

The background of the entire page is a vibrant, multi-colored image of the Crab Nebula, showing intricate filaments of gas in shades of blue, green, yellow, and orange against a dark starry space.

The Reformation **Messenger**

VOLUME 14, NUMBER 3, MARCH 2007

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

THE CRAB NEBULA

“For as many as are led by the Spirit of God,
they are the sons of God.” Romans 8:14

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The Reformation Messenger



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FIRE ESCAPE

If you were sleeping one night and a fire happened to break out in your house and you wake up, the only thing on your mind is to escape for your life out of the burning building. If there are loved ones in the house, your instincts will be to alert the others and possibly assist the weaker persons to get out – but everyone has one thought in their minds – to escape for their lives. There is little thought of the material possessions that will be lost, only thoughts of survival. All the immediate energies are focused on obeying the fire escape rules that they have been taught in order to escape the fire. There is no laughter; no time to waste in socializing; only serious thoughts of urgency.

For many Christians their spirituality is similar to this – it is “Fire escape Religion.” They act in a specific manner only because they are afraid of the fire at the end of the road. They serve the Lord fearfully because they tremble at the thought of being cast into the lake of fire. Their whole religious experience focuses on the rules necessary in order to escape the fire. There is no thought about Jesus or making Him their best Friend. They want to do as little as possible to escape hell fire. There is no delight in their Christian experience. They are often

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long-faced and miserable. They have a totally false view of true Christianity.

Although fear has its proper place in the religious experience, (“And others save with fear, pulling them out of the fire; hating even the garment spotted by the flesh.” Jude 23) we need to move on from there because fear is not from God. “For God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind.” 2 Tim. 1:7

“I sought the LORD, and he heard me, and delivered me from all my fears.” Psalm 34:4 When we realize that we are in this condition, we can come to the Lord and He will deliver us from these fears. How does He deliver us?

“There is no fear in love; but perfect love casteth out fear: because fear hath torment. He that feareth is not made perfect in love.” I John 4:18. He delivers by love.

Christians who are only serving the Lord, or who are baptised with only the motive of escaping the fire are the ones often heard complaining that the religious standards in the church are too restrictive. We live in an extremely permissive age with an emphasis in the world for everyone to do

as they please. There is an unreasonably selfish attitude. There is little thought or concern about others. This attitude has made inroads into religion. Christians are looking for churches that will not interfere with their personal rights and freedoms. They balk at any doctrine within churches that require them to “give up” something.

Many times in the past when we’ve conducted Bible Studies with persons, they have had no difficulty accepting the doctrinal studies, such as Daniel 2 and 7, Christ’s Second Coming and the state of the dead. However, when it comes to personal religion their attitude changes. They do not want to give up anything. I remember one case where a young lady was exactly like this. She happily accepted every point of truth, but, like the rich young ruler, there was one thing she lacked. Her lack was in the area of Dress Reform. She was a beautiful young lady and in the hot summer sun days she decided she wanted to wear short shorts and halter tops. She could not understand why God would not be pleased with this when the weather was hot. She did not think that she needed to cover her body in the hot summer sun. Sadly – not long after this she completely left the faith. She fell into Satan’s trap that many others have,



who “received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved. And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie: That they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness.” 2 Thess. 2:10-12. Yes, she did not believe *all* the truth but had pleasure in unrighteousness.

Is there danger of this happening to baptised members in God’s church? Yes there most certainly is. There have been those in the church who complained about this “rule” or that. They have claimed that the people who are very careful to obey the word of the Lord are fanatics. They are extreme in their adherence to the “rules.” There is danger that a liberal spirit can infiltrate into the church causing church members to turn more and more critical of the high spiritual standards upheld by the church. Some have become embarrassed at the wide gap between the church and the world, and shy away from the idea of being a “peculiar” people. They argue that the church is being narrow and legalistic and that many fine people are being discouraged from joining the church by this arbitrary imposition of certain “rules.”

If their complaints are valid then something needs to be done about the “rules.” Changes need to be made in the doctrine of the church.

In days of Jesus, the Pharisees had created many rules from tradition. They had hundreds of rules on the proper way to keep Sabbath. They became very perturbed when Jesus “broke” their rules of tradition. He, however, demonstrated the true spirit of the law. This angered them and they became critical of all His words and actions. They had fire escape religion. Their complete focus was on the rules and not on Jesus.

If the church rules indeed *are* valid then we need to know how we can present them in a manner that will encourage others to see them in the light of the Bible and Spirit of Prophecy. What needs to be determined is whether these “rules” are made by God or by the church. Are they arbitrary prohibitions or are they God’s loving regulations for our own happiness?

The Apostle Paul wrote the book of 1 Corinthians to admonish the believers for their departure from the Lord. They became very self-righteous in many areas.

Perhaps they were seeking to close the gap between the church and the world and also seeking for worldly honour. Therefore Paul told them that, “we are made a spectacle unto the world, and to angels, and to men.” He went on to contrast his own humility with their pride and haughtiness. “We are fools for Christ’s sake, but ye are wise in Christ; we are weak, but ye are strong; ye are honourable, but we are despised. Even unto this present hour we both hunger, and thirst, and are naked, and are buffeted, and have no certain dwellingplace; And labour, working with our own hands: being reviled, we bless; being persecuted, we suffer it: Being defamed, we entreat: we are made as the filth of the world, and are the offscouring of all things unto this day. I write not these things to shame you, but as my beloved sons I warn you.” I Corinthians 4:9-14. From these verses we see what type of life the true Christian can expect. There is a difference between the world and the true followers of Christ. Those with fire escape religion balk at any differences. They seek to conform to the world as much as is possible without jeopardising their reputation or membership in the church.

IT’S NOT AN EASY ROAD

The reality is that the path to eternal life is not a soft and flowery path. It is so clear in the Bible that we would have to be blind to miss it and yet the Pharisees were blind to it. Jesus called them, “blind leaders of the blind.” Matthew 15:14.

“We must through much *tribulation* enter into the kingdom of God.” Acts 14:22. “*Strive* to enter in at the *strait gate*: for many, I say unto you, will seek to enter in, and shall not be able.” Luke 13:24 “And he said to them all, If any man will come after me, let him *deny* himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me.” Luke 9:23

Though self denial is often talked about in religious circles, it often is not taken very seriously. The next time you are out at the store buying something, stop and ask yourself, “Would Jesus purchase this item?” or “Do I really need this? Or is it just something I want? Can I do without it and give the money to the Lord instead?” Those who are experiencing Fire Escape Religion never let these kinds of thoughts cross their minds. As long as they pay their tithes and a meagre offering, they feel the rest of their money is to be used at their discretion and

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if they have an excess, it is to be used to gratify their own selves. Little thought is given to the new mission fields opening up in Northern Africa and other areas of the world, that need our financial assistances. "Some think that only a portion of their means is the Lord's. When they have set apart a portion for religious and charitable purposes, they regard the remainder as their own, to be used as they see fit. But in this they mistake. All we possess is the Lord's, and we are accountable to Him for the use we make of it. In the use of every penny, it will be seen whether we love God supremely and our neighbour as ourselves... He who realizes that his money is a talent from God will use it economically, and will feel it a duty to save that he may give." COL 351.

THE JOY OF THE LORD

Yet is being a true Christian a sad and sorrowful experience? "We are troubled on every side, yet not distressed; we are perplexed, but not in despair; Persecuted, but not forsaken; cast down, but not destroyed." 2 Cor. 4:8,9 "The joy of the LORD is your strength." Neh. 8:10. "Count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations." James 1:2.

To the true seeker of God, no sacrifice is too great to make for the Lord. "For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us." Romans 8:18. "For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory." 2 Cor 4:17.

Jesus illustrated this joyful sacrifice in several parables. "Again, the kingdom of heaven is like unto a merchant man, seeking goodly pearls: Who, when he had found one pearl of great price, went and sold all that he had, and bought it." Matthew 13:45,46. "Again, the kingdom of heaven is like unto treasure hid in a field; the which when a man hath found, he hideth, and for joy thereof goeth and selleth all that he hath, and buyeth that field." Matthew 13:44. The promised reward is of more value than anything this world has to offer. Fire escape religionists do not see it this way. They moan and groan at any sacrifice they are required to make as though the road to salvation was some kind of initiation process of self-denial for no apparent good purpose.

Then there was the widow who cast her last two mites into the Lord's treasury. "And he looked up, and saw the rich men casting their gifts into the treasury. And he saw also a certain poor widow casting in thither two mites. And he said, Of a truth I say unto you, that this poor widow hath cast in more than they all." Luke 21:1-3 Are you like one of the rich men? Or the widow? Do you think she died of starvation after this? Or did the Lord take care of her in a miraculous manner? Do we love our money more than we love God? Many put their money before God without realizing it. The final 90% that is yours after tithes is not meant to be used for selfish purposes alone. The position of Christ was so strong on the point of putting anything else between Him and ourselves that He went on to say, "He that loveth father or mother more than me is not worthy of me." Matthew 10:37. "Whosoever he be of you that forsaketh not all that he hath, he cannot be my disciple." Luke 14:33

Although there are "rules" and commandments involved in the Christian life it is important to search for the kindest, most tactful and loving way to present the claims of the Christian life to men and women. "The wonderful love of Christ will melt and subdue hearts, when the mere reiteration of doctrines would accomplish nothing." DA 827. "Tact and good judgment increase the usefulness of the labourer a hundredfold. If he will speak the right words at the right time, and show the right spirit, this will exert a melting power on the heart of the one he is trying to help." Ev 638. "It requires much forethought and wisdom from God to labour successfully for the salvation of sinners. If the soul of the labourer is filled with the grace of God, his teaching will not irritate his hearers, but melt its way to their hearts and open them for the reception of the truth." 4T 263

Even if the message is brought in the correct manner, it will make little difference to individuals who have no love for the Lord Jesus. The fault then does not lie in the message. Although some fault may lie with the preachers and their method of presentation, a great degree of fault also lies with the complaining Christian who feels rebellious against the truth because it requires a degree of self-denial (the fire escape Christians).



A LESSON FROM MARRIAGE

Marriage is often used as an illustration to compare the love of Christ for His church (The bridegroom and the bride). In the parable of the Ten Virgins, the virgins were waiting for the bridegroom to come and usher them into the marriage feast. In heaven there will also be a marriage supper of the Lamb. However, if you think of it, marriage is one of the most restrictive experiences that any human being can enter into and it is entered into voluntarily. The man promises to surrender all his former attachments and practices as well as to financially support his wife. The bride also gives up the right to date any of her former male companions and has apparently more restrictions on her life, such as cooking and cleaning for her husband and family. Yet you never see a bride and groom complaining of the "rules" of marriage that are imposed upon them. Rather their wedding day is often the happiest day of their lives.

The most miserable people on earth are those who are married and no longer love each other. It is literally hell on earth. They complain about the restrictions imposed upon them. In a similar fashion, the most miserable Christians are those who are

married to Christ through baptism, and yet do not love Him. They are often bitterly blaming the church for imposing upon them a narrow, restrictive religion. The leaders and ministers are often the focus of their blame, however they are not at fault. These people have much head knowledge but are lacking heart knowledge. They may be familiar enough with all the Bible texts to intelligently argue for the doctrines of the faith. They may know all the last day events in explicit detail, but they may have no personal connection with Jesus. Somewhere along the line they missed the true goal of Christianity. It is not a set of rules or a list of doctrines, but a deeply personal involvement in a love affair with Jesus Christ.

The happiest people on earth should be Christians. They should be happier than newlyweds on their wedding day.

The real reason why some Christians chafe and complain about the rules and the strictness is that they have only enough religion to make them miserable. Their entire Christian experience is based on a struggle to live up to the rules – to keep the law. While there is nothing wrong with obeying the commandments of God, if the demands of the law are the *only* reason for obeying it, then something is seriously wrong with the Christian. They have a fire escape religion, they are lacking in love. Love lifts the legal load and makes delightful what appears to be a burden and strain.

