

# The Reformation Messenger

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



*"Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life  
for his friends. Ye are my friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you."  
John 15:13, 14*



**We Believe**

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

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

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

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

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

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

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# A SPECIAL ENCOUNTER

*“For thou hast had five husbands; and he whom thou now hast is not thy husband: in that saidst thou truly.” John 4:18.*

Jesus had the tact of telling people their sins to their face without offending them; on the contrary, they surrendered their heart to Him. He never started a conversation pointing out man’s weaknesses, even if He knew them in every detail, but He led the conversation in such a way that the sinner himself would acknowledge his condition and, moved by the Master’s understanding, compassion and love, would repent.

It was noon, the scorching Mediterranean sun fell upon the earth with all its power; Jesus felt weary and hot. He had been travelling for a long time on foot, from one region to the other of the country and he was thirsty. Therefore He stopped near a well in Samaria, half way to his destiny. Suddenly, a relatively young woman came to draw water from the well. He did not hesitate to ask her for something to drink. The woman was amazed! The Jews and the Samaritans were enemies; how was it possible for a Jew, who thought himself superior to the Samaritans, to approach a

woman and ask her for something!

This woman went to the well at such a time in order to avoid contact with the other women in the village for whom she was the main subject of conversation. As a rule, women went to draw water in the late afternoon, according to the Bible’s report, *“And he made his camels to kneel down without the city by a well of water at the time of the evening, [even] the time that women go out to draw [water]”* (Genesis 24:11). At that time it was cooler and they secured themselves a provision of water for the early morning, for their personal hygiene, the housework, cooking, etc. She knew that women in town despised her and so as to avoid meeting them she would go at noon, when the sun was at the zenith and nobody dared onto the streets. Her love affair had made of her an outcast. She was paying a high price for just some tenderness, which who knows if she really received.

She was not used to having people approach her; most people looked at her from the corner of their eyes, whispered or greeted her in a hypocritical and sarcastic tone of

voice. But that man was different, He was a stranger and did not know her; He did not know anything about her life, besides He did not seem to have any prejudice about her origin.

Jesus spoke to her about the living water He could provide her, but she did not really understand what He meant. Nevertheless, she asked Him to give her from that water, *“The woman saith unto him, Sir, give me this water, that I thirst not, neither come hither to draw”* (John 4:15). The way to the well everyday was weary and painful; she felt a mixture of loneliness, guilt and shame. But before Jesus gives us His healing power that turns into a fountain of living water, we have to acknowledge our condition as sinners, so Jesus said to her, *“Go, call thy husband, and come hither. The woman answered and said, I have no husband. Jesus said unto her, Thou hast well said, I have no husband.”* (John 4:16, 17).

She had lived with five men and for one or another reason had separated from them. None could offer her the tenderness and love her sensitive soul longed for. It was because of this, of her lifestyle that was so different from the other people in town that she had become a stumbling stone, a black sheep. Jesus did not accuse her, but just pointed out her true condition and she immediately acknowledged that that stranger had a knowledge that came from above and said, *“Sir, I perceive that thou art a prophet”* (John 4:19). In order to avoid such a delicate and painful subject, she tried to change the conversation and get him involved in a pseudo-religious topic, a controversial point: where God should be worshiped. She did not know that the human being was meant to be a temple

where the presence of God was to dwell permanently. Jesus tried to explain this to her and said, “*God [is] a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship [him] in spirit and in truth*” (John 4:24).

In other words He was telling her that we worship God with our lifestyle, our attitude, our conduct at home, in society and not only in a church building. She was greatly impressed by these words and suddenly realized that what she had considered quite normal: living with someone without being married, was immoral in God’s eyes and a bad example to the community.

Each one of our acts, no matter how small they are or whether we practice them in public or in secret have an influence upon the whole because they contribute to form a righteous or unrighteous character which will be manifested even in little things. When the light of heaven shone in her mind regarding her true condition, this woman did not get angry like the believers in the church of Galatia, to whom Paul wrote later on, “*Am I therefore become your enemy, because I tell you the truth?*” (Galatians 4:16) But she experienced sincere repentance and a real conversion.

As a young woman she felt the need of having a companion, the support and affection of someone from the opposite sex, but since the bond of marriage was so strong and indissoluble she preferred to

leave an open door, even if she did not do so with God’s blessing. Even though she may have not had many problems with her partner, she was surely not happy because the sense of belonging was missing and without the approval and blessing of the Lord there is no real joy in the heart.

Greatly impressed by the dialogue with that man whom her soul acknowledged as the Messiah, she abandoned her pitcher and ran to town to call the men of the village. She did not think of herself, of her reputation, whether they would pay attention to her words, whether they would listen to her call. She was now a new creature and that could be seen in her whole attitude. She could not remain silent; the rays of heavenly light that had penetrated her soul could not be hidden. That person with a gloomy face, who used to drag her feet on her way to the well every day, in the heat of a scorching sun, was now free, happy, sociable, and felt the need of sharing with others what she had received.

She went to the men in the village and called them to come and meet Jesus, who had revealed her sinfulness. She knew that although they all seemed to lead a righteous life and tried to hide their vices behind a mask of modesty and chastity, all of them had been bitten by the snake and were spiritually sick; they all needed healing and she had found the Great Healer, the Redeemer of the world!

She had had a casual encounter with a stranger, as she was going about her daily routine, but what a change it meant in her life! That is the way it goes. As we day by day go about doing our duties, feeling the senselessness of everything and the burden of our sinful nature, suddenly our conscience is awakened and we understand that we are not the victims of a predetermined destiny, but of our own dreams, ambitions and mentality that have led us to handle things in a wrong way. The Holy Spirit is actively trying to show every single man that only the narrow way of obedience to God’s commandments is the utmost expression of freedom.

Jesus’ disciples, who were not free from prejudice, could not understand the scene before their eyes. Jesus was talking with an unknown woman and a Samaritan to boot; a woman belonging to that people who had mixed the worship of the living God with idolatry! What was the matter with their Master? Had He no spiritual discernment? But Jesus was working dynamically and preparing the heart of the people to plant the seed of the gospel “*the power of God unto salvation*” (Romans 1:16), so that when the time of the harvest would come, they could be gathered in the Father’s granary and not burnt as straw.

Since that day a new life began for that woman; she had met a Friend who could understand the depth of her soul. Whether He was physically near her or not, she would not forget her experience with Him as long as she lived. She no longer needed to make a man’s arm her support; now she would settle her situation and lead a life that could be approved by God. Now she had understood what it meant to worship God in spirit and in truth, and that was the only way in which she wanted to worship Him.

May the Lord reveal to each man the depth of sin that is rooted in his heart, make him hate it with his whole being so that he may be delivered and able to worship the Lord in spirit and in truth. ***Amen.***

***Teresa Corti***



# MORAL CRISIS



*“But evil men and seducers shall become worse and worse, deceiving, and being deceived.” 2Tim 3:13*

## **Abandoned**

When the Apostle Paul wrote this letter to Timothy, he was not only in jail, but abandoned by most of his friends! (2 Tim. 1:15; 4:16). In that state, and in dire circumstances, he wrote the most detailed account of conditions that will prevail upon the earth during the last days... a moral crisis! (2 Tim. 3:1-9; 4:3-4; 2 Tim. 3). We are clearly living in a time of moral crisis. Moreover, a world of “moral impurity that abounds everywhere.” (3T 564). “Moral” is defined as: habits with respect to right and wrong; righteous; in essence-Godly-pure.

## **Darkness**

There is an astounding and rapid decline of morality in society. “Thousands of people are suffering moral destitution.” (3SM 216). Furthermore, “the present generation is feeble in moral power.” (4T 30). “Like a funeral pall, moral darkness covers the earth, and a ruined world pleads to Christians to put forth individual efforts.” But, where are they? Even the “religious world is covered with the pall of moral darkness.” (3T 73, 391; 5T 158).

## **Unhealthy**

I uneasily wonder if this rapid decline in society is the end of the “age of Grace,” and the abrupt rise of evil? In fact, we can see that, “evil men and seducers shall become worse and worse and deceivers leading many astray”... that time is now!

Pollsters, Gallup and others, have found an “unhealthy trend, an alarming, moral crisis.” Religious surveys, also, agree that there is a true moral crisis in the world; rising street crime, alcohol and drug abuse, suicides, rage killings, horrid massacres, predators, abortions, homosexuality, lesbianism, transgenderism, racism, disrespect for parents and authorities, and so on!

## **Dusty**

One interesting religious survey discovered that 98% of the American homes have one or more Bible. But, few could name the four gospels (Mathew, Mark, Luke, John). Even fewer could name or recite the Ten Commandments. Many of the parents and their children are indeed, spiritual illiterates! There is a story of a seven year old boy who asked his mother, “What’s that large black book on the top of the book shelves that’s covered with dust?” The mother meekly answered, “Oh, that’s the Bible. It’s God’s book.” The little young man answered, “Well, maybe we should give it back to Him, because no one in this house reads it.” This story could be multiplied in many homes, today, even of professed Christians. One reason is that “an atmosphere of lax morality tends to counteract parental influence.” (PP 169).

## **Private Contributions**

Furthermore, Eastern cults, astrology, magic, bizarre music, sensual pleasures, glittering city lights, Satanic novels, American idols, depraved appetites, flesh foods, debasing theatre going, peculiar fashions, politics, squandering of time, associations with vain, skeptical persons--are all major contributors of moral depravity.

## Moral Machinery

In such a time as this; a time of moral crisis, and wretchedness, where can one begin? If a nation is to survive and have the victory over these disintegrating influences, of self-abuse, and sin, then it can only be gained with moral power guided by moral and spiritual laws. Thereby, the “hearts become acquainted with the moral machinery.” (4T 85). In a time of moral crisis, begin first with yourself, learn to approach the Lord, repent of your sins, then practice righteousness and exercise your faith. “Working out your salvation in trembling and fear.” (Eph 6:5). Next, resist the devil.

But, it does not merely stop here. You begin first with yourself, then the family, neighbors, community, and God has the final answer... the entire world. If not, the shocking moral crisis will spread in society and collapse will follow. But, “Christians must possess the saving qualities that preserve the world from moral corruption. Union with Christ brings moral and spiritual powers.” (5T 230). “God wants His people to have moral courage, good moral health, moral stamina, and a moral backbone!” (5T 297; 2T 130)

## I See!

The Gospel in Greek is defined as conversion. The Gospel can change people, communities, and nations. (1Cor. 6:9-11). Can you see it in yourself, your family, others, your church? Missionaries are proclaiming the Good News of salvation in Africa to remote savage tribes, even in the far reaches of the South American Amazon forests; reaching out from almost inaccessible villages such as our remnant brethren of Cainaima, Venezuela. Others have gone to Nepal, China, Korea, Ethiopia, Maine, and so on. Soon whole communities will be converted to the truth.

