storm.” One writer said, “stirred up, likely, by the devil to drown Christ and His disciples.”(Trapp).

Z-Z-Z-Z-Z-Z-Z-Z

“But He was in the stern of the boat, asleep on a pillow:” Jesus’ true humanity is shown by His sleep on the boat. He became weary, and sometimes caught a bit of sleep wherever He could.

Just think of all the worries that might have kept Jesus awake. He could worry about the religious and political leaders who plotted against Him. He could worry about His family who thought He was crazy. He could worry about the overwhelming crowds with their overwhelming needs. He could worry about the disciples He chose. He could worry about the future, because He knew what His destiny was.

Yet, with all of these things to worry about, Jesus wasn’t worried. He slept in a rocking boat in a pitching sea. The Lord’s sleep was not only the sleep of weariness: it was also the rest of faith, for there is a rest of faith as well as a watch of faith! (Heb 3-The better rest of God; Heb 4-The better rest for the believer). You see, Jesus was in the habit of entrusting Himself to His heavenly Father. Having made that commitment, He could sleep through the turbulent squall. This is an impressive

lesson for us.

Wake Up Call

But, the unstirring sleep of Jesus was interrupted. He was roused from His serene sleep by His frightened followers. “They awoke Him.” The howling wind did not wake Him, the arguing of the disciples didn’t wake Him, and water splashing over the boat didn’t wake Him. But, at the cry of His disciples, He instantly awoke. Jesus is like the mother who sleeps through all kinds of racket, but at the slightest noise from her little baby, she instantly awakes. After all, they were His children... in distress.

No Help

The harried disciples, in their pitiable plight, turned to Jesus, and cried out, “Teacher, do You not care that we are perishing?” Their grievous protest was not for Jesus to do anything, such as helping to bail out the water from the sinking ship, but a protest against His apparent indifference. The disciples, in fact, were afraid, but at the same time there were several experienced fishermen among them. They knew they were in jeopardy (Luke 8:23), but probably felt they knew what to do. They worked hard at bailing out

the water, at rowing in a certain rhythm, at piloting the boat in a certain direction. But, they were annoyed that Jesus didn’t help them!

Nautical Experts

We are often the same way. We feel we know the situation. We’re experts on this one, and all we want Jesus to do is help us bail out our boat. We want Jesus’ help, but we want His help to work out our plan. When all is going well in our lives we’re happy, but when a trial arrives we ask, “why me?” Like the disciples, we forget that Jesus is with us, by our side. But, again, we often say, “not now Lord, I will call you when I need you.” And, so, we push Jesus aside. “But keep the blessings coming down, Lord.” Many merely use Jesus; profitably exploiting Him.

Death Grip

“I am afraid, too, that we rely too much upon ourselves. Was it not Dr. Gordon who, when he lay a-dying, said that the secret of strength in faith in Christ was having no faith in ourselves? I am inclined to think that the secret of weak faith in God is our having a good deal of self-reliance; but



when you cannot trust to yourselves, then you hang upon Christ, and cling to him as your only hope; then you give the grip of a sinking man, and there is no hold like that." (Spurgeon).

Listening Wind

"Then He arose and rebuked the wind." (Mark 8:39). Jesus didn't merely quiet the wind and the sea; He rebuked the wind and the sea. This, together with the disciples' fear and what Jesus will encounter at His destination, give the sense that Satan had a significant hand in this storm. Indeed, "Satan works in the atmosphere to cause storms." (2SM 52). But, "storms obey God's will." (COL 81).

Furthermore, the Lord said, "Peace, be still, and the wind ceased!" (v-39). Some have stormy tempers; but He who calmed the stormy Sea of Galilee will say to the troubled heart, "Peace, be still." There is no nature so rebellious that Christ cannot subdue it, no temper so stormy that He cannot quell it, if the heart is surrendered to His keeping." (RH June 9, 1910). "However fierce the tempest, those who turn to Jesus with the cry, 'Lord, save us,' will find deliverance." (RH Oct. 5, 1908). The same testimony is used when Jesus rebuked and silenced demons. This was a spiritual battle as much as a weather crisis. "Jesus addressed the raging storm as a 'force' threatening Him and his disciples. The force of the sea was muzzled as Jesus subdued it with His sovereign word of authority." (Lane)

Convoy

As well, Mark tells us "other little boats were also with Him. When Jesus calmed the stormy Sea of Galilee, He did not only rescue Himself and the disciples, but all the others in the little boats.

Fearful Faith

Jesus not only rebukes the wind but now rebukes the disciples, saying, "Why are you so fearful? How is it that you have no faith?" Jesus did not mention the storm as He was not disturbed by it, but the unbelief of His disciples disturbed Him. It was not their fear of the storm that made Jesus say they had no faith. A small boat in a big storm is a scary place, and the initial fear itself isn't wrong. What the disciples chose to do with it made all the difference.

"Distressing fear brings on a lack of faith and trust." (2T 140)

Seafaring Word

Jesus could say they had no faith because they did not believe His word.

They each heard Jesus say, "Let us go over to the other side of the lake." (Mk 4:22). Jesus did not say, "Let's do the best we can and maybe we'll all drown." He promised a safe arrival, and the disciples could have chosen to trust in that promise, but they didn't.

In this sense they had no faith. "Satan uses fear to rule man's conscience." (GC 591)

He Cares

Jesus could say they had no faith because they accused Jesus of a lack of care towards them. When they woke Him, they said, "Do you not care that we are perishing?" (Mk 4:38) When we think Jesus doesn't care about us, it shows we have no faith, because we don't believe the truth about Jesus. It takes great faith to trust the sleeping Jesus, to know that He cares and works for us even when it does not seem like it. But this is the kind of trust God wants to build in us, "casting all your care upon Him, for He cares for you." (1 Peter 5:7).

Life Support

Jesus could say they had no faith because they forgot the big picture. The disciples should have known that God would not allow the Messiah to perish in a boat crossing the Sea of Galilee. Could the story of Jesus possibly end with Him drowning in a boat accident on the Sea of Galilee?

"Was it reasonable for these men to think that He, who could foresee the future, would take them on board a ship when He foreknew that a storm would wreck them? Would so kind a Leader have taken them to sea to drown them? Was it reasonable to think that He who was so favoured of God would be left to perish? Would He have gone to sleep if they had really been in danger? Was it reasonable to believe that the King of Israel was about to be drowned, even He whom they knew to be the light of the world?

Our unbelief, my brethren, seldom deserves

to be reasoned with. Our fears are often intensely silly, and when we get over them, and we look back upon them, we are full of shame that we should have been so foolish. Our Lord kindly censured their unbelief because it was unreasonable." (Spurgeon)

You see, we could put the emphasis on: "How is it that you have no faith"? Of all people, Jesus' own disciples should have had faith. Would Jesus put the same question to us? After all I have done in you and for you, "how is it that you have no faith?"

Who Is He?

Not only faith, but the disciples "feared exceedingly." (Mk 4:41) Certainly, the total calm should have filled them with peace, but instead, they were just as afraid when He calmed the storm as when they were in the midst of it! "Calamities will cause men's hearts to fail for fear." (4T53). Moreover, "Paul had no fear in the storm at sea." (AA 423). "The Moravians were calm in the storm at sea." (GC 254-5).

Even so, the disciples, "said one to another, what manner of man is this, that even the wind and the sea obey Him?" (Mk. 4:41)

The disciples asked a good question: "Who can this be?" Well, it can only be the Lord, Jehovah, who only has this power and authority. "O Lord God of hosts, who is mighty like You, O Lord? Your faithfulness surrounds You. You rule the raging of the sea; when waves rise, You still them." (Psalm 89:8-9). The same piercing question is posed today, "Who can this be?" Are we denying Jesus and His message, and His promise, by saying, "is this the invincible truth? Is this the right church?" Or "am I undeniably saved?"

