



The Reformation **Messenger**

VOLUME 14, NUMBER 11, NOVEMBER 2007

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

*Can two walk together, except they be agreed?
Amos 3:3*

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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The Reformation
Messenger

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CAN TWO WALK TOGETHER?

“Can two walk together, except they be agreed?” Amos 3:3

Our world is full of separations, divisions, and divorces. About half of all marriages are broken because the marriage partners do not agree. They have different opinions, different habits and different ways of doing things.

Churches are divided because the leaders and the members do not agree. They have different interpretations of the doctrines and practices. Often they become even enemies of each other. Many persecutions have taken place by bigoted professed Christians.

The nations are waging wars because they do not agree on issues that seem important to them. Millions of young men are killed in these wars, and great property losses happen also.

The saddest thing is that so many professed Christians do not walk with God as Enoch did. “Enoch walked with God after he begat Methuselah three hundred years.” Gen. 5:22.

God wants to be friends with us and walk with us on our life journey. But often we do not agree with God and for this reason our ways separate.

We may want to go to different places than where the Lord would want to go. The Lord would go to the prayer meeting and if we prefer to stay home; again we would separate from each other. The Lord wants to have a Bible study, but if we prefer to watch television, again there would be a separation.

If someone decides to walk with God, immediately Satan tries to put a stop to it. He shows attractive things to us that seem very pleasing like he did to Eve in paradise. And he is very successful in his deceptions. Millions of Christians who visit churches do not walk with God but they walk with Satan and they do not realize it, until they come to their destination, which is the lake of fire.

It is the Holy Spirit that unites the believers in perfect harmony. The fruit of the Spirit is love and where there is love, there is also unity.

On the other hand, Satan’s spirit brings discord and strife and divides the people. Among the evil angels there is constant strife and accusing each other. When these angels take control of human beings there can be no true peace or unity among them.

People with God’s Spirit and those with Satan’s spirit do not fit together. For this reason God has separated His faithful children from the people who are controlled by evil spirits. Abraham was called to separate from his kinsfolk so that their influence would not disturb his peaceful family life and his service to God.

We are sociable beings. We need friends and companions, but the right kind of friends. There is a saying, “like likes like” and it is true. If we love God and obey His commandments, only a person who also loves God and obeys Him can be a true friend to us.

Pharisees were very strict in outward obedience and ceremonies but they could not walk with Christ because they did not agree on religion. Jesus mingled with

sinner and publican which the Pharisees would never have done. For this reason they called Jesus to be demon possessed.

It is God's will that His children are united and that they agree with one another. This unity is their strength and with the help of the Holy Spirit it is possible.

"After the descent of the Holy Spirit the disciples went forth to proclaim a risen Saviour, their one desire the salvation of souls. They rejoiced in the sweetness of the communion with saints. They were tender, thoughtful, self-denying, willing to make any sacrifice for the truth's sake. In their daily association with one another they revealed the love that Christ had commanded them to reveal. By unselfish words and deeds, they strove to kindle this love in other hearts." Test. Vol. 8, p. 241.

But this wonderful unity and love did not last very long. Satan was able to separate them from one another so soon.

"But the early Christians began to look for defects in one another. Dwelling upon mistakes, giving place to unkind criticism, they lost sight of the Saviour and of the great love He had revealed for sinners. They became more strict in regard to outward ceremonies, more particular about the theory of the faith, more severe in their criticisms. In their zeal to condemn others they forgot their own errors. They forgot the lesson of brotherly love that Christ had taught. And, saddest of all, they were unconscious of their loss. They did not realize that happiness and joy were going out of their lives, and that soon they would walk in darkness, having shut the love of God out of their hearts." Test. Vol. 8, p. 241.

This has been repeated many times in the church of God. Satan hates the unity and love among God's people. The Jewish people were divided into five different groups. The Pharisees and Sadducees continued to argue together about their doctrines. It was a favourite pastime for them to discuss their teachings with other groups. They hated those who believed different. Also, apostle Paul was filled with this hatred against the early Christians until he met Jesus on the way to Damascus. For the first time he realized that there was a religion of love. There was no anger or hatred in the voice of Jesus when He said, "Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou Me?"

At that moment he decided to change his traveling companions. He started to walk with Jesus and His followers, and never turned back to the old religion any more. Now his previous companions hated him and even tried to kill him.

If we are planning to be together all eternity, should we not begin this friendship already here, in this world? Those who leave the church of God for any reason, indicate that they do not want to walk with them anymore or be in their company. They do not fit into the church of love that Jesus established.

"In the church of God today brotherly love is greatly lacking. Many of those who profess to love their Saviour neglect to love those who are united with them in Christian fellowship... It is not the opposition of the world that endangers us the most; it is the evil cherished in the hearts of professed believers that works our most grievous disaster and most retards the progress of God's cause. There is no surer way of weakening our spirituality than by being envious, suspicious of one another, full of faultfinding and evil surmising." Test. Vol. 8, p. 242.

Then what we need to do is agree on doctrines, practices, and this can be done by studying the Scriptures and the Spirit of Prophecy with the help of the Holy Spirit.

Next we need to learn to love one another. And to whom should we express our greatest love? Is it not the lost sheep? In the parable Jesus said that the Shepherd left the 99 and went to seek the one that was lost.

Agreeing and walking together is not happening automatically. We must become peacemakers and work on it, and with the help of God it can be accomplished. May the Lord help that the prayer of Jesus can be fulfilled among us:

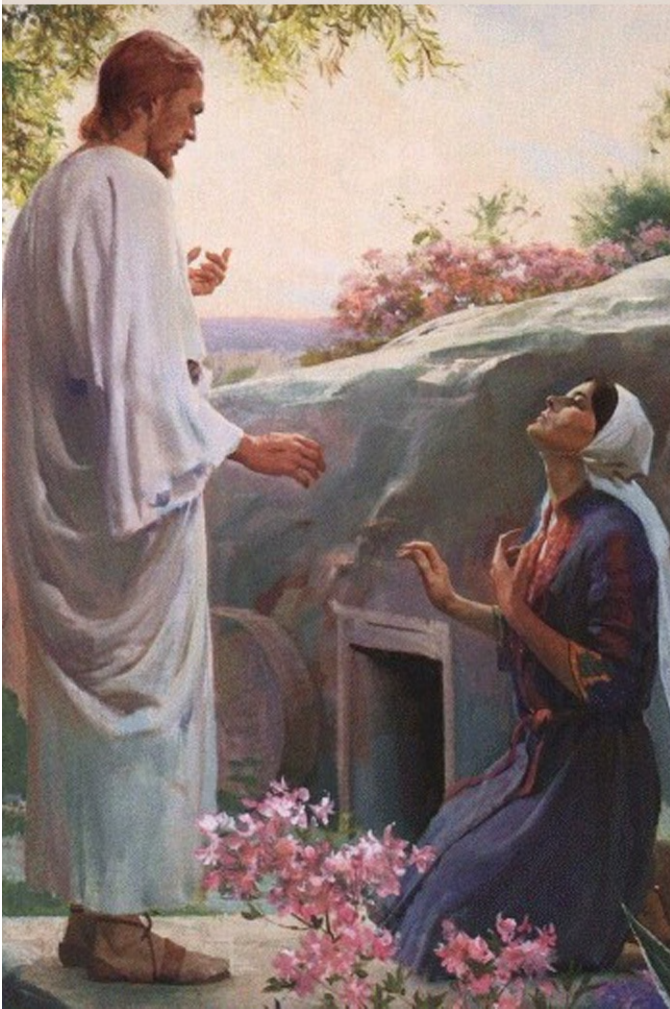
"That they all may be one; as Thou, Father, art in Me, and I in Thee, that they also may be one in us; that the world may believe that Thou hast sent Me. And the glory which Thou gavest Me I have given them; that they may be one, even as We are one: I in them, and Thou in Me, that they may be made perfect in one; and that the world may know that Thou hast sent Me, and hast loved them, as Thou hast loved Me." John 17: 21-23. *Amen.*

Timo Martin, Canada



**Paul Meets Jesus
On The Road To Damascus**

MAN'S NEED OF COMPANIONSHIP



Part 2

“In the garden, Mary had stood weeping, when Jesus was close beside her. Her eyes were so blinded by tears that she did not discern Him... How many echo Mary’s despairing cry, ‘They have taken away the Lord,... and we know not where they have laid Him!’ To how many might the Saviour’s words be spoken, ‘Why weepest thou? whom seekest thou?’ He is close beside them, but their tear-blinded eyes do not discern Him. He speaks to them, but they do not understand.” DA 794.5

Oh how the heart of Infinite Love must ache! He is standing right there, waiting to throw His arms around them, to lay their heads upon His breast, to speak to them words of comfort, cheerful words, joyful words, happy words, words of encouragement, to succour them, and they don’t even know He’s there. O fools, and slow of heart to believe...

Jesus promised, “Lo I am with you always even unto the end of the world.” But the question is, “do we believe it?” When we forget that Jesus is there, and fail to acknowledge His presence, how do you think He feels? Much the same as you would?

Jesus was a real man.

“A human body and a human mind were His.” 3SM 129.4 “He was hungry and thirsty and weary. He was sustained by food and refreshed by sleep.” DA 311.4 He needed to eat. He needed to drink. He needed the companionship of fellow human beings. He found the rest that His weary human nature needed in the home of Lazarus, a fellow human being. Chosen above every angel around the throne, Moses and Elijah, men, were sent to comfort Him at the transfiguration.

And remember Gethsemane? He came to His disciples earnestly desiring to hear a word of comfort, just to know that they were praying for Him, but He found them sleeping. He needed sympathy in His suffering. He needed to hear words of comfort. Just like you and me...

“The human heart longs for sympathy in suffering. This longing Christ felt to the very depths of His being. In the supreme agony of His soul He came to His disciples with a yearning desire to hear

some words of comfort from those whom He had so often blessed and comforted, and shielded in sorrow and distress. The One who had always had words of sympathy for them was now suffering superhuman agony, and He longed to know that they were praying for Him and for themselves. How dark seemed the malignity of sin! Terrible was the temptation to let the human race bear the consequences of its own guilt, while He stood innocent before God. If He could only know that His disciples understood and appreciated this, He would be strengthened.” DA 687 But He found them sleeping. And then they forsook Him and fled.

He looked for some to take pity, but there was none, and for comforters, but found none. And therefore He says: “I have trodden the winepress alone; and of the people [there was] none with me:”

He was alone.

Now, let us contemplate! Jesus was a real man. He needed sympathy in His sufferings; to hear words of comfort. He needed succour. He

needed the companionship of fellow human beings.

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

Read it carefully. We have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feelings of our infirmities – present tense.

“The church is the property of God, and God constantly remembers her as she stands in the world, subject to the temptations of Satan. Christ has never forgotten the days of His humiliation. In passing from the scenes of His humiliation, Jesus has lost none of His humanity. He has the same tender, pitying love, and is ever touched with human woe. He ever bears in mind that He was a Man of Sorrows and acquainted with grief. He forgets not His representative people who are striving to uphold His downtrodden law. He knows that the world that hated Him, hates them.

Although Jesus Christ has passed into the heavens, there is still a living chain binding His believing ones to His own heart of infinite love. The most lowly and weak are bound by a chain of sympathy closely to His heart. He never forgets that He is our representative, that He bears our nature.” HP 284.3

Why doesn’t He forget that He is our representative, and that He bears our nature? Because, He is still touched with human woe. His heart, His human heart, is still touched with the feelings of our infirmities.

