

The Reformation *Messenger*



VOLUME 16, NUMBER 10, OCTOBER 2009

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



"But blessed are your eyes,
for they see: and your ears,
for they hear." Matthew 13:16

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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At The Lord's Table

“In the upper chamber of a dwelling at Jerusalem, Christ was sitting at table with His disciples. They had gathered to celebrate the Passover. The Saviour desired to keep this feast alone with the twelve. He knew that His hour was come; He Himself was the true paschal lamb, and on the day the Passover was eaten, He was to be sacrificed. He was about to drink the cup of wrath; He must soon receive the final baptism of suffering. But a few quiet hours still remained to Him, and these were to be spent for the benefit of His beloved disciples.” DA 642.

Before morning, the Lamb of God would be in the hands of the infuriated mob. Judas had already been plotting his betrayal. This stage was set for His great humiliation, but knowing all that was before Him, Jesus chose this auspicious occasion to introduce to His disciples the new ordinances (other than baptism) that were to be recognized and celebrated in the new church, following His crucifixion and resurrection. These ordinances are a part of the worship of Christian churches in all parts of the world even to these days.

In a few short hours His death would bring the ceremonies and types of the old Jewish economy to their end; and the post-crucifixion ordinances must be established in the church before his death, to be ratified by the shedding of His blood. This was in accord with a plan that had been in the mind of the Father and the Son for ages past.

The new ordinances would include the breaking and eating of unleavened bread as an emblem of Christ's broken body and

the drinking of sweet grape wine as an emblem of His blood that was to be shed for sinners. These ceremonies were emblematic occasions, pointing the believer back to Christ's offering.

Jesus Washed The Disciple's Feet

This holy ordinance (the Lord's Supper) was, however, to be preceded by a ceremony of washing with water, typifying the cleansing away of sin by the blood of Jesus. This washing ceremony was to be observed in addition to the ordinance of baptism. The latter was to be celebrated only once—at conversion; the former from time to time as the church should meet to partake of the emblems of the bread and wine at the Lord's table.

Baptism would represent the big cleansing—when the blood of Christ covered and cleansed away all the past guilt of a sinful life. This additional ceremony would represent the lesser, but none the less important, work of cleansing the followers of Christ from sin and defilement that would accumulate in the life from day to day, following the ordinance of baptism.

Of the institution of this ordinance of cleansing, we find a clear record in John's gospel when he says, “Now before the feast of the passover, when Jesus knew that his hour was come that he should depart out of this world unto the Father, having loved his own which were in the world, he loved them unto the end. ¶And supper being ended, the devil having now put into the heart of Judas Iscariot,

Simon's [son], to betray him; ¶Jesus knowing that the Father had given all things into his hands, and that he was come from God, and went to God;¶ He riseth from supper, and laid aside his garments; and took a towel, and girded himself. ¶After that he poureth water into a basin, and began to wash the disciples' feet, and to wipe [them] with the towel wherewith he was girded." John 13:1-5.

Traveling with open sandals on their bare feet over the dusty paths en route to the place where the Passover was to be eaten, they had accumulated a certain amount of dust on their feet; and it was customary for a servant to perform the service of washing the feet of the guests as they arrived.

No servant being present on this occasion, this service was not performed. It was clearly the duty of some one of the disciples to accept the role of a servant and carry out this menial task, but not one of them was willing to do so. Their hearts were still filled with selfishness and the desire for high rank in the kingdom. Not one of them would humble himself to the point of accepting a servant's role.

"The pitcher, the basin, and the towel were there, in readiness for the feet washing; but no servant was present." DA 644

"There was 'a strife among them, which of them should be accounted the greatest.'" This contention, carried on in the presence of Christ, grieved and wounded Him. The disciples clung to their favourite idea that Christ would assert His power and take His position on the throne of David. And in heart each still longed for the highest place in the Kingdom. They had placed their own estimate upon themselves and upon one another; and, instead of regarding their brethren as more worthy, they had placed themselves first. The request of James and John to sit on the right and left of Christ's throne had excited the indignation of the others. That the two brothers should presume to ask for the highest position so stirred the ten that alienation threatened. They felt that they were misjudged, that their fidelity and talents were not appreciated. Judas was the most severe upon James and John.

"When the disciples entered the supper room, their hearts were full of resentful feelings. Judas pressed next to Christ on His left side; John was on the right. If there was a highest place, Judas was determined to have it, and that place was thought to be next to Christ. And Judas was a traitor." DA 643, 644.

As they sat at the Passover table, He read their selfish, proud hearts. He desired to rebuke their pride and teach them that true greatness is measured by one's willingness to serve others. Already He had said to them, "He that is greatest among you shall be your servant." And again, "He that shall humble himself shall be exalted."

Jesus also recognized that the disciples were not in a proper spiritual condition to partake of the holy emblems of bread and wine and that there was need for deep heart searching on their part that they might make suitable preparation for this new and meaningful

service. Concerning this He a little later said to them: "Wherefore whosoever shall eat this bread, and drink this cup of the Lord, unworthily, shall be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord. But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of that bread, and drink of that cup. For he that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh damnation to himself, not discerning the Lord's body." 1 Cor. 11:27-29.

With these considerations before Him, Jesus arose from the Passover table and began to wash His disciple's feet, as astonishment and self-condemnation filled their hearts. They had proudly declined this humble service, but now their Lord and Master was freely performing it. He had taken upon Himself "the form of a servant," and was revealing His greatness through His great humility.

Peter watched in astonishment as Jesus washed the feet of some of the others. Now He came also to him and Peter, overcome with shame and remorse, exclaimed, "Lord, dost thou wash my feet?"

Peter felt he could not possibly permit his Master to perform for him such a menial service. Surely this was far beneath his Lord's dignity. Was not Christ the Son of David? Was He not about to wrest the kingdom from the Roman usurpers and establish Himself as king over Israel? How then could he permit Him to stoop to perform this servant's task?

In reply to Peter's earnest inquiry, Jesus said, "What id do thou knowest not now; but thou shalt know hereafter." John 13:7.

This declaration from Jesus revealed the fact that there was in this act a hidden meaning, which did not at once appear to the disciples. They knew Jesus was washing their feet, and yet He said that they did not know what He was doing.

A Spiritual Cleansing

Feeling certain that his attitude was correct, Peter rashly declared: "Thou shalt never wash my feet." Jesus answered him, "If I wash thee not, thou hast no part with Me." John 13:6-8.

At the words, "If I wash thee not, thou hast no part with Me," Peter surrendered his pride and self-will. He could not endure the thought of separation from Christ; that would have been death to him. "Not my feet only," he said, "but also my hands and my head." Jesus saith unto him, He that is washed needeth not save to wash his feet, but is clean every whit." DA 646

In a literal sense, no doubt, Jesus here referred to the fact that they had just come from the full bath, and their bodies were clean except for the dust that had gathered on their feet. With the washing of the feet they would then be clean "every whit".

But in a spiritual sense He clearly referred to the cleansing from sin that was symbolized by this new ordinance.

Just as they had already bathed, so at conversion they had been baptized. This complete washing in the waters of baptism signified the cleansing of the life from all sins of the past. This was the big washing. It was typical of the fountain that was opened for sin and uncleanness. Through the cleansing signified by baptism, the sins that were as scarlet had become as white as snow. The stains were all removed. The life was clean. The soul was free from guilt. All things had become new.

But conversion and baptism had not removed the disciples from sin's environment. They were still surrounded with evil influences. They were still subject to temptation. Although Christ was abundantly able to keep them from falling again into sin, they had not always fully trusted themselves into His keeping, with the result that sin had been committed. Some of these acts were known to be sinful, although others constituted sins of ignorance.

Following conversion and baptism, sins may accumulate in the life of a follower of Jesus. As he travels the Christian pathway in a world filled with sin's foul miasma, the feet become soiled. The past life of sin is not again charged to the Christian unless he entirely repudiates his conversion and turns his back upon Christ. He does not require a complete reconversion and cleansing. But he does require the lesser cleansing. Day by day he must come to God through Christ, confessing his failures, his pride, his selfishness, and his fallings into sin through the temptings of Satan. He must exercise faith that just as all his past sinful life was forgiven and cleansed when he first came to Jesus, so now the blood of Christ cleanses him anew from these additional sins. This lesser cleansing is symbolized by the ordinance of feet washing. It was because of this deep spiritual significance that Jesus said, "If I wash thee not, thou hast no part with Me."