Sacred Lessons

In the span of just a few moments, the disciples saw both the complete humanity of Jesus and the fullness of His deity. They saw Jesus for who He is: truly man and truly God. These "lessons, Christ's disciples learned from the experience of the storm." (4T530) The humanity of Jesus "was perfected by a life of constant resistance to evil, will be retained by Him forever, was like ours, dependent on the Father for power, wisdom and strength, and will be carried by Him into eternity."

(AA 531; 5BC 1104; DA 368; 1SM 258; 7BC 925).

Scattered Thunderstorms

Other storms are “arising that will test everyone’s spiritual foundation. Every man’s faith will be tried by the gathering storms of God’s wrath, relentless in fury, ready to burst on earth, winds will increase more and more, desolations will be spread everywhere. These are all signs of Christ’s soon coming. The entire world, in its perversity, will be visited by these storms. Unquestionably, stormy times are rapidly coming upon God’s people.

It will be much the same as the disciples in their boat who, “on the same day when the night was come, launched off into the dark, foreboding Sea of Galilee.” The night will come, when darkness will prevail and Jesus will test God’s people. When the Sunday law arrives, and persecutions begin, God’s people will have to abandon everything and “flee to the mountains, from the wrath to come, and in one city to another.” (Matt. 3:7; 10:23, 24:16)

The night will come when the plagues fall on the world, but not on those who are bindingly sealed. Do not hasten, however, in these stormy times by the wrong course of action.”(5T 129, 396; 6T 396; PK 278; Ev 87,199; ChS 136).

Drop It

When worries and trials begin to gnaw at our mind, let’s

surrender them to the Lord and not take them back again, “casting all your care upon Him, for He cares for you.”(1Peter 5:7). There comes a moment each day when we must simply drop what weighs us down, bail it out and hand it over to God. For Jesus, peacefully, and, devotedly remains with us. That’s the secret of soul-serenity when we’re on life’s stormy tossed sea!

Ship Ahoy!

All this shows the abiding care Jesus has for His people. “There are many Christians today who seem to think the boat is going down! I am tired of the wailing of some of my friends and brethren who take that view. “Some people are always fearing” (MYP35). The boat cannot go down! Jesus Is On Board! *AMEN.*

John Theodorou, U.S.A





Apples	Protects Your Heart	Prevents Constipation
Apricots	Combats Cancer	Controls Blood Pressure
Artichokes	Aids Digestion	Lowers Cholesterol
Avocados	Battles Diabetes	Lowers Cholesterol
Bananas	Protects Your Heart	Quiets A Cough
Beans	Prevents Constipation	Helps Hemorrhoids
Beets	Controls Blood Pressure	Combats Cancer
Blueberries	Combats Cancer	Protects Your Heart
Broccoli	Strengthens Bones	Saves Eyesight
Cabbage	Combats Cancer	Prevents Constipation
Cantaloupe	Saves Eyesight	Controls Blood Pressure
Carrots	Saves Eyesight	Protects Your Heart
Cauliflower	Combats Breast Cancer	Strengthens Bones
Cherries	Protects Your Heart	Combats Cancer
Chestnuts	Promotes Weight Loss	Protects Your Heart
Chili Peppers	Aids Digestion	Soothes Sore Throat
Figs	Promotes Weight Loss	Helps Stop Strokes
Flax	Aids Digestion	Battles Diabetes
Garlic	Lowers Cholesterol	Controls Blood Pressure
Grapefruit	Promotes Weight Loss	Helps Stops Strokes
Grapes	Saves Eyesight	Conquers Kidney Stones
Lemons	Combats Cancer	Protects Your Heart
Limes	Combats Cancer	Protects Your Heart
Mangoes	Combats Cancer	Boosts Memory
Mushrooms	Controls Blood Pressure	Lowers Cholesterol
Oats	Lowers Cholesterol	Combats Cancer
Olive Oil	Protects Your Heart	Promotes Weight Loss
Onions	Combats Cancer	Kills Bacteria
Oranges	Supports Immune Systems	Combats Cancer
Peaches	Prevents Constipation	Combats Cancer
Peanuts	Promotes Weight Loss	Combats Prostate Cancer
Pineapple	Strengthens Bones	Relieves Colds
Prunes	Slows Aging Process	Prevents Constipation
Rice (Whole Grain)	Protects Your Heart	Battles Diabetes
Strawberries	Combats Cancer	Protects Your Heart
Sweet Potatoes	Saves Your Eyesight	Lifts Mood
Tomatoes	Protects Prostate	Combats Cancer
Walnuts	Lowers Cholesterol	Combats Cancer
Water	Promotes Weight Loss	Combats Cancer
Watermelon	Protects Prostate	Promotes Weight Loss
Wheat Germ	Combats Colon Cancer	Prevents Constipation
Wheat Bran	Combats Colon Cancer	Prevents Constipation

Blocks Diarrhea	Improves Lung Capacity	Cushions Joints
Saves Your Eyesight	Shields Against Alzheimer's	Slows Aging Process
Protects Your Heart	Stabilizes Blood Sugar	Guards Against Liver Disease
Helps Stops Strokes	Controls Blood Pressure	Smoothes Skin
Strengthens Bones	Controls Blood Pressure	Blocks Diarrhea
Lowers Cholesterol	Combats Cancer	Stabilizes Blood Sugar
Strengthens Bones	Protects Your Heart	Aids Weight Loss
Stabilizes Blood Sugar	Boosts Memory	Prevents Constipation
Combats Cancer	Protects Your Heart	Controls Blood Pressure
Promotes Weight Loss	Protects Your Heart	Helps Hemorrhoids
Lowers Cholesterol	Combats Cancer	Supports Immune System
Prevents Constipation	Combats Cancer	Promotes Weight Loss
Banishes Bruises	Guards Against Heart Disease	Protects Against Prostate Cancer
Ends Insomnia	Slows Aging Process	Shields Against Alzheimer's
Lowers Cholesterol	Combats Cancer	Controls Blood Pressure
Clears Sinuses	Combats Cancer	Boosts Immune System
Lowers Cholesterol	Combats Cancer	Controls Blood Pressure
Protects Your Heart	Improves Mental Health	Boosts Immune System
Combats Cancer	Kills Bacteria	Fights Fungus
Combats Prostate Cancer	Lowers Cholesterol	Protects Against Heart Attacks
Combats Cancer	Enhances Blood Flow	Protects Your Heart
Controls Blood Pressure	Smoothes Skin	Stops Scurvy
Controls Blood Pressure	Smoothes Skin	Stops Scurvy
Regulates Thyroid	Aids Digestion	Shields Against Alzheimer's
Kills Bacteria	Combats Cancer	Strengthens Bones
Battles Diabetes	Prevents Constipation	Smoothes Skin
Combats Cancer	Battles Diabetes	Smoothes Skin
Lowers Cholesterol	Fights Fungus	Reduces Risk Of Heart Attack
Protects Your Heart	Strengthens Respiration	
Helps Stop Strokes	Aids Digestion	Helps Hemorrhoids
Lowers Cholesterol	Aggravates Diverticulitis	Protects Against Heart Disease
Aids Digestion	Dissolves Warts	Blocks Diarrhea
Boosts Memory	Lowers Cholesterol	Protects Against Heart Disease
Conquers Kidney Stones	Combats Cancer	Helps Stops Strokes
Boosts Memory	Calms Stress	
Combats Cancer	Strengthens Bones	
Lowers Cholesterol	Protects Your Heart	
Boosts Memory	Lifts Mood	Protects Against Heart Disease
Conquers Kidney Stones	Smoothes Skin	
Lowers Cholesterol	Helps Stops Strokes	Controls Blood Pressure
Lowers Cholesterol	Helps Stops Strokes	Improves Digestion
Lowers Cholesterol		



THE CORNERSTONE

Many people have wondered about the material which God is going to use to construct the heavenly temple. Some think it is gold, emerald, jasper, silver, etc. But what is the answer?