## Avoid Them

The New Testament portrays a devoted people who are Christ-centered, law-abiding, principled, persevering, steadfast. In essence, a transformed people! What marvelous traits to develop and possess. Many professing Christians, however, are slaves of immorality; tainted with corrupt habits, loose morals, love of fashion, intemperance, unhealthy stimulants,

beclouded of disease, dissipation, heathen conceptions, etc. It is wrong to associate with such persons. (1 Tim3:5). Paul tells us to avoid divisive persons. “Now I urge you brethren, note those who cause divisions and offenses, contrary to the doctrine which you learned, and avoid them.”(Rom. 16:17). But, first, “examine yourselves to see if you are in the faith.” (1Cor. 13:5).

## Well Done!

We who know the Saviour can, however, assure others – that Jesus Christ brings forgiveness, deliverance, peace, wisdom, to a sinner. Salvation not only reforms, but transforms. The Apostle Paul ran an exciting, challenging race every day. What kind of race are you running? What is your goal? Forget what’s behind. Look ahead. Let neither success nor failure hinder your growth. Be consistent. Press forward until you hear the Master’s voice. “The light of truth calls for men of sterling moral worth.” (4T 488). We need Joseph’s, and David’s with moral affections. Well, where are they? Assuredly, “God has His moral heroes.”(5T 527). Even so, press on until you hear, “well done good and faithful servant.”(Matt. 25:23).

## Am I Doing My Best?

A young High School student was surprised to win his first cross-country race, outrunning the champion! When asked later what he was thinking during the race he answered, “Am I doing my best?” This question motivated him to try harder, and not be discouraged because of a runner in front of him. He was determined to pass him, somehow! He set another goal, allowing nothing to distract him, such as, “what are others doing, thinking, or saying?” But, he developed an unexpected reserve power, and was victorious. The same determination as the young man is needed by believers. Victory is not easy. Those that are half-hearted need a commitment, a goal to service, to God. Whenever you are in a race of life, or trial, ask yourself, “Am I doing my best?” It helps us press forward. The mark is the high calling of God in Jesus Christ. Give your all to Jesus Christ. How? Remember, He gave His all for you.

## From Doubt To Faith

The prophet Habakkuk (3:1-6; 14-19) had an inner struggle; a moral crisis. He

saw evil out of control, too, in his land. He learned what the wicked Babylonians planned, to soon take many of his country men captives. There was mourning, confusion, sorrow. He couldn’t understand why the Lord allowed such circumstances to happen. Habakkuk didn’t turn away in rebellion, or unbelief. Instead, he prayed and waited for word from God. A beautiful response came. Confidence in the Lord!

Wait and rejoice in Him, even if the fig tree would bear no fruit, the fields no food, the rivers no water. Well, how can we have faith like that? Turn to God. Listen. Read His word. Just like Habakkuk did. As the hymn declares, “Trust and obey, for there’s no other way, to be happy in Jesus;” no matter what trials, hardships, or perils come in a moral crisis. Remember, faith shines brightest in the dark!

## Claim The Promise

But, in time of a real moral crisis, where is the safety? What do we turn to? Whom do we turn to? How safe are we really? **You Are Safe In Jesus!** “For you are dead, and your life is hidden with Christ in God.”(Col. 3:3). Every believer must honestly admit that he or she slips again, and again, and walks a narrow Christian path, in a perilous world, in a world of moral crisis. Admittedly, no one is perfect, and every day we must claim the promise. “If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.” (1 John 1:9). Just reading this is comforting, to know Jesus Christ; that we’re safe in Christ, and that we have the confidence that He will bring us to our destination.

## Heaven-Reaching Mountain

Two experienced German mountain climbers were to scale Mt. Matterhorn (Switzerland). They hired three guides. They began scaling and trudging up the steepest, most slippery ice-filled path. They were securely roped together. The guides were positioned in front and rear of the climbers. Suddenly the last man lost his footing, but was held up temporarily by the last four. Each had a firm toe-hold cut into the ice. The next man, however, slipped, and pulled down the other two above him. Only one was able to stand firm – the first guide! He drove a steel spike deep into the ice. Because the spike held the ground firmly, the men below him gained a firm

footing and were all saved.

### **Safe And Sure**

We can say, too, "I'm like one of those men that slipped, but thanks be to God, I'm bound in a living partnership to Christ. Because He stands, say then, 'I'll never perish.'"

Rejoice! You're safe in Him. The blood of Christ makes us safe; The Law and the Word of God makes us sure! We then grow in holiness, grace, love, and moral worth; a **moral renovation!**

Is there a **Moral Crisis** in your life? Press on, all the way to the **Gate! Amen.**

*John Theodorou , U.S.A.*



# LAODICEA MUST REPENT



## Part 7

“Be zealous therefore, and repent” Revelation 3:19

Bible repentance is always specific. When Peter preached at Pentecost, telling the Jews that they had crucified the Son of God, the people cried out, “What shall we do?”

Peter replied, “Repent” (Acts 2:37, 38). Specifically, they needed to repent in terms of the crucifixion of the Messiah.

As we’ve seen in the previous message, repentance means a “change of mind” or a “change of direction”. In modern terms, we would describe it as a U-turn. This can be a physical turning around or a change of the mind.

In what sense, then, is Christ asking Laodicea to repent? When we look at the specific context of His message to Laodicea, we see that He is calling on us to repent in two areas that are related.

First we need to have a change of mind in regard to the conflicting evaluations of our spiritual condition brought out in Revelation 3:17.

*We say that we are rich and increased with goods and have need of nothing.*

*Christ says we are wretched and miserable and poor and blind and naked.*

We need to change our minds and agree that Christ is right and we are wrong.

We need to repent of our wrong self-evaluation.

Second, we need to have a change in direction from our works of the law to the works of faith Jesus describes in verse 18. This means to make a U-turn from our own self-righteousness to Christ’s righteousness. One of the most difficult things for a person to do – even a Christian – is to repent of self-righteousness. It’s one thing to repent of our sins; it’s another thing altogether to repent of our self-righteousness because these are things that look good, things that we are proud of doing!

Jesus told the Jewish nation, “It will be easier for Nineveh in the judgment than for you” (see Matthew 12:41). Why? Because the people of Nineveh were guilty of terrible sins. They recognized that they were sinners and repented. But did the Jews repent? No. Why not? Because they didn’t realize that they needed to repent. They were filled with a sense of all the “good” things they did. They needed to repent of self-righteousness, and this is extremely difficult to do.

God is testing even His faithful children and putting them through fiery trials.

I’ve wrestled with the book of Job for a long time. I could never see why God allowed Satan to mistreat Job so badly and why Job had to go through all those terrible crises without any purpose other than to prove to Satan that God was right. To me, that didn’t seem to be enough; the whole story somehow didn’t seem to fit with what I knew of God’s character. Then one day I was reading *The Desire of Ages*, and I came across these words: “The history of Job had shown that suffering is inflicted by Satan, and is overruled by God for purposes



of mercy.” (471). But Ellen White didn’t say exactly what that merciful purpose was in Job’s case. The only way I could find out was to read and study and wrestle with the book of Job for myself.

The very first verse of the book says that Job “was blameless and upright and one who feared God and shunned evil” (Job 1:1). This description of Job is repeated in verse 8 when God is having a dialogue with Satan. “Have you considered My servant Job, that there is none like him on the earth, a blameless and upright man, one who fears God and shuns evil?”

And Satan replies, “Yes, but he does all this because You have built a hedge around him. Remove Your protection, and give him into my hands. You’ll see what he will do then. He will deny You and reject You. He will turn his back on You.” (see verses 9-11).

So God said, “You can have him. Everything he possesses is in your power, but you can’t touch his body. You can’t kill him.” Immediately, Satan set out to destroy everything Job had – including his children (see verses 13-19). How would you react after losing your children and everything you owned? Job tore his robe and shaved his head, and he fell to the ground and worshipped. And he said, “Naked I came from my mother’s womb, and naked shall I return. The Lord gave, and the Lord has taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord!” (see verses 20 -21).

Job didn’t turn his back on God. He was a righteous person.

In chapter 2, God and Satan have a second conversation regarding Job. Satan says to God, “All right, Job hasn’t rejected You yet. But let me touch *him* – not just his possessions or his children. Let me get his own body in my hands; he will deny You then!”

And God replied, “Go ahead. He is in your hands, but you can’t kill him.”

Satan caused Job to break out in terrible boils from head to foot. At this point Job’s wife had had enough. “Do you still hold to *your* integrity?” she asked. “Curse God and die!” (Job 2:9). But Job didn’t listen. “In all this Job did not sin with his lips” (verse 10).

Three new chapters enter the story, the so-called friends of Job – Eliphaz, Bildad, and Zophar. The arguments of these “comforters” are typical of the Eastern mentality regarding human suffering. All through the book, they are arguing that Job’s intense sufferings are the result of some secret sin in his life. “You wouldn’t be in this condition, Job, if there wasn’t something wrong in your spiritual life. God wouldn’t be punishing you like this otherwise.”

Does God punish us like that? Does He cause us to suffer physically for our sins? No. We need to remember that the arguments of Job’s friends are based on human reasoning, not biblical truth. That is why God rebukes them in the end. They were misrepresenting His character. But the important element in this story is Job’s reaction to all this. He doesn’t reject their reasoning regarding punishment for sin, but he defends his righteousness. That is why Job is so puzzled. Like his friends, he, too, believes that the wicked will suffer and the righteous prosper in this life. Yet he is suffering in spite of being righteous! That is what Job cannot understand.

“Teach me, and I will hold my tongue, cause me to understand wherein I have erred. How forceful are right words. But what does your arguing prove? ...Is injustice on my tongue?” (Job 6:24, 25, 30). He defends his righteousness before his friends. He is saying, “Where have I gone wrong? Show me what sin you are accusing me of. I am blameless, even though I am suffering.”

By the time we reach chapter 10, Job is defending his righteousness to God Himself. “I will say to God, ‘Do not condemn me; show me why You contend with me...You know that I am not wicked.’” (verses 2, 7). Later he pleads with God to show him his sins. Actually, Job is quite confident that his righteousness is perfect. “Go,” Job says, “these friends of mine are accusing me of some secret sin. Show me where I am wrong. I would really like to know what my sin is.” Of course, Job was convinced of his righteousness; he didn’t think he was guilty of sin.

Was there some sin in Job’s life that was the cause of his suffering? No.

Job continues to insist on his righteousness and to defend himself against the

accusations of his friends. They keep saying, “Job, you must have some secret sin in your life; look how you’re suffering!”

And Job argues back, “No I have not sinned. I have kept God’s commandments; I have held to my integrity.” Notice what he says in chapter 23. “My foot has held fast to His steps, I have kept His way and not turned aside. I have not departed from the commandment of His lips; I have treasured the words of His mouth more than my necessary food” (verses 11, 12).