"When Jesus girded Himself with a towel to wash the dust from their feet, He desired by that very act to wash the alienation, jealousy, and pride from their hearts. This was of far more consequence than the washing of their dusty feet. With the spirit they then had, not one of them was prepared for communion with Christ. Until brought into a state of humility and love, they were not prepared to partake of the paschal supper, or to share in the memorial service which Christ was about to institute. Their hearts must be cleansed. Pride and self-seeking create dissension and hatred, but all this Jesus washed away in washing their feet. A change of feeling was brought about. Looking upon them, Jesus could say, 'Ye are clean.' Now there was union of heart, love for one another. They had become humble and teachable. Except Judas, each was ready to concede to another the highest place. Now with subdued and grateful hearts they could receive Christ's words.

"Like Peter and his brethren, we too have been washed in the blood of Christ, yet often through contact with evil the heart's purity is soiled. We must come to Christ for His cleansing grace. Peter shrank from bringing his soiled feet in contact with the hands of his Lord and Master; but how often we bring our sinful, polluted hearts

in contact with the heart of Christ! How grievous to Him is our evil temper, our vanity and pride! Yet all our infirmity and defilement we must bring to Him. He alone can wash us clean. We are not prepared for communion with Him unless cleansed by His efficacy." DA 646

After performing this service, Jesus announced to His disciples, "I have given you an example, that ye should do as I have done to you." John 13:15.

Each Man A Priest

But why did not Jesus meet the situation by commanding His disciples to each wash his own feet in preparation for the Lord's Supper? We answer: because in such an act there would have been no service typical of the work of Jesus.

No man can save himself. No individual can cleanse his own soul from sin's guilt. This work must be done for him by another. In carrying out this holy ordinance in the church, each member thus ministering to his brother would become a personal representative of Jesus. As he applied the symbolic cleansing water to his brother's feet, he would proclaim, in that act, once again the old, old story that only through the application of the blood of Christ can the guilt of sin be removed from the soul. Thus, each member of the church upon earth would in turn become a priest to his brethren.

Heart Preparation

"The celebration of these ordinances is the fulfilling of the command, 'If I, then, your Lord and Master, have washed your feet; ye also ought to wash one another's feet. . . .' What a place is this for hushing controversies, for forgiving those who have done us any injury. This is the time, if one has anything against his brother, to make it right, to settle every difficulty. Let there be mutual forgiveness. Let no strange flame be brought to the altar. Let no malice, no hatred, be cherished by those who meet round the communion table. Whenever this ordinance is rightly celebrated, the children of God are brought into a holy relationship, to help and bless each other." SD 157

"It is at these, His own appointments, that Christ meets His people, and energizes them by His presence. . . . All who come with their faith fixed upon Him will be greatly blessed. All who neglect these seasons of divine privilege will suffer loss. Of them it may appropriately be said, 'Ye are not all clean.'" SD 158

"In the early days of the advent movement, when our numbers were few, the celebration of the ordinances was made a most profitable occasion. On the Friday before, every church member endeavored to clear away everything that would tend to separate him from his brethren and from God. Hearts were closely searched; prayers for a

divine revelation of hidden sin were earnestly offered; confessions of overreaching in trade, of ill-advised words hastily spoken, of sins cherished, were made. The Lord came near, and we were greatly strengthened and encouraged." Manuscript 102, 1904. (Ev 274)

Purpose Of The Ordinance Of Service

"Reconciliation one with another is the work for which the ordinance of feet washing was instituted. By the example of our Lord and Master, this humiliating ceremony has been made a sacred ordinance. Whenever it is celebrated, Christ is present by His Holy Spirit. It is this Spirit that brings conviction to hearts." Ev 275

"Every disciple is called upon to participate publicly, and thus bear witness that he accepts Christ as a personal Saviour." DA 656

"This ordinance is Christ's appointed preparation for the sacramental service. While pride, variance, and strife for supremacy are cherished, the heart cannot enter into fellowship with Christ. We are not prepared to receive the communion of His body and His blood. Therefore it was that Jesus appointed the memorial of His humiliation to be first observed." DA 650

The Lord's Supper

As soon as this service was performed, Jesus again seated Himself at the Passover table, and there proceeded to institute the additional ordinance that is now commonly called the Lord's Supper. **The record says:**

"And as they were eating, Jesus took bread, and blessed [it], and brake [it], and gave [it] to the disciples, and said, Take, eat; this is my body. ¶And he took the cup, and gave thanks, and gave [it] to them, saying, Drink ye all of it; For this is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins." Matt. 26:26-28.

Already Jesus was living in the very shadow of death. In a few short hours He would be taken by the mob to be reviled, persecuted, and slain. His body was to be broken by the nails and the spear. His blood was to be spilled upon the ground. All this was to be endured, not because of any cause for death in Him, but for the remission of the sins of others. It was for them that He was permitting these things to be done to Him. By His stripes, they were to find healing. By His death, life was to be made available to them. His death was to be entirely substitutionary.

Jesus desired to place in the church an ordinance that would be symbolic of the very sufferings He must endure on man's behalf. As His followers would meet from time to time and break the unleavened bread and crush it between their teeth, they would have before them a vivid reminder of the agony and woe that Jesus

passed through on their behalf on Calvary in order to atone for their sins. The breaking of the bread would symbolize the piercing of His hands, feet, and side, as He suffered death at the hands of His enemies.

The drinking of the wine (unfermented grape juice) would symbolize the flowing forth of His blood from His broken body, as it was shed for the remission of sins.

Of the institution of this ordinance, the Apostle Paul has written: "For I have received of the Lord that which also I delivered unto you, That the Lord Jesus the [same] night in which he was betrayed took bread: ¶And when he had given thanks, he brake [it], and said, Take, eat: this is my body, which is broken for you: this do in remembrance of me. ¶After the same manner also [he took] the cup, when he had supped, saying, This cup is the new testament in my blood: this do ye, as oft as ye drink [it], in remembrance of me. For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do show the Lord's death till he come." 1 Cor. 11:23-26.

Just as the offering of the blood of animals, looking forward to Christ's redemptive work on the cross, was to continue until His first advent, so these new ordinances, commemorating His death, were to be in the church until He should come the second time. "This do ye... in remembrance of Me." As His followers gather at the Lord's table and partake of these emblems, they show "the Lord's death till he come."

An Example

Jesus made it clear that the ordinances which He instituted on that memorable evening in the Jerusalem's upper room were to be accepted as examples, and were to be repeated by the church during the years that would intervene between His ascension and His coming again.

Concerning the bread and the wine, He said: "This do ye... for as often as ye eat this bread and drink this cup, ye do shew the Lord's death till He come." 1 Cor. 11:25, 26.

Concerning the ordinance of humility and cleansing, Jesus said: "Know ye what I have done to you? Ye call Me Master and Lord and ye say well; for so I am. If I then your Lord and Master, have washed your feet; ye also ought to wash one another's feet. For I have given you an example, that ye should do as I have done to you. Verily, verily, I say unto you, The servant is not greater than his lord; neither he that is sent greater than he that sent him. If ye know these things, happy are ye if ye do them." John 13:12-17.

It was left to the church to determine the exact intervals when they would meet and celebrate this ordinance, but the intervals were to be of sufficient frequency to serve as a constant reminder of the Lord's sufferings on behalf of sinners. No particular day of the

week was designated upon which these ordinances were to be celebrated. Jesus instituted them on Thursday night at the close of the Passover supper. "On the first day of the week the disciples came together to break bread." Acts 20:7. "And then continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread." Acts 2:46. No doubt, however, the most fitting time for the observance by the church is the Sabbath day when God's people are accustomed to gather for divine worship.

Only those who wholly reject the provisions made for their redemption through the glorious work of the atonement can lightly regard these sacred ordinances of Christ's church upon earth. Those whose faith in Him is strong will see in these provisions a means of demonstrating that faith in His power to save by coming often to the fountain for cleansing and purity. They will rejoice over every opportunity of surrounding the Lord's table to meditate upon His eternal love which led Him to pour out His life for their redemption, and to testify of their full acceptance of the provisions of the atonement by partaking of the emblems of His humiliation and sacrificial death. **AMEN.**

Golden Kayawa Hingabantu , Zambia



@ American Union Conference



@ American Union Conference



"Take Up Your Bed"

"Now there is in Jerusalem by the Sheep Gate a pool, which is called in Hebrew, Bethesda, having five porches. In these lay a great multitude of sick people, blind, lame, paralyzed, waiting for the moving of the water."(John5:2, 3).