In order for us to understand the material to be used, we need to take a closer look on how Solomon's temple was constructed, since it was a symbolic figure of the construction of the heavenly temple.

1 Kings 6:7 ... It gives us instruction on how this great temple was to be constructed. It was constructed of stones made ready from the quarry.

How was it Built?

Stones were prepared at the quarry, hammering, chiselling, squaring, polishing all was done at the quarry. No instrument was to be used upon the stone when brought to the place of construction. The workman had only to place each stone on its position prepared for it from the quarry. One stone of irregular shape was brought from the quarry to be used in the foundation of the temple, but the builders could not find a place for it and would not accept it. It lay there unused, they stumbled over it, greatly annoyed by its presence. Long it remained a rejected stone.

Laying of the Foundation

When they came to the laying of the cornerstone, a long time was spent in search of a stone of sufficient size, strength and shape to take that place and bear the weight. If the wrong choice of material was chosen, the building was in danger. The stone was supposed to be resistant to sun, frost and tempest. Several stones had been chosen, but failed, and scrambled to pieces. But there lay the stone so long rejected by the builders. It had endured the exposure to air and scorching rays of the sun without any seam or crack. Storms had beaten upon it, yet it remained the same.

The Rejected Stone

Finally the attention of the builders was drawn to this large rejected stone. They examined it closely. It had borne every test. They decided to accept it for the cornerstone. It perfectly fitted on its place. It was a symbol of our Saviour, Jesus Christ, according to Isaiah.

God, in His wisdom chose the cornerstone, and laid it Himself. The entire world may lay upon it their burdens and grief, yet it can endure them all.

Christ A Tried Stone

If Christ is the cornerstone, then we are to be the living stones. He will never disappoint those who trust in Him. He has borne every test imposed upon Him. He failed not in the wilderness of temptation. He became more than a conqueror. Christ is represented by the cornerstone. Both Jews and Gentiles may build upon it. Their connection with Christ makes them living stones. Our only safety is in building upon this true foundation which is Christ, the Living Stone.

The Quarry

This earth is the quarry, where we are to be fitted for heaven. As the stones of Solomon's temple need not a touch of hammer or chisel, so will be the resurrected saints and the living righteous at the time of His coming. All the hewing, fitting, polishing of character, must be done during man's probation. Christ comes not to refine and purify character, but to take them to heaven. Many persons are

hewed and polished and beautified by their own endeavours, but they will never become living stones, because they are not connected with Christ. When the rain falls, the tempest rages, and floods come, they will fall in ruin. Character purification cannot be accomplished without pain in our flesh. It is not an easy thing to be pressed on a grinder so that the roughness of character may be removed. Many people complain and murmur when they are pressed on the grinder. They think that it is the enemy's hand and like Jacob they wrestle with the Lord's instrument, which is used to perfect them. Let us all remember that God gives His people a bitter cup to drink and that cup may be made more bitter by complaining and murmuring. It can be sweetened by patiently taking it without complaining. Let it be known that it is not an easy thing for a person to be approved and owned of God. Look at the experience which Abraham went through, which made him later on to be called the father of faith. Look at Joseph and Paul, just to mention a few. We must have experiences of our own so as to be approved by God.

The Heavenly Temple

No noise of chisels or hammer was allowed at Solomon's temple. No character purification will take place in heaven. All have been qualified while they were living upon the earth. They match Christ, the Cornerstone. Now is the time for us to purify our characters, in heaven no more character purification. But we will all be fitted into our position, which we were qualified for whilst we were living up on the earth. So next time when you come across temptations, hardships, trials, and difficulties in life, don't complain. But rather give thanks unto the Lord. Remember it is only the stone which contains gold which is put into the furnace. If you find yourself in the furnace of affliction, praise God for you are a rich and important stone, and God will be moulding you so that you may fit into your place in heaven.

The heavenly temple is a living temple, and it is constructed of living stones from the quarry. This earth is the quarry. It is here we are to be fitted for heaven. But that work cannot happen without pain and sacrifice. It was not easy for Christ, the Cornerstone, hence it cannot be easy for you and me. Let us strive to be there by allowing the Master Worker to mould us

according to His will. Like Jeremiah, we must be able to say, "You are the Potter and I am the clay. Have Thine own way Lord." **AMEN.**

D Gwina, Zimbabwe

QUEBEC CONFERENCE 2006

Praise the Lord we had our small fall conference in Montreal and Granby. Even though many people could not come, the Lord worked in the hearts of those who attended the conference.

The main subject was "Our Lord's Second Coming." We reviewed step by step how the glorious end of suffering and the beginning of eternity will be.

We spoke about the signs of His coming, the very soon crisis with the 10 Commandments, the end of grace, and the withdrawal of His Holy Spirit, the appearing of the King, the punishment of the wicked, and the glorious view of the New Earth and the New Heaven.

Together with Br. Ivo we spoke with Yohana who desired to make the special covenant with the Lord in baptism. I asked her three basic questions: 1) Why did she want to be baptized; 2) Why would she get baptized in this church and not another one; and 3) Having studied the Principles of Faith, did she have any problem with any of the practical principles of our faith. All her answers were satisfactory.

We pray that the Lord will remain burning in the hearts of those who attended.

Oscar Oviedo



ABOUT PERFECTION



“Thou shalt be perfect with the Lord thy God“ Deuteronomy 18:13.

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

Perfection is what the Lord has required from His people in all times. Only God is perfect and here we are told that we should be perfect like our Father in heaven. Is that possible? The Bible itself tells us, “There is none righteous, no, not one.” Romans 3:10.

“Nobody is perfect” is a common saying; we are all sinners. We find no example of absolute perfection in the Holy Scriptures except for Jesus Christ- God Himself in human flesh. “None of the prophets or apostles made proud boasts of holiness. The nearer they came to perfection of character, the less worthy and righteous they viewed themselves.” {FW 54.1}.

Nonetheless, we can read about some men who were perfect in God’s eyes. “Noah was a just man and perfect in his generations, and Noah walked with God.” Genesis 6:9.

In 1 Kings 15:14 we read about Asa, “Asa’s heart was perfect with the Lord all his days” and about Job it is written, “There was a man in the land of Uz, whose name [was] Job; and that man was perfect and upright, and one that feared God, and eschewed evil.” Job 1:1.

When we study the lives of these men, we find that they were not infallible. In what sense were they perfect? They were perfect in obedience to the principles of heaven, in faithfulness to God, in faith and trust in the Lord. If that had not been the case with Noah, he would not have followed God’s instructions to build an ark when not even a drop of water had ever fallen from the sky to the earth. Job was perfect in his interest and care of the poor and needy and his mediation for others, in his generosity. Asa was perfect in the fact that he destroyed all the idols in his country and lifted the eyes of the people to the only living God. All these men expressed their faith and trust in works that pleased the Lord because “without faith it is impossible to please him.” Hebrews 11:6.

The Lord tries our faith and patience, our faithfulness and perseverance so that we may be perfect in His eyes. “My brethren, count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations; knowing [this], that the trying of your faith worketh patience. But let patience have [her] perfect work, that ye may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing.” James 1:2-4.