In the garden of Eden, Adam could find no joy in the communion of the animals, or in the communion of holy angels. “After the creation of Adam every living creature was brought before him to receive its name; he saw that to each had been given a companion, but among them ‘there was not found an help meet for him.’ Among all the creatures that God had made on the earth, there was not one equal to man. And God said, ‘It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him an help meet for him.’ Man was not made to dwell in solitude; he was to be a social being. Without companionship the beautiful scenes and delightful employments of Eden would have failed to yield perfect

happiness. Even communion with angels could not have satisfied his desire for sympathy and companionship. There was none of the same nature to love and to be loved.” PP 46

Jesus has lost none of that humanity. He still needs the companionship of fellow human beings. “He who dwells in the heavenly sanctuary judges righteously. His pleasure is more in His people, struggling with temptation in a world of sin, than in the host of angels that surround His throne.” COL 176

Even the communion with angels, that vast throng that surrounds the throne, cannot satisfy His desire for love and sympathy. There must be those of the same nature to love and to be loved. Is it any wonder that when He was resurrected that He took a multitude of resurrected ones to heaven with Him?

But, isn’t there already human beings in heaven? Enoch, Moses, Elijah and the multitude resurrected with Him? But still His pleasure is more in His people, struggling with temptation in a world of sin.

Does the question pose itself: but He already has fellow human beings with Him. Can’t He find joy in their communion?

Of course He can. “The relations between God and each soul are as distinct and full as though there were not another soul upon the earth to share His watchcare, not another soul for whom He gave His beloved Son.” SC 100

As far as Jesus is concerned, it is just Him and you. In His dealings with you it is as though there is nobody else. You have His undivided attention. Jesus’ pleasure is in you. He needs YOUR companionship. Without it He is alone.

Let’s just pause for a moment. Time to think. Time for the reality of Jesus Christ to sink in.

I shared to begin with: “How many echo Mary’s despairing cry, ‘They have taken away the Lord,... and we know not where they have laid Him!’ To how many might the Saviour’s words be spoken, ‘Why weepest thou? whom seekest thou?’ He is close beside them, but their tear-blinded eyes do not discern Him. He speaks to

them, but they do not understand. DA 794

I asked the question: How do you think that He feels? Alone? Yes, He is there wanting to help them, but they know it not. And they think that they’re the ones that are alone. Oh how His heart must ache when those whom He loves, do not pay any attention to Him. They get caught up in their little old “me”, and forget that Jesus is there.

He says, “Go and proclaim these words toward the north, and say, Return, thou backsliding Israel, saith the LORD; [and] I will not cause mine anger to fall upon you: for I [am] merciful, saith the LORD, [and] I will not keep [anger] for ever. Only acknowledge thine iniquity, that thou hast transgressed against the LORD thy God, and hast scattered thy ways to the strangers under every green tree, and ye have not obeyed my voice, saith the LORD. Turn, O backsliding children, saith the LORD; for I am married unto you: and I will take you one of a city, and two of a family, and I will bring you to Zion:” Jeremiah 3:12-14

He wants to take you, to make you His own. Turn, He says, for I am married unto you. You are bone of my bone, flesh of my flesh. I want you to be mine. I gave my life to be with you. “I drew them with cords of a man, with bands of love: and I was to them as they that take off the yoke on their jaws, and I laid meat unto them.” Hosea 11:4 “The LORD hath appeared of old unto me, [saying], Yea, I have loved thee with an everlasting love: therefore with lovingkindness have I drawn thee.” Jeremiah 31:3

He took YOUR humanity upon HIMSELF, He bore your sins, carried your cross, endured your sorrows, suffered YOUR grief. All He wants is your companionship. To satisfy YOUR need. To love you. To give you sympathy. To succour you.

“Our Saviour wants you to keep in close relation to Himself, that He may make you happy. When Christ lets His blessing rest upon us, we should offer thanksgiving and praise to His dear name. But, you say, if I could only know that He is my Saviour! Well, what kind of evidence do you want? Do you want a special feeling or emotion to prove that Christ is yours? Is this more reliable than pure faith in God’s promises? Would it not be better to take the blessed

promises of God and apply them to yourself, bearing your whole weight upon them? This is faith." FLB 123.5

Let us read carefully to follow this through. Jesus wants a relationship with you. He wants to make you happy.

Remember doubting Thomas? "Then saith he to Thomas, Reach hither thy finger, and behold my hands; and reach hither thy hand, and thrust [it] into my side: and be not faithless, but believing. And Thomas answered and said unto him, My Lord and my God. Jesus saith unto him, Thomas, because thou hast seen me, thou hast believed: blessed [are] they that have not seen, and [yet] have believed." John 20:27-29 Blessed are those who believe without seeing.

How then, do I believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, whom I have not seen and cannot see? How do I have a relationship with a man that I cannot see?

"And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever; [Even] the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him: but ye know him; for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you. I will not leave you comfortless: I will come to you. Yet a little while, and the world seeth me no more; but ye see me: because I live, ye shall live also. At that day ye shall know that I [am] in my Father, and ye in me, and I in you. He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me: and he that loveth me shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him, and will manifest myself to him. Judas saith unto him, not Iscariot, Lord, how is it that thou wilt manifest thyself unto us, and not unto the world? Jesus answered and said unto him, If a man love me, he will keep my words: and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him." John 14:16-23

"Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, [that] shall he speak: and he will show you things to come. He shall glorify me: for he shall receive of mine, and shall show [it] unto you. All things that the Father hath are mine: therefore said I, that he shall take of mine, and shall show

[it] unto you." John 16:13-15 Through the Holy Spirit, you will have communion with Jesus.

"Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me." Revelation 3:20 Jesus will come INTO him and will sup with Him and he with Him. You will experience an intimate relationship with Jesus in your heart. In your mind and it will affect how you see and view everything in the world around you.

How do you have a relationship with a man you cannot see?

By faith. What is faith? The evidence of things unseen... "Faith is not the ground of our salvation, but it is the great blessing --the eye that sees, the ear that hears, the feet that run, the hand that grasps. It is the means, not the end." HP 104.2 By faith you will see Him, you will hear Him, you will walk with Him, and you will hold His hand. An intimate relationship. Communion. Companionship.

By faith. But let's not leave it at that. "Faith is the substance of things hoped for. It is that which will bring about a result. "Faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen." (Heb. 11:1) Have we not proved this in the past as we have moved out in faith to produce the things now seen?... Faith is not only to look forward to things unseen; it is to be confirmed by looking at past experience, at tangible results, the verification of God's Word... Pray, 'Lord, increase my faith.' Faith quickens the senses to work diligently to produce results. Faith elevates and ennobles the powers of the soul, enabling it to lay hold upon the unseen." UL 72.4

Faith is something that goes beyond the imagination. Faith is not just an idea of the mind. It doesn't just sit in the mind. Oh yes, that's a lovely thought. Yes, that's great. No, faith will produce results--tangible results.

It will quicken the senses. What are the senses? Eye ears, etc... The things that are seen.

"Let the children learn to see in nature an expression of the love and the wisdom of God; let the thought of Him be linked with bird and flower and tree; let all things

seen become to them the interpreters of the unseen, and all the events of life be a means of divine teaching." CG 52.1

"In the natural world God has placed in the hands of the children of men the key to unlock the treasure house of His Word. The unseen is illustrated by the seen; divine wisdom, eternal truth, infinite grace, are understood by the things that God has made.

"Children should be encouraged to search out in nature the objects that illustrate Bible teachings, and to trace in the Bible the similitudes drawn from nature. They should search out, both in nature and in Holy Writ, every object representing Christ, and those also that He employed in illustrating truth. Thus may they learn to see Him in tree and vine, in lily and rose, in sun and star. They may learn to hear His voice in the song of birds, in the sighing of the trees, in the rolling thunder, and in the music of the sea. And every object in nature will repeat to them His precious lessons.

"To those who thus acquaint themselves with Christ, the earth will nevermore be a lonely and desolate place. It will be their Father's house, filled with the presence of Him who once dwelt among men." CG 46

Faith produces results. It will colour everything that you see and do. It will pervade all of your actions. By believing that Jesus is right there with you, by taking Him at His word, you will hear Him, you will see Him. You will never be alone.

And in trial and suffering, if you have faith in the personal presence of Jesus, what will be your experience?

You will have joy! "Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened unto you: But rejoice, inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ's sufferings; that, when his glory shall be revealed, ye may be glad also with exceeding joy." 1 Peter 4:12, 13

"That I may know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable unto his death." Philippians 3:10 In your sufferings, you will experience the companionship of Jesus. They are not your sufferings. They are His sufferings. He has taken all of your

sorrows upon Himself, so that when you suffer, it is His sufferings. He has become at one with you so much, that all that you experience, it is as His own.

Do you want a feeling to confirm Jesus?

“We have felt Him in the humiliation; we have felt Him in the sacrifice; we have felt Him in the trials; we have felt Him in the test.” 1 SAT 132.1 Have you felt Him? Have you been humiliated? Have you had to make a great sacrifice and it felt that your very lifeblood was being drained from you? Have you had any trials lately? Been tested? Then you have felt Jesus.

But did you know that He was there? When we come to make Jesus our personal companion, we will never be alone. What a privilege we have to endure sufferings and trials. To be able to feel Jesus. It’s not the happy flight of feelings the flesh would like. No it’s not a little tingle down the spine. It’s far closer than that. Right there in your heart.

And when you have peace? “Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid.” John 14:27. It is the peace of Jesus.

That which is not seen will be experienced by the seen. They will be interpreted by the tangible things of life. *But only if you believe.*

How do I believe? Jesus said “Except ye become as little children...” and how do children believe? They often say, “My Daddy told me so, so it must be right.”

Is that not how it is when you love someone? You trust them. You take their word for it and you act upon it. “My Father in heaven said so. So it must be true.”

He promised, “Lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world.” Matthew 28:20 “Have not I commanded thee? Be strong and of a good courage; be not afraid, neither be thou dismayed: for the LORD thy God [is] with thee whithersoever thou goest.” Joshua 1:9 “Fear thou not; for I [am] with thee: be not dismayed; for I [am] thy God: I will strengthen thee; yea, I will help thee; yea, I will uphold thee with the right hand of my righteousness.” Isaiah 41:10

Believe it. Act upon it. “O taste and see that the LORD [is] good: blessed [is] the man [that] trusteth in him.” Psalm 34:8

“How shall we know for ourselves God’s goodness and His love? The psalmist tells us--not, hear and know, read and know, or believe and know; but—‘Taste and see that the Lord is good.’ Instead of relying upon the word of another, taste for yourself.

“Experience is knowledge derived from experiment. Experimental religion is what is needed now. ‘Taste and see that the Lord is good.’ Some--yes, a large number--have a theoretical knowledge of religious truth, but have never felt the renewing power of divine grace upon their own hearts. These persons are ever slow to heed the testimonies of warning, reproof, and instruction indicted by the Holy Spirit. They believe in the wrath of God, but put forth no earnest efforts to escape it. They believe in heaven, but make no sacrifice to obtain it. They believe in the value of the soul and that ere long its redemption ceaseth forever. Yet they neglect the most precious opportunities to make their peace with God.

“They may read the Bible, but its threatenings do not alarm or its promises win them. They approve things that are excellent, yet they follow the way in which God has forbidden them to go. They know a refuge, but do not avail themselves of it. They know a remedy for sin, but do not use it. They know the right, but have no relish for it. All their knowledge will but increase their condemnation. They have never tasted and learned by experience that the Lord is good.” 5T 221

How do I have a relationship with a man I cannot see?

By experiment. It’s not something that I can give you. You must experience it for yourself. Take His word, and act upon it. If He says that He is with you, then believe it, and act as though He is. His life will be your life for you are one with Him. When you are called to face the world, you will face it with Jesus, and as Jesus faced it. You will not be afraid, because the Lord God Almighty, the King of the heaven and earth, is right beside you.