Potent

The healing of the paralytic, lame, infirm or impotent man is the third of Jesus' seven miracles. This and the other miracles operated precisely in the areas where man is unable to effect any change of laws or conditions which affect his life. In these areas Jesus proved Himself potent where man is impotent, and the works that He did testify to His supernatural ability and divinity.

Pools are an integral part of the Scriptures, being mentioned or referred to twenty seven times, and others of which some can be identified: of Gibeon, (2 Sam. 2:13); of Hebron (2 Sam. 4:12); of Samaria (1 Kings 22:38); pools of Solomon: of Jerusalem, upper pool (2 Kings 18:17); of lower pool (Isa. 36:2); of Siloah, (Neh. 3:15) (John 9: 7,11); of Siloam, (John 9:7); of Bethesda, (John 5:2); of Heshbon, (Song of Solomon 7:4), etc. Nineveh was described, "Ninevah of old was like a pool of water."(Nah. 2:8). The only Greek word translated "Pool" in the KJV is ("kolumbithra") referring to the pool of Bethesda, (John 5:2, 4, 7). Its literal meaning is "a place of diving."

In some translations, Bethesda (Hebrew) is translated into "Bethsaida." The RSV has "Beth-zatha" which (Greek – "bntz-zaith"), means "house of the olive." The true meaning of most translations; Bethzetha, which probably means, "house of loving kindness and mercy." Also, Bethesda – ("house of grace"). But, there was no loving kindness, mercy, or grace to be found at the pool near the "sheep (gate); or (market) where sheep were sold for sacrifice in the Temple."

It was a rectangular spring-fed pool with five porticoes. It has a five arched portico with faded frescoes of Christ's healing. It's located in the northeastern part of Jerusalem, near the church of St. Anne. Tradition has it and throughout the East a superstition to the effect that at the New Year an angel was expected to stir the water in certain localities, enabling one person to obtain healing by being the first to get into the water after the disturbance.

Troubled Waters

The Testimonies write that "at certain seasons the waters of the pool were agitated, and it was commonly believed that this was the result of supernatural power, and that whoever first after the troubling of the pool stepped into the waters would be healed of whatever disease he had. There was, however, a great multitude into the hundreds of sufferers who visited the place; but so great was the crowd when the water was troubled that they rushed

forward, trampling underfoot men, women, and children, weaker than themselves. Many could not get near the pool. Many who succeeded in reaching it died upon its brink. Some sought relief from the heat under the shelters. Others spent the night in these porches, creeping to the edge of the pool day after day, in the vain hope of relief.” (DA 201)

For most there was no help in reaching the pool, attempting to do so for years and finally losing their lives just short of the pool. To-day there is a lack of “a pool.” Many distraught and sick souls are seeking the living waters, but there is none!

The broken cistern holds no water. They seek help, seek salvation, diligently looking for the right things, but are in the wrong places.

The heart-broken prophet, Jeremiah, proclaimed a message of doom to the stiff-necked people of Judah, (and mankind today) and declared, “have you not brought this on yourself, in that you have forsaken the Lord your God, when He led you in the way?” (Jeremiah 2:17). When Jesus went up to Jerusalem he found many poor, hungry, sick, beggars, and lame.

Empty Pools

A certain man was at the sheep pool, who had an infirmity for thirty-eight years! He was tirelessly waiting and hoping to be healed of his gnawing malady, but didn't look towards the right way of salvation; the way to be saved, or rescued!

“He had seen the rippling of the water, but had never been able to get farther than the edge of the pool. Others, stronger than he, would plunge in before him. He could not contend successfully with the selfish, scrambling crowd. The remnant of his strength was slowly wearing away.” (DA 202)

There is nothing to indicate the precise nature of the ailment that had gripped this sick man for so many years except that he could not move without help! He, most likely, did not remain there all the time but was brought when the moving of the water was expected to the edge of the pool.

The pools of the churches cannot save you. They are empty pools, dry, rotting, dead! Why? “For my people have committed two evils. They have forsaken Me, the fountain of living waters, and hewn themselves cisterns – broken cisterns that can hold no water.”(Jeremiah 2:13). You see, there's much sorrow in life because they're looking in the wrong church; a church without a living “pool” of salvation.

Miracle Worker?

When Jesus saw him lying there, and knew that he already had

been in the condition a long time, He said to him, “Do you want to be made well?”(John 5:5). As with Nathaniel and the woman of Samaria, Jesus discerned the true state of affairs by His own power of perception, saying, “wilt thou be made whole?” Jesus here took the initiative. The question was not needless or nonsense, for many who are chronic invalids have no hope of cure. Ah! Yet others use their sickness as a means of eliciting sympathy, hence do not really want to be healed! But, the sick man had the sincere (Latin – sin cere; a cistern without a crack) desire for healing but lacked the means (v -7).

The question Jesus posed to the paralytic man might appear redundant or superfluous. If you are sick and hospitalized, do you want to be healed? The answer, of course would always be yes! Why am I here? Certainly we would want to be healed, but actually we are seeking a miracle from Jesus, the “Miracle Worker!” Isn't this true? We would normally not ask one if they wanted to be healed. If Jesus were to ask us if we want to be saved, it's normal for us to answer that we want to be saved! We're all here to be saved! You see, Jesus wants an answer of faith from us, a sign, for He wants to heal and to save. **Jesus does not need to be a Miracle Worker to save a life, nor do we just want to receive a miracle.**

Lonely

What was the sick man's answer? “The sick man answered Him. Sir, I have no man to put me into the pool when the water is stirred up, but while I am coming, another steps down before me.”(v-7). In essence he said, “I am all alone!” “Alone and friendless, feeling that he was shut out from God's mercy, the sufferer had passed long years of misery.”(MH 82)

Loneliness is the most terrible sickness that can befall one. It is a real sickness with all the cardinal signs and symptoms! No man alone can help for it's a physical sickness. But the heart and the soul becomes fraught with the sickness of loneliness. They are sick because they seek the right things but go to the world and into the wrong places! Many, because of their loneliness abruptly end their lives. Suicides now surpass automobile accidents in teenage deaths. When a spouse dies, the surviving one usually dies shortly afterwards because of loneliness. No one is there who cares. People build walls instead of bridges.

Jesus was “heart-broken” at the Cross. God the Father abandoned Him. “Jesus cried out with a loud voice, saying, Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani? That is, “My God, My God, why have you forsaken (deserted) Me?” (Math 27: 46). Jesus died on the Cross of a “ruptured heart!” When the spear was thrust into His heart He was medically dead; blood and water-like body fluids gushed forth. The grief and loneliness of Jesus was insurmountable. But unto the end, “Christ as man endured.”(DA 111) The Apostle Paul, too, was an example of “courage in loneliness.”(AA 240-41)

Remedy

Yet, how often do we lament and pitifully cry out, “Eli, Eli, why have you forsaken me?” Too often! Are we pursuing the right things but in the wrong places? “Man’s life on earth is a warfare.”(Vulgate, O.T., Job, vii, 1). What is the remedy for loneliness?

“Many are suffering from maladies of the soul far more than from diseases of the body, and they will find no relief until they shall come to Christ, the wellspring of life. Complaints of weariness, loneliness, and dissatisfaction will then cease. Satisfying joys will give vigor to the mind and health and vital energy to the body.” (4T 579).

After the sick man at the pool answered Jesus’ question, “Do you want to be well again?” Jesus said, “Get up, pick up your sleeping mat and walk.” The man was cured at once, and he picked up his mat and walked away.(v-9). Is this another nonsense statement? No! If we attempt to understand God without faith, then we are at enmity with God.