TRUE LOVE

“From a worldly point of view, money is power; but from the Christian standpoint, love is power.” 4T 138

“True love is not a strong, fiery, impetuous passion. On the contrary, it is calm and deep in its nature. It looks beyond mere externals and is attracted by qualities alone. It is wise and discriminating, and its devotion is real and abiding...

“*Love is power.* Intellectual and moral strength are involved in this principle, and cannot be separated from it. The power of wealth has a tendency to corrupt and destroy; the power of force is strong to do hurt; but the excellence and value of pure love consist in its efficiency to do good, and to do nothing else than good. Whatsoever is

done out of pure love, be it ever so little or contemptible in the sight of men, is wholly fruitful; for God regards more with how much love one worketh than the amount he doeth. Love is of God. The unconverted heart cannot originate nor produce this plant of heavenly growth, which lives and flourishes only where Christ reigns.

“Love cannot live without action, and every act increases, strengthens, and extends it. Love will gain the victory when argument and authority are powerless. Love works not for profit nor reward; yet God has ordained that great gain shall be the certain result of every labour of love. It is diffusive in its nature and quiet in its operation, yet strong and mighty in its purpose to overcome great evils. It is melting and transforming in its influence, and will take hold of the lives of the sinful and affect their hearts when every other means has proved unsuccessful. Wherever the power of intellect, of authority, or of force is employed, and love is not manifestly present, the affections and will of those whom we seek to reach assume a defensive, repelling position, and their strength of resistance is increased. Jesus was the Prince of Peace. He came into the world to bring resistance and authority into subjection to Himself. Wisdom and strength He could command, but the means He employed with which to overcome evil were the wisdom and strength of love...

“Pure love is simple in its operations, and is distinct from any other principle of action. The love of influence and the desire for the esteem of others may produce a well-ordered life and frequently a blameless conversation. Self-respect may lead us to avoid the appearance of evil. A selfish heart may perform generous actions, acknowledge the present truth, and express humility and affection in an outward manner, yet the motives may be deceptive and impure; the actions that flow from such a heart may be destitute of the savour of life and the fruits of true holiness, being destitute of the principles of pure love. Love should be cherished and cultivated, for its influence is divine.” 2T 134-6

TRUE CHRISTIANITY

True Christianity is not composed of just do's and don't's. There are restrictions, yes, just as there is in a physical marriage, but these restrictions are imposed by love, which seeks always, and ever to please the

object of the affections. Those Christians who are in love with Christ are filled with joy and happiness, while the “fire escape” Christians are miserably enduring their Christian experience. They are bitter and complaining about not being able to eat what they want to eat or dress as they choose to dress. They blame the church for their being forced to “give up” so many things. Their joyless attitude seems to assume that their religion is the product of the church committee that is bent on including all possible prohibitions that could make men, women and youth unhappy.

Is this really true? If a person would carefully study the church doctrine and standards they would see that all the “rules” they are complaining about are – in reality – God's appointed way for our happiness. Those who love the Lord will ever be studying for ways in which they can please the Lord. Fire escape Christians are seeking the opposite – seeking for ways in which the Lord can please *them* and make their lives enjoyable; expecting the Lord to sanction portions of their unconverted lifestyle – overlooking and turning a blind eye to things they consider of minor importance.

The true Christian will be studying his Bible to find directions from God. They will always be asking themselves, “What does God think of what I'm doing?” It does not matter so much what the church leader thinks, but the all-important question is: “Is it pleasing to the Lord?” We love Him too much to risk displeasing Him. Our delight would be to find in the Bible and put into practice those things which please the One we love and eliminate those things that displease Him. No longer will we be spending our energy seeking ways for God to please us, but for ways that we can please God. There will not need to be any threatening or ultimatums. God is searching for those who will be sensitive to the slightest indication of His will. He is not pleased by those who must be constantly prodded into line by fear of punishment. There is no love in this.

“I will instruct thee and teach thee in the way which thou shalt go: I will guide thee with mine eye. Be ye not as the horse, or as the mule, which have no understanding: whose mouth must be held in with bit and bridle, lest they come near unto thee.” Psalm 32:8, 9 Many Christians are like

these animals – led by a bit and bridle. They respond only to threats and obey because of fear of punishment.

What convicted Peter of his sin of denying Christ? Did Jesus come and point His finger in Peter's face and berate him with an angry voice for his lack of courage to stand for what is right; for his blatant outright lies, swearing and cursing?

“While the degrading oaths were fresh upon Peter's lips, and the shrill crowing of the cock was still ringing in his ears, the Saviour turned from the frowning judges, and looked full upon His poor disciple. At the same time Peter's eyes were drawn to his Master. In that gentle countenance he read deep pity and sorrow, but there was no anger there.

“The sight of that pale, suffering face, those quivering lips, that look of compassion and forgiveness, pierced his heart like an arrow. Conscience was aroused. Memory was active. Peter called to mind his promise of a few short hours before that he would go with his Lord to prison and to death. He

remembered his grief when the Saviour told him in the upper chamber that he would deny his Lord thrice that same night. Peter had just declared that he knew not Jesus, but he now realized with bitter grief how well his Lord knew him, and how accurately He had read his heart, the falseness of which was unknown even to himself.” DA 712/3

Jesus wants the same from us. We need to be so connected with Jesus that we will be corrected only by a look from Jesus. Only those who love Him supremely and are searching the Bible diligently for guidance are the ones who will be watching for indications of His pleasure and will recognize the loving glance of correction. They will be searching their Bibles for one purpose – to find out what pleases Jesus. They will then immediately obey the slightest revelation of His will. This is the true essence of Christianity – ordering every level of life in harmony with His revealed will, because of love.

So why are you serving God; to escape fire or because you love the Lord? Why do we love the Lord? What has He done for you?

A common sentiment in the world is that we do not owe anyone anything. When people go through difficulties I have heard the complaint – “God hasn't done anything for me, why should I do anything for Him.” Or, “I am my own person – I can do as I please.” But is this true? What is it that we owe God? We only need to stop and count our blessings to see the love of God towards us. We are not hungry, poor, sick or destitute. We have peace in a troubled world; we have happiness and joy. We also have the promise of everlasting life – eternity to spend with the One who we have learned to love on this earth.

David writes, “O taste and see that the LORD is good: blessed is the man that trusteth in him.” Psalm 34:8

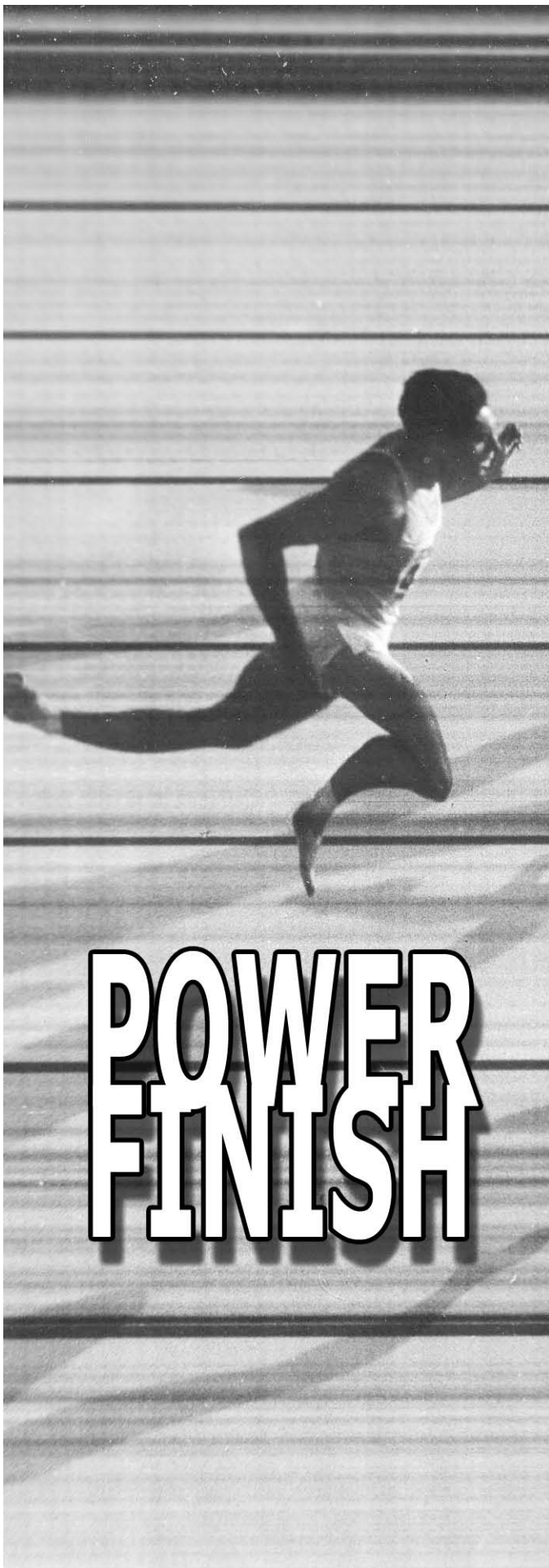
To love God “with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind.” Matthew 22:37

It is a risk worth taking... Don't hold anything in your heart back.

Don't be a fire escape Christian. The rules alone will not bring you happiness and salvation. True happiness is found in maintaining a loving relationship with Jesus and doing happily those things which please Him because we love Him.

Wendy Eaton, Australia





“Let us, therefore, fear lest, a promise being left us of entering into his rest, any of you should seem to come short of it.” Hebrews 4:1

Incredible Power

In our journey of life, it's our wish and desire to finish strong, to endure until the end with a divine power. Assuredly, “all power is at the Christian's demand.”(MH 514) “derived from Christ,” (6T 479) and “promised to the people who proclaim the everlasting gospel. This power alone can give the victory over the enemy.” (TM 459) Furthermore, it “can be bestowed abundantly on persons who come to God in faith.” (5T 157)

There are no systems, principles, or learning in the world that can give this kind of power, for it is divine. But, this power was limited by Israel's unbelief, and is misused in the world today. For, ...“this is the word of the Lord, saying, not by might, nor by power, but by my spirit saith the Lord.” (Zech 4:6) Although the world today is teetering on the verge of destruction, it is still God's restraining power that keeps mankind from passing fully into Satan's control, as the powers of the earth are held in restraint by the angels holding the four winds. (Rev 7:1-3)

Fangless Kings

The Old and New Testament is gorged with many who kept the promises and finished strong, and also others who walked a long way with God, but failed and came to nothing. The peril lay in their lethargy, pride, disbelief, animosities, and disobedience. King Hezekiah, for one, who prayed, and wept, and was added unto his days fifteen years, who sought “peace and truth”, ultimately came to naught with his treasures and power, “coming short of it.” (2 Kings 20:17-19).

Many more bad examples of the kings of Israel existed who were either assassinated, committed suicide, brutally defeated, or pitifully died. Most notably, was King Solomon. For certain, you knew people of high standards, wise, worked for the conversion of others, leaders, experienced, zealous, who came to a standstill, and fell into worldliness with as much zeal as they once had for the Lord and holiness!

Hold Fast

The book of Hebrews reveals a generation who were also a bad example of obedience, and, thusly, we can profit from their grievous mistakes. The Apostle Paul's exhortation to the wavering Jews was to “hold fast,” (Heb 3:6), and to “go on to maturity.” (Heb. 6:1) Therefore, the “better rest for the believer,” and the promise of “entering His rest” still stands. (Heb 4) Let us be careful, too, that none of you be found to have fallen short of it.