“And shall say unto them, Hear, O Israel, ye approach this day unto battle against

your enemies: let not your hearts faint, fear not, and do not tremble, neither be ye terrified because of them; For the LORD your God [is] he that goeth with you, to fight for you against your enemies, to save you.” Deuteronomy 20:3-4

And when you sorrow? “Through all our trials we have a never-failing Helper. He does not leave us alone to struggle with temptation, to battle with evil, and be finally crushed with burdens and sorrow. Though now He is hidden from mortal sight, the ear of faith can hear His voice saying, Fear not; I am with you. ‘I am He that liveth, and was dead; and, behold, I am alive forevermore.’ Rev. 1:18. I have endured your sorrows, experienced your struggles, encountered your temptations. I know your tears; I also have wept. The griefs that lie too deep to be breathed into any human ear, I know. Think not that you are desolate and forsaken. Though your pain touch no responsive chord in any heart on earth, look unto Me, and live. ‘The mountains shall depart, and the hills be removed; but My kindness shall not depart from thee, neither shall the covenant of My peace be removed, saith the Lord that hath mercy on thee.’ Isa. 54:10.” DA 483.1

Have you found a friend? Oh such a friend. Jesus is real. All our sorrows, all our joys are His, because He has become one with us. When we experience the hardships of life forgetting that Jesus is right there with us, we leave Him to tread the winepress alone. And oh, how does His heart ache. There is no one else. Just you and Him.

When we suffer, we need to suffer with Jesus because it is His suffering. He Himself needs OUR sympathy. He Himself needs to know that we know how He feels.

Will we be like the disciples and will He find you sleeping when He comes? He is still touched with the feelings of our infirmities. He Himself needs sympathy in His suffering.

Hear His cry “Is it nothing to you, all ye that pass by? behold, and see if there be any sorrow like unto my sorrow, which is done unto me, wherewith the LORD hath afflicted me in the day of his fierce anger. From above hath he sent fire into my bones, and it prevailed against them: he hath spread a net for my feet, he hath turned me back: he hath made me desolate

and faint all the day. The yoke of my transgressions is bound by his hand: they are wreathed, and come up upon my neck: he hath made my strength to fall, the Lord hath delivered me into their hands, from whom I am not able to rise up.” Lamentations 1:12-14

He has taken your sorrows upon Himself so that He can experience them WITH you, and when we leave Him out, how does He feel? How would you feel?

“Wisdom crieth without; she uttereth her voice in the streets: She crieth in the chief place of concourse, in the openings of the gates: in the city she uttereth her words, [saying], How long, ye simple ones, will ye love simplicity? and the scorers delight in their scorning, and fools hate knowledge? Turn you at my reproof: behold, I will pour out my spirit unto you, I will make known my words unto you. Because I have called, and ye refused; I have stretched out my hand, and no man regarded; But ye have set at nought all my counsel, and would none of my reproof: I also will laugh at your calamity; I will mock when your fear cometh; When your fear cometh as desolation, and your destruction cometh as a whirlwind; when distress and anguish cometh upon you. Then shall they call upon me, but I will not answer; they shall seek me early, but they shall not find me: For that they hated knowledge, and did not choose the fear of the LORD: They would none of my counsel: they despised all my reproof. Therefore shall they eat of the fruit of their own way, and be filled with their own devices. For the turning away of the simple shall slay them, and the prosperity of fools shall destroy them. But whoso hearkeneth unto me shall dwell safely, and shall be quiet from fear of evil.” Proverbs 1:20-33

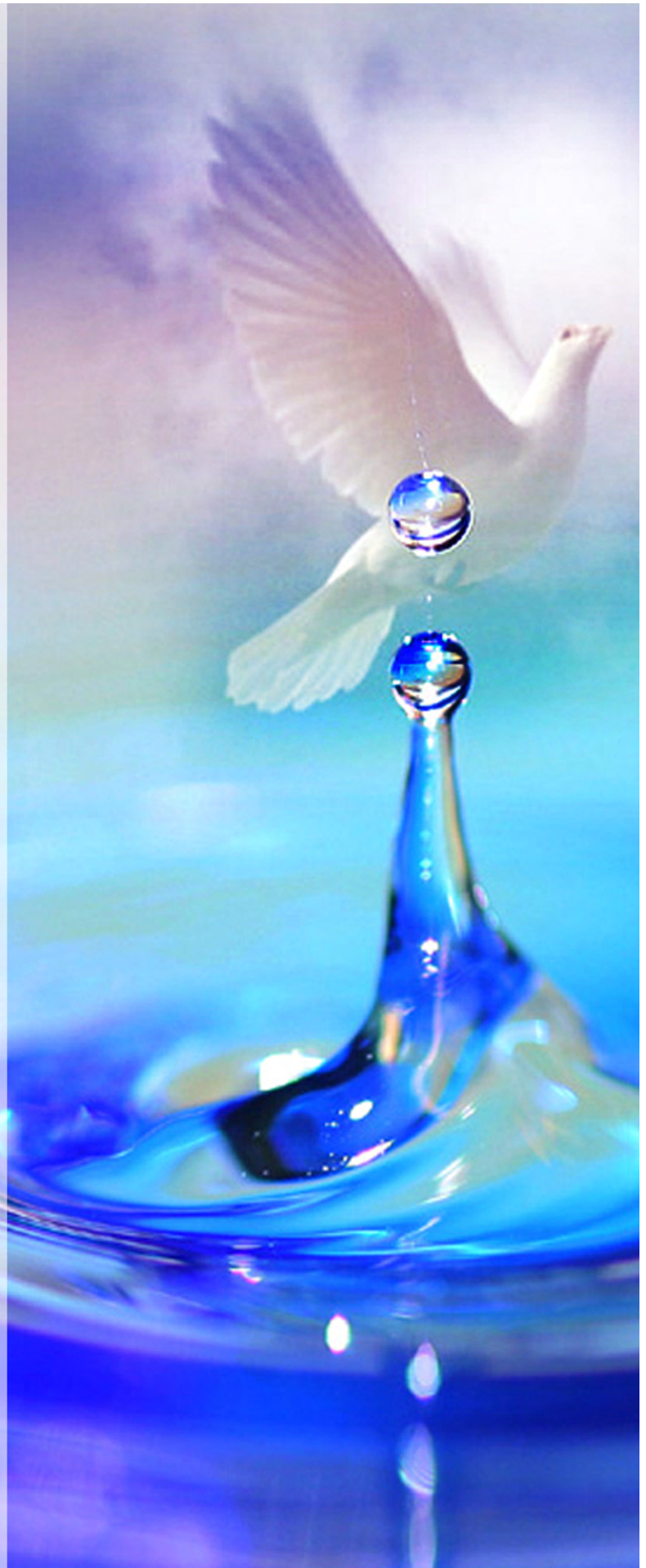
Don't leave Jesus out. Don't leave Him alone. If He's knocking on your door saying, “let me in, I want to fellowship with you in your sufferings,” open wide the door. Don't leave His aching heart outside. You wouldn't like it if He did it to you would you? Then do unto Him as you would have Him do unto you.

Bring Jesus into every experience of your life. Make Him your constant companion. In the trial, in the joy, you will have fellowship with a man who knows just how you feel, and knows just how to make you feel better. You yourself must taste and see that He is good. And though it may at first be bitter in your mouth as you plunge into the deep waters of self-denial and affliction, you will find it to be sweet.

May we do just that. May we not leave Jesus standing there without the door, while we are crying and sorrowing on the inside. Let's not leave Him alone. It is my prayer that you won't. Amen

These appeals that are coming to us from Jesus are the cords of a man. We would naturally shrink from companionship with God. **AMEN.**

Camron Schofield, Australia





INTRODUCTION

Heaven has, for a long time now been waiting to welcome the spouse that Jesus espoused (betrothed) about 2000 years ago. He would not take her with Him when He ascended to heaven because she was so immature in her tender age of three years and inexperienced as a woman to make “her husband known in the gates in the gates, when he sits among the elders of the land.” Proverbs 31:23. For this reason, He left her to grow to maturity, however, not alone but with the help of the comforter, “...the Holy Spirit whom the Father will (was) to send in my (His) name;” to “teach you (her) all things.” John 14:26.

Her growth and development along with the children she had to bring forth was destined. “That our sons [may be] as plants grown up in their youth; [that] our daughters [may be] as corner stones, polished [after] the similitude of a palace.” Psalms 144:12. Her progressive growth was well marked out. Just like a growing plant that needs sunshine, water, deep and rich fertile soil and air, all that she needed was availed her so as to alleviate the chances of stunted growth in her being, for which reason ... “he (Jesus) said..., My grace is sufficient for thee:..” 2 Corinthians 12:9

NATURE'S BIRTH

“The germination of the seed represents the beginning of spiritual life, and the development of the plant is a beautiful figure of Christian growth. As in nature, “For the earth bringeth forth fruit of herself; first the blade, then the ear, after that the full corn in the ear;” (Mark 4:28) so in grace, there can be no life without growth. The plant must either grow or die. As its growth is silent and imperceptible, but continuous, so is the development of the Christian life. At every stage of development our life may be perfect; yet if God's purpose for us is fulfilled, there will be continual advancement. Sanctification is the work of a lifetime. As our opportunities multiply, our experience will enlarge, and our knowledge increase. We shall become strong to bear responsibility, and our maturity will be in proportion to our privileges.” God's Amazing Grace 283

“The plant grows by receiving that which God has provided to sustain its life. It sends down its roots into the earth. It drinks in the sunshine, the dew, and the rain. It receives the life-giving properties from the air. So the Christian is to grow by cooperating with the divine agencies... As the plant takes root in the soil, so we are to take deep root in Christ. As the plant receives the sunshine, the dew, and the rain, we are to open our hearts to the Holy Spirit... By constantly relying upon Christ as our personal Saviour, we shall grow up into Him in all things who is our head.” Ibid 283

SPIRITUAL BIRTH

In resolving to be born into the spiritual world, one certainly consents that the life he or she has been living before has not been the best. Feelings of hate, revenge, infinite ambitions of ego, fear of getting revenged on wrongs done to others, selfishness, grudges, all knowing, always right etc., certainly character traits that are not valued in mature men and women. The same lack of something good that was yesterday still remains amid all the filler materials we have put in place to demand respect as fully grown and mature people. The unceasing trouble in the heart of man in search of a calm and peaceful life, has led many to regard the counsel, “... eschew evil, and do good; ... seek peace,

and ensue it.” 1 Peter 3:11 They are led to accept the invitation “...Come unto me, all [ye] that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.” Matthew 11:28. The invitation that we may grow after our spiritual birth is given to all, young and old alike.

“There should be an earnest desire in the heart of every youth who has purposed to be a disciple of Jesus Christ to reach the highest Christian standard, to be a worker with Christ. If he makes it his aim to be of that number who shall be presented faultless before the throne of God, he will be continually advancing. The only way to remain steadfast is to progress daily in divine life. Faith will increase if, when brought in contact with doubts and obstacles, it overcomes them. True sanctification is progressive. If you are growing in grace and the knowledge of Jesus Christ, you will improve every privilege and opportunity to gain more knowledge of the life and character of Christ.” {AG 284.3}

“The Lord Jesus is making experiments on human hearts through the exhibition of His mercy and abundant grace. He is effecting transformations so amazing that Satan, with all his triumphant boasting, with all his confederacy of evil united against God and the laws of His government, stands viewing them as a fortress impregnable to his sophistries and delusions. They are to him an incomprehensible mystery. The angels of God, seraphim and cherubim, the powers commissioned to cooperate with human agencies, look on with astonishment and joy, that fallen men, once children of wrath, are through the training of Christ developing characters after the divine similitude, to be sons and daughters of God, to act an important part in the occupations and pleasure of heaven.” {Ibid 222.}

“It is the privilege of the young, as they grow in Jesus, to grow in spiritual grace and knowledge. We may know more and more of Jesus through an interested searching of the Scriptures, and then following the ways of truth and righteousness therein revealed. Those who are ever growing in grace will be steadfast in the faith, and moving forward.” {Ibid 284.} A resolution on your part to choose to live thus is never empty of God’s care. It’s coupled with a promise from the lips

that never lie, “I the Lord do keep it; I will water it every moment: lest any hurt it, I will keep it night and day. Isa. 27:3.