“Jesus does not ask this sufferer to exercise faith in Him. He simply says, “Rise, take up thy bed, and walk.” But, the man’s faith takes hold upon that word. Every nerve and muscle thrills with new life, and healthful action comes to his crippled limbs. Without question he sets his will to obey the command of Christ, and all his muscles respond to his will. Springing to his feet, he finds himself an active man. Through the same faith we may receive spiritual healing. By sin we have been severed from the life of God. Our souls are palsied. Of ourselves we are no more capable of living a holy life than was the impotent man capable of walking. Many realize their helplessness, and long for that spiritual life, but they are vainly striving to obtain it.” (DA 202-03) In essence they are striving for the right things but in the wrong places!

The Jump Of Faith!

In the book of Acts 3, we read of a lame man healed. The Apostle Peter, along with John, were confronted by a “lame man from his mother’s womb” asking alms as they were entering the Temple in the hour of prayer. Fixing his eyes on the man, Peter said to him, “Look at us.”(v-4). “Peter said, silver and gold I do not have, but what I do have I give to you in the name of Jesus Christ. Rise up and walk. So he, leaping up, stood and walked and entered the temple with them, walking, leaping, and praising God.”(v-6, 8).

This is the phenomenal power of faith; a jump of faith! The power of faith makes one jump up, and by faith alone! How long did it take to do this? Immediately! This story of healing and that of the infirm cripple at Bethesda, illustrate the divine power granted to live the new life.

These cripples present a vivid picture of man’s complete helplessness as a sinner, and Christ’s power to save and enable

him to live the new life. Acting on the word of God they were made whole!

The Spirit of Prophecy has said if you, too, believe fervently, your sins are forgiven, as if you never sinned before. No mark or stain on any paper or book! Between a miracle and with faith, when you confess, your sins are immediately forgiven!

The Bed!

When Jesus Christ commands us to do something that we simply do not understand, we are not to be dismayed, as conversion is an on-going process... to the very end! You see, nothing really happens by chance. Ah! But, the “bed” of the paralytic man, if we can conceive it through the eyes of Jesus, is the central part of the story!! It may have been made of wood (Song of Solomon 37:9); unlikely of iron (Deut 3:11); or of ivory (Amos 6:4); or of gold and silver (Esther 1:6); or perfumed with myrrh, aloes, and cinnamon (Prov. 7:17). The bed was simply a mattress, or pallet, but most likely a rolled rug and a blanket.

The Jews’ empty ritualism carped at the healing and the healed man briskly carrying his bed on the Sabbath, which was unlawful, and vented its rage on Jesus! The Jews saw the paralytic, not the “man” carrying his bed. The awe-struck crowds, seeing the paralytic, not the “man” carrying his bed, was a unique occasion to talk about Jesus! The sick man was no longer sick! The enraged Jews asked him, “Who is the Man who said to you, take up your bed and walk?” (v-12) The parable merely referred to the paralytic and Jesus, both, as “the man.” Pilate said to the Jews, “Behold the man.”(John 19:5). But, Jesus Christ is not merely a “man.”

Now, the bed of the paralytic was his only delight, a place of rest; a place of luxury for him, for which he would not exchange, probably, for any throne of the worlds. Sleep for the homeless is home! As night approached and it was a time for rest, how sweet it was for the curtain of repose to enclose his aching heart, stretch his aching limbs and lay his weary head on his own delightful, bed, his only security, his only refuge. Sleep for him was pain’s easiest salve. Every night silently the lovely stars, envoys of beauty, preachers of beauty, clothed in radiance, blossomed, shining in order like a living hymn written in light. Orion, still in its course, clear and young as when the shepherd first noted in the plain of Shinar, shined on the man. It was poetry in Heaven; gems in Heaven! The sentinel stars set their watch on the sleeping one.

Many, however, die in bed! “Wherefore, I praised the dead which are already dead more than the living.”(Ecc1 4:2); “The man that wandereth out of the way of understanding shall remain in the congregation of the dead.” (Prov. 21:16) “If I wait for the grave as my house. If I make my bed in the darkness, where then is my hope?” (Job 17:13, 15)

Ah! But, the bed of the paralytic was now a newness of life, (Rom 6:4), rich with blessings, a “witness” to the beaming crowds as he gleefully walked away with his newly cherished bed, shinning with glorious hope. “This hope we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and steadfast, and which enters the Presence behind the veil.” (Heb 6:19) You see, salvation is a process, as healing comes with obedience on the narrow path of conversion.

The healed paralytic did not know Jesus, and after he picked up his bed and began “walking with God according to His commands” (Deut. 5:33), and gingerly carrying his bed, Jesus was no longer there! It was then that his healing became a subject of dispute with the Jews because of the Sabbath day question; carrying a burden! It was not a burden but an open door of blessing! In his confusion the healed man could only explain that his benefactor had commanded him to do this very thing (John 5:11). The Pharisees, however were unreceptive and cold! He could not identify the healer, for he had not learned His name, and it seemed impossible to find out, for Jesus had left the scene. He did not want to receive the glory. Jesus Christ does not need to receive riches from man. But, man is poor and needs to receive riches from God!

A Worse Thing!

The Jews allowed the man to go on his way as he was not guilty of any intentional violation of the law. Later he went to the Temple to give thanks for the healing. The miracle was not completed, yet, as his sins were forgiven, but Jesus had to say to him, “See, you have been made well, Sin no more, lest a worse thing come upon you.” (John 5:14). Sin no more – to be free of sin! The miracle was now completed.

Sin, in fact, is the worst sickness of the world! Jesus’ healing is supposed to include forgiveness. (Mark 2:9-12). This forgiveness must not be lightly accepted! The **worse thing** (v-14) is left undefined.! Hmmm? Ah! But the warning is the more effective and grim for this reason!

Returning to the Jews the man identified Jesus as his healer, not because of any offense, but perhaps felt an obligation to the community and the authorities. But, furthermore, to herald His healing power, praising God. When we render unto Jesus, we truly give mercy (v-15). This, however, led the rulers to persecute Jesus. His guilt was plain as a lawbreaker. He violated the Sabbath, but also said “God was His Father, making Himself equal to God.”(v-18).

The healing at the pool precipitated the “Period of Controversy!” (John 5:1-6; 7:1). Jesus indicated that His action was a sample of what His Father was continually doing, and thus tacitly claimed deity as His prerogative.” He spoke of God, not as an avenging judge, but as a tender Father, and He revealed the image of God as mirrored in Himself.” (DA 205) Furthermore, arguing for: belief in Himself, the forerunner, the Father, works He performed, and the

Scriptures. (John 5:19-47). You see, Jesus wants to save our lives. He wanted to die so that He could cancel our sins and we could live! “He will cast all our sins into the depths of the sea.”(Micah 7:19)

Poisoned Springs

“The sense of sin has poisoned the springs of life. His loving presence surrounds you. But Christ says, ‘I will take your sins; I will give you peace. I have bought you with My blood. You are Mine. My grace shall strengthen your weakened will; your remorse for sin I will remove.’ When temptations assail you, when care and perplexity surround you, when, depressed and discouraged, you are ready to yield to despair, look to Jesus, and the darkness that encompasses you will be dispelled by the bright shining of His presence.

“When sin struggles for the mastery in your soul, and burdens the conscience, look to the Saviour. His grace is sufficient to subdue sin. Let your grateful heart, trembling with uncertainty, turn to Him. Lay hold on the hope set before you. Christ waits to adopt you into His family. His strength will help your weakness; He will lead you step by step. Place your hand in His, and let Him guide you.

“Never feel that Christ is far away. He is always near. His loving presence surrounds you. Seek Him as One who desires to be found of you. He desires you not only to touch His garments, but to walk with Him in constant communion.” (MH 85)

The “**bed**” brings Jesus Christ into our lives. Always keep in mind what Jesus Christ has done for you. Tell others! Jesus never wants to leave us alone, or to be lonely. He wants you to arise and “**Take Up Your Beds!**” This is the merciful Jesus Christ. **AMEN.**

John Theodorou, USA

INDEX TO THE MESSENGER

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"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 firstfruits 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 14:4, 5

I don't think anyone needs convincing of the very imminence of Christ's soon return. We know that the world is really frayed on its edges. Everything that has been prophesied about the coming of Jesus is taking place. Now more than ever before we have a need to place close attention to the words of Jesus.