Dead End

Here is a clear warning of scripture for all of us today. Now, the children of Israel that left Egypt never reached the Promised Land. They were found to have fallen short of it, because of their unbelief. Yet, God brought them safely right up to the borders, but they would still not believe God's power. We are warned, again and again, not to finish this way, and clearly warned of “the certainty of God's messages for today.” (PK 442). However, “the warnings given to the majority of people today will be in vain.”(PP 102-103). There is, however, a

promise of rest; “for He is our God, and we are the people of His pasture, and the sheep of His hand. Today, if you will hear His voice, do not harden your hearts as in the rebellion, as in the day of trial in the wilderness.”(Psalm 95:7,8) The promise is real, but nevertheless, they did not enter... left out, left behind. But, why didn't they enter? Well, it's unfaithfulness! “Beware brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief in departing from the living God; but exhort one another daily, while it is called “Today,” lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin. For we have become partakers of Christ if we hold the beginning of our confidence steadfast to the end.” (Heb. 3:12,14).

The Big Lie

The message is simply, clearly stated; to be steadfast until the finish... the end! But, sin had deceived the Israelites; sin presented itself as something that would satisfy them – something of value. Here is the lie and always will be a lie. They permitted it, however, to captivate their heart, enrapture them, and consequently they turned away from the living God. But, you say that could not happen to you? Well, just look around you, in your church, at God's professed believers, and remember, “take heed, therefore, let him who thinks he stands take heed lest he fall.”(1Cor 10:12).

A Cure

The Apostle Paul is prescribing a remedy here, and that is to encourage, and strengthen one another. It will not only help the one you are addressing, but yourself, also. When we remind one another of the marvelous wonder of who God is to us, of the heavenly calling we share, of eternity, the joys, His peace, mercy and grace, that glitter of sin is abhorring, and dull... vain. Although “sin may appear common and insignificant, it extinguishes the inward impression of the Spirit, and impairs your moral sense.”(FE 195). The lie and the liar are exposed. Even so, God gives you opportunity to do this in many ways.

Church-Goers

Take those opportunities and use them to the utmost. Nobody denies it, it is one thing to feel and sympathize with our brothers and sisters, but don't leave them looking compromisingly at sin. “But, as for you,

speak the things which are proper for sound doctrine.” (Titus 2:1) “Therefore, we must give the more earnest heed to the things we have heard, lest we drift away.”(Heb 2:1) These are the qualities of a sound and faithful church! Also, make certain they know what it is they are forgetting of the Word of God! Encourage them to have a believing heart. Take an interest, be concerned, listen, pray with them.

In Fashion

You see, God speaks with us through the Word, that is forever settled, and came to believe what they heard versus what their eyes veritably saw – the fierce warriors – they chose to trust their eyes – by sight, not faith, and doubting God, which is, “becoming fashionable.”(GC 526). “Satan would have men go shrinking, trembling, and painfully along in doubt.”(MYP 63). “For indeed the gospel was preached to us as well as to them; but the Word which they heard did not profit them, not being mixed with faith in those who heard it.”(Heb 4:2).

The Word

The word, (Greek-Logos) means a “thought or concept;” and “the expression or utterance of thought.” Even so, we find the eternal Word incarnate in the Son of God; “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth.” (John 1:1,14). As a designation of Christ, therefore, Word (Logos) is peculiarly felicitous because (1) in Him are embodied all the treasures of the divine wisdom, the collective thought of God (1Cor 1:24; Eph 3:10-11); and (2) He is, from eternity, but especially in His incarnation, the utterance or expression of the Person and thought of Deity (John 1:3-5,9,14-18). So, in the Being, Person, and work of Christ, Deity is expressed in the Word (Logos).

Mutiny!

The Israelites, however, heard the Word, but again, did not mix it with faith! Or, they refused to believe and act on it! You see, one can hear the Word, the eternal Word of the Almighty God, over and over again, but it will not help them, because it needs to be mixed with faith. But, to be

helped, one needs to be obedient, first. Oh, how often this happens in the lives of so many Christians. Furthermore, instead of listening, believing and acting on it they give lame excuses why it doesn't apply in their situation, or is not their time yet, but for a “later season.” They develop and reason a justification why they do not have to believe and act on that belief. In fact God told the Children of Israel He would go before them and drive out the infidel inhabitants of Canaan. But, again, instead of looking at the promises of God they looked at their carnal state, circumstances, and surrounding conditions before them. They placed their faith, as so many do today, in their own ability and power, not God's. Admittedly, they mutinously refused to mix the Word with faith!

Heart Disease

They saw miracle after miracle to help them believe God was faithful in His Word and promises, but still, they kept hardening their hearts and refusing to believe. Miracles happen, too, in our lives, yet we fall short of the rest of God, as the Israelites did. “Let us, therefore be diligent to enter that rest, lest anyone fall according to the same example of disobedience.” (Heb. 4:11). You see, interestingly, the Word discovers our condition!



Fiery Mixture

The Greek word for “labour” (kopos)(KJV); or “make every effort” means to exert one's self; to endeavour. We need to live in the same rest of God that was made possible on Calvary. If we stay in that place of trusting Christ and all He did to make us right with God, we walk in faith that He goes before us driving out the enemies that are too great for us to conquer. We passionately obey His Word – believing the unseen, not the seen

before us. We mix the Word with faith! But, this sounds like a contradiction; to labour to enter rest and make every effort to do so. Ah! But it is a battle to mix faith with the Word.

The Children of Israel took the effortless way, lack of faith and turned back to the barren wilderness and its wailing wildness. Now if they had made the effort to mix the Word they heard with faith and obeyed – they would have gone into the Promised Land. Instead they miserably perished in the dreadful desert. Let us heed the warning that we do not suffer a similar cruel and bitter fate by following their example of disobedience. (Heb 4:2)

Gymnastics

“For the Word of God is living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit, and of joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart, and there is no creature hidden from His sight, but all things are naked and open to the eyes of Him to whom we must give account.” (Heb 4:12, 13). God, in fact is telling the Hebrew church they better start mixing the Word with faith or it will be their judge!

Now, the Word comes to us, and if we mix it with faith, it will show that we are living in what Christ did for us. It shows we are His and not merely living a daily lie. But, if we trust in ourselves to get us through it, it exposes our self-reliance; “uncovered” – is from the Greek word “gymnos” – stark naked – that is the same as gymnasts of the Greeks competed in the nude. (No women were permitted to be present).

Divine Standard

That word “laid bare” or “opened” – trachelizo (trakhy-ay-lid-zo) is the word we get trachea (windpipe) from. It was used when a combatant held back the head of his opponent exposing his neck for the sword (tracheotomy). What is the sword? This word picture shows us that the Word of God has us totally exposed and vulnerable. But, the Word of God, too, helps us, “to avoid deception, and shows us our relation to God,” (UL 316:4) and is “required in meeting the divine standard.” (TMK 77:1).



High Priest

And if this exposure or nakedness of the Word finds us falling short of the finish, then what must we do? “Seeing then that we have an great High Priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our confession. For we do not have an High Priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but was in all points tempted as we are, yet without sin. Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need.” (Heb. 4:14-16).

Finish!

Jesus experienced the same temptations you are tempted with, and as He was God and man, knows how tempting it is to rely on self, yet never did! He is before God, His Father, now, at the throne of grace in the Holy Sanctuary, pleading with His pierced hands for you and I. He conquered every evil power imaginable yet never succumbed to it. So, “hold firmly” the faith you vigorously profess. Mix the Word with faith in Him! Run to Him there in the Holy of Holies--confidently entering through the rent curtain, knowing confidently that He can give you that grace that will help you in your time of need, and fiery trials.



Remember, that as long as you are earnestly seeking that help, you are in fact mixing faith with the Word! You are holding on steadfastly. You want to finish! It is when you stop running to Him that you will be found to have fallen short of the finish.

Bible Heroes

Although we were thoroughly given the dire example of unbelieving, rebellious Israel, there are many good examples of those who mixed the Word with faith and even though they cruelly suffered for it, they stood firm to the finish. We have the blessed examples of Enoch, Abraham, Moses, Noah, Sarah, Isaac, Jacob, and other patriarchs, who exhibited faith at the dawn of history. In the New Testament we have the examples of the Apostles, Paul, John, Mark, Matthew, and Luke, and our supreme, ultimate example – Jesus Christ. Here are the examples of obedience we can safely follow in our journey of life.

Promised Salvation

Finally, for a better estimate of your salvation, “God is not unjust to forget your work and labour of love which you have shown toward His name, in that you have ministered to the saints, and do minister. And we desire that each one of you show the same diligence to the full assurance of hope until the end that you do not become sluggish, but imitate those who through faith and patience inherit the promises.” (Heb 4:10-12).

Energizing Power

Many strong warnings! Great comfort! Sustaining hope! So, continue to mix the Word with faith today – so that you can walk in obedience. Take every opportunity to encourage and strengthen one another with the fact of who He is, and what purpose He is calling you to. Go to Him for the mercy and grace to help you in that time of imminent need for that **Power Finish!** – and not “**come short of it.**” **AMEN.**

John Theodorou, USA

THE REBELLION OF LUCIFER



“Leaving his place in the immediate Presence of the father Lucifer went forth to diffuse the spirit of discontent among the angels. He worked with mysterious secrecy, and for a time concealed his real purpose under any appearance of reverence for God.” PP 37.

“Many of the angels were, however, blinded by Lucifer’s deception... Lucifer had presented the purposes of God in a false light-- misconstruing and distorting them to excite dissent and dissatisfaction. He cunningly drew his hearers on to give utterance to their feelings-- then these expressions were repeated by him when they would serve his purposes as evidence that the angels were not fully in harmony with the Government of God... While secretly fomenting discord and rebellion, he with consummate craft caused it to appear as his sole purpose to promote loyalty and preserve harmony and peace.” PP 38.

“Lucifer himself had not at first been acquainted with the real nature of his feelings: for a time he had feared to express the workings and imagings of his mind yet he did not dismiss them. He did not see whither he was drifting.” PP 39.

He Was Convinced But Not Converted

“Lucifer was convinced that he was in the wrong.” PP 39

“Great numbers of the angels signified their purpose to accept him as their leader... Still the loyal angels urged him and his sympathizers to submit to God; and they set before them the inevitable should they refuse.” PP 40

“The only course remaining for him and his followers was to assert their liberty and gain by force the right which had not been willingly accorded them.

“So far as Satan himself was concerned; it was true that he had now gone too far to return.” PP 41

But not so with those who had been blinded by his deception. To them the counsel and entreaties of the loyal angels opened a door of hope: and had they heeded the warning they might have broken away from the snare of Satan.

“He had artfully presented his side of the questions, employing sophistry and fraud to secure his object. His power to deceive was very great. By disguising it in a cloak of falsehood, he has gained advantage. All his acts were so clothed with mystery that it was difficult to disclose to the angels the true nature of his works. Until fully developed, it could not be made to appear the evil thing it was: his disaffection would not have been seen to be rebellion... The angels whom he could not bring fully to his side he accused of indifference to the interest of the heavenly beings... Therefore God permitted him to demonstrate the nature of his claims, to show the working out of his purposed changes in the divine law. His own work must condemn him. Satan had claimed from the first that he was not in rebellion. The whole universe must see the deceiver unmasked.” PP 41, 42.

To Be A Lesson To All Coming Ages

“Satan’s rebellion was to be a lesson to the universe through all coming ages, a perpetual testimony to the nature of sin and its terrible results.” PP 42

The Rebellion of Korah, Dathan and Abiram against Moses and Aaron, Numbers 16:1-50 (1-3) (12) (20-24) (26) PP, pg. 395,397,403,404

“Korah, the leading spirit in this movement was a Levite of the family of Kohath, and a cousin to Moses; he was a man of ability and influence. Though appointed to the service of the tabernacle, he had become dissatisfied with his position and aspired to the dignity of the Priesthood. The bestowal of Aaron and his house of the priestly office, which had formerly devolved upon the first born of every family, had given rise to jealousy and dissatisfaction, and for some time Korah had been secretly opposing the authority of Moses and Aaron, though he had not ventured upon an open act of rebellion. He finally conceived the bold design of overthrowing both the civil and religious authority. He did not fail to find sympathizers.” PP 395

“Jealousy had given rise to envy and envy to rebellion. They had discussed the question of the right of Moses to so great authority and honor, until they had come to regard him as occupying a very enviable position, which any of them could fill as well as he. And they deceived themselves and one another into thinking that Moses and Aaron had themselves assumed the positions they held. The discontented one said that these leaders had exalted themselves above the congregation of the Lord in taking upon them the Priesthood

and the government, but their house was not entitled to distinction above others in Israel; they are not more holy than the people and it should be enough for them on a level with their brethren who were equally favored with God’s special presence and protection.” PP 397

“In this work of disaffection there was great union among discordant elements of the congregation than had ever before existed. Korah’s success with the people increased his confidence and confirmed him in his belief that the usurpation of authority by Moses, if unchecked, would be fatal to the liberties of Israel; he also claimed that God opened a matter to him, and had authorized him to make a change in the government before it is too late. But many were not ready to accept Korah’s accusation against Moses.