Job was not self-righteous, and the proof of it is that God will never put a self-righteous person into fiery trials. Jesus had only one message to the self-righteous Pharisees, “Woe unto you.” But the people with Christ’s righteousness will be made more righteous by these trials. After we accept Christ’s righteousness, the fiery trials will begin to purify us more.

By chapter 31, Job is strongly defending his own righteousness. He calls upon God to judge him. “Let me be weighed in a just balance, that God may know my integrity” (verse 6). He goes on to list the good works he has habitually done – fed the hungry, clothed the naked, cared for the orphans and widows, and opened his home to the homeless. This chapter is Job’s final argument against the accusations of his three friends. “So these three men ceased answering Job.” (Job 32:1).

After Job’s three friends quit arguing with him, a fourth man steps in – Elihu. He asks Job, “Do you think this is right? Do you say, ‘My righteousness is more than God’s?’” (Job 35:2).

He continues this argument until chapter 38, when God steps in at last to settle the matter. If you read from chapter 38 to the end of the book, you’ll find that God rebukes Job’s three friends for their mistaken theology. They argued, “Job, you must be a sinner. The fact that you are suffering is proof of sin in your life because God punishes those who do bad things”. And God says, “No. You’re wrong. Suffering is not always proof of God’s punishment of sin.” So Job was right to reject the argument of his three friends.

But God also rebukes Job. “Who is this who darkens counsel by words without

knowledge? Now prepare yourself like a man, I will question you, and you shall answer Me.” (Job 38:2).

And notice that Job repents. “Then Job answered the Lord and said” ‘Behold, I am vile; what shall I answer You? I lay my hand over my mouth” (Job 40:3, 4). God’s words silenced Job.

The rich young ruler said to Jesus, “All these things have I kept from my youth up” (Matthew 19:20). Job was so focused on all the good things he did and the lack of sinful things in his life that he couldn’t recognize the source of his righteousness was self rather than God. But when he came face to face with God, he admitted, “I have uttered what I did not understand, things too wonderful for me, which I did not know... Therefore I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes” (Job 42:3, 6).

That is what Laodicea needs to do as well. Have we come to that point?

Repentance is terribly painful because we have to swallow our pride – our spiritual pride. The things we have looked to as evidence of our goodness, we have to see as monuments to self. It was hard for Job to admit he had a problem in his spiritual life. It was hard for Peter to repent of his own opinion. It was hard for Paul to give up his righteousness of the law. But each of these realized that God was right and that He was their only hope. Are we prepared to take that hard step – both as individuals and as a denomination?

God didn’t enjoy putting Job through this crisis. But Job had a lesson to learn, and this drastic method was the only way to teach him. God allowed Satan to touch Job for a purpose. When the lesson was complete, God blessed him again. He restored his health, his possessions, and his children.

Christ’s message to Laodicea will also produce a shaking – a traumatic time for God’s people. I don’t know exactly how God will chastise us today, but I know that His purpose will be the same as was His purpose for Job. Out of that shaking time will come a people who will have repented of their self-righteousness; a people who will have turned to Christ’s righteousness fully and completely; a people who will abhor self and the righteousness it produces. The ultimate end of true Christianity is that

the Christian rejoices in Christ and has no confidence in the flesh. (see Philippians 3:3).

Have you ever wondered why God allows His people to be harassed after probation has closed? When probation closes, there can be no change in status. God has said, “He that is righteous, let him be righteous still; and he that is holy, let him be holy still” (Revelation 22:11).

Those who are righteous by faith will remain so until the end; those who have rejected Christ will remain in that condition. Why, then, does God allow His righteous people to go through a time of terrible crisis *after* the close of probation – a crisis the like of which has never been experienced by any previous generation? Is He simply trying to prove a point? Is He just proving to the universe that these people will remain faithful to Him, no matter what He throws at them?

This statement from *The Great Controversy* helps us understand:

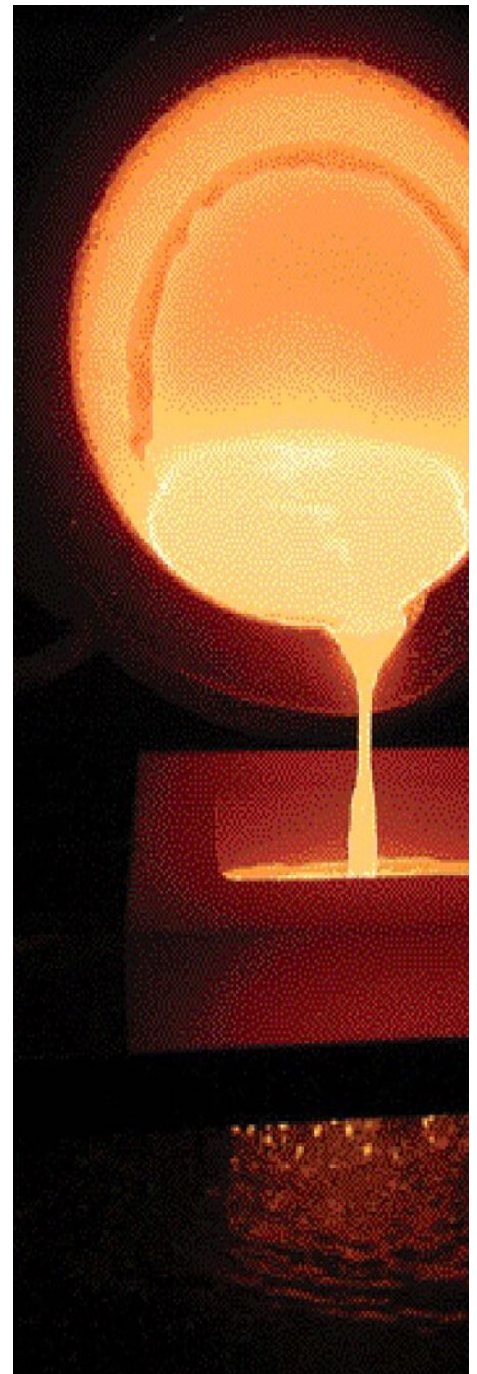
*Their (God’s people) affliction is great, the flames of the furnace seem about to consume them; but the Refiner will bring them forth as gold tried in the fire. God’s love for His children during the period of their severest trial is as strong and tender as in the days of their sunniest prosperity; but it is needful for them to be placed in the furnace of fire; their earthliness must be consumed, that the image of Christ may be perfectly reflected. (621)*

When you are going through a crisis, it doesn’t mean that God loves you any less. God’s *agape* love never changes; it is eternal, unconditional, changeless. (see Jeremiah 31:3). So the time of terrible trial following the close of probation doesn’t indicate that God is not concerned about what happens to His people, any more than Job’s experience showed a lack of concern on God’s part for him. Self must be consumed so that the image of Jesus Christ may be reproduced in our lives. The world desperately needs to see Christ, but it cannot see Him in you or me unless every particle of self has been crucified. That is why God allows us to go through the refining process now, and that is why He will allow His people to go through the time of crisis following probation’s close.

In the time of trouble, Satan will point us

to our feelings. Even after probation closes, we will still *feel* sinful. Even after probation closes we will still *feel* that we aren’t good enough to be saved. But the question is not how we feel. The question is: “Who is our righteousness?” The answer must be: “Christ”. Every bit of self, every taint of earthliness must be consumed. We cannot look to ourselves or our experience. Christ can be fully reproduced in us only when we have said goodbye to self completely.

In this, as in all other aspects of our lives, Christ is our example. How was it possible for Him – not as God, but in our humanity, which He assumed – to perfectly reveal



His Father? Paul gives us the steps in Philippians, chapter 2 and holds Christ up to us as our example. He says:

*Let this mind (attitude) be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus. Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God; But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant; and was made in the likeness of men: And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.” (verses 5-8).*

The Greek word in verse 6 translated “equal” means “absolute sameness”. Paul is saying that Jesus was one with the Father, equally divine in every regard. It was not sin for Him to make Himself equal with the Father.

During His earthly mission, He was walking in the Spirit. That is what Paul admonishes us to do as well. (see Romans 8:1,4, Galatians 5:16). It was the Holy Spirit who controlled Jesus, and that is why He could reveal the Father perfectly. Through the Spirit, Christ was totally dependent on His Father. He told His disciples, “Verily, verily, I say to you, The Son can do nothing of himself, but what he seeth the Father do... I can of mine own self do nothing”. (John 5:19, 30). And just as Christ was totally dependent on His Father, so we are to be totally dependent on Christ. “Without me,” He says, “ye can do nothing” (John 15:5). “As the living Father hath sent me, and I live by the Father: so he that eateth me, even he shall live by me.” (John 6:57). It is not our righteousness that the world needs to see; it is Christ’s righteousness.

Throughout His ministry on earth, Jesus repeated that He lived by the power of His Father, that the works He performed were done by the power of His Father (see John 10:32,37,38; 14:9-11). The same is true with us today, we must be clear about that.

So God calls on Laodicea to repent. Specifically, He calls on us to repent of our false self-evaluation. We are *not* rich and increased with goods, and we need to admit and repent. He calls on us to repent of our works of the law – our self-righteousness. We must move from works of law to works of faith; from self-righteousness to Christ’s righteousness.

Now that we have seen what Christ is asking of us in terms of repentance, what will be our response? Our problem is that we are not guilty of gross sins. Like Job, our problem is that self-righteousness has deceived us. Do we need to repent of self-righteousness? Yes. It is crucial that we do so, and God will do everything in His power to help us. He will rebuke us first, as He does Laodicea. Then He will chastise us if necessary.

To what extent will God chastise us? I don’t know, but if we look at Job’s experience, we realise the chastisement can take drastic forms. Job lost his children, his possessions, his health, and almost his life itself. But God didn’t allow these calamities to come to Job because He was angry with him or in order to justify Himself to Satan. He did it out of love. He knew that Job needed to learn this important lesson for his eternal good. And Job did learn the lesson. He did repent. He said, “God, You are right, and I am nothing.” May God give us the wisdom to follow in Job’s steps.

God has told us what His goal is for our lives: “I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their god, and they shall be my people”. (2 Corinthians 6:16). This is the precious covenant, the “new covenant” that God wants to make with us. It is His promise to dwell in us through the Holy Spirit just as the Spirit totally controlled Jesus during His earthly life.

“Love is the basis of godliness. Whatever the profession, no man has pure love to God unless he has unselfish love for his brother. But we can never come into possession of this spirit by trying to love others. What is needed is the love of Christ (*agape*) in the heart. When self is merged in Christ, love springs forth spontaneously. The completeness of Christian character is attained when the impulse to help and bless others springs constantly from within – when the sunshine of heaven fills the heart and is revealed in the countenance” (*Christ’s Object Lessons*, 384).

He wants to fulfill this promise in our lives; He wants to fulfill this promise in our church. And when that happens, the whole earth will be lightened with God’s glory, and the end will come. *Amen*

*Anonymous*

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Sebago, Maine

August  
23 – 25, 2007

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# HUNGER AND THIRST AFTER RIGHTEOUSNESS



Jesus said, “Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness, for they shall be filled.” Matt. 5:6.