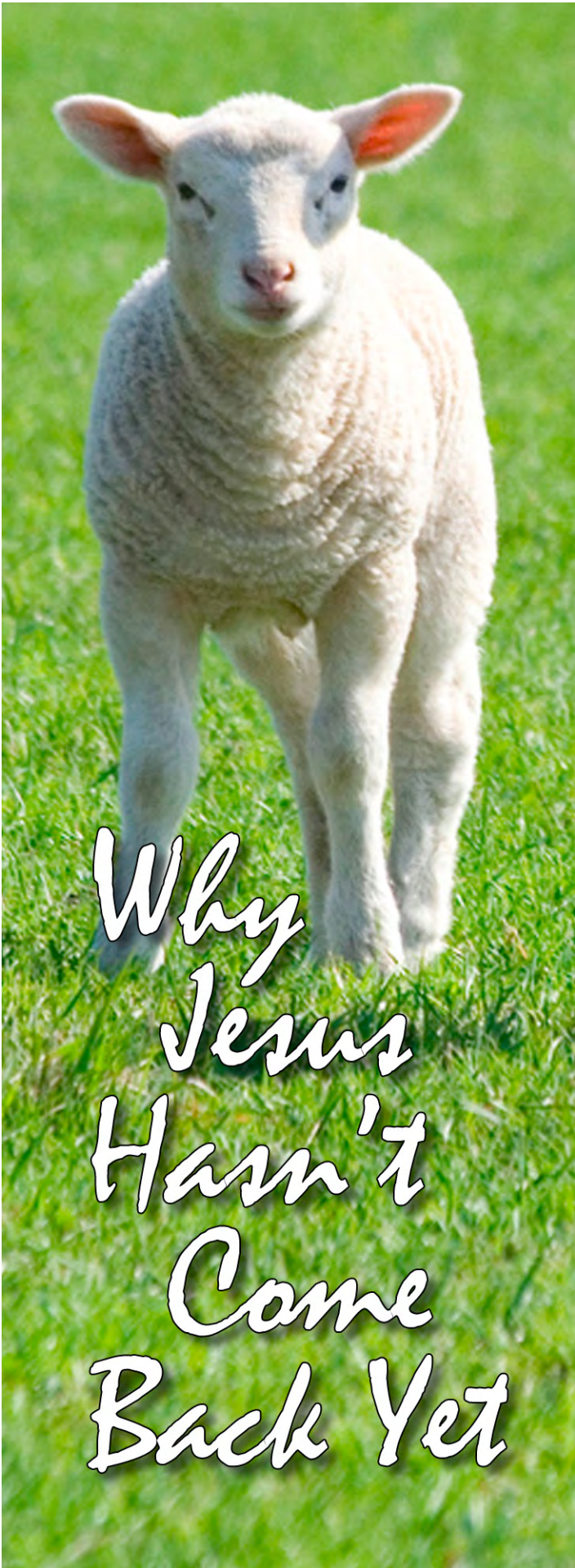
*Watch therefore: for ye know not what hour your Lord doth come. But know this, that if the goodman of the house had known in what watch the thief would come, **he would have watched, and would not have suffered his house to be broken up.** Therefore be ye also ready: for in such an hour as ye think not the Son of man cometh. Matt. 24:42-44.*

Looking at prophecy and world events, is it difficult to realise Jesus is coming? When He comes in the clouds of heaven, is that going to take us by surprise? Not at all.

"What time is here referred to? Not to the revelation of Christ in the clouds of heaven to find a people asleep. No; but to His return from His ministration in the most holy place of the heavenly sanctuary, when He lays off His priestly attire and clothes Himself with garments of vengeance, and when the mandate goes forth: 'He that is unjust, let him be unjust still: and he which is filthy, let him be filthy still: and he that is righteous, let him be righteous still; and he that is holy, let him be holy still.'" {2T 190.1}

Where is Jesus at the present time? In heaven doing a work for us as our High Priest.

"When Jesus ceases to plead for man, the cases of all are forever decided. This is the time of reckoning with His servants. To those who have neglected the preparation of purity and holiness, which fits them to be waiting ones to welcome their Lord, the sun sets in gloom and darkness, and rises not again. Probation closes; Christ's intercessions cease in heaven. This time finally comes suddenly upon all, and those who have neglected to purify their souls by obeying the truth are found sleeping. They became weary of waiting and watching; they became indifferent in regard to the coming of their Master. They longed not for His appearing, and thought there was no need of such continued, persevering watching. They had been disappointed in their expectations and might be again. They concluded that there was time enough yet to arouse. They would be sure not to lose the opportunity of securing an earthly treasure. It would be safe to get all of this world they could. And in securing this object, they lost all anxiety and interest in the appearing of the Master. They became indifferent and careless, as though His coming were yet in the distance. But while their interest was buried



*Why
Jesus
Hasn't
Come
Back Yet*

up in their worldly gains, the work closed in the heavenly sanctuary, and they were unprepared.” {2T 191.1}

To be sleeping means to be unconscious of Jesus finishing his work in heaven; and like in the days of Noah when the door was shut, the people didn't have the opportunity to be protected from the flood. So it is before Jesus comes in the clouds of heaven, the opportunity of meeting him in peace is closed.

Preparation of purity and holiness--that is what we should be occupied with. Purifying our souls by obeying the truth. If we neglect that, we will be asleep when the time comes. When Jesus returns, what should be the condition of God's people? When can Jesus say, "I can come now?"

"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 69.1}

When will He come? When His character is revealed in His church. Can we wonder why there has been a delay?

What are the 144,000 to be? They were without fault before the throne of God. The work of the gospel is to produce a character in the life of those who believe in Jesus Christ.

Even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it; That he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word, That he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish." Eph. 5:25-27.

That is what the gospel of Jesus Christ is all about. Before Jesus can come, He wants to see a people who have benefited by the gospel; when He sees His church without spot or wrinkle, without any sin. Then He will come to take them home. That is what He is waiting for. The impact of the gospel upon the lives of the people, that is what He is waiting for. As you read this, does it do to you what it does to me? Jesus is waiting for me to change? Oh. That is something to think about.

"In order for us to be like the Saviour, we must be changed..." {UL 311.4}

That is what the gospel of Christ is all about--we must be pure.

"(see Philippians 3:20, 21). Now is the time for us to bring into the daily life the virtues of Christ's life. We have no time to lose. Should we fail in our character building, we shall lose eternal life. We must build on the true foundation. . . . We must do the work of Christ, and be constantly watching and praying. Then we shall be ready for His appearing, prepared to receive eternal life." {UL 311.4}

How close is the coming of Jesus? How close can you see it coming to an end?

This is what activates my mind in what I have just read. That for me to be like Jesus, for me to be ready for him to come, I must be changed. I've got little time left. I must change. I can't be faulty any longer.

What is our need, why should we look at Christ? What is our present need? Our present need is to obey the truth. Attending diligently in developing a purity and faultlessness in our characters in such an intense time in which we live now.

"Therefore thus will I do unto thee, O Israel: [and] because I will do this unto thee, prepare to meet thy God, O Israel." Amos 4:12

Meditate young people and children on the drama of what it is going to be when Jesus actually comes onto this planet. It is going to be horrendous. People are going to be crying, "let the rocks fall on us." There are going to be catastrophes worse than we've seen. As you see yourself in this terrible plight coming up before you, say to yourself, "I'm going to be saved from this and be very particular that I am going to come out alright on the right side of this scene."