“For a time this work was carried on secretly. As soon as the movement gained sufficient strength to warrant an open rupture, Korah appeared at the head of the function and publicly accused Moses and Aaron of usurping of authority which Korah and his associates were equally entitled to share... ‘Ye take too much upon you,’ said the conspirators, ‘seeing all the congregation are holy, every one of them, and the Lord is among them. Wherefore then lift ye up yourselves above the congregation of the Lord?’” PP 398

“Do not the same evils still exist that lay at the foundation of Korah’s ruin? Pride and ambition are wide spread and when this is cherished, they open the door to envy and a striving for supremacy; the soul is alienated from God, and unconsciously drawn into the ranks of Satan. Like Korah and his companions. Many, even the professed followers of Christ, are thinking, planning and working so eagerly for self exaltation that in order to gain the sympathy and support of the

people, they are ready to pervert the truth, falsifying and misrepresenting the Lord’s servant, and even charging them with the base and selfish motives that inspire their own heart.

“By persistently reiterating falsehood and that against all evidence, they at last come to believe that they are engaged in a good work, verily doing God service.” PP 403, 404

Rebellion has certain characteristics, which can always be seen clearly.

1. The basic motive is Pride
2. Rebels always seek sympathy
3. They enlist followers to make their cause appear respectable
4. Rebellion causes separation
5. Rebellion is incurable
6. Rebellion leads to distraction

“Now all these things happened unto them for examples and they are written for our admonition upon whom the ends of the world are come.” 1 Corinthians 10: 11

Ancient Israel To Spiritual Israel

Moses and Aaron the leaders in the Wilderness. Exodus 4:12-17

Moses and Aaron were accused by Korah, Dathan and Abiram in their administration. “Ye take too much upon you... wherefore then lift up yourselves above the congregation of the Lord.”

Korah, Dathan and Abiram organized a new camp with 250 Princes against the camp of Moses and Aaron. Numbers 16:1-3

After their death, punishment from God of Korah, Dathan and Abiram with the 250 Princes and sympathizers, yet the camp of Korah Dathan and Abiram existed and his followers were still defending him. “But on the morrow all the congregation of the children of Israel murmured against Moses and against Aaron saying, “Ye have killed the people of the Lord.” Numbers 16:41

And Moses sent to call Dathan and Abiram the sons of Eliabu, which said, we will not come up. Numbers 16:12 *Amen*

Hildon Mbogela, Belize



AARON ANOINTED HIGH PRIEST



Humanly, it cannot be done, but Jesus said, “If ye have faith as a grain of mustard seed, ye shall say unto this mountain, Remove hence to yonder place; and it shall remove; and nothing shall be impossible unto you.” Matt. 17:20.

The mustard seed is one of the smallest seeds, hardly visible to the human eye. It means that if we have any faith at all, we can do supernatural deeds.

When the disciples crossed the sea in their ship, there arose a storm and the waves beat against the ship that it was full. They came to Jesus who was sleeping peacefully and said unto Him, “Master, carest Thou not that we perish? Jesus rebuked the wind and there was great calm. Then He said unto them, ‘Why are you so fearful? how is it that ye have no faith?’” Mark 4:20.

Jesus asked the question, “How is it that ye have no faith?” They had seen many miracles of Jesus, but yet they were fearful. If they had had a little faith, like a mustard seed, they would not have been fearful.

The old Israel saw many miracles during their wilderness journey, but yet every time when a new difficulty arose they forgot them all and murmured against God and Moses. For this reason they could not enter into the Promised Land.

Paul writes, “So we see that they could not enter in because of unbelief.” Heb. 3:19.

In Tanzania a group of Seventh-Day Adventists said that they had faith, and they jumped from the ship to the waters below, and they all drowned. This was not true faith. Jesus would not jump down from the pinnacle of the temple, where Satan had taken Him.

“If ye have faith as a grain of mustard seed, said Jesus, ye shall say unto this mountain, Remove hence to yonder place; and it shall remove.’ Though the grain of mustard seed is so small, it contains that same mysterious life principle which produces growth in the loftiest tree. When the mustard seed is cast into the ground, the tiny germ lays hold of every element that God has provided for its nutrients, and it speedily develops a sturdy growth. If you have faith like this, you will lay hold upon God’s word, and upon all the helpful agencies He has appointed. Thus your faith will strengthen, and will bring to your aid the power of heaven. The obstacles that are piled by Satan across your path, though apparently as insurmountable as the eternal hills, shall disappear before the demand of faith. ‘Nothing shall be impossible unto you.’” DA 431.

The greatest obstacle or mountain that we are facing is sin. It is sin that spoils this life, and it is sin that takes the eternal life away from us.

Humanly we are not able to save ourselves from sin. We need the power of God to overcome. The promise has been given us, “and she shall bring forth a Son, and thou shalt call His name Jesus: for He shall save His people from their sins.” Matt. 1:21.

And Paul writes, “For by grace are ye saved through faith; and not of yourselves: it is the gift of God.” Eph. 2:8.

Hebrews chapter 11 tells us some of the mighty works that have been done by faith.

By faith we receive grace of God. Our sins will be forgiven and we receive power to live a godly life.

But faith is something we cannot produce. It is included in the fruits of the Spirit. When we are born again of the Spirit, we receive the fruit of the Spirit, which gives us faith to move mountains. Therefore it is a gift of God.

Many professed Christians pray to God to be saved from sin. Yet they continue to commit sins and finally they come to the end of their lives, still doing sins. What went wrong? Why could they not move mountains?

There is something that we must do, and many fail to do it. Jesus said, "If thy right eye offend thee, pluck it out, and cast it from thee: for it is profitable for thee that one of thy members should perish, and not that thy whole body should be cast into hell. And if thy right hand offend thee, cut it off, and cast it from thee: for it is profitable for thee that one of thy members should perish, and not that thy whole body should be cast into hell." Matt. 5:29, 30.

Paul writes, "Ye have not yet resisted unto blood, striving against sin." Heb. 12:4.

"Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling." Phil. 2:12.

And Sister White continues, "The strongest evidence of man's fall from a higher state is the fact that it cost so much to return. The way of return can be gained only by fighting, inch by inch, every hour. By a momentary act of will, one may place himself in the power of evil; but it requires more than a momentary act of will to break these fetters, and attain to a higher, holier life. The purpose is formed, the work begun; but its accomplishment will require toil, time, and perseverance, patience and sacrifice." Test. Vol. 8, p. 313.

"After the union with Christ is formed, it can be preserved only by earnest prayers 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." RH, Dec. 13, 1887.

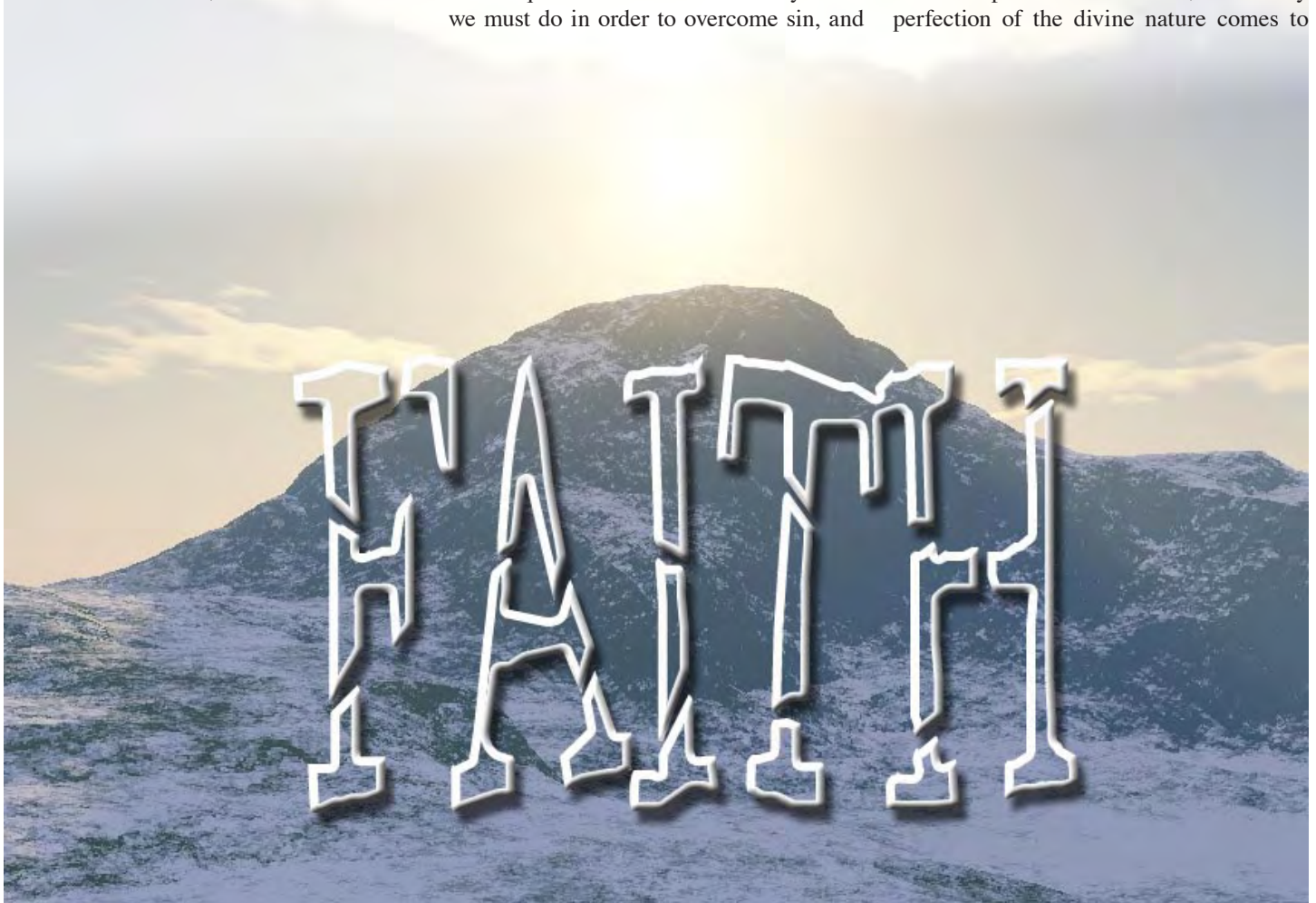
These quotations show us clearly what we must do in order to overcome sin, and

then the power of God will be added to it and the mountains start moving, sin will be overcome and our salvation will be complete.

Those who do only half-hearted effort themselves, will not receive the power of God. We must place all on the altar of sacrifice in order to be omnipotent in our deeds, and move the mountains.

"So those who are called to unite with Christ must leave all in order to follow Him. Old associations must be broken up, plans of life relinquished, earthly hopes surrendered. In toil and tears, in solitude and through sacrifice, must the seed be sown.

"Those who consecrate body, soul, and spirit to God, will constantly receive a new endowment of physical, mental, and spiritual power. The inexhaustible supplies of heaven are at their command. Christ gives them the breath of His own Spirit, the life of His own life. They Holy Spirit puts forth His highest energies to work in heart and mind. The grace of God enlarges and multiplies their faculties, and every perfection of the divine nature comes to



their assistance in the work of saving souls. Through co-operating with Christ, they are made complete in Him, and in their human weakness they are enabled to do the deeds of Omnipotence." GW, p. 112, 113.