Once a rich man came to Jesus. He was faithful and kept the commandments: he paid the tithe, went to the synagogue every Sabbath, led a clean moral life, gave no false testimonies, but in spite of it all he was not sure whether he was on the way to heaven, whether he could obtain eternal life. Jesus said to him, “Sell all that thou hast, and distribute unto the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come, follow me.” Luke 18:22. He could not fulfil the requirement; he was not perfect in faith and could not obey and comply with the command.

As we see the fulfilment of the prophecies and can almost hear the steps of the Lord coming, some people are getting rid of their possessions, investing in God’s cause and living in a more modest and simple way because their greatest wish and longing is to be translated to their

eternal dwelling place. Are they perfect? Do they never have to ask the Lord or a fellowman for forgiveness? They are in no way better than anyone else, but in the Lord's eyes they are perfect in faith and trust in the Lord. None of our righteous or generous deeds can be perfect unless we do them in faith. "Perfection through our own good works we can never attain. The soul who sees Jesus by faith, repudiates his own righteousness. He sees himself as incomplete, his repentance insufficient, his strongest faith but feebleness, his most costly sacrifice as meagre, and he sinks in humility at the foot of the cross. But a voice speaks to him from the oracles of God's Word. In amazement he hears the message, 'Ye are complete in Him.'" {FW 107.4}

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

Here it is spoken of perfection of character since God does not need any faith, and our character is the only thing we shall take to heaven. In the Testimonies we read, "We need to understand that imperfection of character is sin." {COL 330.1}

More concretely, this verse is related to our love toward our enemies, which is the utmost degree of perfection. God sent His only begotten Son to a planet in rebellion and Jesus lived and worked among men who hated His purity and perfection of character. "But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you; that ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven: for he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust. For if ye love them which love you, what reward have ye? do not even the publicans the same? And if ye salute your brethren only, what do ye more [than others]? do not even the publicans so? Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect." Matthew 5:44-48.

John speaks very clearly about this kind of perfection: "If we love one another, God dwelleth in us, and his love is perfected in us." 1 John 4:12. Previously, the same apostle said, "But whoso keepeth his word, in him verily is the love of God perfected." 1 John 2:5. A perfect character is a synonym of perfect love which is the result of God

and His Word living in us.

But our holy Father, rich in grace and wisdom, does not ask the impossible. "He would not call upon them to be perfect if He had not at His command every perfection of grace to bestow on the ones upon whom He would confer so high and holy a privilege." {AG 230.4}

Here we have a clue. God Himself can give us perfection through His grace.

We can see that there are three concepts that are very closely related to one another: faith, perfection and love. It seems that as we grow in faith, we grow in perfection by performing acts of love and all this by the grace of God. In Romans we read that faith comes by hearing the word of God and the Testimonies tell us "No man, woman, or youth can attain to Christian perfection and neglect the study of the word of God." {CSW 17.1} How important it is that we eagerly search the Scriptures and attentively listen to the message that is preached!

"Whom we preach, warning every man, and teaching every man in all wisdom; that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus." Colossians 1:28

"God designs that every one of us shall be perfect in Him, so that we may represent to the world the perfection of His character. He wants us to be set free from sin, that we may not disappoint Heaven, that we may not grieve our divine Redeemer. He does not desire us to profess Christianity, and yet not avail ourselves of that grace which is able to make us perfect, that we may be found wanting in nothing." {ML 15.3}

"Moral and spiritual perfection, through the grace and power of Christ, is promised to all. Jesus is the source of power, the fountain of life. He brings us to His word, and from the tree of life presents to us leaves for the healing of sin-sick souls. He leads us to the throne of God, and puts into our mouth a prayer through which we are brought into close contact with Himself. In our behalf He sets in operation the all-powerful agencies of heaven. At every step we touch His living power." {AA 478.2}

"A noble, all-round character is not inherited. It does not come to us by accident. A noble character is earned by individual effort through the merits and

grace of Christ. God gives the talents, the powers of the mind; we form the character. It is formed by hard, stern battles with self." Self always wants to have the upper hand. If we are converted, self is crucified, but not yet dead. Therefore, Paul says, "I die daily." This daily death is a voluntary act; it is surrendering our will to God's will, living according to the principles that make of our body a temple of the Spirit; it is allowing Jesus Christ to occupy the throne of our heart so "that Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith; that ye, being rooted and grounded in love may be able to comprehend with all saints what [is] the breadth, and length, and depth, and height; and to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that ye might be filled with all the fulness of God." Ephesians 3:17-19. Where Jesus rules and lives there is perfection.

But, in order to die, we need to have been born and there is where the problem is. If we have not been born again; if we have not had the experience (and not just the knowledge) of the forgiveness of our sins, if we have not seen Jesus agonizing for us on the cross of Calvary and felt great distress, if we are not aware that we are justified only by faith and do not know what it means to be covered by Jesus' righteousness, we cannot die to the desires of the flesh or make any step toward perfection because we have not yet entered the stage of sanctification; we have not taken His yoke upon us. "True sanctification means perfect love, perfect obedience, perfect conformity to the will of God." {AA 565.1} "In Christ we shall find perfection. Beholding Him, we shall become transformed." {DA 816.3} Not in vain Paul advises us, "Let us run with patience the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith." Hebrews 12:1, 2.

Previously in the same book Paul writes, "But strong meat belongs to them that are perfect, those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil." (I am using the Greek version). So here we find another definition of perfection: it is the capacity to discern between good and evil and that comes through practice, making use of our reasoning. "Perfection of character is attained through exercise of the faculties of the mind, in times of supreme test, by obedience to every requirement of God's law." {MM 168.5}

The Holy Scriptures teach us that the Holy Spirit is the one that gives us discernment as He activates our conscience and gives us spiritual insight. "Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth." John 16:13. Spiritual insight and discernment come from God. That was Solomon's plea to the Lord as he was chosen to rule over His people, "Give therefore thy servant an understanding heart to judge thy people, that I may discern between good and bad: for who is able to judge this thy so great a people?" 1 Kings 3:9. "Man is to make earnest efforts to overcome that which hinders him from attaining to perfection. But he is wholly dependent upon God for success. Human effort of itself is not sufficient. Without the aid of divine power it avails nothing. God works and man works. Resistance of temptation must come from man, who must draw his power from God. On the one side there is infinite wisdom, compassion, and power; on the other, weakness, sinfulness, absolute helplessness." {AA 482.2}

"The growth of the soul in grace, in purity, in comeliness, is little by little -- a progressive work; but it must go forward unceasingly. The fruit is ever approaching perfection; the Christian is constantly assimilating the ways and will of Christ." {CSW 17.1}

"Every faculty with which the Creator has endowed us should be cultivated to the highest degree of perfection, that we may be able to do the greatest amount of good of which we are capable. In order to purify and refine our characters, we need the grace given us of Christ that will enable us to see and correct our deficiencies and improve that which is excellent in our characters." {CG 164.2}

As we see and correct our deficiencies, our character is perfected and by so doing our influence upon others is greater. But Jesus tells us, "for without me ye can do nothing," and Paul writes to the Philippians, "I can do all things through Christ which strengthens me." (Phil. 4:13) So now, instead of trying to be perfect on our own or trying to help others to reach perfection of character, we look for the guidance of the Spirit, we implore the Lord that He may send us the Comforter in great measure so that we may spot our shortcomings and receive the power to overcome. Now instead of telling others that they should be perfect, we do what Epaphras, a servant of Christ, did,

"Epaphras, who is [one] of you, a servant of Christ, saluteth you, always labouring fervently for you in prayers, that ye may stand perfect and complete in all the will of God." Colossians 4:12. We bring to the Lord in prayer all our beloved ones and plead that they may fulfil God's will out of faith.