“But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and His righteousness; And all these things shall be added unto you.” Matt. 6:33.

Righteousness is something that none of us has naturally. It cannot be inherited from our parents, neither can we produce it ourselves.

Paul writes, “As it is written, There is none righteous, no, not one: There is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God.” Rom. 3:10, 11.

Naturally we have no desire after God, or for His righteousness. Purity and holiness do not appeal to a natural person.

Naturally no one is hungering and thirsting after righteousness. People are thirsting after riches, power, pleasure, fun, and to satisfy the appetites and cravings of the flesh. There goes a murderer to kill, and a thief in the night to steal. There goes a pleasure-lover to a place of entertainment and a self-righteous Christian to church, feeling good about himself like the Pharisee. And they all perish; they all will be cast into the lake of fire.

Some people realize that righteousness is necessary for salvation and they pray for it, but do not receive it. It is not enough to ask for it; we must be hungering and thirsting for it, then only can we be filled with it.

A young person who delays his baptism and his commitment to God until a later time is not hungering and thirsting after righteousness.

A Christian who cannot do missionary work, nor visit the church meetings, because he is so busy with his daily work is not hungering or thirsting after righteousness either. He is hungering and thirsting after more money.

A professed Christian who does not read the Bible every day, nor prays without ceasing, is not hungering and thirsting after righteousness. Therefore, none of these mentioned will be filled with righteousness, and for this reason sin remains in their lives.

Paul writes, “Awake to righteousness, and sin not.” 1 Cor. 15:34. Here is the secret. Many have been sleeping spiritually and not realizing what they were doing. Satan lulls people to sleep; they are hypnotized by him.

Peter denied his Lord three times, not thinking that he was doing something wrong; until suddenly he wakes up, realizing his terrible sin, and in repentance goes and weeps bitterly. This waking up to realize his sin was his salvation.

This weeping bitterly like Peter is seeking after righteousness. Then God will fulfill His promise, by filling us with righteousness.

Sister White writes, “I saw some with strong faith and agonizing cries, pleading with God. Their countenances were pale and marked with deep anxiety, expressive of their internal struggle. Firmness and great earnestness was expressed in their countenances; large drops of perspiration fell from their foreheads. Now and then their faces

would light up with the marks of God's approbation, and again the same solemn, earnest, anxious look would settle upon them...

"As the praying ones continued their earnest cries, at times a ray of light from Jesus came to them, to encourage their hearts and light up their countenances.

"Some I saw, did not participate in this work of agonizing and pleading. They seemed indifferent and careless. They were not resisting the darkness around them, and it shut them in like a thick cloud. The angels of God left these, and went to the aid of the earnest, praying ones." EW, p. 269, 270.

This is the answer to what we must do. Pray without ceasing in great earnestness and agony.

Sister White continues, "We must be much in communion with God. Prayer in secret, prayer while the hands are engaged in labor, prayer while walking by the way, prayer in the night season, the heart's desires ever ascending to God, --this is our only safety. In this manner Enoch walked with God." RH, Nov. 8, 1887.

Enoch was victorious because he prayed without ceasing, and Sister White said that this is our only safety, also.

Bible study is also part of hungering and thirsting after righteousness. Sister White writes, "Just as soon as there is the diligent study of the Bible that there should be, we shall not fail of noting a marked difference in the characters of the people of God." RH, April 9, 1889.

When we understand the high standard that we must reach, which is Christlikeness in the character, then we would not ignore any medium that is available for us to reach it.

At the same time Satan has been very active to put God's people to sleep, that they would not be hungering and thirsting after righteousness. Many professed Christians are crossing the line of no return. They sin against the Holy Spirit by ignoring the only saving message that God has given us.

This is our message to the perishing world. Sin can be overcome, man can be changed to the image of God. The hidden treasure can still be found. We must prove it by

our own lives; then only can we be true preachers of righteousness. God has made every provision for man to be an overcomer, even under the strongest temptation.

Angels of heaven marvel at this message and its effect on one who receives it. It is much more than forgiveness for sins. It is a new life in Christ, it is love so deep that we can never fully understand it, it is purity and holiness, it is Godlikeness and living without sin. This message is the water of life that Jesus offered to the Samaritan woman.

Yet the delegates in the Minneapolis conference in 1888 rejected this message and ridiculed it, by so doing they sinned against the Holy Spirit. They did not see the necessity for this message. They felt themselves rich and increased with goods, and having need of nothing. When the test came upon them 26 years later they all failed, and became enemies of God's people.

"There is nothing so offensive to God or so dangerous to the human soul as pride and self-sufficiency. Of all sins it is the most hopeless, the most incurable." COL, p. 154.

Humility of the heart is the first condition for receiving Christ's righteousness. Yet it is very difficult to learn. Few people can say, "I must decrease," "I must be less noticed." This characteristic is totally opposite to the human nature. A humble person cannot be offended, no abuse will hurt him; he loves his enemies.

Is it your desire to live in the country where dwelleth righteousness? Where everyone is perfect and loves one another? Is it your desire to put away sin and the love of the world? If so, then there is the message for you, in the holy pages of the Bible. A message that will thrill your heart and change you into the perfect image of Christ. But you must hunger and thirst for it, then only can you be filled with righteousness. And then walk with God in a prayer connection, as Enoch walked and was victorious. *AMEN.*

Timo Martin, Canada

2007

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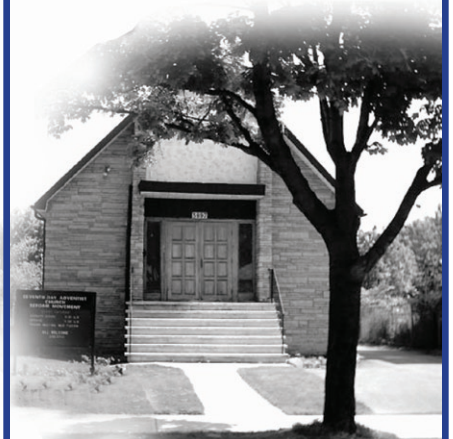
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## SABBATH - EVEN BEFORE SINAI

# SABBATH OBSERVANCE

It is a wonderful and established fact that the Sabbath was given to man in Eden. Sabbath observance continued to the time of the Israelite's slavery in Egypt, and after their deliverance while they were living in the tents of the desert for forty years. This was a period of 2500 years from Adam to the fourth generation of Abraham (Genesis 15:16) Even before the Ten Commandments were proclaimed on Sinai, the Sabbath Commandment was in existence since Eden, and continuing with the next twenty-five generations. Both the Sabbath observance and the rest of the Ten Commandments were respected by ancient generations as a reminder of their redemption. They offered animal sacrifices as a sign of their affection towards God. The generations of ancient times were very faithful and obedient towards the commandments of God, more so than the generations of this present age.

In the life of man, he may have to face periods of persecution because of his belief in God's Ten Commandments; even during the difficult period of slavery in Egypt, the people remembered the commandments of God including the Sabbath observance. The Ten Commandments given by God, written by God's own fingers should always be remembered. It will help us to remember the love of God towards us, and when we are tempted to sin it will remind us to stop sinning. At times the hearts of the people were hardened like rock; to remind them of God's law, the commandments were inscribed on tables of stone.

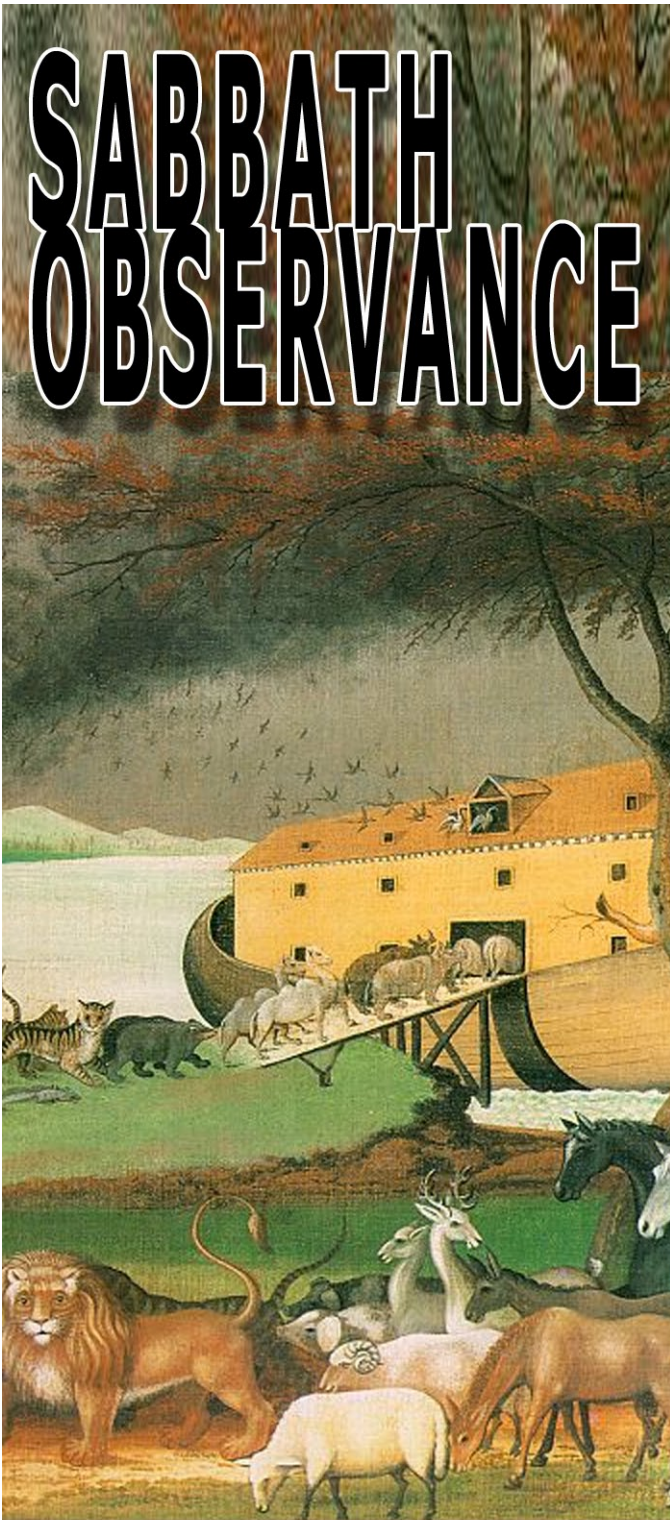
The birth date of a man cannot be changed to another day, for any reason. Likewise the commandments of God including the holy Sabbath day cannot be changed for any reason. It is written, "Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy but to fulfil. For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all is fulfilled." Matthew 5:17,18 "Ye shall not add unto the word which I command you, neither shall ye diminish aught from it, that ye may keep the commandments of the Lord your God which I command you." Deuteronomy 4:2 "My covenants will I not break, nor alter the thing that is gone out of my lips. Once have I sworn by my holiness that I will not lie unto David." Psalm 89:34,35 This holy Sabbath day was entrusted to Adam, the father of mankind.