This was the message of Jones and Waggoner in the 1888 Conference. They said that the power of Christ is so great that starting today we can live a life without sin. When Jesus said to the blind, "open your eyes and see," he could see immediately; and when He said to the lame, "arise and walk," he could walk immediately; and also when He said to the sinner, "go and sin no more," he could go and do no more sins, because Jesus always provided the power to do what He asked from them.

Unfortunately the leaders in that conference refused to believe it and rejected this heaven-sent message, and Sister White said that by rejecting this message they sinned against the Holy Spirit, but yet they remained as leaders; when the test came upon the church in 1914, not even one of them accepted the reform message, but became enemies of the church of God. Only those who had accepted this message of Christ's righteousness had power to be faithful even unto death.

This is our message today to the people who are struggling against sin, and have failed. They could not move the mountains, but we know the way how to do it. But, if anyone, even today refuse to believe this message, they also will commit an unpardonable sin, because there is no other message that could save them.

By this message we become perfect, "Even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect." Without this perfection we will be lost. May the Lord help us to move the mountains that are hindering our salvation, and prove to others that it can be done. **AMEN.**

Timo Martin, Canada

Never Alone

Never alone.
To think that I am never alone,
Never alone,
Wherever I go.
Never alone,
In this world below,

Up to heaven,
Never alone,
Down into hell,
Never alone.

In this hole which I have dug?
Never alone.
A friend,
Up high,
Or down below,
I am never alone.

Jesus is here with me,
When I'm sad,
When I'm happy.

A friend,
Dear and true,
A friend,
For me and you.

He loves you,
Gave up heaven for you,
Gave it all,
To be with you.

In your pit,
Way down there,
He was laid,
In the lowest lair,
In the deepest den,
Of the beast within.

He took your flesh,
And all its sin,
He took it,
Upon Him.

He wore your smile,
He wore your frown,
He wore it all,
Like a crown.

He felt your pain,
He cried your tears,
He knew your trials,
And He felt your fears.

Alone He walked,
Alone with you.
He was alone,
Not you.

Alone He walked,
To be with you,
Through dangers,
Ever new.

Up the mountains,
Down the valleys,
He walked it all,
E'en the darkest alleys.

He wore your spit,
Upon His face,
He bore the cross,
In your place.

He wore those nails,
That you drove in,
The spear in his side,
Your guilt, within.

But more than that,
He had a friend,
A friend from eternity,
That, because of you,
He couldn't see.

So if you think you've got it hard,
Think again.
He did this,
So you could be His friend.

His mouth,
He opened not,
Though pain, intense.
Like a sheep is dumb,
He bore the penalty
Of your offense.

And He died.
Bowed His head upon His breast.
Gave it all up,
And entered into rest.

So now there He is,
Standing in Heaven,
Beside His Father,
Pleading,
That you will be forgiven.

He loves you dear,
He loves you sore,
He loves you so much,
He couldn't love you any more.

He gave up all to be with you,
So why stay here,
And pine away?
Do you really want,
Upon this earth to stay?

He offers you His hand.
Then take it,
Hold it tight,
And He will help you,
Through the night.

He's trod the path before,
He's been stricken,
And He's been sore.

He's felt it all
So He can feel it with you,
He's done it all,
So He can say "I'm with you."

Yes, He's your Friend,
But are you His?
Do you love Him,
As He loves you?

Would you die for Him,
As He died for you?

If you say, "I do",
Then you are His friend too.
But if you just can't quite,
Then,
Hold on tight.
He'll help you,
Through the night.

Yes, A Friend,
For me and you.
A Friend,
Dear and True.

"Never alone,"
With joy you can say;
Unless you tell Him:
"Go away."

In which case, He will,
He will not stay.
He will turn His back,
And walk away.

But I hope you won't,
And I pray that you don't,
Because if you do,
Then you will be all alone.

All alone,
In the world out there,
All alone,
With no one to care.

So stop and consider,
What He has done for you.
After all that,
Can't you be His friend too?

So please don't be silly,
Let Him in.
Why not?
He wants to be your friend?

Just over there,
He's waiting,
He's waiting for you.
He's waiting for you,
To say the words,
"I love you too!"

Aaaah,
Blessed peace,
Never alone.

Never alone,
With Jesus my Friend,
Never alone,
Love, without end.

Never alone,
Is my prayer today,
Never alone,
I pray we can all say.

By Camron Schofield



HEALTH MATTERS: SUPER JUICES



Pomegranate Fruit

Three juices are being widely advertised as “super juices,” having multiple health benefits. Two of the juices, mangosteen and noni, are sold over the Internet or through distributors. The third, pomegranate juice, can be found in most grocery stores. What is it that makes these products “super juices?” These fruits have existed since the beginning of the world, so why are these fruits making such an impact now?

Mangosteen

The mangosteen has historically been praised for countless centuries by all who encountered it. The hull has been a part of Asian medicine and has been valued throughout its native range for its medicinal qualities. For hundreds of years, people in Singapore, Malaysia, India and China have been using the fruit and the bark of the mangosteen tree to treat diarrhea and eczema. These days, mangosteen juice is as likely to be sold in Toronto and Vancouver as in these Asian countries.

Why all the interest in an obscure tropical fruit? It is an exotic fruit that is very difficult to grow and only exists in specific climates.

Why Drink It?

Mangosteen fruit, specifically the rind,

contains a compound which is called, mangostin. Mangostin is a phytochemical. Phytochemicals are naturally-occurring compounds found in plants which promote health, decrease risk of various diseases, and boost the immune system. There are hundreds of different types of phytochemicals in plants, all with their health-promoting properties. The phytochemical in mangosteen is called xanthone, which is a proven antioxidant, “that may help maintain intestinal health, strengthen the immune system, neutralize free radicals, help support cartilage and joint function, and promote a healthy respiratory system.” Xanthones are among the strongest antioxidants, which are known for their anti-aging properties.

Mangosteen is also very high in potassium, which plays a vital role in energy levels and heart health.

Other promoters of mangosteen juice, those who sell the product for the manufacturer boast even more health benefits, including curing cancer, diabetes, Alzheimer’s, migraine headaches, depression, and a lot of other diseases.

Many of the health benefits listed on these websites advertising mangosteen are anecdotal stories from people who have had various maladies alleviated after drinking

mangosteen juice. Often anecdotal stories take a leap of faith. You must choose to believe it because someone says it is so, not because you know it is true. These anecdotal stories are not scientifically obtained, however, as has been proven over and over, sometimes folkloric knowledge or uses hold up well under scientific scrutiny. Anecdotal evidence is often where science begins when it starts to test a product for its health benefits.

The Evidence

All of the science on mangosteen and its health benefits is still very early. Many of the health claims made by those who promote mangosteen juice have never been tested in any scientific or laboratory studies. The lack of studies done does not mean that there are no benefits to drinking mangosteen juice. Often science has to play “catch up” on many of the natural remedies that have been “tried and true” throughout centuries. The studies that are currently being done are still in the laboratory stage, testing to discover the various chemicals that mangosteen may contain that would be beneficial for humans. These preliminary studies show emerging evidence that mangosteen has anti-inflammatory, antioxidant, and anti-microbial properties.



Mangosteen Fruit

Noni

Noni is a lime-green fruit the size of a small potato that grows in tropical Asia and on islands in the Pacific, including Hawaii. In China, Samoa, Japan and Tahiti, various parts of the tree serve as tonics and to contain fever, to treat eye and skin problems, gum and throat problems, as well as constipation, stomach pain, or respiratory difficulties. In Malaysia, heated noni leaves applied to the chest are believed to relieve coughs, nausea, or colic. As for external uses, unripe fruits can be pounded, then mixed with salt and applied to cuts or broken bones. In Hawaii, ripe fruits are applied to draw out pus from infected boils. Traditionally, the root has been used to treat menstrual cramps and urinary difficulties. It was virtually unknown in North America until 1996, when a Utah company started selling it as a dietary supplement.

Eating noni fruit takes some getting used to; it has a very strong, and often unpleasant taste. To make noni juice more palatable, its manufacturers combine it with grape and blueberry juices.

Why Drink It?

The co-founder of the Noni juice manufacturer states that noni juice “addresses every ailment we know of.” It has made claims that it can prevent, treat, and cure diabetes, depression, carpal tunnel syndrome, lupus and other diseases. Again, these claims are based on anecdotal evidence from people who have benefited from drinking noni juice. Today, manufacturers say that noni juice “boosts the immune system, delivers superior antioxidants, and increases energy and physical performance.”

The Evidence

A researcher in Hawaii who has tested Noni juice says that it is an important plant in Polynesian medicine. But, the Polynesians do not use the ripe fruit. As mentioned previously, they use the roots, bark, and leaves for different remedies, usually by applying them externally to the skin or to wounds.

Like mangosteen, noni is very high in potassium. Heart muscle needs potassium in order to function properly. Low potassium can even lead to heart arrhythmias.

In several animal studies, noni juice has prevented the DNA damage that can lead to cancer in rats, arrested cancer of the connective tissue, and prolonged the survival of animals with lung cancer. No human trials have been done of the effects of noni juice on cancer treatment or survival. Further testing needs to be done to see if these same effects can be replicated in humans. But these early results are promising.

One study found that noni inhibited and reduced growth of the blood vessels sprouting from human breast tumours, and in higher doses, the noni caused existing vessels to rapidly degenerate. Tumours need a significant blood flow in order to reproduce.

Pomegranate

Pomegranate has been revered through the



ages for its medicinal properties. However, pomegranate wasn't even heard of in North America until about three years ago when a successful Los Angeles business couple began marketing pomegranate juice as a chic, healthy drink. In 2003, they introduced a pomegranate juice that now can be found in most grocery stores in North America.

Why Drink It?

Promoters say, "Cheat death... eight ounces a day is all you need. This incredible juice has more naturally occurring antioxidants than any other drink." Antioxidants have been shown to fight free radicals, those that cause heart disease, premature aging, Alzheimer's, even cancer.

The Evidence

One pomegranate delivers 40% of an adult's daily Vitamin C requirement. The company who produces 80% of the pomegranate juice in North America has spent millions of dollars testing their product. As a result, pomegranate juice is far ahead of noni and mangosteen juice in scientific evidence.

It is also a rich source of folic acid and of antioxidants. The researchers say that pomegranate is one of the phytochemical-rich fruits like blueberries, cranberries, and strawberries. These phytochemicals promote the function of the immune system, act directly against bacteria and viruses, reduce inflammation, and can be associated with the treatment and/or prevention of cancer, cardiovascular disease and any other malady affecting the health or well-being of an individual. Each plant has its own array of phytochemicals that aid in the prevention and treatment of disease. Pomegranates are high in a

phytochemical called polyphenol. These polyphenols are anti-oxidants which are responsible for the free-radical scavenging ability of pomegranate juice.

Some of studies that have been done are as follows:

Testing showed that PSA levels slowed substantially in men diagnosed with prostate cancer who drank 240 ml of pomegranate juice every day for three years. Rising PSA levels can indicate that a prostate tumour is growing.

Researchers say that the pomegranate juice stabilizes the cancer rather than kills it. Further testing will to be done so that researchers can determine if everyone who has prostate cancer or is at risk should drink pomegranate juice, but the preliminary findings are positive.

Also, preliminary studies from test tube and animal studies, and from a few small human trials suggest that pomegranate juice may be healthy for the cardiovascular system.

In one of the human studies, researchers gave men who had coronary heart disease a daily cup of pomegranate juice. After three months, stress tests showed that blood flow through the juice-drinkers arteries had improved, while it deteriorated in the men who drank a similar-tasting placebo beverage that contained no pomegranate juice.