As a conclusion we may say, "Being confident of this very thing, that he which

hath begun a good work in you will perform [it] until the day of Jesus Christ." Philippians 1:6. And the Lord answers us, full of joy for our confidence and trust in Him, "My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness." 2 Corinthians 12:9. **Amen**

Teresa Corti

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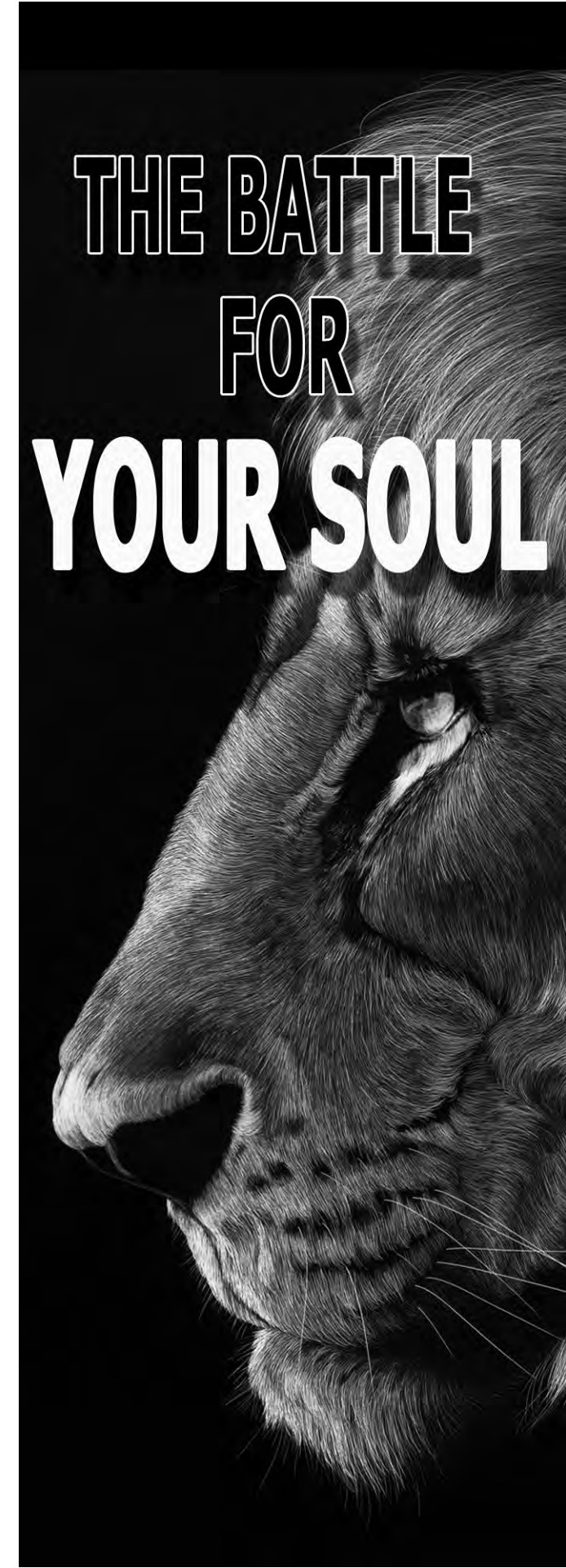
We are pleased to announce the revised Reformation Messenger Website, which is located at: www.imsmessenger.com.

To date we have served over 28,000 visitors. The revised website now has added features including the entire catalogue of the magazine published from 2000 to 2006. This includes more than 80 issues comprised of over 1100 articles that are available in both text and PDF format. Both formats may be searched by various methods.

The use of the website and access to all of the articles continues to be free. Additionally we have also added an online subscription service with various rate plans comprised of both printed format and now newly available on CD, that can be mailed to you. There is also a donation service for those who would like to support the important work that the magazine accomplishes throughout the world in spreading the gospel message to each continent.

We hope that you will find the changes to the website convenient and worthwhile. May God bless your support of His work throughout the world and may these efforts hasten His soon return. Amen

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THE BATTLE FOR YOUR SOUL

“For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places” Ephesians 6:12

“Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour.” 1Peter 5:8.

It is said that “misery loves company” and this is certainly true with Satan. He is not content to simply exist in defiance of God – he wants to bring as many down with him as he can. As we are nearing the end of time, he is becoming more active. Many people, both Christians and non-Christians, are aware of the fact that we are on the verge of a stupendous crisis about to break out on this earth, but many do not know what it is since they are not seeking answers from God. “The present is a time of overwhelming interest to all living. Rulers and statesmen, men who occupy positions of trust and authority, thinking men and women of all classes, have their attention fixed upon the events taking place about us. They are watching the relations that exist among the nations. They observe the intensity that is taking possession of every earthly element, and they recognize that something great and decisive is about to take place,—that the world is on the verge of a stupendous crisis.” PK 536, 537. They think it is a physical battle. They are fighting the war against terror.

The apostle Peter also thought it was a physical battle. He was full of confidence when he said, “Lord, I am ready to go with thee, both into prison, and to death.” Luke 22:33. He was willing to fight. In the Garden of Gethsemane we read of Peter taking up his sword and cutting off the ear of the High Priest’s servant. This is not Jesus’ way. Jesus healed the man and told Peter to “Put up again thy sword into his place: for all they that take the sword shall perish with the sword.” Matthew 26:52. Not long after this Peter was found denying Jesus vehemently. “Then began he to curse and to swear, saying, I know not the man. And immediately the cock crew. And Peter remembered the word of Jesus, which said unto him, Before the cock crow, thou shalt deny me thrice. And he went out, and wept bitterly.” Matthew 26:74, 75. Peter did not understand the true nature of the battle and therefore he was not ready. He was caught off-guard. If he understood the spiritual battle that each person is involved in, he never would have denied Jesus. After his conversion he was a changed man and nothing could shake his faith. When faced with death, we find him sleeping peacefully, chained between two guards (Acts 12:7). He realized that people are not the enemy. It is Satan who is the enemy and people sometimes yield themselves to be controlled by Satan.

Daniel understood the battle. We can read of his reaction when the decree went forth prohibiting prayer to anyone except the king. Although offenders would be thrown to the lion’s den, Daniel was not deterred. He knew it was only Satan. It was a spiritual battle – not a physical one. “From the story of Daniel’s deliverance we may learn that in seasons of trial and gloom God’s children should be just what they were when their prospects were bright with hope and their surroundings all that they could desire. Daniel in the lions’ den was the same Daniel who stood before the king as chief among the ministers of state and as a prophet of the Most High. A man whose heart is stayed upon God will be the same in the hour of his greatest trial as he is in prosperity, when the light and favour of God and of man beam upon him. Faith reaches to the unseen, and grasps eternal realities.” PK 545

Although we are engaged in a spiritual battle, behind the scenes there

is a very real battle being engaged. "If the veil which separates the visible from the invisible world could be lifted, and the people of God could behold the great controversy that is going on between Christ and holy angels and Satan and his evil hosts concerning the redemption of man; if they could understand the wonderful work of God for the rescue of souls from the bondage of sin, and the constant exercise of His power for their protection from the malice of the evil one, they would be better prepared to withstand the devices of Satan. Their minds would be solemnized in view of the vast extent and importance of the plan of redemption and the greatness of the work before them as colabourers with Christ. They would be humbled, yet encouraged, knowing that all heaven is interested in their salvation." 5T 467

JESUS AND ANGELS

Some think that Jesus is far away... just watching the events unfold on this earth. He created us and stood back and is now watching the battle to see how it plays out. The truth is that all of heaven is taking great interest in the events unfolding on this earth and they are taking an active part. "Christ will never abandon those for whom He has died. We may leave Him and be overwhelmed with temptation, but Christ can never turn from one for whom He has paid the ransom of His own life. Could our spiritual vision be quickened, we should see souls bowed under oppression and burdened with grief, pressed as a cart beneath sheaves, and ready to die in discouragement. We should see angels flying quickly to the aid of these tempted ones, forcing back the hosts of evil that encompass them, and placing their feet on the sure foundation. The battles waging between the two armies are as real as those fought by the armies of this world, and on the issue of the spiritual conflict eternal destinies depend." PK 175. This illustrates how strongly each of these masters desire your service. You are valuable and important to each one.