Is there a Sabbath day only for Jews?

"The Sabbath was made for man..." Mark 2:27,28 not only for the Jews, but for all people. So, "for there is no difference between the Jew and the Greek: for the same Lord over all is rich unto all that call upon him. For "whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved." Romans 10:12, 13. 2300 year's even before the name of Judah came to be known, the Sabbath of the Lord within the Ten Commandments of God were given to Adam and Eve. So the Sabbath is not intended for Jews alone but for the whole of mankind up until the end of the world.

### In the days of Noah...

"Seven days were the family of Noah in the ark before the rain began to descend upon the earth" 1 SP, p. 72. "And Noah went in, and his sons, and his wife with him, and his sons' wives with him, went into the ark because of the waters of the flood. Of clean beasts, and of beasts that are not clean, and of fowls, and of every thing that creepeth on the earth, There went in two and unto Noah into the ark, the male



## Part 3

and the female, as God had commanded Noah.” Genesis. 7: 7-9. “And it came to pass after seven days, that the waters of the flood were upon the earth.” Genesis 7:10. According to the word of God, of all the animals and birds entered into the ark within six days. Also Noah and his family entered into the ark. Before the flood began, they worshiped the Sabbath day in Noah’s ark. This proves that, according to the custom of Noah’s family, they followed the Sabbath observance. The ark, during the flood was place of shelter and safety for Noah’s family and other living things.

“Anxiously did Noah and his family watch the decrease of the waters. He desired to go forth upon the earth again. He sent out a raven which flew back and forth to and from the ark. He did not receive the information he desired, and he sent forth a dove, which, finding no rest returned to the ark again. After seven days the dove was sent forth again, and when the olive leaf was seen in its mouth, there was great rejoicing by this family of eight, which had so long been shut up in the ark.” 1 S.P. p.76; Genesis 8:10,12

So, here a lesson is taught to all who should live upon the earth, that for every manifestation of God’s mercy and love toward them, the first act of all should be to render to him grateful thanks and humble worship.” S.P. Vol. 1, p. 76, 77

### **Manna and Sabbath**

“And when the dew that lay was gone up, behold, upon the face of the wilderness there lay a small round thing, as small as the hoar frost on the ground. And when the children of Israel saw it, they said one to another, It is manna: for they wist not what it was. And Moses said unto them, This is the bread which the Lord hath given you to eat. This is the thing which the Lord hath commanded, Gather of it every man according to his eating, an omer for every man, according to the number of your persons; take ye every man for them which are in his tents. And the children of Israel did so, and gathered, some more, some less.

“And when they did mete it with an omer, he that gathered much had nothing over, and he that gathered little had no lack; they gathered every man according to his eating. And Moses said, Let no man leave

of it till the morning. Notwithstanding they hearkened not unto Moses; but some of them left of it until the morning, and it bred worms, and stank: and Moses was wroth with them. And they gathered it every morning, every man according to his eating: and when the sun waxed hot, it melted. And it came to pass, that on the sixth day they gathered twice as much bread, two omers for one man: and all the rulers of the congregation came and told Moses.

“And he said unto them, this is that which the Lord hath said, Tomorrow is the rest of the holy Sabbath unto the Lord: bake that which ye will bake today, and seethe that ye will seethe; and that which remaineth over lay up for you to be kept until the morning. And they laid it up till the morning, as Moses bade: and it did not stink, neither was there any worm therein. And Moses said, Eat that today; for today is a Sabbath unto the Lord: today ye shall not find it in the field. Six days ye shall gather it; but on the seventh day, which is the Sabbath, in it there shall be none.” Exodus. 16:14-26.

“The Lord is no less particular now in regard to His Sabbath than when He gave the foregoing special directions to the children of Israel. He required them to bake that which they would bake, and seethe [that is, boil] that which they would seethe, on the sixth day, preparatory to the rest of the Sabbath.

“God manifested His great care and love for His people in sending them bread from heaven. “Man did eat angel’s food”; that is, food provided for them by the angels. The threefold miracle of the manna – a double quantity on the sixth day, and none on the seventh, and its keeping fresh through the Sabbath, while on other days it would become unfit for use – was designed to impress them with the sacredness of the Sabbath.” SP. Vol. 1, pp. 224–226.

The example of the experience of the manna in the wilderness is proof that the Holy Sabbath is the Lord’s holy day.

1. From the first day to the sixth in the week, there was the showering of the manna. But...
2. On the sixth day the showering was doubled for it should be preserved for the Sabbath day.
3. In particular we can note here, there was no showering of manna on the seventh day Sabbath at all.

4. The manna collected during the other five days, if keep for next day, would become rotten.
5. But it kept fresh for the Sabbath, the seventh day; it would not be rotten.

“See, for that the Lord hath given you the Sabbath, there fore he giveth you on the sixth day the bread of two days; abide ye every man in his place, let no man go out of his place on the seventh day. So the people rested on the seventh day.” Exodus. 16:29,30.

### **The Day of the Lord**

“The fourth is the connecting link between the great God and man. The Sabbath, especially, was given for the benefit of man and for the honor of God.... The Sabbath was to be a sign between God and His people forever. In this manner was it to be sign – all who should observe the Sabbath, signified by such observance that they were worshipers of the living God, the creator of the heavens and the earth. The Sabbath was to be a sign between God and His people as long as He should have a people upon the earth to serve Him.” SP. Vol. 1, p. 237.

“Our heavenly father desires through the observance of the Sabbath to preserve among men a knowledge of Himself. He desires that the Sabbath shall direct our minds to Him as the true and living God, and that through knowing Him we may have life and peace.

“When the Lord delivered His people Israel from Egypt and committed to them His law, He taught them that by the observance of the Sabbath they were to be distinguished from idolaters. It was this that made the distinction between those who acknowledge the sovereignty of God and those who refuse to accept Him as their Creator and King. ‘It is a sign between me and the children of Israel forever,’ the Lord said. ‘Wherefore the children of Israel shall keep the Sabbath, to observe the Sabbath throughout their generations, for a perpetual covenant.’ Exodus 31:17, 16

“As the Sabbath was the sign that distinguished Israel when they came out of Egypt to enter the earthly Canaan, so it is the sign that now distinguishes God’s people as they come out from the world to enter the heavenly rest. The Sabbath is a sign of the relationship existing between God and His people, a sign that they honor

His law. It distinguishes between His loyal subjects and transgressors...

“The Sabbath given to the world as the sign of God as the Creator is also the sign of Him as the Sanctifier. The power that created all things is the power that re-creates the soul in His own likeness. To those who keep holy the Sabbath day it is the sign of sanctification. True sanctification is harmony with God oneness with Him in character. It is received through obedience to those principles that are the transcript of His character. And to Sabbath is the sign of obedience...”

“To us as to Israel the Sabbath is given ‘for a perpetual covenant.’ To those who reverence His holy day the Sabbath is a sign that God recognizes them as His chosen people.” 6T, pp. 349, 350

“Speak thou also unto the children of Israel, saying, Verily my sabbaths ye shall keep: for it is a sign between me and you throughout your generations; that ye may know that I am the Lord that doth sanctify you. Ye shall keep the Sabbath therefore; for it is holy unto you: every one that defileth it shall surely be put to death: for whosoever doeth any work therein, that soul shall be cut off from among His people.... Wherefore the children of Israel shall keep the Sabbath, to observe the Sabbath throughout their generations, for a perpetual covenant.” Exodus. 31:13, 14, 16. *AMEN.*

*S. Raj Israel*



## GENERAL CONFERENCE ASSEMBLY 2007

**International Missionary Society 7th-day Adventist Church Reform Movement**

**July 11-15, 2007 Puebla, Mexico**

With the help of the Lord, the time of the next General Conference Assembly is at hand! The General Conference Assembly 2007 will be held at the Centro Vacacional IMSS Metepec, in the State of Puebla, Mexico. The conference center is located close to the city of Atlixco.

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# MEXICO 2007

## Youth Conference



**INTERNATIONAL MISSIONARY SOCIETY SEVENTH DAY ADVENTISTS REFORM MOVEMENT**

**July 15 to 22, 2007 Puebla, Mexico**

The program entails study workshops with topics of interest for the youth. Every evening there will be evangelistic meetings. Excursion to Mexico City and one to the ruins of Teotihuacan.

### Site of the Conference

Centro Vacacional IMSS Metepec, in the state of Puebla, Mexico.

### Booking and Payment

To make a reservation, the forms and payment of foreign visitors must be received at the General Conference offices no later than June 25, 2007.

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### In Mexico contact the Union Headquarters:

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# MISSIONARY REPORT FROM GATINEAU & GRANBY

By the grace of God and responding to the Macedonian call, the work in Gatineau did prosper by the Spirit of the Lord.

During one week we had meetings every night, in which Anie and her two children of 17 and 18 years of age attended. With Sister Flor we studied the baptismal questions, and she expressed her desire to be baptized at the next Canadian conference, if it is the will of God.

On Sabbath we were together, nine adults and one child. I left them the Bible Study Course, that they can study as they continue to meet together. Sister Flor has a great missionary spirit, and she seems very sincere. I would like to ask all to pray for her and for her family. Also pray for Anie and for her children.

They are asking for visits from our members once a month, or at least once every two months. They also need Bibles and Hymnals, which they do not have.

The night before my leaving Gatineau to go to Granby, one sister of Anie's came with her husband and two children, age 20 and 12. I had an opportunity to study with them about Sabbath and of the vegetarian diet. They asked to be informed about the next meeting.

In Granby we had meetings, but not that frequently because some were working and others were studying in night school. Somehow they seemed to be discouraged.

On Sabbath we came together with three members, four visitors and seven children.

Please pray for these members and visitors. Do not forget them nor those in Gatineau.

I gave them 500 flyers to be distributed in both places. Also, please send them Sabbath School Lessons and more pamphlets in Spanish and in French.