"What are you doing . . . in the great work of preparation? Those who are distrustful of self, who are humbling themselves before God and purifying their souls by obeying the truth--these are receiving the heavenly mold and preparing for the seal of God in their foreheads." {FLB 288.3}

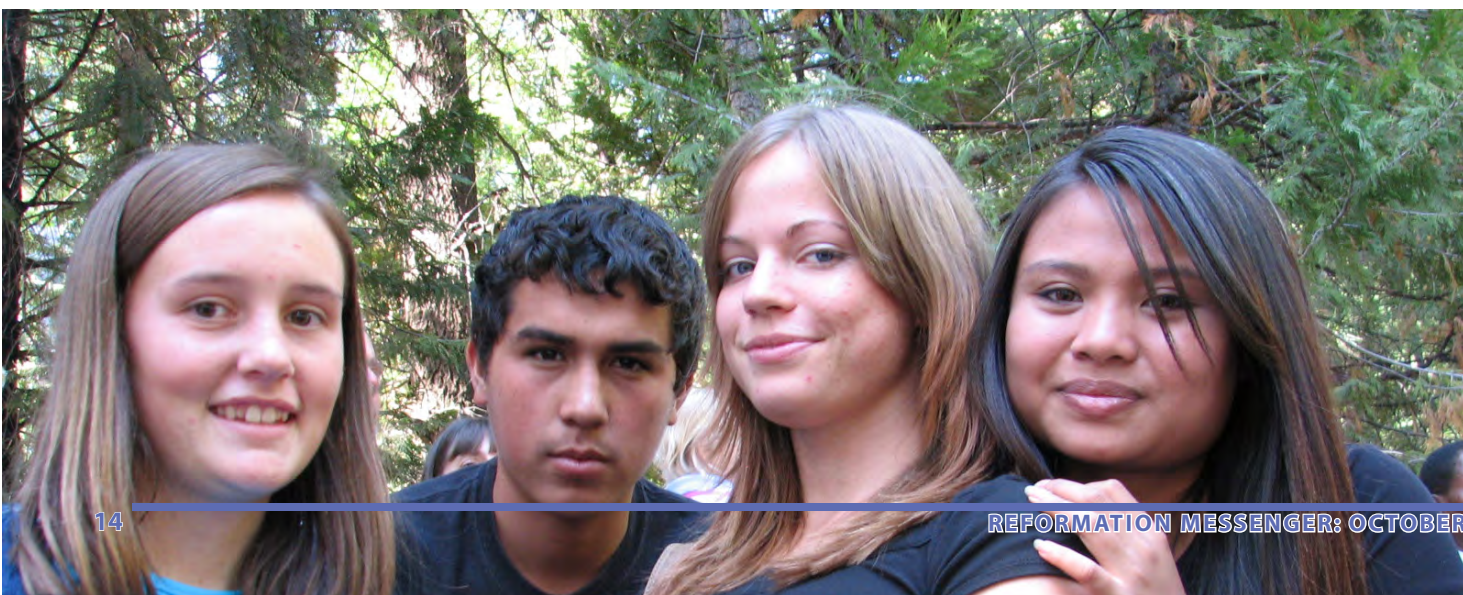
Who are these people? The 144,000.

"When the decree goes forth and the stamp is impressed, their character will remain pure and spotless for eternity. Now is the time to prepare. The seal of God will never be placed upon the forehead of an impure man or woman. It will never be placed upon the forehead of the ambitious, world-loving man or woman. It will never be placed upon the forehead of men or women of false tongues or deceitful hearts. All who receive the seal must be without spot before God--candidates for heaven." {FLB 288.3}

He is asking us individually. What are you doing to prepare to see Jesus in the clouds of heaven? Adults, what are you doing?

Isn't that a precious privilege? A candidate for heaven? We stand before God and offer ourselves as candidates before heaven. Is that what you are doing? I have grown up in a religious world that has proclaimed Jesus is coming. I was a SDA from birth but I have seen a state of religious apathy as I grew up. As I became animated, I looked for others to become animated with me. Very few. And those few got tired as they grew up with me. What are we doing?

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Continued from page 13.

“Every individual soul, if he would receive the seal of the living God, must hear the Word of the Lord, and do it with exactitude.” {FLB 288.4}

When we hear something from God’s word, what is the apathy that affects us today? “Oh yeah, I know what I should be doing but not just yet, I’m not ready yet.” Can you afford to think like that? If Jesus is waiting, He could have come already. The world is already on its last legs. What are the angels doing? They are holding back the winds of strife.

We are living on borrowed time. The angels could have given up a long time ago, ever since 1844. But what? Jesus is waiting and waiting for a number to comprise the 144,000. Here we live today on the very cusp of the very final destruction and what are we doing? We go to church every day and then home every Sabbath and continue in the normal round and stave off the convictions that come to us. What are we to be doing? We hear the word of the Lord and are doing it with exactitude. No haphazard religion. None of this business of “later on when I’m ready.”

“There must be no such thing as haphazard religion if men would have a place in the family of God. Now is the time, while the four angels are holding the four winds, to make our calling and election sure.” {FLB 288.5}

We can’t be in apathy. We must change, we must overcome those character defects and there is no time to lose. No haphazard religion. We must hear the word of the Lord and do it with exactitude. This message comes to us in a time when God says, “here is a problem with the church in this time.”

What is the message? What does He say about His people who are living in the last period of the Christian church in this very period just prior to the coming of Jesus?

“And unto the angel of the church of the Laodiceans write; These things saith the Amen, the faithful and true witness, the beginning of the creation of God; I know thy works, that thou art neither cold nor hot: I would thou wert cold or hot. So then because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spue thee out of my mouth.” Rev. 3:14-16.

What is He saying is the condition of the people of which we are part and parcel of? Apathy. Not hot, nor cold, “I’m warm, lukewarm for Jesus.” We are surrounded by lukewarm, tepid water, spiritually speaking. You know the story of the frog, as that water heats up, he doesn’t know when to get out and he dies in it.

“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

“If any man.” In the midst of this lukewarm people, He says, “I’m knocking. Will anyone open to Me and really let Me in?” The church is His woman, remember? These are the words that Jesus is referring to when He says, “I am standing at the door and knocking.”

“I sleep, but my heart waketh: [it is] the voice of my beloved that knocketh, [saying], Open to me, my sister, my love, my dove, my undefiled: for my head is filled with dew, [and] my locks with the drops of the night.” Song of Solomon 5:2.

Isn’t this the case of Jesus in Gethsemane? His brow heavy with dew? Drops of sweat? Now comes this languid response:

“I have put off my coat; how shall I put it on? I have washed my feet; how shall I defile them? My beloved put in his hand by the hole [of the door], and my bowels were moved for him.” Song of Solomon 5:3, 4

I’m asleep; I don’t feel like getting up. I can see His hand coming in the door. In the old days the doors had a latch and there was a hole. He is really trying so hard to come in.

*“I rose up to open to my beloved; and my hands dropped [with] myrrh, and my fingers [with] sweet smelling myrrh, upon the handles of the lock. I opened to my beloved; **but my beloved had withdrawn himself**, [and] was gone: my soul failed when he spake: I sought him, but I could not find him; I called him, but he gave me no answer.” Song of Solomon 5:5, 6*

Can you see the languid behaviour? His church? This is the deplorable state of God’s people among whom we have grown up.

“To keep your heart in heaven will give vigor to all your graces and put life into all your duties. To discipline the mind to dwell upon heavenly things will put life and earnestness into all our endeavors. Our efforts are languid, and we run the Christian race slowly, and manifest indolence and sloth, because we so little value the heavenly prize. We are dwarfs in spiritual attainments. It is the privilege and duty of the Christian to be increasing in the knowledge of the Son of God, ‘unto a perfect man.’” {OHC 161.5}

What is the word of God speaking to us today? Our great need. I am languid that when I read something from God’s word and the reality of what the word of God is telling me to do I say “yeah, later, I’ll come to the door soon; I’m quite sleepy thank you very much.” That is what I see around me, continually.

If you knew you were being chased by a lion and he’s not far behind, what would you do? You would run for your life. It’s time to get an adrenalin rush. The languidness must be snapped out of. We are covered in the dust of normal living.

“Awake, awake; put on thy strength, O Zion; put on thy beautiful garments, O Jerusalem, the holy city: for henceforth there shall no

more come into thee the uncircumcised and the unclean. Shake thyself from the dust; arise, [and] sit down, O Jerusalem: loose thyself from the bands of thy neck, O captive daughter of Zion.” {Isa. 52:1, 2.

We are being held down. We are being bound by Satan’s sophistry to put us to sleep. “Awake, shake yourself, get out of this languid condition,” says the word of God.

“In order to understand this matter aright, we must remember that our hearts are naturally depraved, and we are unable of ourselves to pursue a right course. It is only by the grace of God, combined with the most earnest effort on our part, that we can gain the victory.” {AG 327.3}

It’s natural for us to be lukewarm. We can’t arouse ourselves; we need the grace of God combined with our effort.

“Every wrong tendency may be, through the grace of Christ, repressed, not in a languid, irresolute manner, but with firmness of purpose, with high resolves to make Christ the pattern.” {AG 327.4}

We can’t get there by a languid, irresolute manner. I must be filled with a resolute reaction to the challenge that is in my life. I am naturally depraved. I’ve grown up in this languid condition. “She’ll be right mate,” as the Australian says! No way will it be right! Every SDA Australian and every other Christian in the world needs to wake up! It’s not alright, it’s nearly over.