CONDITIONS OF CHRISTIAN GROWTH

The constant urge to all that have been born into the kingdom of grace was the sermon of the apostle Peter about 2000 years ago. As a baby that is nursed on mother’s milk after birth, Peter too points out that all that have been spiritually reborn take the food that has vital nutrients in order to produce a symmetrical growth.. “As newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby.” 1 Peter 2:2. What kind of growth is Peter referring to? Of growing tall, stout, with beards and grey hair? Certainly no! “But grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. 2 Peter 3:18, notwithstanding the physical growth for young people born into the spiritual family.

I have watched several mothers making a critical scrutiny of their babies while the baby is breast feeding. And after a while most mothers are happy to note that the baby is putting on weight very fast, signifying that the baby is growing well. They are happy because their efforts have been rewarded. On the contrary, what reaction would you expect from a mother that has given wonderful food and clothing to her baby but with little or no positive change in growth for the last three months? “Better I would have not conceived! Better I would have not given birth!” ...etc. It is all regrets and remorse that her hopes have produced little good.

Our heavenly Father is always watching the development that we make so that we may grow fit as heirs of His Kingdom of Grace. This watchcare is one that surpasses that of the most loving mother or father. Just like a mother, He is most pleased when we make two steps today, three tomorrow, and eventually walking upright after months of falling and rising up again. To achieve this, He dearly yearns that we meet the following:

1) Impartation. “One of the divine plans for growth is impartation. The Christian is to gain strength by strengthening others. “He that watereth shall be watered also himself.” (Prov. 11:25). This is not merely a promise; it is a divine law, a law by which God designs that the streams of benevolence, like the waters of the great deep, shall be kept

in constant circulation, continually flowing back to their source. In the fulfilling of this law is the secret of spiritual growth...” {AG 285.}

2) Interest in Christ’s Work. “The only way to grow in grace is to be interestedly doing the very work Christ has enjoined upon us to do.” Christian Service 101

3) Home Religion. “The work of sanctification begins in the home. Those who are Christians in the home will be Christians in the church and in the world. There are many who do not grow in grace because they fail of cultivating home religion.” Child Guidance 481.3

4) Preparedness For New Truth. “Grace can thrive only in the heart that is being constantly prepared for the precious seeds of truth. The thorns of sin will grow in any soil; they need no cultivation; but grace must be carefully cultivated. The briars and thorns are always ready to spring up, and the work of purification must advance continually. If the heart is not kept under the control of God, if the Holy Spirit does not work unceasingly to refine and ennoble the character, the old habits will reveal themselves in the life.” {Christ’s Object Lessons 50}

5) Study of the Word. “In giving us the privilege of studying His word, the Lord has set before us a rich banquet. Many are the benefits derived from feasting on His word, which is represented by Him as His flesh and blood, His spirit and life. By partaking of this word our spiritual strength is increased; we grow in grace and in a knowledge of the truth. Habits of self-control are formed and strengthened. The infirmities of childhood--fretfulness, willfulness, selfishness, hasty words, passionate acts--disappear, and in their place are developed the graces of Christian manhood and womanhood.” Counsels to Parents, Teachers, and Students 207

6) Exercise. “The best way to prevent the growth of evil is to preoccupy the soil. The greatest care and watchfulness is needed in cultivating the mind and sowing therein the precious seeds of Bible truth. The Lord, in His great mercy, has revealed to us in the Scriptures the rules (Law and testimony) of holy living. He tells us the sins to shun; He explains to us the plan of salvation, and points out the way to heaven.

He has inspired holy men to record, for our benefit, instruction concerning the dangers that beset the path, and how to escape them. Those who obey his injunction to search the Scriptures will not be ignorant of these things. Amid the perils of the last days, every member of the church should understand the reasons of his hope and faith,—reasons which are not difficult of comprehension. There is enough to occupy the mind, if we would grow in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.” Christian Education 188

7) Shake Off Spiritual Lethargy. “Shake off your spiritual lethargy. Work with all your might to save your own souls and the souls of others. It is no time now to cry, ‘Peace and safety.’ It is not silver-tongued orators that are needed to give this message. The truth in all its pointed severity must be spoken. Men of action are needed --men who will labor with earnest, ceaseless energy for the purifying of the church and the warning of the world.” Test. Vol. 5, p. 187

8) Connected With Christ. “It is the privilege of every soul to make advancement. Those who are connected with Christ will grow in grace and in the knowledge of the Son of God, to the full stature of men and women. If all who claim to believe the truth had made the most of their ability and opportunities to learn and to do, they would have become strong in Christ. Whatever their occupation,—whether they were farmers, mechanics, teachers, or pastors,—if they had wholly consecrated themselves to God, they would have become efficient workers for the heavenly Master.” {ChS 25.1} Is it not time, high time, for you to awake out of sleep, and shake off this carnal security?

9) Acknowledging The Holy Spirit Working In Us And With Us. “If the world is to be convinced of sin as transgressors of God’s law, the agency must be the Holy Spirit working through human instrumentalities. The church needs now to shake off her death-like slumber; for the Lord is waiting to bless His people who will recognize the blessing when it comes, and diffuse it in clear, strong rays of light. ‘Then will I sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean... And I will put my spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes.’ (Eze. 36:25-27).” Ye Shall Receive Power 188.2

10) Total Conquest over Self. The condition

of Israel growing to a great nation was described by Moses; “...When ye are passed over Jordan into the land of Canaan; Then ye shall drive out all the inhabitants of the land from before you, and destroy all their pictures, and destroy all their molten images, and quite pluck down all their high places: And ye shall dispossess [the inhabitants] of the land, and dwell therein: for I have given you the land to possess it... But if ye will not drive out the inhabitants of the land from before you; then it shall come to pass, that those which ye let remain of them [shall be] pricks in your eyes, and thorns in your sides, and shall vex you in the land wherein ye dwell.” Numbers 33:51-53,55.

But regardless of their high destiny, they chose the course of ease and self-indulgence; they let slip their opportunities for completing the conquest of the land; and for many generations they were afflicted by the remnant of these idolatrous people, that were, as the prophet had foretold, as “pricks” in their eyes, and as “thorns” in their sides. Numbers 33:55. PP 544 Would the current crisis of the Middle East be said to be the result and consequences of “ye shall drive out all the inhabitants” and if “ye will not drive out the inhabitants of the land?”

Similarly, now as then, our growth in becoming men and women of God’s admiration depends on whether we live up to the pledge we have personally made to God’s call. Everyone has to wage a spiritual war, which the spirit of prophecy denotes as; “A great warfare is going on over every soul, between the prince of darkness and the Prince of life. There is a great battle to be fought... but you are not to do the main fighting here. As God’s agent you are to yield yourselves to Him, that He may plan and direct and fight the battle for you, with your co-operation. The Prince of life is at the head of His work. He is to be with you in your daily battle with self, that you may be true to principle; that passion, when warring for the mastery, may be subdued by the grace of Christ; that you come off more than conqueror through Him that hath loved us. Jesus has been over the ground. He knows the power of every temptation. He knows just how to meet every emergency, and how to guide you through every path of danger He who has given His precious life because He loved you, and wanted you to be happy, will be a Captain who will



always be mindful of your interest.” Sons and Daughters of God 160

THE ULTIMATE GROWTH.

It will not be a secret thing or something needing guesswork when one has grown to the standard set forth for us – the pattern of Jesus Christ as indicated by His counsel, “Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven.” Matthew 5:16. This can only happen when “...we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ.” Ephesians 4:13. A time and times spent with the Lord will have an elaborate blossoming effect similar to that of trees growing along the river bank because their roots will ever be supplied with the water needed for foliage and fruit production, no matter the dry weather.

“The mind of a man or a woman does not come down in a moment from purity and holiness to depravity, corruption, and crime. It takes time to transform the human to the divine, or to degrade those formed in the image of God to the brutal or the satanic. By beholding we become changed... Constant war against the carnal mind must be maintained; and we must be aided by the refining influence of the grace of God, which will attract the mind upward and habituate it to meditate upon pure and holy things.” {AG 224.}

Testimony has it that when we come into close association and acquainted with God

and His ways, we partake of His nature. To cheer us when we pursue the course for oneness with God and Jesus, it is written; "And it came to pass, when Moses came down from mount Sinai with the two tables of testimony in (his) Moses' hand, when he came down from the mount... And when Aaron and all the children of Israel saw Moses, behold, the skin of his face shone; Exodus 34:29-30. Forty days spent with the Lord worked a transformation in which divinity was flashing in humanity. This wonderful reservation awaits all that are striving to touch the heart of God in faith. Too, as Moses, they will be manifest unmistakably with the glory that surrounds the Lord in His throne, says the prophet; "Servants of God, with their faces lighted up and shining with holy consecration, will hasten from place to place to proclaim the message from heaven" Great Controversy 612

"He who is guided by clean, holy principles will be quick to discern the slightest taint of evil, because he keeps Christ before him as his pattern. His deep regret at the discovery of a wrong act means the prompt correction of every step wherein he has diverged from truth. It means a constant, earnest striving for higher and still higher attainments in the Christian life. It means helping others

to climb heavenward. It means taking hold of Christ by living faith and resisting evil if need be unto blood, striving against sin." In Heavenly Places 260

"Many have an idea that they must do some part of the work alone. They have trusted in Christ for the forgiveness of sin, but now they seek by their own efforts to live aright. But every such effort must fail. Jesus says, 'Without Me ye can do nothing.' Our growth in grace, our joy, our usefulness,--all depend upon our union with Christ. It is by communion with Him, daily, hourly,--by abiding in Him, --that we are to grow in grace. He is not only the Author, but the Finisher of our faith. It is Christ first and last and always. He is to be with us, not only at the beginning and the end of our course, but at every step of the way." Steps to Christ 69

"--Seek to be an evergreen tree. Wear the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit, which is in the sight of God of great price. Cherish the grace of love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance. This is the fruit of the Christian tree. Planted by the rivers of water, it always brings forth its fruit in due season." {3BC 1142.} Or else, "Every

branch in me that beareth not fruit he taketh away." John 15:2

"When the fruit is brought forth, immediately he putteth in the sickle, because the harvest is come.' Christ is waiting with longing desire for the manifestation of Himself in His church. When the character of Christ shall be perfectly reproduced in His people, then He will come to claim them as His own." {COL 69.}

Dear reader, what significant steps can we recount today when we reflect our past (1, 2...over 10) years of Christian life? What imperfections can we testify as having overcome? Which are the tendencies/habits that have proved to be and still are more difficult to part with and why? Most likely, a more total surrender that has no reservation of any sort is required of us before we can attain the ultimate maturity--"The Fullness of Christ".

While there is still time to be called today, let's nourish ourselves that we may grow to the stature of perfect Adam, before the announcement "...It is done" is made. **Amen.**

John Riang'a Obwocha.





BROTHERLY LOVE

When Jesus walked on this earth He was often followed by many people, and surrounded by multitudes—yet He walked alone. No one on earth understood him. When He needed comfort He could only pour out His heart to His Father in heaven.

So each of us must walk our walk alone—solitary. We can befriend each other, we can love each other, we can try to help one another, but our inner self is a private chamber that only God has the key to.

Yet, sometimes there are souls that bond with other souls, and have an intuition of what the other may be going through. Yea, deeper than that, when one hurts, the other feels the pain. There is a poignant bond, a mysterious link between heart and heart.

POIGNANT: Keenly distressing to the mind or feelings: poignant anxiety. Affecting, touching, poignant sentiment. Latin: prick, pierce

Such a feeling Simeon predicted that Mary, the mother of Jesus would have: “Yea, a sword shall pierce through thy own soul also.” Luke 2:35.