May the Lord water that seed that is sown in these places and make it to grow. **AMEN.**

***Shartery Garcia***





### **Clark, Angeles City May 14, 2007**

The anticipated launching of the Youth Recreation Fellowship Program organized by the Youth Dept. of the Local Timog Church (Angeles City) in coordination with the Philippines Union and Luzon Mission field Youth Dept. had been planned to take place on May 14, 2007. On Sunday morning three vans were taken by the young people with the guidance of the elders to Clark camping ground, a really quiet and scenic area located in Angeles City, Pampanga, a restful setting for outdoor Christian fellowship. This is a mountainous place where adults, young people and children were able to spend a nice time in nature among the trees. The trip was approximately one hour long. Altogether 40 church members attended, 26, youth, 9 adults, and 5 children. We were also glad to have a couple of visitors and friends of some of the brethren come along with us. Young men and women from different local Reformed churches, namely Pandan, Manila & Cavite, were invited to participate. We were very happy to have them; they had the wonderful opportunity to interact with other young people and share the day together for exchanging thoughts and experiences and develop friendships. Sis. Marlie Galom, the local Timog Church youth department leader presided over the program and opened by warmly welcoming all who had come. We

began the morning with joyful expressions of praise and gratitude through singing of the hymn, "Seek Ye First," followed by a scripture reading and prayer offered by Sis. Cleotilde Austria. Our speaker, Luzon Missionfield Youth Leader, Br. Roland dela Paz stressed the necessity of outdoor recreation which, when true to its name tends to strengthen and build up. He pointed out that we are made for action. We need exercise, fresh air, sunshine, periods of rest, contemplation and retreat. God has wonderfully created our minds and bodies so it is important that we not let this delicate machinery become worn by cares, perplexities and toils. It is the privilege and duty of Christians to refresh their spirits and invigorate their bodies for the purpose of using their physical and mental powers for the glory of God. By seeing, hearing, feeling and touching the things of God we may be able to know what it really means to live with Him. It was noted, also that the blessed occasion was a special time for young and old people to get acquainted, grow in their physical and social life and to prepare for the great day of our Lord's coming. He kindly added that this training will be the stepping stone in helping to establish our individual relationship with God as well as our love and unity with each other. Next we arranged and separated all participants into four groups and let them

choose the name of a fruit that would identify their team. Our educational activities proceeded afterward, which proved very challenging, practical and interesting. We balanced the mental and physical exercises with a bit of practical labor-- missionary work. This was the most exciting part when we went to people and distributed our literature, pamphlets and tracts presenting our Creator and asking them to believe in the Son of God. Most of the children and young people carried and gave out an invitation card explaining our mission and informing the masses about our local broadcast radio ministry. A wonderful effect began to happen in souls that were interested, who asked for more Bible information and studies. Everything was well organized.

The energetic youth singers inspired the sweet fellowship with spiritual songs. Thereafter lunch time came and potluck was served. We sat down on the grass under the shade of the trees and enjoyed a healthy vegetarian meal. The food was excellent and a wonderful spirit in all was shown. Later in the afternoon., we continued the program, children, youth and even adults played various social exercises, that takes a lot of skill including special music and a cheering composition, learning Bible books, places, events, people and stories,





scriptures quizzes/drills were conducted, collecting and classifying object lessons from nature. The workshop period followed by art and craft making, led by Sis. Marlie Galo, Sis. Rachel Austria, Sis. Chit dela Paz, Br. Roland dela Paz and Elder Francis Ortega. This is, of course one of the interesting parts of all because they like to use their hands and simple materials like wood, bamboo and leaves to make something pretty, useful and meaningful. This includes also fire building, bread baking, cooking food like rice placed in bamboo without using a pot, frying the egg in a paper bond, egg toasting through the aid of a wooden stick and other ways such as roasting the egg underground. These activities provide so much fun for the people. As an appreciation during this time, Sis. Chit dela Paz was in charge of the awards ceremony, given for various accomplishments based on accumulated points of talents in reasoning, intelligence, practical skill and Christian traits shown

by the players such as friendliness, cheerfulness, tact and courtesy. As the day came to a close, each was given an opportunity to express what new things they learned that can help them throughout life. The last hours were very special as Elder Francis Ortega, Philippine Union Youth Department Leader expressed heartfelt gratitude for everyone who contributed and participated actively in these endeavors. Encouraged by the interest displayed by the young people, he firmly believed that this program could become a nurturing ground that could foster support and understanding during the adolescent years. But most importantly, as young people rightly trained this could be the greatest resource for the highest in the Master's service and for our fellow men. He was quite enthusiastic about the development of this project and proposed to adopt these training programs around the country. Then we knelt down in prayer, thanking God for His providence and trusting the Almighty to deliver His

children from temptations. The recreation turned out successful and more rewarding than we expected. May the Lord continue to bless this effort to further His cause and give grace and wisdom to each youth who are truly searching for the meaning of life with God.

Your brethren in Christ,  
 Philippine Union and Luzon Mission Field Leaders  
 Elder Francis Ortega and Bro. Roland dela Paz

# The CULTURE Of HEAVEN



## Part 1

Each one of us needs to become acquainted with a new type of culture, one that is very different from which we have become accustomed to. I call this the culture of Heaven. What will the culture of Heaven be like? Do we see any of that culture here amongst us? What do you think?

Luke 8:12-15

1 “Now the parable is this: The seed is the word of God.

12 Those by the way side are they that hear; then cometh the devil, and taketh away the word out of their hearts, lest they should believe and be saved.

13 They on the rock are they, which, when they hear, receive the word with joy; and these have no root, which for a while believe, and in time of temptation fall away.

14 And that which fell among thorns are they, which, when they have heard, go forth, and are choked with cares and riches and pleasures of this life, and bring no fruit to perfection.

15 **But that on the good ground are they, which in an honest and good heart, having heard the word, keep it, and bring forth fruit with patience.”**

Here we have presented from Jesus the meaning of a parable that He spoke to His disciples. This is the parable of the Sower. Most of us know this parable very well. The Sower or planter went to plant some grain. And when he threw the grain onto the ground the grain fell into various conditions. In some places the ground was rocky, other places it was good ground but the soil was very thin. Still in another place thorns grew up and choked the growing plants and in another place it was good, rich soil full of nutrients and the ideal environment for the plants to grow.

Jesus here gives an explanation to the disciples of what He was teaching them. He told them that **the seed is the word of God**. There are many descriptions of what the Word of God is, “a lamp unto my path”, the “bread of life”. Most describe it being a life giving force with powerful characteristics and results to the one who hears and reads it. Yet here we find that even though the seed is perfect, full of life giving properties, in some circumstances it dies. It fails to impart its powerful properties and produce the desired result. It fails to take hold and become a permanent part of the environment to which it has gone into.

We see that this interaction involves two parts; the seed or the Word of God and the environment to which it falls. We see that this environment has a lot of impact upon the seed. It makes a difference whether the seed will grow up into a plant and produce fruit some day or if it will continue for a while and eventually die. Although some in this parable don’t even make it until the seed germinates. The seed dies immediately. Let us stop for a moment and be clear here. **The seed in each case is perfect** but it is different factors that are at play within each environment that makes the difference. There are different cultures in effect.

### Environment Affects Behaviour

Would you say that environment affects our behaviour? Do the things around us influence us to act a particular way over another? Does it affect our choices and if so to what extent? Are we destined to do those things that we are genetically predisposed to do? The culture that we are born with, what is in our Human nature, what is in our genetic code from when we are born?

We are going to look at a bit of the culture of Heaven. We are going to look at the seed that made it. I would like us to take a look at the seed that falls into the environment that enabled it to grow into a strong and mature plant and to produce good fruit. What kind of culture did it have? What kind of culture will there be in Heaven?

We can find that environment in verse 15. It says; **“But that on the good ground are they, which in an honest and good heart, having heard the word, keep it, and bring forth fruit with patience.”**

I would like to pull out one very distinct character trait of this environment to which the seed of the word of God grows here. I would like us to focus on the word honesty. You see what comes first here is not that the person heard the word, kept it and then brought forth fruit but that the actual environment that the seed fell into was an honest and good one. It was an honest heart.

The fact that the Word was heard and kept was a result of the honesty and therefore fruit was eventually produced. The word was kept and not discarded because it was fortified by honesty. Jesus uses the phrase “keep it”, implying that there is a struggle here. But the thing that allowed this heart to keep and hold on to God’s life giving Word or the “seed” is the honest heart into which it fell.

At some point in David’s life, after many trials and persecution, he mistakenly exclaimed in Psalm 116:11, “I said in my haste, All men are liars.”

David realized after living a life with God, through trials, failures and victories that indeed there are some honest people but he also realized that there are very few. Let us look at this character trait of where the seed had success.

What are other concepts or ideas that we associate honesty? When we think of honesty we think of another word, integrity. We think of phrases like “my word is my bond.” We think of reliability, of truthfulness and commitment. We think of faithfulness and love. These are all concepts with which we associate the make up of the concept of being honest.

Now the culture of Heaven is very different

from the culture that we know. Honesty, how do we differentiate between what each considers right and wrong. Each of us has different backgrounds, different behaviour patterns that we have learned from the environment in which we have lived. The church that we are a member of, the local church that we frequent and even the smaller group(s) within that circle of membership, each has an impact upon how we judge and process the information around us. I don’t know how many times I personally have caught myself adjudicating a situation that I am in. Wondering how a particular person can act a certain way that is different from the understanding that I personally have.

These are called expectations. And each set of expectations are what we think should happen. How a person should behave in a given situation, how they should dress, what their moral values should be etc. Each of us tends to develop our own scale with which we measure the people and world around us. But is this scale correct? How do we retrain our mind to be in harmony with God’s mind? How can our mind become like the mind of Jesus. How do we even know whether our perception of what is honest is correct?

I will give you a really good example of what I am talking about. I would like you to think of a couple that have been married for a long time. When they were young and they first got married the two individuals had certain expectations of each other. Before they were married, while they were still single and were just dating those expectations were not as important. They were a lot fewer and seemed to be lost in all the other emotions that they were feeling. And then the bottom fell out! When they got married how things seemed to be completely different than they expected. That is because all of a sudden there were expectations from each other’s perspective. Because each was a different person, with different behaviour patterns and different minds their expectations were different. But gradually over the years, as each influenced each other and each got used to what the other person expected of them and the world around them, their expectations harmonized and maybe even changed. Each knew what to expect of each other given a certain set of circumstances. And there is a lot more harmony.

So what is Honesty? How would we define if someone is honest. How do we know if we ourselves are honest? What is God’s attitude towards honesty?

## HONESTY WITH GOD

What does it mean to be honest with God?

### **Our High Calling pg. 226**

**“Honesty and policy will not harmonize;** either policy will be subdued, and truth and honesty hold the lines of control, or policy will take the lines, and honesty cease to direct. Both cannot act together; they can never be in agreement. When God makes up His jewels, the true, the frank, the honest, will be His chosen ones, His treasures.”

God’s chosen one’s will be the honest; they “will be His chosen treasures.” We fool ourselves if we think that God does not read our heart. We fool ourselves if we think that dishonesty will not have repercussions in our life. God does not want us to act out of policy.

What does it mean to act out of Policy? ***The word Policy means a definite course of action adopted for the sake of expediency.*** God does not want us to make decisions and live our life because it is the expedient thing to do, the easy thing to do in a given set of circumstances. It says here that this type of behaviour and honesty cannot exist in the same person at the same time. They cannot act together. Having principles and acting upon those principles is never the expedient or easy thing to do. It is contrary to this world and it is contrary to our human nature.

Lets take a look at an example of this in the Bible, from someone that is remembered as an honest person.