“Let your love go out for those things that Jesus loved, and be withheld from those things that will give no strength to right impulses. With determined energy seek to learn, and to improve the character every day. You must have firmness of purpose to take yourself in hand and be what you know God would be pleased to have you.” {AG 327.4}

What is the Lord saying to us today? Get yourself in hand. That is what He is saying right here. Get hold of yourself. Get into action, to put away the things that Jesus doesn’t love, and embrace the things He does love.

“The intellect, as well as the heart, must be consecrated to the service of God. He has claims upon all there is of us. The follower of Christ should not indulge in any gratification, or engage in any enterprise, however innocent or laudable it may appear, which an enlightened conscience tells him would abate his ardor or lessen his spirituality.” {AG 327.5}

I am not telling you what to do; I am sharing with you what God is telling me. There are little things that we indulge in, that I indulged in, and that were actually abating my ardour. Satan is there continually placing things so laudable, so harmless. Nothing wrong with that, but what is it doing? It is weakening my fervency for getting ready for Jesus to come.

“Every Christian should labor to press back the tide of evil, and save our youth from the influences that would sweep them down to ruin. May God help us to press our way against the current.” {AG 327.5}

Young people from ages 17 to 30, when your parents are telling you what to do, don’t become impatient. All those who are mothers and fathers in Israel, listen to the Father in heaven. It is time to respond and to respond with alacrity. We are living on the cusp of destruction and we are all being put to sleep.

We live in such a lovely country. We are on a destructive edge and we are sitting back indolently and Jesus is trying so hard to come in.

With high resolve, make Christ the pattern. Without making Christ the pattern you are not going to get there even if you try. Why make Christ the pattern? Because it is only in this way we will change. What must I do to change? I must see Jesus.

“But we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, [even] as by the Spirit of the Lord.” 1 Corinthians 3:18

If I don’t make a high resolve to make Christ my pattern I will not change. I need to look intently with great earnestness on Jesus because I’m going to die unless I do.

“As one becomes acquainted with the history of the Redeemer, he discovers in himself serious defects; his unlikeness to Christ is so great that he sees the necessity for radical changes in his life. Still he studies with a desire to become like his great Exemplar. He catches the looks, the spirit, of his beloved Master. By beholding, by ‘looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith,’ he becomes changed into the same image.” {6BC 1098.6}

“It is not by looking away from Him that we imitate the life of Jesus, but by talking of Him, by dwelling upon His perfections, by seeking to refine the taste and elevate the character, by trying—through faith and love, and by earnest, persevering effort—to approach the perfect Pattern. By having a knowledge of Christ—His words, His habits, and His lessons of instruction—we borrow the virtues of the character we have so closely studied, and become imbued with the spirit we have so much admired. Jesus becomes to us ‘the chiefest among ten thousand,’ the One ‘altogether lovely’ (RH March 15, 1887).” {6BC 1098.7}

If you need arousing, awakening, then look at Jesus and occupy your mind with Him and you will get a fright to see your condition; you will be brought to study His beautiful characteristics and thus you become changed. It is not ours to concentrate on ourselves and how we must change, but it is ours to keep Jesus and concentrate with intensity on Him.

If I'm going to look steadfastly at Jesus just like the children of Israel when they were bitten by the snakes, there was the stick with the serpent and by looking they were relieved of their poison. How intently do you think they were looking? As they did this, what happened and what will happen to you?

"Imperceptibly to ourselves we are changed day by day from our own ways and will into the ways and will of Christ, into the loveliness of His character. Thus we grow up into Christ, and unconsciously reflect His image." {6BC 1097.5}

You won't say, I'm a better person now, nothing like that. Your concentration is not upon yourself, on not how well you are doing. You're concentration of yourself will never change you. Comparing our self with others will not work either. You have to become like Jesus and the only way is to look to Him alone. Then you will change imperceptibly to yourself. You will change unconsciously reflecting His image. As you keep looking at him you will see defects in you. You won't say, "oh, I'm doing well there." The Lord will continue to change us.

Our focus is to be astutely concentrating on the vision that is going to change us, to look intently upon Jesus. As we do this, one contemplation we need to look at is that many are people are at the position of, "I'm never going to change, I'm too weak." Let us contemplate on that aspect in Christ. Why was Jesus crucified?

"For though he was crucified through weakness, yet he liveth by the power of God. For we also are weak in him, but we shall live with him by the power of God toward you." 2 Corinthians 13:4

What did I just read about Jesus? He was weak. Did you ever know that? Why did He die? Because of weakness. He was as weak as you and me. Why was He living a perfect life? It said it here. He liveth by the power of God. Gaze and wonder at this picture, He the God of the universe came down and became weak with me. He the mighty God encased in human flesh, as He hung there on the cross, as He hung there on Gethsemane as a weak, helpless, sinful human being. Sinful? Oh yes. Let us read it straight from the word of God.

"For he hath made him [to be] sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him." 2 Corinthians 5:21

When God placed Him in Gethsemane, what was He? Sin. On Him was laid the entire bundle of iniquity that we all struggle with. It was on Him. That is why He was crucified, as weak as you and me.

As you think about what you must do to change and you know you are too weak and you hang languidly as Jesus on the cross, in your weakness gaze upon this.

"For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and

for sin, condemned sin in the flesh." Romans 8:3

As we look upon Jesus we see Him writhing in anguish, in the weak human flesh that He was in. We see Him at the cross with the law condemning Him. He agonises in His absolute helplessness. He suffered as a weakling, hanging on the power of God.

"All who will can be overcomers. Let us strive earnestly to reach the standard set before us. Christ knows our weakness, and to Him we can go daily for help. It is not necessary for us to gain strength a month ahead. We are to conquer from day to day." {UL 311.5}

"Take therefore no thought for the morrow: for the morrow shall take thought for the things of itself. Sufficient unto the day [is] the evil thereof." Matthew 6:34

In my weakness, cling to Him. That was the experience of Jacob, as he was struck in the side; he was so weak but he clung on to Jesus. I will not let thee go unless thou bless me.

Our dire present need is that we must change and we haven't got enough time to change into the image and character of Christ before He returns. We are too weak; it is too hard. Driven by our utter need we are to gaze upon Jesus, we are to gaze upon His cross long enough to see its glory and to feel its power. And in this way we will change. **Amen.**

John Thiel, Australia



Jesus is offering to us the water of life, and Satan is giving to the people the intoxicating wine of Babylon.

People who are drunk from wine often get involved in accidents, fights, and even murders. But nowhere are the men and women so intoxicated as in the religious world. Because of this drunken condition, people are involved in play religion, which does not benefit them nor save them.

“An angel said, ‘Come hither; I will show unto thee the judgment of the great whore that sitteth upon many waters: With whom the kings of the earth have committed fornication, and the inhabitants have been made drunk with the wine of her fornication.’” Rev. 17: 1, 2.

“For all nations have drunk of the wine of the wrath of her fornication, and the kings of the earth have committed fornication with her, and the merchants of the earth are waxed rich through the abundance of her delicacies.” Rev. 18:3.

The Bible does not say that few people have drunk this wine, but all nations have done it.

Then how few are there who are not intoxicated by this wine, and have sane and clear minds to understand the truth.

“There are few to whom you bring the truth, who have not been drinking of the wine of Babylon. It is hard for them to comprehend the truth.” 1 Sel. Mess., p. 405.