Another study showed that men and women with atherosclerosis (hardening of the arteries) who drank a cup of pomegranate juice every day for a year, their carotid arteries were less clogged and their systolic

blood pressure dropped by an average of 21%. Meanwhile, the artery blockages worsened in similar men and women who drank a placebo juice.

Pomegranate juice aids in the slowing down of cartilage damage in diseases such as osteoarthritis. It contains an extract that inhibits the build up of interleukin, which is an inflammatory protein molecule that plays a key role in cartilage degradation. Thus, it contains anti-inflammatory properties that are of benefit in a variety of diseases that are caused by inflammation.

Hype or Help?

Science is now just starting to test the health benefits of various natural remedies that have been used around the world for thousands of years. Just because science has not yet discovered the health benefits of these juices does not mean that the health benefits don't exist. Even many of the herbal remedies that are widely used in naturopathic medicine have thousands of years of history to show that these remedies work. But, science has a lot of catching up to do.

What has been proven with these juices is that they contain chemicals that have strong antioxidant properties which does help in slowing down the effects of the aging process on our bodies by neutralizing the free radicals that build up over time, with exposure to pollution and toxins. To drink the juice for this reason alone is of benefit.





“Ye are my witnesses, saith the Lord, and My servant whom I have chosen: that ye may know and believe Me, and understand that I am He: before Me there was no God formed, neither shall there be after Me. I, even I, am the Lord; and beside Me there is no saviour. I have declared, and I have shewed, when there was no strange god among you: therefore ye are My witnesses, saith the Lord, that I AM GOD.” Isa. 43:10-12.

God can use us as His witnesses only when there is no strange god in us. “Hear, O My people, and I will testify unto thee: O Israel, if thou wilt hearken unto Me; there shall be no strange god in thee; neither shalt thou worship any strange god.” Ps. 81:8, 9.

When we are born again we leave the world and our “strange gods,” and become followers of God. If we are truly re-born, then we may claim God as our Father, our very own Father in Heaven, Source of all our needs. We have renounced other gods, other sources.

When Jesus was born on this earth, His mother received wisdom from God through the Holy Spirit to co-operate with the heavenly agencies in the development of this Child, this Child who could claim only God as His Father. In the same way we need to be taught how to co-operate with the heavenly agencies so that we may be developed into His witnesses. We must be taught as Jesus was taught, and learn as He learned. How did Jesus learn?

“Though He were a Son, yet learned He obedience by the things which He suffered...” Heb. 5:8.

Therefore, “beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened unto you; But rejoice, inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ’s sufferings; that, when his glory shall be revealed, ye may be glad also with exceeding joy.” 1 Pet. 4:12.

When Jesus lived upon this earth He became a Teacher. What did He teach? He taught the things He had learned. “The teaching of Christ was the expression of an inwrought conviction and experience...” Desire of Ages.

Wrought is:

- 1) put together: carefully wrought
- 2) shaped by hammering with tools: wrought iron (worked)

Christ’s convictions, and hence His teaching, was the result of being worked upon by God. When He taught He was just voicing His own experience, what He Himself had learned. Learning involves time and suffering. (That is, learning under sin involves time and suffering. Learning after sin is finished will be a whole new glorious experience.)

When Moses fled to the wilderness to spend forty years there unlearning much of what he had learned in Egypt; time, change of surroundings, and communion with God were needed to remove the false impressions he had received. It takes time to become a witness of God; especially when there is a lifetime of unlearning to do, and many “strange gods” to vanquish.

“Man would have dispensed with that long period of toil and obscurity, deeming it a great loss of time. But Infinite Wisdom called him who

was to become the leader of His people to spend forty years in the humble work of a shepherd. The habits of caretaking, of self-forgetfulness, and tender solicitude for his flock, thus developed, would prepare him to become the compassionate, long-suffering shepherd of Israel. No advantage that human training or culture could bestow, could be a substitute for this experience. Moses had been learning much that he must un-learn." Patriarchs and Prophets.

What was one of the major tasks that lay upon Moses in that desolate place? He must renounce error and accept truth. Was this easy? No! Moses would have to undertake a severe struggle in order to remove the impressions that error and superstition had imprinted on his sub-conscious, a struggle as for life. "But God would be His Helper when the conflict should be too severe for human strength." PP

Are we called to this same struggle? If we want to be saved, we are; if we want to become worthy instruments able to be used by God to save others, our loved ones. (Of course, all of you know this already, but I am just coming more and more to the realization of what an intense battle we are engaged in. Or we can choose to just drift with the downward current, and make no effort to come into harmony with God and truth. But what good is that?)

What was another lesson that Moses had to learn? How about slaying the Egyptian? That was not the way God wanted Moses to act! He was not yet prepared for his great work.

"In slaying the Egyptian, Moses had fallen into the same error so often committed by his fathers, of taking into their own hands the work that God has promised to do. It was not God's will to deliver His people by warfare, as Moses thought, but by His own mighty power, that the glory might be ascribed to Him alone." PP

Do we try to deliver the people of their error by warfare. i.e. argument? Moses rashly killed the Egyptian. Sometimes do we rashly expose the error that people believe, and kill it with a convincing Bible text, or three, or ten? The person may be silenced, but are they convinced? Has their own mind been carefully led along, and taught, so that they are convinced, in their own mind? Fully persuaded of the truth!?

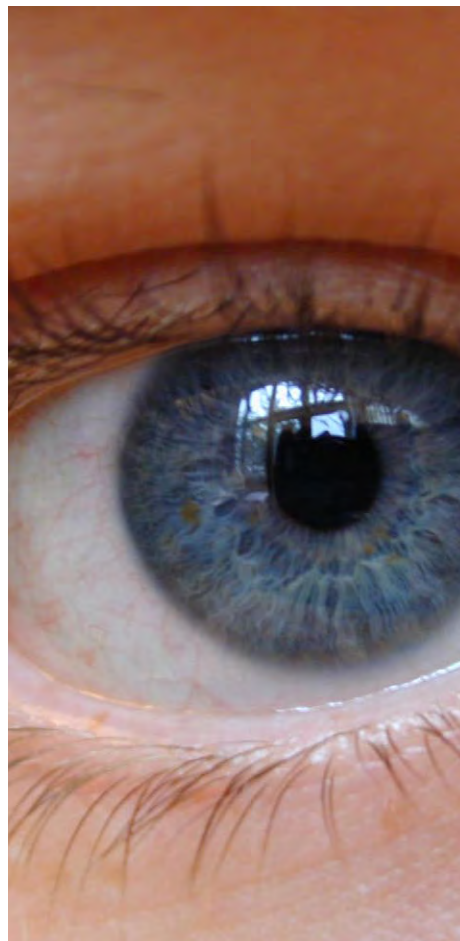
"Yet even this rash act was overruled by God to accomplish His purposes." Wonderful God!! Able to overrule our rash mistakes!

But, "Moses was not prepared for his great work." What did he have to learn? "He had yet to learn the same lesson of faith that Abraham and Jacob had been taught." What was that? "Not to rely upon human strength or wisdom." What then? "But upon the power of God for the fulfillment of His promises."

What other lesson did Moses receive wandering all those years amid the solitude of the mountains? The lesson of patience.

What was the school? Self-denial and hardship in the wilderness. He must learn to rule his spirit, temper his passion, control his "self."

It is not an easy thing to win a soul from the slavery of sin to the freedom of the gospel. Many do not understand that they are slaves! "Moses well knew the perversity and blindness of those who were placed under his care; he knew the difficulties with which he must contend."



Do we understand the difficulties with which we must contend in order to wrench souls from the grasp of Satan? "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." Eph. 6:12.

Are you ever surprised at the unexpected conflicts you meet? We must not be surprised or dismayed. "Behold My servant, whom I uphold; Mine elect, in whom My soul delights; I have put My spirit upon him: he shall bring forth judgment to the Gentiles. He shall not cry, nor lift up, nor cause His voice to be heard in the street. A bruised reed shall He not break, and the smoking flax shall He not quench." (When you feel utterly crushed, and broken, this is a wonderful promise to read.) He shall bring forth judgment unto truth. He shall not fail nor be discouraged, till He have set judgment in the earth: and the isles shall wait for His law." Isa. 42:1-4.

Instead of being surprised or dismayed we must learn to "put on the whole armor of God, that we may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil." Eph. 6:11. Wiles? Wile is:

1. a deceitful stratagem or trick.
2. a disarming or seductive manner, device, or procedure
3. trickery. To entice, lure.

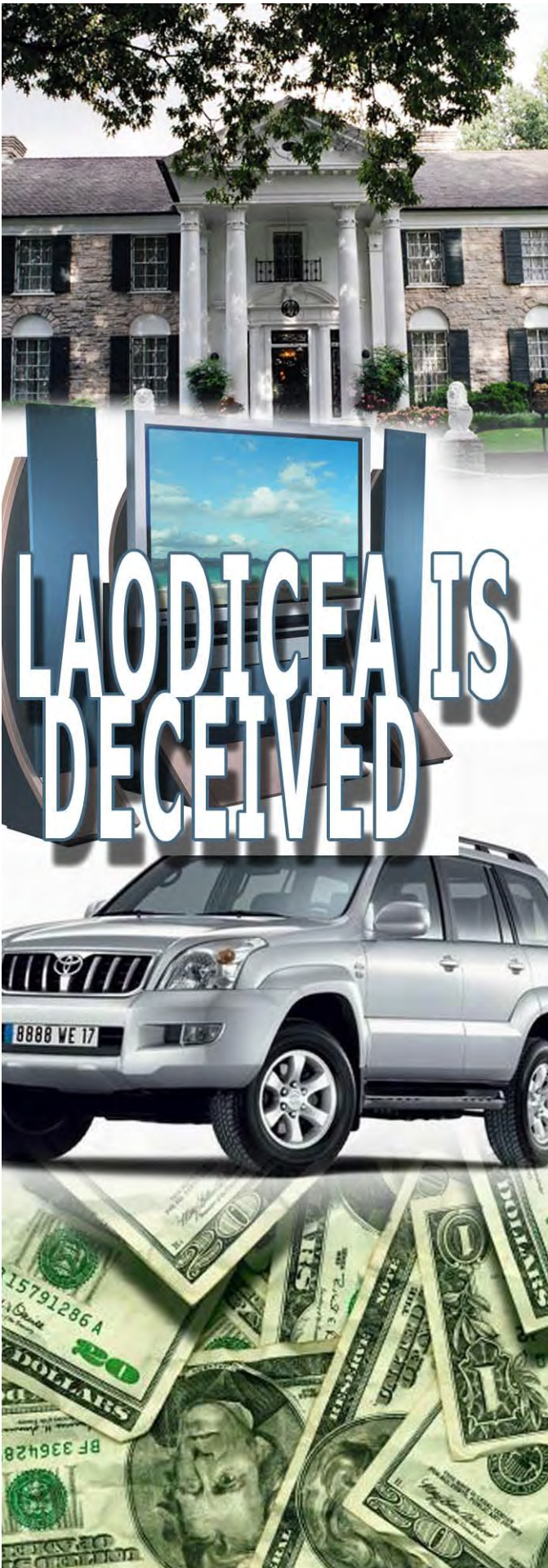
"But Moses had learned that in order to prevail with the people, he must have help from God. He pleaded for a clearer revelation of God's will and for an assurance of His presence."

In order to "open the blind eyes, to bring out the prisoner from the prison, and them that sit in darkness out of the prison house," we must have help from God. In order to prevail with the people we must have a clearer revelation of God's will; and we must have His Presence. "Thy Presence is salvation." "I have set the Lord always before me: because He is at my right hand, I shall not be moved." "Thou wilt show me the path of life: in Thy Presence is fullness of joy; at Thy right hand there are pleasures forevermore." Ps. 16:8, 11.