### **Abraham**

Genesis 12:11-19

11 And it came to pass, when he was come near to enter into Egypt, that he said unto Sarai his wife, Behold now, I know that thou art a fair woman to look upon:

12 Therefore it shall come to pass, when the Egyptians shall see thee, that they shall say, This is his wife: and they will kill me, but they will save thee alive.

13 Say, I pray thee, thou art my sister: that it may be well with me for thy sake; and my soul shall live because of thee.

14 And it came to pass, that, when Abram was come into Egypt, the Egyptians beheld the woman that she was very fair.

15 The princes also of Pharaoh saw her, and commended her before Pharaoh: and the woman was taken into Pharaoh's house.

16 And he entreated Abram well for her sake: and he had sheep, and oxen, and he asses, and menservants, and maidservants, and she asses, and camels.

17 And the LORD plagued Pharaoh and his house with great plagues because of Sarai Abram's wife.

18 And Pharaoh called Abram and said, What is this that thou hast done unto me? why didst thou not tell me that she was thy wife?

19 Why saidst thou, She is my sister? so I might have taken her to me to wife: now therefore behold thy wife, take her, and go thy way.

Here we have the example of Abraham when they were traveling into and through Egypt. Abraham's wife Sarah was a beautiful young woman and in those days kings pretty much took what they wanted in their kingdom. If there were a beautiful young woman that they wanted as a wife or concubine then they would just take her, even if that meant killing the husband if they were married.

This was the thought that ran through Abraham's mind when they were upon the border of Egypt. Now I want this to be clear to everyone. They were at the border of Egypt; they had not even entered the country yet. This was not just an emotional, spur of the moment reaction to being confronted by Pharaoh and his army. No this was a pre-thought out act. This was the nature of Abraham acting out of "policy". This was a premeditated act. This was done out of expediency.

He asked his wife to tell everyone, when they asked, that Sarah was his sister instead of his wife. That way it would protect him and all of their possessions. You see it was a forgone conclusion that Abraham would be confronted while passing through Egypt because he was a rich man at this point with many animals, a large family and many goods. It was a large caravan that couldn't just slide through undetected during the night.

So Abraham decided to have Sarah act dishonestly. In other words lie for him

because it was expedient to do so. Abraham thought that it wasn't really a big deal if he and by extension his wife and most likely his whole caravan behaved dishonestly. God would understand. It was the only way that he could see that he and his entire family and goods could be kept safe. But something unexpected happened, something that he hadn't thought through properly. Maybe he thought that he would be able to pass through unmolested and that all would be okay if this lie were told? But as we can see that was not what happened was it. The Pharaoh spared Abraham all right. Abraham saved his family and all his belongings, but he lost his wife to Pharaoh.

What must Abraham have thought at that moment? On top of it all, that dishonesty resulted in plagues being sent upon Egypt by God. This was all the result of the dishonesty that started with Abraham. I wonder if some innocent people in Egypt didn't die in those plagues? How many citizens might have lost their livelihood because of this dishonesty by the father of God's chosen people.

This is what expediency does. This is what dishonesty does. In every circumstance the truth will always come out. God always brings the truth out. Nothing good will ever come out of expediency and we fool ourselves if we think that God does not see this. Remember what it said about policy or expediency and honesty in Our High Calling; **"Both cannot act together; they can never be in agreement."**

#### **Our High Calling, pg. 226**

"Truthfulness and frankness should be ever cherished by all who claim to be followers of Christ. God and the right should be the motto. Deal honestly and righteously in this present evil world. Some will be honest when they see that honesty will not endanger their worldly interests; but all who act from this principle **will have their names blotted out of the book of life.**"

All who act from the principle of expediency, to be honest only if it doesn't affect their worldly interests **"will have their names blotted out of the book of life."**

This is how God views our life. This is part of the culture of Heaven. It is something that doesn't come natural but it must be there present if the seed of God's word is to

grow within us.

1 John 2:3-5

3 And hereby we do know that we know him, if we keep his commandments.

4 He that saith, I know him, **and keepeth not his commandments, is a liar**, and the truth is not in him.

If we do not keep His commandments then the truth is not in us and we are a liar, dishonest, or not honest. In other words, if we do not see the effectual working of the Holy Spirit in our lives, manifested in the keeping of the commandments in our life there is no truth in us. This applies to us, right here and right now.

### **HONESTY WITH OURSELVES**

**Review & Herald, December 29, 1896**

"Strict honesty must be cultivated."

"Strict honesty" is not something that comes naturally to humans but must be "cultivated." It takes time to grow within us, to change in our characters. What is the difference between honesty and strict honesty? Doesn't it mean that there will be no situation in our life when we will not be honest? That seems quite a tall order doesn't it? Can you imagine living your life like that? Can you think to yourself if there is any situation during this past week or this very day in which maybe you didn't quite hit that goal?

The next step that we need to go through in changing over our life to the culture of Heaven is to be honest with ourselves. And like the title of this article, it is a culture shock! It is shocking to us that we are not the people that we thought we are. We are shocked to think that all we have become in our life might still need to be changed. That the culture of Heaven might be so different than what we thought it was and even more disturbing that we ourselves might be different.

How can we be honest with anyone else and especially God if we are not honest with ourselves?

Proverbs 19: 21-22

21 "There are many devices in a man's heart; nevertheless the counsel of the LORD, that shall stand.

22 The desire of a man is his kindness: and

a poor man is better than a liar.”

The wisest man who ever lived, Solomon came to the conclusion that it is better to be poor, with little food or shelter, constantly struggling to get by each day than to be a liar or dishonest.

### Review & Herald, December 16, 1890

“But I am now speaking of actual **mistakes and errors that those who really love God and the truth sometimes commit.** There is manifested on the part of men in responsible positions an unwillingness to confess where they have been in the wrong; and their neglect is working disaster, not only to themselves, but to the churches. Our people everywhere have great need of humbling the heart before God, and confessing their sins. But when it is known that their ministers, elders, or other responsible men, have taken wrong positions, and yet excuse themselves and make no confession, the members of the church too often follow the same course. Thus many souls are endangered, and the presence and power of God are shut away from his people.”

We must be willing to admit and accept when we are wrong or have done wrong. We must not let satan win the struggle for our lives. Satan wins when we do not admit to ourselves and to God when we are wrong. You know, being honest with God, and ourselves, that is the beginning of repentance. And without repentance there is no new life.

This quote from the Review & Herald is speaking to **“those who really love God and the truth”**. This is not speaking about someone who doesn’t believe in God or whom has a limited understanding of God, this is talking about those who really love God and the truth. That is a really a sobering statement isn’t it? I can’t emphasize that enough! **“Those who really love God and the truth.”**

There is a great need for us to start humbling our heart. Doesn’t that mean being honest? Honest with God and honest with ourselves? And the worst part of all of this dishonesty that we have amongst God and ourselves is that because of this “many souls are endangered, and the presence and power of God are shut away from his people.” Just as in the case of Abraham, our dishonesty affects the salvation of others. And the

result is “the presence and power of God are shut away from His people.”

Are you looking for the presence and power of God? Wonder where it has gone? I think we know the answer. I want us to think about that for a while.

### HONESTY WITH EACH OTHER

Why is it important to be honest with each other? Does it really affect our life all that much? Why should I be honest with others if they are not honest with me?

2 Corinthians 8:21

21 Providing for honest things, not only in the sight of the Lord, but also in the sight of men.

God wants us to provide for honest things. Its is a requirement of God for us to not only be honest in our dealings with each other but to provide the environment (there is that concept again) in which honesty may flourish. But what does that mean? An environment where honesty can flourish?

Messages to Young People, pg. 420

“In your association with others, **put yourself in their place.** Enter into their feelings, their difficulties, their disappointments, their joys, and their sorrows. Identify yourself with them, and then do to them as, were you to exchange places with them, you would wish them to deal with you. **This is the true rule of honesty.** It is another expression of the law, “Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself.” And it is the substance of the teaching of the prophets. **It is a principle of heaven,** and will be developed in all who are fitted for its holy companionship.”

**The true rule of honesty** is to put yourself in another brother or sister’s place. Approach each other as if viewing the world from their perspective. Walk a mile in another’s shoes. This speaks about a tremendously personal interaction amongst each other. **“Identify yourself with them.”** We must identify with each other. Treat each other as if we would trade places and look from their perspective. Empathize and sympathize with them. Remember what I said about expectations? Don’t just share the good places but enter into the painful places. This is the true rule of honesty! “It is a principle of Heaven.” It is part of the

culture of Heaven! This doesn’t just happen but it must be developed. So when are we going to start?

### In The Upper Room

Remember the parable of the Sower that we began our study with today? Those texts we read were Jesus explaining the meaning of that parable. He was explaining the parable because like the others in attendance that day the disciples didn’t understand the message behind it. So after the crowds went away the disciples asked Jesus what it meant and He explained it to them. Even though the disciples were with Jesus they were still a confused bunch at that time. Now, time passed and they witnessed Judas being like the seed that fell on the rocks, which satan took away. Peter himself must have been wondering what type of ground he was in after denying Jesus three times on the night of His crucifixion. I am sure that these thoughts were not isolated to Peter. But what do we see happen to them?

Acts 2:1

1And when the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all with one accord in one place.

Acts of the Apostles pg. 36 and 37

“As the disciples waited for the fulfillment of the promise, they humbled their hearts in true repentance and confessed their unbelief. As they called to remembrance the words that Christ had spoken to them before His death they understood more fully their meaning.

These days of preparation were days of deep heart searching. The disciples felt their spiritual need and cried to the Lord for the holy unction that was to fit them for the work of soul saving.”

When the disciples were in the upper room on the day of Pentecost, they became in one accord. They searched their hearts; they were honest with themselves, with God and with each other. Only then could the Holy Spirit be poured out in its fullness. We need to come to this point in our lives. We need to be honest with each other, nothing less will do. We need to confess our unbelief. We need some heart searching with each other. **Amen**

*John Formosa, Canada*



# THE RESULT OF ONE LIE



## CHILDRENS CORNER

It was winter twilight. Shadows played about the room, while the ruddy light flickered pleasantly between the ancient andirons.

A venerable old lady, whose hair time had silvered, but whose heart he had left fresh and young, sat musing in an armchair, drawn up closely by the fireside. Suddenly the door opened, and a little girl hurried to her side.

"Well, Bessie," said the old lady, laying her hand lovingly on the child's sunny ringlets, "Have you had a good slide?"

"Beautiful, Aunt Ruth; and now won't you tell me one of your nice stories?"

Bessie was an only child, whose mother had just died. The little girl had come to visit her aunt, who had learned to love her dearly because of her winning ways and affectionate disposition.

But Aunt Ruth's eyes were of the clear sort, and she soon discovered that Bessie was not only careless about telling the truth, but that she displayed little sensitiveness when detected in a falsehood.

Now, if there was any one trait for which Aunt Ruth particularly distinguished, it was her unswerving truthfulness; and if here was any one thing that annoyed her more than all others, it was anything like falsehood.