“Sanctified love for one another is sacred. In this great work Christian love for one another—far higher, more constant, more courteous, more unselfish, than has been seen—preserves Christian tenderness, Christian benevolence, and politeness, and enfolds the human brotherhood in the embrace of God, acknowledging the dignity with which God has invested the rights of every man. This dignity Christians must ever cultivate for the honour and glory of God.” MCP 244.

Yet we are all sinful, fallen human beings, and there is need of a lifelong vigilance.

“As long as life shall last there is need of guarding the affections and the passions with a firm purpose. There is inward corruption, there are outward temptations, and wherever the work of God shall be advanced, Satan plans so to arrange circumstances that temptation shall come with overpowering force upon the soul. Not one moment can we be secure only as we are relying upon God, the life hid with Christ in God.” MCP 238.

“Above all his companions, John the beloved disciple yielded himself to the power of that wondrous life; that divine life from which flowed every life-giving impulse that has blessed the world.”

And, “listen to Christ’s words, to His prayer to the Father, ‘I have declared unto them Thy name, and will declare it: that the love wherewith Thou hast loved Me may be in them, and I in them.’ (John 17:26) What language is this! The Lord Jesus desires to shed abroad His love through every member of the body, His church, that the vitality of that love may circulate through every part of the body and dwell in us as it dwells in Him. The Lord then can love fallen man as He does His own Son; and He declares that He will be satisfied with nothing less than this in our behalf.” MCP 245.

This divine love is to flow through each of us, and through our church as a body.

“God would have His children realize that in order to glorify Him their affection must be given to those who most need it... No selfishness in

look, word, or deed is to be manifested when dealing with those of like precious faith,... whether they be high or low, rich or poor. The love that gives kind words to only a few, while others are treated with coldness, and indifference, is not love but selfishness. It will not in any way work for the good of souls or the glory of God. Our love... is not to be sealed up for special ones, to the neglect of others. Break the bottle, and the fragrance will fill the house." MCP 241-2.

"The love which Christ diffuses through the whole being is a vitalizing power. Every vital part—the brain, the heart, the nerves—it touches with healing. By it the highest energies of the being are roused to activity. It frees the soul from the guilt and sorrow, the anxiety and care, that crush the life-forces. With it comes serenity and composure. It implants in the soul joy that nothing earthly can destroy—joy in the Holy Spirit—health-giving, life-giving joy." MH 115.

"But ye, beloved, building up yourselves on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Ghost, Keep yourselves in the love of God, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life. And of some have compassion, making a difference: And others save with fear, pulling them out of the fire; hating even the garment spotted by the flesh. Now unto him that is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy, To the only wise God our Saviour, be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and ever. Amen." Jude 20-25.

Kathleen Ross, Alberta, Canada

A JOYOUS WEDDING IN TORONTO

Sister Emelina Garcia and Brother Leo Chiatto were wed in a beautiful ceremony in our Toronto Church on October 14, 2007. Their families and friends witnessed how the Lord had led their lives together with encouraging results. Elder Jerry Eaton held the wedding service and spoke of how marriage is like a sanctuary from the outside world for the faithful couple.

Here is an excerpt from a Christian song that was quoted in the service:

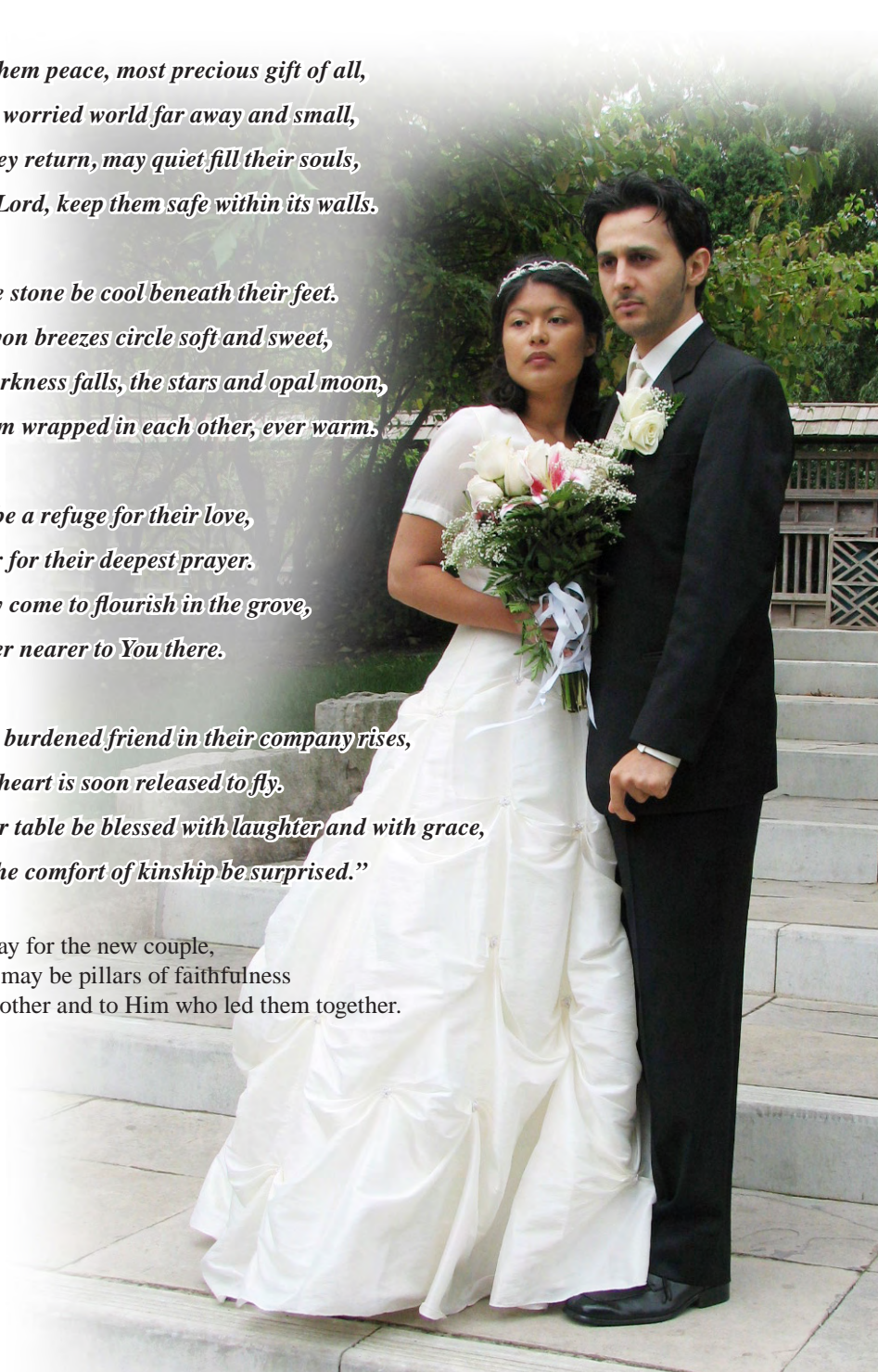
*"Grant them peace, most precious gift of all,
Keep the worried world far away and small,
When they return, may quiet fill their souls,
Dearest Lord, keep them safe within its walls.*

*"May the stone be cool beneath their feet.
The canyon breezes circle soft and sweet,
When darkness falls, the stars and opal moon,
Find them wrapped in each other, ever warm.*

*"May it be a refuge for their love,
A harbor for their deepest prayer.
May they come to flourish in the grove,
Grow ever nearer to You there.*

*"Many a burdened friend in their company rises,
A heavy heart is soon released to fly.
May their table be blessed with laughter and with grace,
And by the comfort of kinship be surprised."*

Let us pray for the new couple,
that they may be pillars of faithfulness
to one another and to Him who led them together.





I looked, and lo, a Lamb stood on the mount Sion, and with Him an hundred forty and four thousand, having His Father's name written in their foreheads... And they sung as it were a new song before the throne,... and no man could learn that song but the hundred and forty and four thousand, which were redeemed from the earth. These are they which were not defiled with women, for they are virgins. These are they which follow the Lamb whithersoever He goeth. These were redeemed from among men, being the first fruits unto God and to the Lamb. And in their mouth was found no guile: for they are without fault before the throne of God. Revelation 14:1-5

In the previous message, we looked at Revelation chapter 7, the first of the two New Testament passages that deal with the 144,000. We saw that Revelation chapter 7 discusses the 144,000 in the context of the question, "Who will be able to stand during the great tribulation that will precede the second coming of Christ in all His glory?" Revelation chapter 14, the second passage dealing with the 144,000, describes their spiritual attainments or qualities. It presents this faultless group in the setting of the three angels' messages, which are themselves the message of Christ our righteousness. It is the proclamation and acceptance of this message – righteousness by faith – that will produce the 144,000.

Thus, the three angels' messages can be described as sealing messages. They prepare a people for the last days and the coming of Jesus. The three angels' messages are also God's final call to a doomed world to accept His Son, Jesus Christ, as their only hope of salvation.

Notice how Revelation chapter 14 begins: "I looked..." (verse 1). Remember that in chapter 7, John hears the 144,000 when they are scattered over the earth; he doesn't see them until they are gathered in heaven. Now in chapter 14, he sees them. Chapter 14 is dealing with the 144,000 after they have arrived in heaven. This seems evident from the statements that follow. The Lamb is on Mt. Zion with the 144,000 around Him (verse 1).

Mention is made, again, of the fact that the 144,000 are sealed, having the name of God written in their foreheads. Chapter 14 contrasts God's seal with the mark of the beast (see verses 1, 9). Both God's people and Satan's followers receive a seal or mark in their foreheads – either God's seal or the mark of the beast. When the three angels' messages have been proclaimed to the whole world as a witness, when the subject of Christ our righteousness has swallowed up every other issue, then the entire human race will be divided into just two camps. No one will be left sitting on the fence. As Christ once said, "He that is not with me is against me." (Matthew 12:30) Then there will be only believers and unbelievers.

Those who have accepted Christ's righteousness will have surrendered themselves to His cross. They will say, "I am crucified with Christ; nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave His life for me." (Galatians 2:20) Those in Satan's camp will cry out, "Crucify Him!"

After he sees the 144,000 standing with the Lamb on Mt. Zion, John says, "I heard a voice from heaven, as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of a great thunder," (verse 2). The Greek words translated "many waters" actually mean "rushing waters". It sounded like thunder to John's ears.

Verse 3 goes on to say that only they can sing the new song that no one but the 144,000 can learn. Why is it that only the 144,000 can sing this song? It is because this song describes their experience during the last days of the earth's history.

Verses 4 and 5 describe the spiritual characteristics of the 144,000. They are spiritually pure (have not been defiled with women). The contrast is between this group and God's enemies, who are in Babylon, the mother of harlots. (see Revelation 17:5) Babylon is also characterized by self. Nebuchadnezzar exalted himself, saying, "Look at this great city that I have built." In contrast, the 144,000 have lost all confidence in the flesh, they are rejoicing in Christ.

Verse 4 also says that the 144,000 are "virgins". I once thought that no married person could be among the 144,000 because the Bible says they must be virgins. This is the problem with interpreting everything literally. We must always remember that Revelation is written in symbolic terms. The 144,000 are virgins in the same sense that Paul was talking about when he wrote to the Corinthian Christians, "I have espoused you (engaged you) to one husband, that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ." (2 Corinthians 11:2). He continues, "But I fear, lest by any means... your minds should be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ." (verse 3) Paul is saying, "I want you to be totally grounded in Christ and in His gospel; I want you to be trusting completely in the righteousness that is in Christ. I want to present you to Christ as a virgin, undefiled by self, but I'm afraid that you will be easily swept away from the gospel."

So when John says that the 144,000 are virgins and have not been defiled by women, he is saying that they are no longer defiled by self or any human substitute for the pure righteousness of Christ. They are resting in Him as their only Saviour, their only hope.

John also says that the 144,000 will "follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth." (Revelation 14:4) The term Lamb is used to signify Christ in the context of sacrifice. Jesus said, "If any man will come after me (follow me), let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me." (Luke 9:23) Those who follow the Lamb wherever

He goes will share in His cross.