We only need to surrender ourselves to Jesus for victory. "The LORD saveth not with sword and spear: for the battle is the LORD's." 1 Samuel 17:47 "The spirits of darkness will battle for the soul once under their dominion, but angels of God will contend for that soul with prevailing power. The Lord says, 'Shall the prey be

taken from the mighty, or the lawful captive delivered? . . . Thus saith the Lord, Even the captives of the mighty shall be taken away, and the prey of the terrible shall be delivered: for I will contend with him that contendeth with thee, and I will save thy children.' Isa. 49:24, 25." DA 258

SATAN

Satan wants to have as many people on his side as possible. "I saw evil angels contending for souls, and angels of God resisting them. The conflict was severe. Evil angels were crowding about them, corrupting the atmosphere with their poisonous influence, and stupefying their sensibilities. Holy angels were anxiously watching these souls, and were waiting to drive back Satan's host. But it is not the work of good angels to control minds against the will of the individuals. If they yield to the enemy, and make no effort to resist him, then the angels of God can do but little more than hold in check the host of Satan, that they should not destroy, until further light be given to those in peril, to move them to arouse and look to heaven for help. Jesus will not commission holy angels to extricate those who make no effort to help themselves." MYP 52

"I was shown that Satan cannot control minds unless they are yielded to his control. Those who depart from the right are in serious danger now... Those who have tempted the devil to tempt them will have to make desperate efforts to free themselves from his power. When they begin to work for themselves, then angels of God whom they have grieved will come to their rescue. Satan and his angels are unwilling to lose their prey. They contend and battle with the holy angels, and the conflict is severe. And if those who have erred continue to plead, and in deep humility confess their wrongs, angels who excel in strength will prevail and wrench them from the power of the evil angels." MYP 60

"When the individual is aroused to his danger, and, with distress and fervour, looks to Jesus for strength, Satan fears he shall lose a captive,

and he calls a re-enforcement of his angels to hedge in the poor soul, and form a wall of darkness around him, that heaven's light may not reach him. But if the one in danger perseveres, and in helplessness and weakness casts himself upon the merits of the blood of Christ, Jesus listens to the earnest prayer of faith, and sends a re-enforcement of those angels which excel in strength to deliver him.

"Satan cannot endure to have his powerful rival appealed to, for he fears and trembles before His [Christ's] strength and majesty. At the sound of fervent prayer, Satan's whole host trembles. . . And when angels, all-powerful, clothed with the armoury of heaven, come to the help of the fainting, pursued soul, Satan and his host fall back, wellknowingthattheirbattleislost."MYP53

POLITICAL EVENTS

The battle is not only fought over each individual soul, there is also a battle being fought over the political events on this earth. "We have before us in the Word of God instances of heavenly agencies working on the minds of kings and rulers, while at the same time satanic agencies were also at work on their minds...

"Day by day the conflict between good and evil is going on. Why is it that those who have had many opportunities and advantages do not realize the intensity of this work? They should be intelligent in regard to this. God is the Ruler. By His supreme power He holds in check and controls earthly potentates. Through His agencies He does the work which was ordained before the foundation of the world." 4BC 1173



“As a people we do not understand as we should the great conflict going on between invisible agencies, the controversy between loyal and disloyal angels. Evil angels are constantly at work, planning their line of attack, controlling as commanders, kings, and rulers, the disloyal human forces... I call upon the ministers of Christ to press home upon the understanding of all who come within the reach of their voice, the truth of the ministration of angels. Do not indulge in fanciful speculations. The written Word is our only safety. We must pray as did Daniel, that we may be guarded by heavenly intelligences. As ministering spirits angels are sent forth to minister to those who shall be heirs of salvation. Pray, my brethren, pray as you have never prayed before. We are not prepared for the Lord's coming. We need to make thorough work for eternity” (Letter 201, 1899).

“Angels are now restraining the winds of strife, until the world shall be warned of its coming doom; but a storm is gathering, ready to burst upon the earth, and when God shall bid His angels loose the winds, there will be such a scene of strife as no pen can picture.” Ev 704

IN OUR MEETINGS

“I saw that Satan carries out his plans well. As the servants of God appoint meetings, Satan with his angels is on the ground to hinder the work. He is constantly putting suggestions into the minds of God's people. He leads some in one way, and some in another, always taking advantage of evil traits in the brethren and sisters, exciting and stirring up their natural besetments. If they are disposed to be selfish and covetous, Satan takes his stand by their side, and with all his power seeks to lead them to indulge their besetting sins. The grace of God and the light of truth may melt away their covetous, selfish feeling for a little, but if they do not obtain entire victory, Satan comes in when they are not under a saving influence, and withers every noble, generous principle, and they think that too much is required of them. They become weary of well-doing, and forget the great sacrifice which Jesus made to redeem them from the power of Satan and from hopeless misery.” EW 268. Has your mind ever wandered away from the subject at hand in church? Have worldly cares and trials crept into your mind during the service? Have

you communicated with others whether by whispered word or written note? Is it the angels of God who are inspiring you to do these things? Are we inviting the evil angels into our midst?

“Evil angels in the form of believers will work in our ranks to bring in a strong spirit of unbelief. Let not even this discourage you, but bring a true heart to the help of the Lord against the powers of satanic agencies. These powers of evil will assemble in our meetings, not to receive a blessing, but to counterwork the influences of the Spirit of God.

“At these gatherings we must ever remember that two forces are at work. A battle unseen by human eyes is being waged. The army of the Lord is on the ground, seeking to save souls. Satan and his host are also at work, trying in every possible way to deceive and destroy.” LDE 161

WHAT IS YOUR PART IN THIS?

Although it sounds like a strong physical battle behind the scenes, what is our part? Are we to passively choose our master and then let them fight it out? There is more to it than that. It takes striving and agonizing. Great efforts are needed to change masters. To detach from the world and attach to Jesus is no easy matter. The world can have a tremendous grip on us. Satan does not let go of his prey easily.

“We are to do all we can do on our part to fight the good fight of faith. We are to *wrestle, to strive, to agonize*, to enter in at the strait gate. We are to set the Lord ever before us. With clean hands, with pure hearts, we are to seek to honour God in all our ways. Help has been provided for us in Him who is mighty to save. The spirit of truth and light will quicken and renew us by its mysterious workings; for all our spiritual improvement comes from God, not from ourselves. The true worker will have divine power to aid him, but the idler will not be sustained by the Spirit of God.” *Faith and Works* page 48

“A union with Christ by living faith is enduring; every other union must perish. Christ first chose us, paying an infinite price for our redemption; and the true believer chooses Christ as first and last and best in everything. But this union costs us something. It is a union of utter

dependence, to be entered into by a proud being. All who form this union must feel their need of the atoning blood of Christ. They must have a change of heart. They must *submit* their own will to the will of God. There will be a struggle with outward and internal obstacles. There must be a painful work of *detachment* as well as a work of *attachment*. Pride, selfishness, vanity, worldliness--sin in all its forms--must be overcome if we would enter into a union with Christ. The reason why many find the Christian life so deplorably hard, why they are so fickle, so variable, is that they try to attach themselves to Christ without first detaching themselves from these cherished idols.