"A liar shall not stand in my sight," was the language of her heart, and so she determined, with the help of God, to root out from her darling's character the noxious weed, whatever effort it might cost her. Of this she had been musing, and her resolve was formed.

"Get your rocking chair, dear, and come close beside me;" and in a moment the child's blue eyes were upturned to hers.

"I am old now, Bessie," and she tenderly stroked that fair brow, "and my memory is failing. But I can recall the time when I was a little sunny-haired girl like you. You open your eyes wonderingly, but if your life is spared, before you know it, child, you will be an old lady like Aunt Ruth.

"In those young days I was in a spelling-class, at school, with a little girl named Amy, a sweet-tempered, sensitive child, and a very good scholar. She seemed disposed to cling to me, and I could not well resist her loving friendship. Yet I did not quite like her, because she often went above me in the class, when, but for her, I should have stood at the head.

"Poor Amy could not account for my occasional coolness, for I was too proud to let her know the reason. I had been a truthful child, Bessie, but envy tempted me, and I yielded. I sometimes tried to prejudice the other girls against Amy, and this was the beginning of my deceit. She was too timid to defend herself, and so I usually carried my point.

"One day our teacher gave out to us the word, believe. In her usual low voice, Amy spelt 'b-e-l-i-e-v-e, believe.' Her teacher misunderstanding her said, quickly, 'Wrong – the next;' but turning to her again, asked, 'Did you not spell it, l-e-i-v-e?'

"No ma'am, I said l-i-e-v-e.'

"Miss R-, still in doubt, looking at me, inquired, 'You heard, Ruth; how was it?'

"A wicked thought occurred to me, - to disgrace her, and raise myself. Deliberately I uttered a gross falsehood, 'Amy said l-e-i-v-e.'

"The teacher turned toward Amy, who stood, silent, distressed and confounded by my accusation. Her flushed face and streaming eyes gave her the appearance of guilt.

"'Amy,' said her teacher sternly, 'I did not expect a lie from you. Go, now, to the foot of the class, and remember to remain after school.'

"I had triumphed, Bessie; Amy was disgraced, and I stood proudly at the head of my class, but I was not happy.

"When school was dismissed, I pretended to have lost something, and lingered in the hall. I heard the teacher say –

"'Amy, come here,' and then I caught the light footsteps of the gentle child.

"How could you tell that lie?"

"'Miss R--I did not tell a lie,' but even as she denied it, I could see through the keyhole that in her grief at the charge, and her dread of punishment, she stood trembling like a culprit.

"Hold out your hand.'

"There I stood, as if spellbound. Stroke after stroke of the hard ferule I heard fall upon the small white hand of the innocent child. You may hide your eyes from me, Bessie. Oh, why did I not speak? Every stroke went to my heart, but I would not confess my sin, and so I stole softly from the door.

"As I lingered on the way, Amy walked slowly along, with her books in one hand, while with the other she kept wiping away the tears, which would not yet cease to flow. Her sobs, seeming to come from a breaking heart, sank deep into my own.

"As she walked on, weeping, her foot stumbled and she fell, and her books were scattered on the ground. I picked them up and handed them to her. Turning towards me, her soft blue eyes swimming in tears, in the sweetest tones, she said, -

"I thank you, Ruth.'

"It made my guilty heart beat faster, but I would not speak so we went on silently together.

"When I reached home, I said to myself, 'what is the use, nobody knows it, and why should I be so miserable?' I resolved to throw off the hated burden, and, going into the pleasant parlor, I talked and laughed as if nothing were the matter. But the load on my poor heart only grew the heavier.

"I needed no one, Bessie, to reprove me for my cruel sin. The eye of God seemed consuming me. But the worse I felt, the happier I seemed; and more than once I was checked for my boisterous mirth, while tears were struggling to escape.

"At length I went to my room. I could not pray,

so hurrying to bed, I resolutely shut my eyes. But sleep would not come to me. The ticking of the old clock in the hall seemed every moment to grow louder, as if reproaching me; and when it slowly told the hour of midnight, it smote upon my ear like a knell.

"I turned upon my little pillow, but it was filled with thorns. Those sweet blue eyes swimming in tears, were ever before me, the repeated strokes of the hard stick kept sounding in my ears. At length, unable to endure it longer I left my bed, and sat down by the window. The noble elms stood peacefully in the moonlight, the penciled shadow of their spreading branches lying tremulously on the ground.

"The white fence, the graveled walks, the perfect quietness in which everything was wrapped, seemed to mock my restlessness, while the solemn midnight sky filled me with a sense of awe which I never felt before. Ah! Bessie, God was displeased with me, my conscience was burdened and uneasy, and I was wretched.

"As I turned from the window, my eyes rested on the snow-white cover on my little bed, a birthday gift from my mother. All her patient kindness rushed upon my mind. I felt her dying hand upon my head. I listened once more to her trembling voice, as she fervently besought the blessing of heaven upon me: -

"Oh, make her a truthful, holy child!"

"I tried to banish from my thoughts this last petition of my dying mother; but the more resolute was my purpose, the more distinctly did those pleading tones fall upon my heart, till, bowing upon the window, I wept convulsively. But tears, Bessie, could give no relief.

"My agony became every moment more intense, till at length, I rushed, almost in terror, to my father's bedside.

"Father! Father!" but I could say no more. Tenderly putting his arm around me, he laid my throbbing head upon his bosom; and there he gently soothed me, till I could so far control my sobbing, as to explain its cause. Then how fervently did he plead with heaven, that his sinning child might be forgiven!

"Dear father," I said, "will you go with me tonight to see poor Amy?"

"He answered, 'Tomorrow morning, my child.'

"Delay was torture; but striving to suppress my disappointment, I received my father's kiss and went back to my room. But sleep still fled from

my weary eyelids.

"My longing to beg Amy's forgiveness amounted to frenzy; and after watching for the morning, for what seemed to me hours, my anguish became so intolerable that I fled once more to my father, and with tears streaming down my cheeks, I knelt by his side, beseeching him to go with me to Amy that moment; adding, in a whisper, 'She may die before she has forgiven me.' He laid his hand upon my burning cheek, and after a moment's thought, replied,

"I will go with you, my child."

"In a few moments we were on our way. As we approached Mrs. Sinclair's cottage, we perceived lights hurrying from one room to another. Shuddering with dread, I drew closer to my father. He softly opened the gate, and silently we passed through it.

"The doctor, who was just leaving the door, seemed greatly surprised to meet us there at that hour. Words cannot describe my feelings, when in answer to my father's inquiries, he told us that Amy was sick with brain fever.

"Her mother tells me," he continued, "that she has not been well for several days, but that she was unwilling to remain home from school. She came home yesterday afternoon, it seems, very unlike herself. She ate no supper, but sat at the table silently, as if stupefied with grief.

"Her mother tried every way to find out the cause of her sorrow; but in vain. She went to bed with the same heart-broken appearance, and in less than an hour, I was summoned. In her delirium she has been calling upon her dear Ruth, beseeching you with the most mournful earnestness to pity and to save her."

"Bessie, may you never know how his words pierced my heart!"

"My earnest plea to see Amy just one minute, prevailed with her widowed mother. Kindly taking my hand – the murderer's – she led me to the sick chamber. As I looked on the sweet sufferer, all hope deserted me. The shadows of death were already on her forehead and her large blue eyes.

"Kneeling by her bed, in whispered words my heart pleaded, oh, so earnestly, for forgiveness. But, when I looked entreatingly toward her, in her delirious gaze there was no recognition. No, Bessie, I was never to be comforted by the assurance of her pardon.

"When I next saw Amy, she was asleep. The

bright flush had faded from her cheek, whose marble paleness was shaded by her long eyelashes. Delirium had ceased, and the aching heart was still. That small, white hand, which had been held out tremblingly to receive the blows of the harsh ferule, now lay lovingly folded within the other. Never again would tears flow from those gentle eyes, nor that bosom heave with sorrow. That sleep was the sleep of death!

"My grief was wilder, if not deeper, than that mother's of whose lost treasure I had robbed her. She forgave me; but I could not forgive myself. What a long, long winter followed. My sufferings threw me into a fever, and in my delirium I called continually upon Amy.

"But God listened to the prayers of my dear father, and raised me from this sickness. And when the light footsteps of spring were seen upon the green earth, and early flowers were springing up around the grave of Amy, for the first time, I was allowed to visit it.

"My head swam, as I read, lettered so carefully on the white tablet: -

"AMY SINCLAIR, Fell asleep September third."

"Beside that fresh turf I knelt down, and offered, as I trust, the prayer of faith. I was there relieved, and strengthened too, Bessie," said Aunt Ruth, as she laid her hand tenderly upon that young head bowed down upon her lap.

Poor Bessie's tears had along been flowing, and now her grief seemed uncontrollable. Nor did her aunt attempt consolation; for she hoped there was a healing in that sorrow.

"Pray for me!" whispered Bessie, as, at length, looking up through her tears, she flung her arms about her aunt; and from a full heart Aunt Ruth prayed for the weeping child.

That scene was never forgotten by Bessie; for in that twilight hour, a light dawned upon her, brighter than the morning. And, although it had cost Aunt Ruth not a little to call up this dark shadow from the past, yet she felt repaid a thousand-fold for her sacrifice. For that sweet young face, lovely as a May morning, but whose beauty had been often marred by the workings of deceit and falsehood, grew radiant in the clear light of that truthful purpose which was then born in her soul.



**Br. Kang With  
New Interested Souls  
in Mongolia**



# The Ladder in the Sky

By Camron Schofield

'Twas on a starry night he lay down his head  
A stone for a pillow, the ground for his bed.

From a land far, far away,  
He had come as a traveler that day.

Over the hills, and across the plain,  
His heart, torn with grief and pain.

What had he done? I ask thee now?  
Why did he come to be here this hour?

'Twas by treachery,  
That he came to be.

And now here he was, all alone,  
Far from his father, far from his home.

Tossing and turning he tried to sleep,  
But a guilty conscience, he did reap.

Cut off from God, and forsaken of heaven,  
Here he was, like bread without leaven.

Sorrow and remorse, did fill his heart,  
His God, he felt, had drawn apart.

With one last look upon the starry skies,  
He sighed once, and closed his eyes.

Suddenly, out on the plain,  
It glowed once, and glowed again.

And then it began to shine,  
A ladder to heaven, a bridge across time.

From high and holy heaven,  
To dark and dismal earth below,  
Angels did come, and angels did go.

And far away in the depths of his spirit that night  
Flowed a melody sweeter than Psalm  
In celestial like strains it unceasingly fell,  
O'er his soul like an infinite calm.\*

What was it he saw? What did he see?  
A Saviour, given, unto you and me.

Is it nothing to you, all ye that pass by?  
Is it nothing to you, this ladder in the sky?

Let me hear you say,  
It's all, everything to you,  
And if you do, I will tell you,  
You can have peace too.

\* Borrowed from the hymn Far Away in the Depths  
of My Spirit by W.D. Cornell