The cross is not just a piece of wood on which Jesus died. It is a truth; it is the truth of God's verdict of death to the flesh or human nature, it is a symbol of death to self. "They that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts." (Galatians 5:24)

In each believer, there are two natures struggling for supremacy. There is the flesh, which is our natural, sinful life. And there is the Spirit, which is the divine nature of which every born-again believer has become a partaker. These two natures can never be at peace, can never come to a partnership or marriage. The moment we try to combine these two, we are committing spiritual fornication. The flesh and the Spirit are implacable enemies. (see Romans 8:5; Galatians 5:16, 17)

What the flesh sees, the flesh wants. At the very centre of the flesh is self. The self covets everything. We need to realize that our sinful, human nature will never be satisfied until it takes over the place of God. If God didn't put restrictions on the flesh, it would end up getting rid of anything or anyone who stands in its way. To reach its ultimate goal, the flesh even has to get rid of God, because its ultimate goal is to take God's place.

All this is revealed by the cross of Christ. It revealed that sin, if given free reign, would end up crucifying the Son of God Himself. That is why we cannot take sin lightly. Sin is far more than simply breaking a rule or doing something bad. Sin is essentially self taking the place of God. Sin is saying, "I, not Christ".

When the Spirit says no to the flesh, the flesh is not happy; it suffers. All through His life on earth, from His birth to the cross, Jesus stood on the platform of "not My will, but God's will be done". All His earthly life, the flesh suffered, and God's will was performed in Him. (see 1 Peter 4:1) In Revelation chapter 14 we see a group of people, the 144,000, who are willing to take the same stand and suffer as Christ did. The 144,000 are described as those who have been "redeemed from among men, being the first fruits unto God and to the Lamb." (Revelation 14:4) One significance of the term first fruits is that it means harvest time has arrived. In

this same chapter, after the three angels' messages have produced the 144,000, John sees a harvest scene. Christ sits on a cloud holding a sharp sickle. An angel comes out of the temple in heaven and cries, "thrust in thy sickle, and reap, for the time is come for thee to reap; for the harvest of the earth is ripe." (verse 15) As the first fruits, the 144,000 are a sign that the harvest is just around the corner.

The first fruits also symbolize the fruit or grain that is harvested first before the rest of the crop. Even though the 144,000 are the last generation of Christians in point of time, they are the first ones to be gathered together by God.

In the Bible, our English word perfect often translates the original word meaning "maturity". For example, in Matthew chapter 5, Jesus contrasts egocentric human love with God's agape love. He says, "Ye have heard that it hath been said, Thou shalt love thy neighbour, and hate thine enemy." (verse 43) This was the kind of love taught by the scribes and Pharisees. But Jesus goes on to say that a person doesn't even need to be a Christian to practice this level of love; even sinners do this. Jesus presents a higher standard of love. "But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you." (verse 44) He concludes, "Be ye therefore perfect (mature), even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect." (verse 48) Loving unconditionally, loving those who are unlovable, this is spiritual perfection, spiritual maturity. This is the way God loves--unconditionally. This is the way Jesus loved those who mistreated Him. When they cursed Him on the cross, He prayed for their forgiveness. He showed love for those who hated Him. To love as He loved is to be one with Him.

When Christ said we must be perfect, or mature, as His Father in heaven is perfect, He meant that we must love unconditionally, spontaneously, whether or not the object of that love treats us well or badly. We must love each other as God loves us.

The 144,000 will fully reflect this unconditional love of God. This is perfection, spiritual maturity, because love is the fulfilling of the law. (see Romans 13:10; Galatians 5:14) It is in this sense that Jesus will say, "Here are they that keep

the commandments of God.” (Revelation 14:12)

We must be clear about what Jesus means when He speaks of our keeping the commandments. Does He mean in the letter, or does He mean in the spirit? The Jews were experts at keeping the letter of the law. So are many Seventh-day Adventists. But is that what Christ is looking for? The letter of the law is important, but more important is the spirit of the law. We can keep the letter of the law and be totally out of harmony with its spirit or intent. But if we are keeping the spirit of the law, we will be in harmony with the letter of the law as well.

So when the 144,000 are called the “first fruits” of those who are redeemed, it means that:

1. They are the first to be harvested.
2. They are the sign that the rest of the harvest of the earth will be reaped next.

The 144,000 will manifest the full power of the gospel while still living on this earth. In heaven, all believers, all the saved, will reflect the character of Christ, including the great multitude.

In describing the 144,000 further, John says, “In their mouth was found no guile.” (Revelation 14:5) Peter uses the same expression in describing Christ’s behaviour at the cross: “Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow His steps. Who did no sin, neither was guile found in His mouth. Who, when

He was reviled, reviled not again, when He suffered, He threatened not; but committed Himself to Him that judgeth righteously. Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness: by whose stripes ye were healed.” (1Peter 2: 21-24)

Christ was willing to suffer that we should be saved. We must be willing to suffer that He might be glorified. That is what the 144,000 are willing to do. Will they be persecuted in the great tribulation? Will they be mistreated? Will they be reviled? Will they suffer? Yes, they will face all these situations. How will they react? They will react as Christ did. They will keep quiet; they will not fight back. They have no guile in their mouths. This is the power of the gospel. The greatest test that will come to us during the great time of trouble is this: Will we, by faith, overcome even as He overcame?

Can the gospel produce such a people – not merely one or two individuals, but a church of such people, who will lighten the earth with God’s glory/character?

The answer is “Yes”. The three angels’ messages, which are righteousness by faith in verity, will do it. That is the only thing that can produce such an experience – a clear understanding of Christ’s righteousness and a heart response to it.

Finally, John says that the 144,000 are “without fault before the throne of God.” (Revelation 14:5) Revelation 7:14 says they

“have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.” This is how they are without fault. They stand in the perfect righteousness of Jesus, imparted to them by faith. “Here are they that keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus.” (Revelation 14:12)

So here we have a picture of a people, the 144,000, who are cleansed, who fully reflect the character of Christ, who are undefiled and without fault. How will this happen? Will it happen as a result of promotional programs? By incentives? By skillful administration? No. It will come about only through the preaching of the gospel, by the righteousness of Christ, as presented in the messages of the three angels, and by our response to these messages in faith. Christ and His righteousness is the only truth that can produce such a people.

God has a great plan for Laodicea – this last generation of Christians. The proclamation of the three angels’ messages will bring that plan to fruition. It will produce a people who will be able to stand in the great tribulation and at the second coming of Jesus. Remember that in His divinity, Christ is a consuming fire. Anyone not covered by His righteousness will be consumed at the second coming. But the 144,000 will be able to stand that consuming glory, not because they are good in themselves, but because they are clothed with the white raiment – the righteousness of Christ. In joy, they will cry out, “This is our God and Saviour; we have been waiting patiently for Him, and here He is!”

“The Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, come. And let him that is athirst, come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely.” (Revelation 22:17)

“He which testifieth these things saith, Surely I come quickly. Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus.” (verse 20) *Amen.*

Anonymous





The day our parents let go of our little stubby hands and send us into the unknown world, they call it school, our hatred begins. I think it's not so much the feeling of being in a strange place with a happy-go-lucky school teacher who smiles as if she was forced to. Rather it's the anxious feeling we all get which makes us think that our parents left us in "the creepy place" as a punishment, and they might never come back. Why do you think we run to our parents as soon as we were unleashed from the school gates? As we get older though, we do realize the fact that school is a part of our life, no matter what. Nevertheless, there is one thing we all should look forward to at the beginning of each school year... summer.

Even though some of us funny people are a bit sad at the end of every school year, we all know that deep down, we all wish for something exciting every summer. The first week is always catching up on our deep sleep and then we really think of ways to spend the 53 days that we have left. Some of the big children easily get a job. Of course we are small children and we have to prepare an argument about how to get vacation enjoyment of working outside the home. Otherwise, at home we are learning housekeeping ethics, watering the garden, car washing, going to church, or continually studying school lessons, reading the Bible, and praying. Some of us should open our hearts for God's field evangelism of house to house canvassing with our parents. And

also we can do some volunteer work in our church publishing house. Unfortunately, those under 12 years old, like me, we cannot get a job. No matter how clever we are, but which parent would allow us to work outside the home? There is always a wonderful feeling during the last week of summer that this year went by too fast.

The thing that always reminds us of school is the back-to-school sales. Busy and lazy Moms really enjoy these fake sales because of stocking up. I really appreciate personally my Mom for stocking up on my school needs. In Canada, most schools open on September 4th, the best day on earth for our unhappy parents. However, if you really think about it, it's a fresh start. On that day, we might be entering new classrooms, new schools, new environments, or the most challenging academic years of our life. Nonetheless, what we don't realize in the course of worrying so much about the first day of school is that we are rejoining with old friends or even making new friends whom we know are true to us.

It is very easy to complete a 100km marathon, or become a popular athlete or we can run many continuous miles by cycling or we can become a scholar. But these all belong to physical fitness and success in life. Higher than this, we all need spiritual studies and training in our daily life. Exercise ourselves towards godliness. For bodily exercises profit for a very short time, but in the long run, godliness is very

profitable for heavenly peace. "Having promise of the life that now is and of that which is to come." 1 Tim. 4:7,8. So my advice to all school children who believe in God and Jesus Christ--study the word of God very systematically, and pray in the morning before you go to school. Our bodies and minds are to be dedicated to God before starting our worldly activities. The goal is not spiritual muscle-flexing, but godliness,--a life that is pleasing to the Lord. Vigorous study of the word of God, focused and bodily discipline, are all part of the process.

How well we train greatly affects how we run the race of life, which starts in our school life. Do not try to fit in with the wrong, worldly crowd. Because, the more you pretend to the world, you will be a loser. Godly exercise is the main key to a godly character.

At the same time, obey you lovely parents and get up before sunrise. Listen very carefully to their instruction and advice. It might be strong advice you hear from your parents every single day, but please believe me, this advice had a bitter taste to me in the beginning, but now their advice actually works. I myself have tried it. **AMEN.**

Shilshah A Chelliah, Canada

REJOICE



IN THY YOUTH

When the opportunity arose, it was asked of Daniel Webster, “what has been the most important thought to come to your mind?” He was not only the secretary of state; he had also written many books and was author of the famous Webster Dictionary. What do you think was his answer? “The most important thought is this--one day I will give an account to God for my life.” The Bible says in Romans 14:10, 12. “But why dost thou judge thy brother? or why dost thou set at nought thy brother? for we shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ. So then every one of us shall give account of himself to God.” “For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad.” 2 Corinthians 5:10.

We will give an account to God of what we have done. It is a law that has been established; we cannot change it or run away from it. It is a fact. You and I, young man and young lady will have to be judged.

Once there was an Indian Chief who was well respected as a wise man and having experience. One day two young men from the tribe decided to make fun of the Indian Chief and put his wisdom on trial. The young man said, “I have the perfect question for the chief,” he told his friend, “let’s get a baby bird from a nest and go before the old man. I will ask him, is the bird in my hand dead or alive? If he says he is alive, I will close my hand tighter and show him it is dead. If he says it’s dead, I will open my hand and the bird will fly, and we will laugh at the chief.” They went before the chief and they asked the question, “Mr. Chief how is the baby bird in my hand, dead or alive?” The chief with great wisdom answered, “the answer is in your hand, if you want it to live, it will live; if you want it to die, it will die.”

God has decided on which day you would be born and he will decide when you will die. We have no control over these two matters. Nevertheless, we decide what happens between these two events. We need to learn how to count our days. God is our Creator and all of us one day will give an account to God what we have done with our lives.

Psalm 90:12 “So teach us to number our days, that we may apply our hearts unto wisdom. We must learn to redeem our time; we belong to God by Creation.”