“After the union with Christ has been formed, it can be preserved only by *earnest prayer* and *untiring effort*. We must *resist*, we must *deny*, we must *conquer self*. Through the grace of Christ, by courage, by faith, by watchfulness, we may gain the victory.” 5T 231

“*Submit* yourselves therefore to God. *Resist* the devil, and he will flee from you.” James 4:7 “Whom *resist steadfast* in the faith, knowing that the same afflictions are accomplished in your brethren that are in the world.” 1 Peter 5:9

“Ye have not yet *resisted unto blood*, striving against sin.” Hebrews 12:4 To obtain the victory you must resist sin with all your resolute firmness as if you're struggling in a physical combat. Yet we have the promise that, “There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it.” 1 Cor 10:13.

HOW TO BE STRONG IN THIS?

There are several ways in order to gain and maintain strength in this battle. The first step would be to choose to serve Jesus – take His hand and do not let go.

“Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God.” Hebrews 12:2. “*Gaze upon Jesus* until the spirit faints under the excess of light. We do not half pray. We do

not half believe. 'Ask, and it shall be given you.' Luke 11:9. 'Pray, believe, strengthen one another.' Pray as you never before prayed that the Lord will lay His hand upon you, that you may be able to comprehend the length and breadth and depth and height, and to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that you may be filled with all the fullness of God." 7T 214

"Live in contact with the living Christ, and He will hold you firmly by a hand that will never let go. Know and believe the love that God has to us, and you are secure; that love is a fortress impregnable to all the delusions and assaults of Satan. 'The name of the Lord is a strong tower: the righteous runneth into it, and is safe.' Proverbs 18:10."

Once we have a connection with Jesus, the use of song can help us in our daily activities to keep our mind stayed upon Jesus. "If more praising of God were engaged in now, hope and courage and faith would steadily increase. And would not this strengthen the hands of the valiant soldiers who today are standing in defense of truth?" PK 202. Jesus was often heard lifting up His voice in song. If we would do more singing our spirits would be uplifted while we are doing our daily duties. They will not become monotonous or distasteful.

"*The joy of the Lord is your strength.*" Nehemiah 8:10. The common opinion by worldly people is that religion is gloomy and solemn. Is there any joy in serving the Lord? "Do not think that when you walk with Jesus you must walk in the shadow. The happiest people in the world are those who trust in Jesus and gladly do His bidding. He is the light of life. From the lives of those who follow Him unrest and discontent are banished. With a full heart they echo the words of the wise man, Wisdom's 'ways are ways of pleasantness, and all her paths are peace' (Prov. 3:17). Though they meet with trials and difficulties, their lives are full of joy; for Christ walks beside them, and His presence makes the pathway bright" HP262.

"My brethren, count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations; Knowing this, that the trying of your faith worketh patience. But let patience have her perfect work, that ye may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing." James 1:2-4

"To the mature Christian the trials and tests

of life brings no burden of disappointment or discouragement. Christian joy and courage are not based on outward circumstances, which may often be most forbidding but our faith in God's over ruling providence and an intelligent understanding of His dealing with men. Christianity teaches men how to be joyful under such circumstances, through an intelligent understanding of the causes of suffering through faith in God." 7T 214

"Not by might, nor by power, but by my spirit, saith the LORD of hosts." Zech 4:6. "I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me." Phil. 4:13

WHO WILL WIN?

"We do not understand as we should the great conflict going on between invisible agencies, the controversy between loyal and disloyal angels. Over every man, good and evil angels strive. This is no make-believe conflict. It is no mimic battle in which we are engaged. We have to meet most powerful adversaries, and *it rests with us to determine which shall win.* We are to find our strength where the early disciples found theirs." ST, Feb. 17, 1914.

The following is a very serious statement that we all need to carefully consider. We are loved with an everlasting love. The Lord has given His all for our salvation. Are we the barren fig tree that God is giving extra special attention for another year? "I saw that the angels of God are not to force or bend the will of the individual they watch over. They are to gently chide, warn and guard. *Satan can never force back these holy angels from their charge. None can do this but the individuals that they are watching over. If these individuals continue to grieve these tender, holy angels; if they go astray from their counsel and warnings, and choose an independent course of their own, they will drive these angels from them.* If the will is submitted to them, they will bend it in the heavenly channel, and they will ever be on the watch for their interests, leading them from a thousand dangers, preventing their lives being taken by Satan, and, if they are inclined to go a wrong course, stand in the path before them to prevent their ruin.

"But if individuals continue to retain their own will, choose their own course, and have their own way, the angels leave them in sadness. Then Satan comes in to control

the will, and bend the mind, and smiles in hellish triumph at his success.

"I saw that the great condescension for man has been made. Jesus condescended to the shameful death of the cross, and now man in his turn must condescend and bow. He must yield up his will and pleasure if he would follow in the only road to heaven. I saw that God would not compel any to be saved. Jesus has made the great sacrifice, and if man will freely, gladly accept it; if he will choose life, he can have it. But his life must be one of continual yielding." 2SG 277/8.

CONCLUSION

"Day by day the battle goes on. If our eyes could be opened to see the good and evil agencies at work, there would be no trifling, no vanity, no jesting or joking. If all would put on the whole armour of God and fight manfully the battles of the Lord, victories would be gained that would cause the kingdom of darkness to tremble." 6T 41

On the resurrection morning, we will meet our guardian angel. We will then understand all the trials and difficulties we encountered in our life's journey. We will see the love of God in everything that we experience. "The angel who was his guardian from his earliest moment; the angel who watched his steps, and covered his head in the day of peril; the angel who was with him in the valley of the shadow of death, who marked his resting place, who was the first to greet him in the resurrection morning--what will it be to hold converse with him, and to learn the history of divine interposition in the individual life, of heavenly co-operation in every work for humanity!

"All the perplexities of life's experience will then be made plain. Where to us have appeared only confusion and disappointment, broken purposes and thwarted plans, will be seen a grand, overruling, victorious purpose, a divine harmony." Ed 305

May God help us to be good Christian soldiers and take our stand under the banner of Christ, and letting Him fight our battles for us. **AMEN**

Wendy Eaton, Australia

BREAD UPON THE WATERS



CHILDRENS CORNER

“Ah! Jacob, now you see how all your hopes are gone. Here we are worn out with age—all our children removed from us by the hand of death, and ere long we must be the inmates of the poor house. Where now is all the bread you have cast upon the waters?”

The old, white-haired man looked up at his wife. He was, indeed, bent down with years, and age sat tremblingly upon him. Jacob Manfred had been a comparatively wealthy man, and while fortune had smiled upon him he had ever been among the first to lend a listening ear and a helping hand to the call of distress. But now misfortune was his. Of his four boys not one was left. Sickness and failing strength found him with but little, and had left him penniless. An oppressive embargo upon the shipping business had been the first weight upon his head, and other misfortunes came in painful succession. Jacob and his wife were all alone and gaunt poverty looked them coldly in the face.

“Don’t repine, Susan,” said the old man. “True we are poor, but we are not yet forsaken.”

“Not forsaken, Jacob? Who is there to help us now?”

Jacob Manfred raised his trembling finger toward heaven.

“Ah! Jacob, I know God is our friend, but we should have friends here. Look back and see how many you have befriended in days long past. You cast your bread upon the waters with a free hand, but it has not returned to you.”

“Hush, Susan, you forget what you say. To be sure I may have hoped that some kind hand of earth would lift me from the cold depths of utter want; but I do not expect is as a reward for anything I may have done. If I have helped the unfortunate in days gone by, I have had my full reward in knowing that I have done my duty to my fellows.