God bless and keep, and make useful in His cause, all His faithful witnesses. **AMEN.**

Kathleen Ross, Alberta, Canada

REFORMATION MESSENGER: MARCH 2007



“Thou sayest, I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing; and knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked.” Revelation 3:17

In His message to Laodicea, the True Witness shows us clearly that our lukewarmness – our self-righteousness, or legalism – has deceived us. Revelation 3:17 divides naturally into two parts. The first half of the verse is Laodicea’s own opinion of her spiritual condition; the second half is Christ’s evaluation of Laodicea’s condition. And it is clear that the two opinions disagree totally. There is a radical contradiction between what we think of ourselves and what Christ sees in us.

Laodicea’s problem is a subconscious one. Jesus says Laodicea “knowest not” that she is wretched, miserable, poor, blind and naked. In other words, we have been deceived regarding our true spiritual condition. We do not know what we are really like. 3T: 252-253.

What greater deception can come upon human minds than a confidence that they are right when they are all wrong. The message of the True Witness finds the people of God in a sad deception, yet honest in that deception. They know not that their condition is deplorable in the sight of God. While those addressed are flattering themselves that they are in an exalted spiritual condition, the message of the True Witness breaks their security by the startling denunciation of their true condition of spiritual blindness, poverty and wretchedness. The testimony, so cutting and severe, cannot be a mistake for it is the True Witness who speaks, and His testimony must be correct. 3T:252-253

Now, it is easy to tell the difference between hot works and cold ones – between works of faith and works of the flesh. That is not why Laodicea is deceived about her condition. The reason we have been deceived is that we have not clearly distinguished works of the law (lukewarm works) from works of faith (hot works). It is easy to confuse these two, for the difference between works of the law and works of faith is a real, but subtle, difference.

Luther himself confused these two kinds of works when he condemned the apostle James for upholding works of faith. He called James’ epistle “an epistle of straw” because he felt that James contradicted Paul’s writings in the New Testament and that Paul was correct. Actually, Paul and James agree completely. Both uphold works of faith; both teach that genuine justification by faith always produces works of faith. Later in his life, Luther reversed his opinion of James, admitting that the apostle was correct and inspired.

Paul condemns works of the law – self-righteousness – but he insists on works of faith. “By the deeds (or works) of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight.” (Romans 3:20). Paul condemns any effort to get to heaven by performing works of the law; those who try to be righteous by keeping the law will never succeed. “Therefore,” Paul says, “we conclude that a man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law.” (verse 28). He taught the same thing to the Galatian Christians. “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.” (Galatians 2:16). In other words, works of the law contradict justification by faith; they are enemies of the gospel. “Satan is seeking with all his subtlety to corrupt mind and heart. And oh how successful he is in leading men and women to depart from the simplicity of the gospel of

Christ... Church members are in danger of allowing self to take the throne." (Review and Herald, 15 December 1904).

Works of the law are what we call legalism or self-righteousness. Such works have no part in our justification. We are justified solely by what Christ did for us in His life and death. Paul explicitly condemns anyone who tries to add works of the law to justification by faith. "Christ is become of no effect unto you, whosoever of you are justified by the law; ye are fallen from grace." (Galatians 5:4). Justification by faith simply cannot mix with works of the law, they are mutually exclusive.

On the other hand, Paul strenuously upholds works of faith! After insisting that works do not contribute one bit to our salvation, (see Ephesians 2:8,9) Paul tells the believers that nevertheless, "we are... created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them." (verse 10). Thus Paul is in harmony with James, who is arguing that justification by faith always produces works of faith.

To the young pastor, Titus, Paul writes, "Not by works of righteousness which we have done (that is, works of the law), but according to His (God's) mercy He saved us." (Titus 3:5). Yet only three verses later, Paul says, "I will that thou affirm constantly, that they which have believed in God might be careful to maintain good works. These things are good and profitable unto men." (verse 8). Notice that works of faith are profitable, not to us but "unto men". Good works reveal to others what Christ is doing in us. It testifies that genuine justification by faith is present.

In this same letter to Titus, Paul says that Christ "gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto Himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works." (Titus 2:14). The Greek word translated "zealous" comes from the same root as the word translated "hot" in Revelation 3:15. Paul clearly supports good works – not as a way to earn our salvation, but as a means of demonstrating genuine justification by faith and of drawing others to Christ. Thus Paul and James are in complete harmony.

"But" some will argue, "didn't the heroes of the Old Testament win God's favour by

their works – by keeping His laws?" Not at all. Hebrews, chapter 11 explicitly commends numerous Old Testament individuals for their good works and obedience, but they are commended because of their works of faith. The phrase "by faith" is repeated over and over in Hebrews 11. For example, "By faith Abraham, when he was called to go out into a place which he should after receive for an inheritance, obeyed, and he went out, not knowing whither he went." (verse 8).

Abraham didn't know where he was going, but he obeyed God's call. It was an obedience born of faith. He didn't ask God, "Is there electricity where I'm going? Are there refrigerators?" God didn't tell Abraham, "There is a house waiting there for you with running water." He simply said, "I want you to go to a land that I will give you." And Abraham obeyed in faith; therefore, his actions were works of faith, not works of the law, even though he certainly obeyed God's commandments.

Likewise with Noah. God said to Noah, "I'm going to destroy this earth with a flood. I want you to build an ark." Did Noah believe God? Yes, and his works gave evidence of his faith. True works of faith are always built on the promises of God, works of the law are built on human promises and performances. At Sinai, God said to the Israelites, "Here are My laws." And they replied, "All that You say, we will do." (Exodus 24:7).

What, then, is the essential difference between works of the law and works of faith? Why have we become so deceived that we have mistaken the one for the other and have become unconscious of our real spiritual condition? If we are going to be able to respond to Christ's counsel, we need to have our eyes open so that we can see clearly the essential difference that sets works of the law apart from works of faith.

The difference is not in the works themselves, because works of the law and works of faith appear very similar on the outside; what is the difference?

The first difference is in the source or origin of the work that is being done. Works of the law are done through human effort – by the flesh.

Works of faith are done by Christ through His Spirit because the Christian is walking

by faith. Let's look at an example of each.

An excellent example of works of the law is the Pharisee's prayer in Luke 18. The introduction to this story is crucial. Notice that Jesus told this story in the context of self-righteousness, or works of the law. "He spake this parable unto certain (people) who trusted in themselves that they were righteous and despised others." (Luke 18:9) Works of the law typically cause us to despise others; legalists tend to look down on those who aren't measuring up to their standards.

Two men went up into the temple to pray; the one a Pharisee, and the other a publican. The Pharisee stood and prayed thus with himself, God, I thank thee, that I am not as other men are, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this publican. I fast twice in the week, I give tithes of all that I possess." (verses 10-12).

Now, to Jesus' listeners, the word Pharisee didn't have the negative meaning it has to us today. A Pharisee was considered to be a very holy person because he was zealous to keep God's law. So this is a good person who is telling God about himself. Are his works good or bad? They are good. He would get a star in his crown if we were passing them out. But were these good things that he did works of the law or works of faith?

They were works of the law. Why? What is wrong with this Pharisee's works?

They made him feel good about himself. He wasn't living for God, but for himself. He's telling God, "Please look at me. See how good I am!"

And what will Jesus say to him in the judgment? "Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? And in thy name done many wonderful works? And then I will profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity." (Matthew 7:22, 23). "The people of God are represented in the message to the Laodiceans as in a position of carnal security. They are at ease, believing themselves to be in an exalted condition of spiritual attainments." 3T 252

Works of the law are always done for ourselves, for our glory. The source is the flesh, our sinful human nature. The flesh

cannot do genuine good works. It can perform works that appear good, but the source is wrong because the flesh is always dominated by self. Notice how often the Pharisee in Jesus' story uses the word I as he prays about himself.

In contrast, let's consider this example of works of faith. Paul, who was also a Pharisee, discarded all his works of the law in exchange for Christ and His righteousness.

For we (genuine Christians)... worship God in the spirit, and rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh...(I want to be) found in Him (Jesus) not having mine own righteousness, which is the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith. That I may know Him, and the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings. (Philippians 3:3, 9-11).

Paul's confidence was in Jesus Christ, not in himself. He says, "I want Jesus to live in me now that I've accepted Him as my righteousness." That must be our position also. Our confidence must be in Jesus, not in self.

Writing to the Corinthian church, Paul says, "I laboured more abundantly than they all (the other apostles)." But lest someone should misunderstand, he quickly adds, "Yet not I, but the grace of God which was with me." (1Corinthians 15:10). It wasn't Paul, in his human nature, who was doing the work, it was God doing it in him. The source of works of faith is Christ working in us through His Spirit.

That is the first difference between works of the law and works of faith. Works of the law have their source in our sinful human natures. Works of faith have their origin in Jesus Christ, who works in us and through us by His Spirit.

The second difference between the two is closely related. It is the motive that lies behind the works that we do.

Works of the law are motivated by one or more of the following reasons:

1. Fear of punishment
2. Desire for reward
3. Bringing glory to self

Works of the law are always motivated by
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self. They are self pretending to be good.

God judges us, not by our actions, but by the motives behind those actions. Our problem as Laodicea – the reason we are deceived about our true condition – is that we do the opposite; we judge ourselves by our actions, not by our motives. Jesus brought out this distinction in His Sermon on the Mount. The Pharisee would say, "I have never murdered anyone!" But Jesus replies, "Wait a minute! If you hate someone in your heart, you have killed him, even if you don't actually murder him physically. If you look at a woman with lust in your heart, you have committed adultery, even if you haven't actually done the act." God looks at the heart. That is why in the judgment He will weigh every secret motive. When we realize this far-reaching standard, we will know that all of us are unclean. "All the ways of a man are clean in his own eyes, but the Lord weigheth the spirits." (Proverbs16:2). God considers not only the act, but the spirit that motivates the act.

Paul illustrates the difference between works of the law and works of faith by pointing to the experience of Abraham and his sons, Isaac and Ishmael. He says, "Abraham had two sons, the one by a bondmaid, the other by a freewoman... He who was of the bondwoman was born after the flesh, but he of the freewoman was by promise." (Galatians 4:22, 23).

What does Paul mean? He is simply pointing out that Ishmael was the product of Abraham's own works. Isaac, on the other hand, was Abraham's son as the result of a promise. Who produced Ishmael? Abraham. Who produced Isaac? God. Abraham could not produce Isaac without a miracle from God because Sarah was past the age of childbearing. It was humanly impossible. Thus works of faith are produced by God alone as we walk in faith as Abraham did. But works of the law are produced by our own human natures as Abraham produced Ishmael through Hagar. "Which things," Paul continues, "are an allegory, for these are the two covenants; the one from the mount Sinai, which gendereth to bondage." (verse 24).

Why is Mount Sinai a symbol of the covenant that leads to bondage? Because when God gave Israel His law on Mount Sinai, the people responded, "All that the Lord hath said we will do, and be obedient." (Exodus

24:7). That was the old covenant – people promising God to be good in exchange for salvation. Did they succeed? No. When they failed, did they acknowledge their failure? No. Instead, they made many rules – human rules – that they could keep. Then they said, "Look, God, we're keeping Your law."

The difference between the old covenant (Ishmael) and the new covenant (Isaac) is not easily apparent. Only a closer look at the two covenants reveals that while the old covenant was a contract between God and Israel, the new covenant was a will made by God, benefiting humanity. When God entered into a contract with Israel at Mount Sinai, He was fully aware they could not keep it. But the old covenant was necessary to destroy all confidence in the flesh so that the way might be opened for the new covenant. Unfortunately, the Jewish nation refused to acknowledge their total depravity and consequently rejected the new covenant in Christ. Their history, says Paul, has been recorded for our benefit "upon whom the ends of the world are come." (1 Corinthians 10:11). May we not repeat their history!

Paul continues his comparison, "But Jerusalem which is above is free, which is the mother of us all... Now we, brethren, as Isaac was, are the children of promise." (Galatians 4:26, 28). Isaac represents God's promise and God's performance through Sarah. In the new covenant, we accept by faith the promises of God and allow Him to work in us. Here is how Ellen White puts it:

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 religion is worth nothing. (Steps to Christ, 44).