Psalm 8:1-4. “O LORD, our Lord, how excellent is thy name in all the earth! who hast set thy glory above the heavens. Out of the mouth of babes and sucklings hast thou ordained strength because of thine enemies, that thou mightest still the enemy and the avenger. When I consider thy heavens, the work of thy fingers, the moon and the stars, which thou hast ordained; What is man, that thou art mindful of him? and the son of man, that thou visitest him?”

Let me ask you--how big is the sun? Is it 10 times bigger than the earth? How about one million 300 thousand times bigger than this earth. It takes 8 minutes for the rays to reach us from the sun. How fast does light travel? 300 million kilometers per second.

How far is the sun from the earth? If we multiply 8 (minutes) x 60 (seconds in a minute) x 300 million (kilometers/second) = what is your number?

The galaxy we live in is called the Milky Way. Do you know how many stars it has? The Milky Way contains 100 thousand, millions

stars. The closest galaxy to us is 4 years and 3 million light years away. My thought is “who is man that you are mindful of him?” It is impressive, the song comes to my mind “how great thou art, oh God.”

We think when we buy property it is ours, my house—yeah, right. But, if you don't pay your taxes for the house what happens? All that we possess belongs to God. He gives us houses, wealth and bank accounts.

Nevertheless I invite you to come to the cross and acknowledge God as your Creator. Don't keep on fighting off His calling. The more we fight (resist) the more trouble that comes into our life. Let us submit all our plans to God. Let Him direct your life and watch Him bless you. Remember this Bible verse: Ecclesiastes 11:19 “Rejoice, O young man, in thy youth; and let thy heart cheer thee in the days of thy youth, and walk in the ways of thine heart, and in the sight of thine eyes: but know thou, that for all these things God will bring thee into judgment.”

Keep the faith young people, we are praying for you. *AMEN.*

Joshua Martinez, Idaho, USA.

NB: We will be having a youth conference for the Western Field youth in December. It will be fun. Make plans to attend. More details will be coming in the fall.

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“And unto one he gave five talents, to another two, and to another one; to every man according to his several ability” Mathew 25:15



ims
PUBLISHING



In the every day, worldly manner of speech there are two expressions that are often used: “good luck” and “bad luck;” or “lucky” and “unlucky”. When something good happens that makes us happy, people usually say, “You were lucky!” On the contrary, when something bad happens that makes us sad, or when we suffer a loss, then we hear the words, “That was bad luck!”

There was once a man who lived in China. He was known for his wisdom. He was poor, but satisfied with what he had; all he had was a horse and a son.

Once, his horse ran away and the people of the village, sympathizing with him, said, “What bad luck!” But the man answered; “I do not know whether it is bad or good luck. We shall see.”

A week later, the horse came back followed by ten other wild horses. The whole village gathered together to congratulate the man for his good luck. The wise man answered, “I do not know whether it is good or bad luck. We shall see.”

The next day, his son got on one of the new horses to tame it, but the horse threw him violently down to the ground and the young man ended up with a broken leg. “What bad luck!” his neighbours in the village said. The wise man in our story answered, “I do not know whether it is bad or good luck. We shall see.” After a month or so, a war broke out and all young people were recruited to go to the front, but the young man had his leg in a cast and could not go.

“That is really good luck!” said the villagers. The wise man answered, “I do not know whether it is good or bad luck. We shall see.”

And so the story goes on without end. Is our own life story something similar? Do we divide our life into periods in which we were “lucky” or “unlucky”?

We can read the whole Bible and we shall not find any of these words. Instead of “lucky”, we find the word “blessed” and in the place of “unlucky” or “bad luck”, we read “temptations” or “trials”.

“My brethren, count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations, knowing this, that the trying of your faith worketh patience” (James 1:2, 3). In other words, when we have bad luck, when we have to go through trials, when things go bad, when we are tempted, we should not complain, murmur or cry, but rejoice. Is that logic? Is that at all possible? Here we are given a clue in the following word: Faith, “the trying of your faith”. Faith makes everything possible, opens all doors and reaches every goal when it is according to God’s will.

“Faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.” (Hebrews 11:1)

A Christian can overcome everything by faith. He sees no bad luck in anything, but trials that work out patience and this patience will be rewarded at the end.

When we study the Bible, we find the story of people who went through several hard trials that ended up being a blessing for them or for others. One of the well-known examples is the one of Joseph who was thrown into a well by his own brothers who afterwards sold him as a slave. But what a blessing was Joseph’s life! He occupied the highest position

in the court of the Egyptian Pharaoh and saved that land from famine. But even more important than that is the fact that his attitude worked towards the conversion of his own brothers. Let us listen to what he himself has to say, “Now therefore be not grieved, nor angry with yourselves, that ye sold me hither: for God did send me before you to preserve life... and God sent me before you to preserve you a posterity in the earth, and to save your lives by a great deliverance.” Genesis 45:5, 7.

Was what happened in the past bad luck or good luck for Joseph and his brothers? Was it just a coincidence or part of a plan beyond human imagination? Have we maybe in our life gone through situations in which we have suffered, but they have turned into a blessing for us or for others?

Peter writes, “Wherein ye greatly rejoice, though now for a season, if need be, ye are in heaviness through manifold temptations: That the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honour and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ: Whom having not seen, ye love; in whom, though now ye see [him] not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory: Receiving the end of your faith, [even] the salvation of [your] souls.” 1 Peter 1:6-9.

This is actually our greatest and main goal—the salvation of our soul. And we know that it is through trials that we are cleansed from sin and strengthened in faith. It is as we are tried that we grow in patience and hope and get to know our Lord better. The Lord does not allow anything to happen in our life that cannot turn into a blessing, if we cling to Him in faith.

Once, the devil expressed his wish to try Job, a pious, generous and faithful man who served God and his fellowmen. The Lord allowed Satan to attack His loving child. Maybe there is no other story in the Holy Scriptures sadder than Job’s. How “unlucky” he was! In one single day he lost all his cattle; all his children died in an accident and at the end he was deprived of his health. His wife was no support, even his servants scorned him, and he found no consolation whatsoever in his friends. But in the midst of this loneliness and suffering, Job heard God’s voice; he had a revelation of the Majesty of heaven and

His creative power and repented in dust and ashes, as told in the Bible. Through this experience his soul was cleansed and he could, from then on, serve God in Spirit. What a blessing!

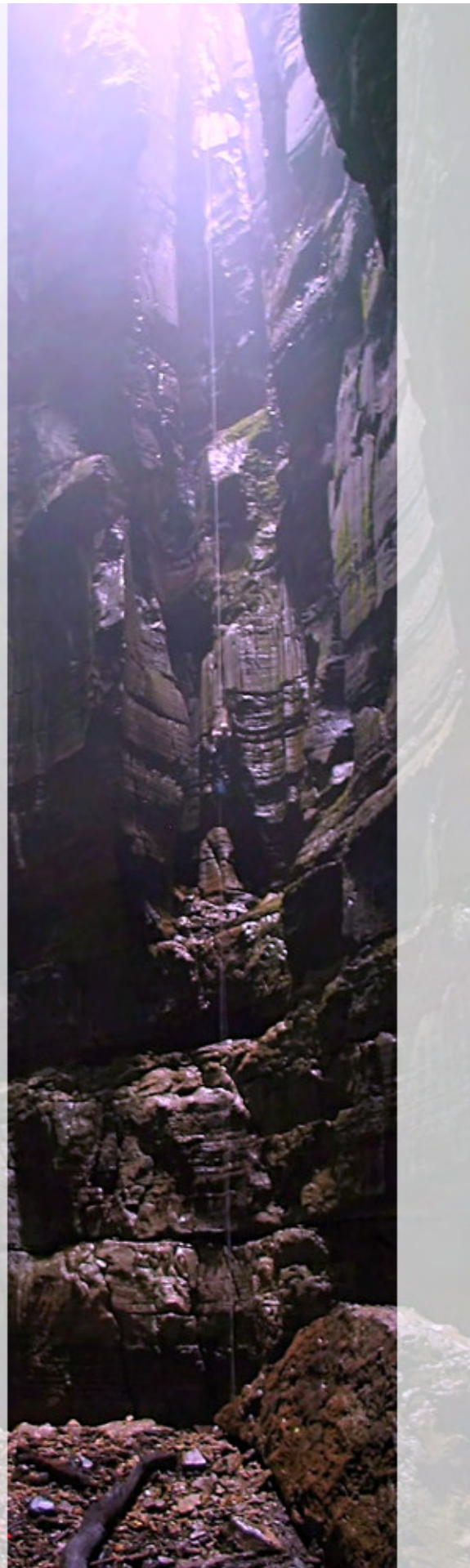
But there is Someone who suffered even more than Job did, because He was sinless and did not need to repent. He was accused, scorned, beaten up, condemned and finally crucified. “Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows: yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted. But he [was] wounded for our transgressions, [he was] bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace [was] upon him; and with his stripes we are healed.” Isaiah 53:4, 5.

What a blessing that we have accepted Jesus as our personal Saviour! As it is written in Psalm 144:5, “Happy [is that] people, that is in such a case: [yea], happy [is that] people, whose God [is] the Lord.” This is the only context in which the word “happy” appears in the Bible and this word is a synonym of blessed.

As disciples of Jesus Christ, let us drop from our daily speech these two expressions “bad luck” and “good luck” and substitute them for “trials” and “blessings” with the certainty that each trial entails a blessing. Let us remember what Luke writes in Acts of the Apostles 14:22, “...we must through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of God.” Nothing is in vain; everything has a purpose and the precious virtue of patience will be revealed at the end of times and receive its reward, “Because thou hast kept the word of my patience, I also will keep thee from the hour of temptation, which shall come upon all the world, to try them that dwell upon the earth.” Revelation 3:10.

May the Lord help us to remain on the narrow path and realize what a great blessing it is! *Amen.*

Teresa Corti



SURPASSING LOVE REVEALED IN HIS PLAN

December 15, 1914
By Mrs. E. G. White

The law of love is the foundation of God's government, and the service of love the only service acceptable to heaven. God has granted freedom of will to all, endowed men with capacity to appreciate His character, and therefore with ability to love Him, and to choose His service. So long as created beings worshiped God, they were in harmony throughout the universe. While love to God was supreme, love to others abounded. As there was no transgression of the law, which is the transcript of God's character, no note of discord jarred the celestial harmonies.

"Kept in Silence from Times Eternal"

But known unto God are all His works, and from eternal ages the covenant of grace (unmerited favor) existed in the mind of God. It is called the everlasting covenant; for the plan of salvation was not conceived after the fall of man, but it was that which was "kept in silence through times eternal, but now is manifested, and by the Scriptures of the prophets, according to the commandment of the eternal God, is made known unto all the nations unto obedience of faith." Rom. 16: 25, 26, A. R. V.

Redemption Not an Afterthought

The purpose and plan of grace existed from all eternity. Before the foundation of the world it was according to the determinate counsel of God that man should be created and endowed with power to do the divine will. The fall of man, with all its consequences, was not hidden from the Omnipotent. Redemption was not an afterthought, a plan formulated after the fall of Adam, but an eternal purpose, suffered to be wrought out for the blessing not only of this atom of a world, but for the good of all the worlds that God had created.

Before Him who rules in the heavens, the mysteries of the past and the future are alike outspread; and God sees, beyond the woe and darkness and ruin that sin has wrought, the outworking of His purpose of love and blessing. Though clouds and darkness are round about Him, yet righteousness and judgment are the foundation of His throne.

Made Known in His Love

Through creation and redemption, through nature and through Christ, the glories of the divine character are revealed. By the marvelous display of His love in giving "His only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life," the character of God is revealed to the intelligences of the universe. Through Christ our heavenly Father is made known as the God of love.

Heaven in Sadness - the Angels Perplexed

When man sinned, all heaven was filled with sorrow; for through yielding to temptation, man became the enemy of God, a partaker of the satanic nature. The image of God in which he had been created was marred and distorted. The character of man was out of harmony with the character of God; for through sin man became carnal, and the carnal heart is enmity against God, is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be.