Oh! Of all the kind deeds I have done to my suffering fellows, I would not for gold have one of them blotted from my memory. Ah! My fond wife, ‘tis the memory of the good done in life that makes old age happy. Even now, I can hear again the warm thanks of those whom I have befriended, and again I can see their smiles.”

“Yes, Jacob,” returned his wife, in a lower tone, “I know you have been good, and in your memory you can be happy; but, alas! There is a present upon which we must look—there is a reality upon which we must dwell. We must beg for food or starve!”

The old man started, and a deep mark of pain was drawn across his features.

“Beg!” he replied, with a quick shudder. “No, Susan, we are—

He hesitated, and a big tear rolled down his furrowed cheek.

“We are what, Jacob?”

“We are going to the poorhouse!”

“Oh God! I thought so!” fell from the poor wife’s lips, as she covered her face with her hands. “I have thought so, and I have tried to school myself to the thought; but my poor heart will not bear it!”

“Do not give up,” softly urged the old man, laying his hand up on her arm. “It makes but little difference to us now. We have not long to remain on earth, and let us not wear out our last days in useless repinings. Come, come.”

“But when—when—shall we go?”

“Now—today.”

“Then God have mercy on us!”

“He will,” murmured Jacob.

That old couple sat for a while in silence. When they were aroused from their painful thoughts it was by the stopping of a wagon in front of the door. A man entered the room where they sat. He was the keeper of the poorhouse.

“Come, Mr. Manfred,” he said, “the selectmen have managed to crowd you into the poorhouse. The wagon is at the door, and you can get ready as soon as possible.”

Jacob Manfred had not calculated the strength he should need for this ordeal. There was a coldness in the very tone and manner of the man who had come for him that went like an ice-bolt to his heart, and with a deep groan he sank back in his seat.

“Come, be in a hurry,” impatiently urged the keeper.

At that moment a heavy covered carriage drove up to the door.

“Is this the house of Jacob Manfred?”

This question was asked by a man who entered from the carriage. He was a kind-looking man, about forty years of age.

“That is my name,” said Jacob.

“Then they told me truly, uttered the newcomer.

“Are you from the poorhouse?” he continued, turning towards the keeper.

“Yes.”

“Then you may return. Jacob Manfred goes to no poorhouse while I live.”

The keeper gazed inquisitively into the face of the stranger, and left the house.

“Don’t you remember me?” exclaimed the newcomer, grasping the old man by the hand.

“I can not call you to my memory now.”

“Do you remember Lucius Williams?”

“Williams?” repeated Jacob, starting up and gazing earnestly into the stranger’s face.

“Yes, Jacob Manfred—Lucius Williams, that little boy whom, thirty years ago, you saved from the house of correction; that poor boy whom you kindly took from the bonds of the law, and placed on board your own vessels.”

“And are you—“

“Yes—yes, I am the man you made. You found me a rough stone from the hand of poverty and bad example. It was you who brushed off the evil, and who first led me to the sweet waters of moral life and happiness. I have profited by the lesson you gave me in early youth, and the warm spark which your kindness lighted up in my bosom has grown brighter and brighter ever since. With an affluence for life I have settled down to enjoy the remainder of my days in peace and quietness. I heard of your losses and bereavements. Come, I have a home and a heart, your presence will make them both warmer, brighter, and happier. Come, my more than father—and you my mother, come. You made my youth all bright, and I will not see your old age doomed to darkness.”

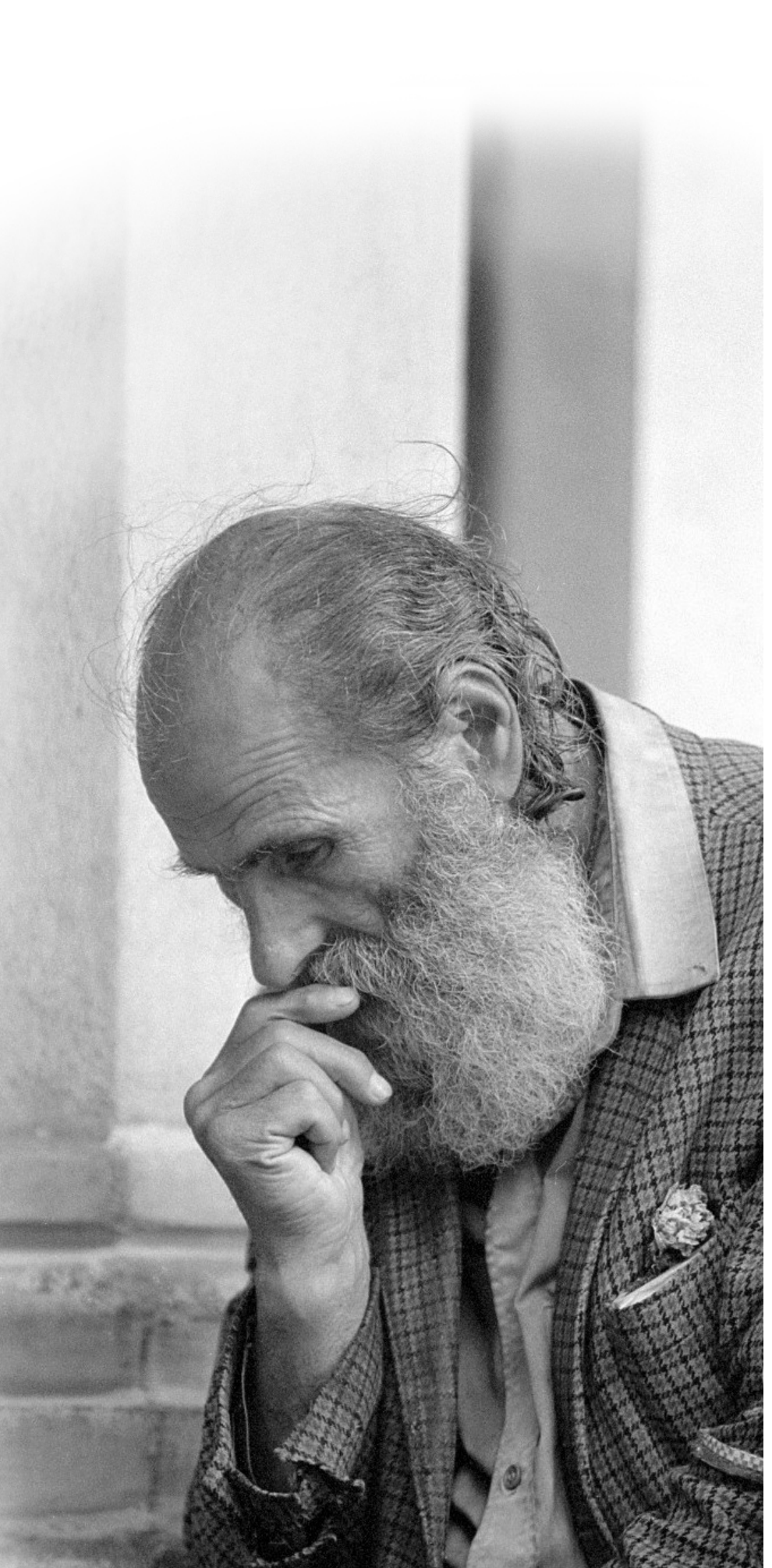
Jacob Manfred tottered forward and sank upon the bosom of his preserver. He could not speak his thanks, for they were too heavy for words. When he looked up again he sought his wife.

“Susan,” he said, in a choking, trembling tone, “my bread has come back to me!”

“Forgive me, Jacob.”

“No, no, Susan. It is not I who must forgive—God holds us in His hand.”

“Ah!” murmured the wife, as she raised her streaming eyes to heaven, “I will never doubt Him again.”





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