The birth of a son to Zacharias, like the birth of the child of Abraham, and that of Mary (Christ Himself), was to teach a great spiritual truth, a truth that we are slow to learn and ready to forget. In ourselves we are incapable of doing any good thing; but that which we cannot do will be wrought by the power of God in every submissive and believing soul. It was through faith that the child of promise was given. It is through faith that spiritual life is begotten, and we are enabled to do the works of

righteousness. (The Desire of Ages, 98).

It is only through faith that we can produce righteousness. Both justification and sanctification are by faith alone. "All our good works are dependent on a power outside of ourselves." (Christ's Object Lessons, 160). (Notice Ellen White says "all our good works", not "some of our good works"). "All that man can do without Christ is polluted with selfishness and sin; but that which is wrought through faith is acceptable to God." (Selected Messages, 1:364).

This is still an issue today with us in Laodicea. Many are trapped in a subtle form of legalism and are sincerely ignorant of it. Laodicea has been deceived, and she doesn't know it because she has confused works of the law with works of faith.

Some are concerned that if we teach these things, men and women will be tempted to quit trying to be obedient. That they will put forth no effort to overcome sin. But true faith always involves effort and struggle with sin. What does faith mean? It means two things when we truly put faith into practice. It means

1. "Not I"
2. "but Christ"

The first is negative; this is our part. The second is positive; this is Christ's part.

The first is the most difficult. When we say, "Not I," we are saying something that contradicts our sinful human natures and our pride. We are going against our natures. Of course, that is painful to the ego because we want some credit in this matter of sanctification. So instead of saying, "Not I, but Christ", we prefer to say, "I plus Christ". We are willing to admit that justification is Christ alone, faith alone.

But when it comes to sanctification, we want to have a part. But that is not true; the Bible does not teach that. The Bible teaches that the flesh, our human nature, is an enemy of God. It is not subject to God's law and never can be. (see Romans 8:7). So in everything, we must say, "Not I, but Christ." That is what Christ is saying to poor, deceived Laodicea (see 2Corinthians 4:7).

Our works, which look good because they are works of the law, have deceived us. They resemble works of faith, so we think that we are "rich, and increased with

goods, and have need of nothing". But Christ says, Actually, you are "wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked." (Revelation 3:17). The only other place in the New Testament where this word wretched appears is Romans 7:24. After admitting his inability in himself to do any good thing, Paul cries out, "O wretched man that I am! Who shall deliver me from the body of this death?"

It's true that Paul also says, "I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me." (Philippians 4:13). But he can say that only after he has first said, "O wretched man that I am!" And the only way Paul or we can realize our wretchedness is to realize that our works of the law, good as they may appear, are as filthy rags in God's sight. (see Isaiah 64:6).

When we do works of the law, the more we do, the more highly we think of ourselves – just like the Pharisee in Jesus' story. Those who are successfully doing works of the law are likely to believe, or even say, "I have not sinned for such and such a length of time." This is the epitome of the Laodicean condition. This attitude will destroy us!

In contrast, the believer who is doing works of faith will always see himself as a sinner. Even though his works are good he will never feel righteous; he will always think of himself as "O wretched man that I am!" The closer we come to Christ, the more clearly we'll be able to see the great gulf between what we are and what He would have us to be.

Ellen White says: The Laodicean message must be proclaimed with power; for now it is especially applicable... Not to see our own deformity is not to see the beauty of Christ's character. When we are fully awake to our own sinfulness, we shall appreciate Christ... Not to see the marked contrast between Christ and ourselves is not to know ourselves. He who does not abhor himself cannot understand the meaning of redemption. (Review and Herald, 25 September 1900).

Of course, we may recognize that the righteousness of Christ dwells in us by faith. We may rejoice in the high esteem that Christ places on us "in Christ". But when we truly understand the gospel sanctification – what Christ does in us – we can never

be the source of our assurance because we will always feel that we are sinners – and that is no assurance. Our assurance comes from what we are "in Christ". In Christ, we stand complete and perfect. What He does in us is ongoing and incomplete. In fact, Christ will do many good works in us that we are not even aware of. Remember, Jesus tells us that in the judgment He will say, "I was hungry, and you fed Me. I was thirsty, and you gave Me something to drink. I was naked, and you clothed Me."

And we will reply, "Lord, when did we do these things? We don't remember doing that." We are unconscious of many of the works Christ will do through us. Works of faith, what Christ does in us, do not save us. They are the evidence that we have salvation and justification by faith.

Laodicea is sadly deceived, mistaking her works of the law for works of faith. She looks at all the good things she is doing and says, "I am rich and need nothing!" But the True Witness sees that in reality, she is wretched, poor, blind and naked. May God give us grace to understand our true condition so that we will be willing to make a positive response to His counsel. And that is the topic of my next message.

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ONLY ONCE



CHILDRENS CORNER

"I'll be home soon, mother; I am only going around the corner to see the new billiard rooms;" and, with his hat in his hand, Harry was closing the back door when his mother called back.

"I will not permit you to go there, my dear," she said. "You must know that both your father and I disapprove of such places."

"But I don't intend to play, mother; only to look at; the boys say the tables are splendid; and besides, what could I tell Jim after promising to go with him? He is waiting outside for me. Please say 'yes' only this once."

"Tell him that we rather you would remain at home; and ask him to come and spend the evening with us," said Harry's father, as he looked up from his newspaper.

"Oh, I know he won't do that!" and Harry stood, turning the door handle, until, finding that his parents did not intend to say anything more, he walked slowly to the front step.

"Why don't you hurry up," called Jim, "don't keep me standing here all night in the cold."

"I am not going. Won't you come in?" said Harry.

"Not going! Your mother surely doesn't object to your looking at a billiard table!"

"She would prefer I not go," said Harry, and Jim's only reply was a significant whistle, as he walked off.

"He'll be sure to tell all the boys!" said

Harry, half aloud, as he shut the front door with rather more force than was necessary. "I don't see why mother and father are so particular." Then, entering the living room he took a book off the table and sat down very far from the light with a scowl on his face.

His father put aside his newspaper, and without noticing Harry's mood, he said pleasantly, "I wonder if my son feels as if he is too old for me to tell him a story? If he feels he is not too old for one, I have just the story for him. It's called, 'Only Once.'" Harry put the book back on the table; but Harry still kept thinking of what the boys would say when Jim told an exaggerated story, and his countenance remained unchanged.

"When I was about your age, Harry," began his father, "we lived next door to Mr. Allen,



a very wealthy gentleman, who had one son. Frank was a good-natured, happy boy. He had two beautiful ponies, several dogs, and a large backyard to play in and we became good friends.

“Many afternoons we spent together, riding the ponies, or playing ball in the yard. Then one summer afternoon, I will never forget, for it seems to me now, looking back, that things changed. This afternoon was a turning point in Frank’s life; but we didn’t think much about it at the time.

“It was a very warm afternoon; and, becoming tired of playing ball, we had stopped to rest in the shade, when Frank suggested that we take the ponies to a plank road a few kilometres from the house, and race them. I was certain that his father would disapprove of this, and, besides, it would have been most cruel work on such a warm afternoon, so I tried to make Frank think of something else to do instead; but all in vain.

“‘I think we should go, Charlie,’ he said. ‘What’s the harm in doing it; *only this once?* I just want to see if either of my ponies is likely to be a faster trotter.’

“For a moment I hesitated, but in the next came the thought of my father’s displeasure, and I shook my head.

“‘Very well, just as you please, Mr. Good Boy! I know plenty of others who will be glad to ride Jet;’ and so saying, he walked away.

“Frank did find a boy who was delighted to go with him, and enjoyed the race so much that, notwithstanding his father’s reprimand, he managed to pursue this same sport more times than, ‘only once.’

“As soon as the summer was over, Mr. Allen went to Europe for his health, and I did not see Frank again for three years, until I left the country and entered the same university with him.

“Frank began studying very earnestly; but before the first year was over, the earnestness had passed away. Friends would induce him to spend his evenings at their rooms, or at some public place of amusement, and each time Frank would try to satisfy his conscience with, ‘It will only be once.’

“Thus, little by little, his studies were neglected, and as study became irksome, his love for excitement and amusement increased, until one day I overheard a gentleman who knew him well, remark that he feared Frank’s ‘only once’ would prove his ruin.

“But a few years before Frank would have been shocked with the thought of spending the afternoons in racing, and evenings in the billiard saloons. He has not at first really intended to visit these places more than ‘once,’ ‘just to see for myself;’ but there are very few who ever stop in the course of wrong doing at ‘only once.’

“At length his father died. When the sad news reached the son, he seemed more serious for a time; but in an hour of temptation he yielded. Before long his old companions surrounded him again, and of them he soon learned how to spend the large fortune left him by his father, in a most reckless manner.



“In vain his true friends tried to check him in his wild career; and, five years ago, Harry, my poor friend Frank died as a drunkard.”


“Oh, Father, how dreadful!” and Harry shuddered.

“Yes, it is dreadful, my son; but there are countless untold stories as dreadful as this one. If we were to visit a prison, and ask the wretched inmates how it was that they were first led into crime, we should find that ‘*only this once*’ brought most of them there. One took something which did not belong to him, never intending to do it more than that once; but the crime soon grew into a habit. Another was once tempted to gamble, and only that one game was the foundation of all his crimes. Another fully intended to stop with the first glass; but instead, became a reckless drunkard.

“Learn, my son, to dread those little words, ‘only once,’ and when tempted to use them, think of all that they may lead to, and ask for strength to resist the temptation; and, Harry, do you wonder now why we refuse to allow you to visit the billiard room even once?”

“No, father; I see now that you were right, and I was wrong in supposing that it could not possibly do me any harm to go only this once; and if Jim *does* tell the boys some silly story to make them laugh at me, I can tell them about Frank Allen, and that will soon sober them.”

My dear young people, do you flatter yourself that it is a trifling thing to do wrong, ‘only once?’ If so, stop and consider how often not only the young but those of mature years yield to this deceptive and alluring thought and take the first steps in a career of sin, when, could they but see the end of the path which they are so thoughtlessly entering, they should shudder with horror. They do not realize that sin once indulged in hardens the heart, and that one step in the downward path leads to the broad road.

How many parents yield to the pleadings of their children to be indulged, ‘only once,’ who find that to deny after once being indulged, costs a greater effort than to have stood with firmness to conviction of conscience and true principle. 



BELIEVERS IN AUSTRALIA



BELIEVERS IN LONDON CANADA

"We must not be content with anything short of the divine illumination from the central Light of the universe. When we have this illumination, we shall see the necessity of pressing onward and upward, of elevating the standard, of cultivating the loftiest ambition, and of reaching the highest attainments. We shall constantly draw from the Source of all wisdom, and live as in the sight of the Lord. We should consecrate all our powers to the service of Christ. He has loved us; he has died to redeem us, and to wash us from our sins in his own blood. Self must die. All success and honor must be accredited to Him who has died that we might live. Christ must be inscribed upon our banners. How slow we are to understand that God requires the service of our whole heart, an unreserved consecration of all the powers of our being. He claims all there is of us. All that mortal man can render of service in any direction, must be devoted to the work of Christ, if we would meet the requirement of God.

Your talent has been intrusted to you by the Lord, and you will be held responsible for its employment and improvement. It is the design of the Giver that it shall be used in accordance with his divine will. We are not only to work out our own salvation, but we are to love our fellow-men as we love ourselves. We must manifest the glory of God. This is the high aim of our existence. We must be in such a condition that we can appreciate the light that God has brought into the experience of others. Our lives and characters are influenced by the physical, intellectual, and moral acquirements of past generations. If we remain in ignorance, we have no one to blame but ourselves. If we put to the stretch every power, and task every ability to the utmost, with an eye single to the glory of God, we shall not fail of doing a valuable work for God. The time in which we live is full of the most solemn importance."

Signs of The Times, November 30, 1888.