To the angels there seemed to be no way of escape for the transgressor. They ceased their songs of praise, and throughout the heavenly courts there was mourning for the ruin sin had wrought. Out of harmony with the nature of God, unyielding to the claims of His law, naught but destruction was before the human race. Since the divine law is as changeless as the character of God, there could be no hope for man unless some way could be devised whereby his transgression might be pardoned, his nature renewed, and his spirit restored to reflect the image of God.

Divine love had conceived such a plan. It was through Satan's misrepresentation of God's character that man was led to doubt the reality of His love, and came to look upon God as his enemy. As Satan had done in heaven, so he did on earth,--declared God's government unjust, the restrictions of His law unnecessary, and bade men, as he had angels, to throw aside the yoke and let the dictates of their own nature be their only guide and law. He promised liberty; but as he himself is the servant of corruption, he brought the race into bondage to sin, misery, and death. He represented God as claiming all, and giving nothing, as requiring men's service for His own glory, but denying Himself nothing

for man's good.

He Alone Could Save

In the work of creation, Christ was with God. He was one with God, equal with Him, the brightness of His glory, the express image of His person, the representative of the Father. He alone, the Creator of man, could be his Saviour. No angel of heaven could reveal the Father to the sinner, and win him back to allegiance to God. But Christ could manifest the Father's love; for God was in Christ, reconciling the world to Himself. Christ could be the "day's man" between a holy God and lost humanity, one who could "lay His hand upon us both."

None but Christ could redeem man from the curse of the law. He proposed to take upon Himself the guilt and shame of sin,--sin so offensive in the sight of God that it would necessitate separation from His Father. Christ proposed to reach to the depths of man's degradation and woe, and restore the repenting, believing soul to harmony with God. Christ, the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world, offered Himself as a sacrifice and substitute for the fallen sons of Adam, though in this offering all heaven was involved in infinite sacrifice.

He So Loved that He Gave

But the Father so loved the world that He gave His only-begotten Son, that through His smitten heart a channel might be found for the outflowing of infinite love for fallen man. Man had become so degraded by sin, his nature so perverted by evil, that it was impossible for him of himself to come into harmony with God, whose nature is purity and love. But Christ redeemed him from the condemnation of the law, and imparted divine power, and through man's cooperation, the sinner could be restored to his lost estate.

The grace of Christ alone could change the heart of stone to a heart of flesh, make it alive to God, and transform the character, so that a degraded child of sin might become a child of God and heir of heaven. Man had no power to justify the soul, to sanctify the heart. Moral disease could be healed only through the power of the great Physician. The highest gift of heaven, even the only-begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth, was able to redeem the lost.

The only hope for the fallen race was found in becoming reconciled to God. Satan had so misrepresented God that man had no true conception of the divine character. Christ came to the world, and in carrying out the plan of salvation, revealed the fact that "God is love."

MIRACLE WATER



CHILDRENS CORNER

It was a beautiful morning at Pine Springs Ranch, a picturesque summer camp nestled high in the mountains of southern California. Beams of light were sliding down the towering pines and played chase over the hillsides.

Joan stepped out of her cabin to be alone with God for just a few seconds before she would give her worship talk. Her eyes instantly caught the brilliance of the morning, and she thought, "This is a fabulous day! I can't believe how good my girls are. I can tell that God is blessing this camp already. This just has to be a wonderful week. Counseling isn't so bad after all!"

Suddenly her reflection was interrupted by a frantic voice, "Joan! Joan! Carol is in the shower all soaped up, and the water won't work!"

Joan raced to the rescue and found Carol in the bathhouse lathered up thicker than barber's foam.

"Oh, Joan," Carol sobbed, "I was taking a shower, and the water quit, and now I can't rinse, and I'm never going to be on time for line call, and we'll lose all our merit points, and..."

"Now, Carol, calm down. There's a little trickle of water here, and we can rinse you off with a washcloth. The rest of you girls run up to the cabin and get dressed. Carol and I will be up in just a minute for worship."

With a lot of effort and a little luck, Joan straightened out the problem and rushed her cabin members to line call on time. She was still panting from all the rush when she got to breakfast. Just as she was going in the cafeteria door, she heard a familiar voice behind her and swung around. There was all six feet two inches of Larry, waist-deep in excited campers, wading through them to her.

"Hey, Joan, you sound like you've just run around the camp ten times! What's up?"

"Oh, Larry, you wouldn't believe the problems we had this morning getting everyone ready for line call! First the water quit, and my girls couldn't brush their teeth or wash, and one was all soaped up and couldn't rinse, and that's not the half of it."

"Did the water quit completely?"

"No. Good thing there was still a trickle running. The pressure must have just gone off."

"Well, maybe, but in the boys' village there is no water either—not even a trickle!"

"That's strange. Hey, I'll see you later. My girls are waiting for me at the table."

Elder Cummings, a young, vivacious man in his twenties who had an uncanny knack for dealing with kids of all ages, walked to the front of the cafeteria. "I know everyone is ready for breakfast," he said, "but I have one important announcement before we get started. I would like all staff to come up front right after prayer for a short meeting about some urgent items."

While the campers ate, the staff gathered and waited for their director to speak. "Has anyone had trouble with the water today?" he asked.

"We sure have! Lots of trouble," was the unanimous response.

Just then Jack came bounding through the door, and Elder Cummings called him over and told the staff, "I sent Jack up to look at the spring and pump and check the water tanks. Tell us what you found, Jack."

Jack's tall, lanky frame shook as he spoke fast and excitedly, "The spring is dry. The tanks in the boys' village are empty, and the tanks in the girls' village have only about two feet of water in them. There's no

way to get any more water; and if we don't get water, we'll have to close camp."

"I'm afraid Jack's right," the director said. "Staff, this is a serious problem. I know you're all shocked and as disappointed as I am, but we must not upset the campers. For the time being, just let the campers think this is a passing problem, and that there is nothing to worry about. Tonight I want you all to come to a prayer meeting after you get your campers to bed, and we'll ask the Lord what to do. Until then please try to act as though nothing is wrong, and run your regular program today."

The rest of the day went fairly well, and Joan's girls didn't ask many questions about the meeting or the water. Joan had almost forgotten about the whole problem when Lynn, Elder Cummings's secretary, came up to her. "Joan, Elder Cummings wants all of you counselors to keep your kids from taking showers tonight. The lack of water would show even more then. Don't forget the meeting. When you see the other counselors, pass the word around about the showers."

Campfire time came, and the campers sang their favourite songs at the top of their lungs while Fred and John picked up the banjo and guitar. Joan's mind wasn't at the campfire bowl, though. "These kids will be so unhappy if they have to go home early," she thought. "They've really having fun, and camp has gone so well this far. I'd be disappointed to see them go, too."

She was brought back to reality by two hands slipping into hers as the campers stood and clasped hands to sing their nightly song of dedication.

"We are one in the Spirit, We are one in the Lord... And they'll know we are Christians by our love..."

As the music drifted out over the night air, everything seemed so perfect. Each person in camp seemed united in Christ and ready

to spend a wonderful week together. Why did the spring have to run dry?

The song faded, and prayer was offered. The campers reluctantly started back to their cabins.

Joan's girls huddled around her as they made their way up the hill. Their cabin was the highest on the hillside, and no one liked to walk up the hill by herself.

"You girls will really have to speed things up tonight," Joan coaxed as she led the way into the cabin and switched on the light. "I have to go to a meeting in thirty minutes, and I want you all tucked safely in bed before I leave. So try to hurry extra fast, okay?"

"Joan," Jill tugged worriedly at her long red tresses as she talked, "Sammy said he heard Elder Cummings say he was going to close camp and send us all home because he didn't like the dumb girls. Did he say that, Joan?"

"That stupid Sammy Martin made it all up, Jill, just because he hates girls," Ann retorted angrily.

"So what did Elder Cummings really say?" persisted Jill.

By this time all the girls were looking at Joan for an answer.

Joan started slowly, "Well, Jill, Sammy Martin was wrong about Elder Cummings not liking you girls, and he doesn't want to send you home. We do have a little problem, though. Remember when you couldn't get any water, Carol?" Carol nodded.

Joan continued, "Well, that's our problem. We're very low on water; and if we don't get some more, we can't keep the camp running. Don't worry though. We're having a meeting tonight about it, and we're going to ask the Lord for help. I know something will work out. Now hurry and get ready for bed, but remember—no showers, and don't use any more water than you have to."

Soon the girls were tucked into bed. Joan met Connie, another counselor, at her cabin, and they headed to the meeting together.

The lodge was buzzing with conversation when the girls arrived. Elder Cummings called the meeting to order, and everyone was seated in a circle so that the conversation

could proceed easily.

"I checked into our problem a little more carefully today," Elder Cummings began. "I made a few calls and found out that this whole area is low on water. I called down to Idyllwild and asked if they could truck us up some water. They said they couldn't spare it, so I called the valley. They said it would cost us quite a bit for the amount we need, and besides that, they can't deliver for another two days because they're already bogged down with order. Can you think of anything else we can do?"

Larry spoke up. "Elder Cummings, I think we've done everything we can do by ourselves, and we don't seem to be getting anywhere. The only thing I can see that could solve our problem is for God to work a miracle."

"I've thought and prayed a lot about this too, Larry, and I've come to the same conclusion," Elder Cummings said. "Only God can solve our problem."

Everyone agreed. Elder Cummings continued, "Let's talk to the Lord about our situation and ask Him to provide water if He wants us to keep the camp open. Remember, the Lord knows best; and He might not answer us the way we think He should. We have to accept in faith what He knows is good for us. Let's break up in smaller groups now and earnestly pray, because what is to be done has to be done soon."

The staff members divided into small groups and began to pray as they had never prayed before. Everyone could feel the Lord's presence.

After about an hour, Elder Cummings led the staff in the camp song of dedication, "We Are One in the Spirit." At the close of the song he spoke, "Joan and Larry, it's getting late, and I hate to leave the campers alone. I wonder if you would each go back to your village to be there in case anything comes up. I know you hate to leave while we stay and pray, but you pray with us from up there."

Joan and Larry reluctantly left the beautiful prayer service. As they walked back to their villages, the feeling of God's presence went with them and they parted with a smile and the whispered words of encouragement, "God will meet our needs."

Joan prayed silently as she went from cabin to cabin checking the girls. She took extra care not to make any noise that would waken her campers. Looking around, she found all nine girls fast asleep. Joan knelt down by her bed and continued praying. When she had finished she stepped just outside to see if the other cabins were quiet. As she went back in and closed the door, a window popped open and two counselors stuck their heads inside.

"Joan, Joan, are you here?" Betty whispered excitedly.

"What's up?"

"Joan, the water tanks are overflowing—I mean, water is bubbling out the top!" Cheryl's voice quivered with great excitement as she spoke.

"It's miracle water!" Betty broke in.

"That's wonderful! When did you find out?" Joan could hardly hold her voice down to a whisper.

"When Larry finished checking the cabins in his village, he went up to look at the tanks and found them running over!" Betty related with enthusiasm.

"I've got to see this!" Joan exclaimed as she pulled on her shoes.

"I'm sorry, Joan, but you have to stay here with the kids. We're supposed to be at a thanks meeting right now. If you don't stay, there won't be anyone here. We'll tell you every detail when we get back!" Cheryl called as she and Betty started back down the hill.

Joan felt left out for just a moment, but then she remembered that it didn't matter if she saw or not—the fact was still the same. God had performed a miracle for them, for her! She slipped outside once more and looked up at the stars. Suddenly her heart overflowed with joy. "What a wonderful, powerful God I serve," she said aloud. "I know He cares for me and will never reject me. This is going to be the greatest camp ever!"

At that moment Joan heard some noise and turned around to see nine faces peeking out at her. She laughed and ran inside to tell her girls the story of the miracle water.



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