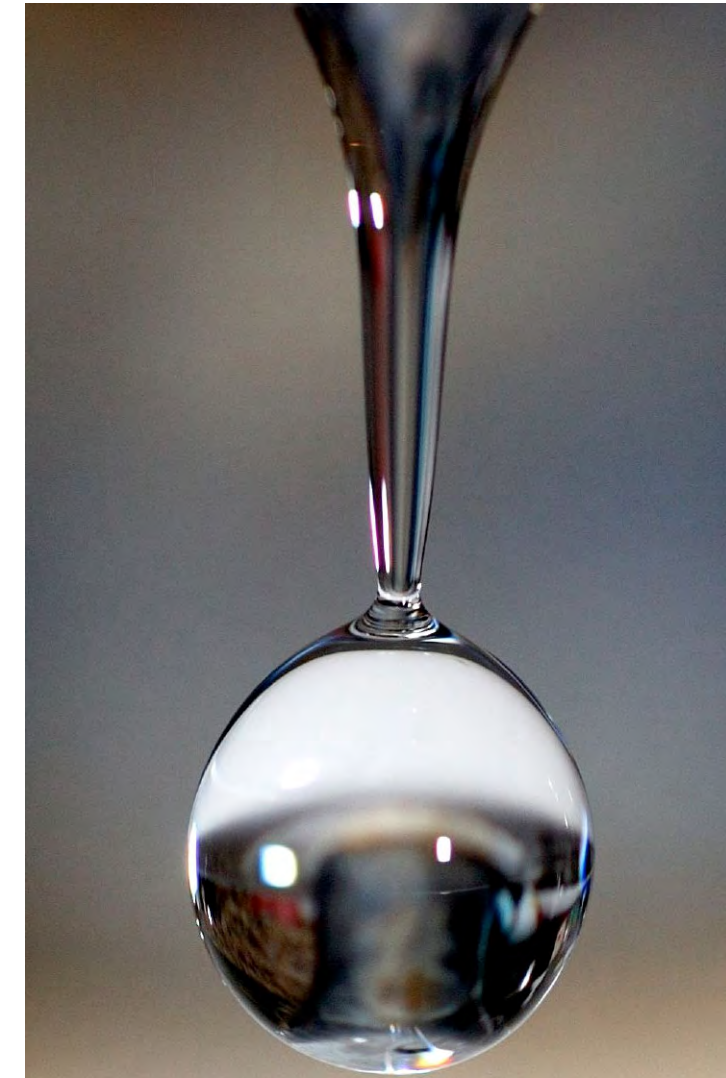
When you teach the people, they do not understand; their minds cannot grasp the truth. This wine of Babylon leaves permanent damage. People who have drunk of it deeply have always difficulty understanding the truth clearly. As long as they live they easily fall into confusion, and believe heresies.

We are traveling on a narrow pathway, high above the world, and unless our eyesight is clear, and our feet steady we can easily fall off the road into the deep abyss below, into the drunken world.

In our world there are in reality only two churches, according to the Bible. One is called, “The synagogue of Satan, which say that they are Jews, and are not, but do lie.” Rev. 3:9.

In the synagogue of Satan there is a large membership, and they are divided into thousands of different groups. Also their ministers claim to be ministers of righteousness.

“For such are false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into the apostles of Christ. And no marvel; for Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light. Therefore it is no great thing if his ministers also be transformed as the ministers of righteousness; whose end shall be according to their works.” 2 Cor. 11:13-15.



Water Of
Life
Versus
Wine Of
Babylon

These deceitful workers claim to be the apostles of Christ, and people believe them, and place their salvation into their hands, only to be lost in the end.

By mingling the truth with errors, they make their messages deceitful. The churches which have more truth and less errors are more deceitful than the churches that have almost all their doctrines erroneous.

On the other side is the church of God; a little flock like a mustard seed. The picture of this church we find in Rev. 12:1. "A woman clothed with the sun, and the moon under her feet, and upon her head a crown of twelve stars."

Paul calls it, "The church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth." 1 Tim. 3:15.

The church of God is not divided, not even into two groups.

These two churches are at war against each other. The fallen churches are using as weapons, lies, falsehood, persecution, prison and death.

The true church of God has only one weapon, the truth. The churches of the great Babylon are giving intoxicating wine to the people, while the church of God gives the clear water of life.

"And the woman was arrayed in purple and scarlet colour, and decked with gold and precious stones and pearls, having a golden cup in her hand full of abominations and filthiness of her fornication: And upon her head was a name written, MYSTERY, BABYLON THE GREAT, THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS AND ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH." Rev. 17: 4, 5.

Because of their intoxication their judgment is not correct.

Jesus said, "Ye blind guides, which strain at a gnat, and swallow a camel." Matt. 23:24.

The Pharisees condemned Jesus for healing on the Sabbath, but saw nothing wrong in hating Him and putting Him to death.

When they had to choose between Christ and Barrabas, without hesitation their choice was Barabbas.

It is the same today. When someone chooses the church of God, they choose Christ; when they choose one of the churches of the great Babylon, they choose Barabbas, or in reality, Satan.

What is inside of this cup that the great Babylon is offering to the people? Let us look to ancient Babylon as to what they gave out.

"But Daniel purposed in his heart that he would not defile himself with the portion of the king's meat, nor with the wine which he drank:

therefore he requested of the prince of eunuchs that he might not defile himself." Dan. 1:8.

Today it is junk food, meats, wines, and many other unhealthy drinks and foods.

The second thing is, they had no connection with God.

"The Chaldeans answered before the king, and said, There is not a man upon the earth that can shew the king's matter: therefore there is no king, lord, nor ruler, that asked such things at any magician, or astrologer, or Chaldean. And it is a rare thing that the king requireth, and there is none other that can shew it before the king, except the gods, whose dwelling is not with flesh." Dan. 2:10, 11.

This same thing applies to modern Babylon. The God of heaven is not with them. He dwells only in His faithful remnant church.

The third thing that we find in this cup of abominations is, worshipping human achievements and intolerance.

"Nebuchadnezzar the king made an image of gold, whose height was threescore cubits, and the breadth thereof six cubits: he set it in the plain of Dura, in the province of Babylon. And whoso falleth not down and worshippeth shall the same hour be cast into the midst of a burning fiery furnace." Dan. 3:1, 6.

Religious persecution has existed since the beginning. You are considered an enemy, unless you worship as they do in the great Babylon.

The water of life that Jesus gives includes love even to the enemies.

The fourth abomination is pride. "The king spake, and said, Is not this great Babylon, that I have built for the house of the kingdom by the might of my power, and for the honour of my majesty." Dan. 4:30.

The Modern Babylon says the same. "I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing." Rev. 3:17.

The fifth abomination is entertainment. "Belshazzar the king made a great feast to a thousand of his lords, and drank wine before the thousand." Dan. 5:1.

In order to keep members and especially the young people in the church, entertaining programs are introduced into churches.

"The true Christian will not desire to enter any place of amusement or engage in any diversion upon which he cannot ask the blessing of God. He will not be found at the theater, the billiard hall, or the bowling salon." AH 515.

This includes television shows, and Internet programs.

These things do not exist in heaven and we must learn how to live there.

After quoting Rev. 14:8, Sister White writes, “What is that wine? Her false doctrines. She has given to the world a false sabbath instead of the Sabbath of the fourth commandment, and has repeated the falsehood that Satan first told Eve in Eden—the natural immortality of the soul. Many kindred errors she has spread far and wide, ‘teaching the commandments of men.’” 2 Sel. Mess., p. 118.

By drinking the wine of Babylon, the minds get intoxicated and therefore the truth is not understood. In the time of war in 1914, the Seventh-Day Adventists saw nothing wrong in joining the army and disfellowshipping the faithful ones, and giving their names to the authorities of the country.

The Roman governor, Pilate had better eyesight and understanding than did the Jews. He saw that Jesus was innocent, and did not deserve the death penalty.

The water of life that Jesus is offering keeps our minds clear and the truth makes sense to us. Peter writes, “Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour.” 1 Pet. 5:8.

Paul writes, “For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears; And they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables.” 2 Tim. 4:3, 4.

Sister White gives us a warning, that we must not visit fallen churches, unless we can present the truth to them.

“I was shown the necessity of those who believe that we are having the last message of mercy, being separate from those who are daily imbibing new errors. I saw that neither young nor old should attend their meetings; for it is wrong to thus encourage them while they teach error that is a deadly poison to the soul and teach for doctrines the commandments of men. The influence of such gatherings is not good. If God has delivered us from such darkness and error, we should stand fast in the liberty wherewith He has set us free and rejoice in the truth. God is displeased with us when we go to listen to error... The angels cease their watchful care over us, and we are left to the buffeting of the enemy, to be darkened and weakened by him and the power of his evil angels; and the light around us becomes contaminated with the darkness.” EW 124, 125.

If we visit these fallen churches, we do not come under the influence of men only, but under the influence of Satan, and our minds become hypnotized. We go to drink the wine of Babylon, and the angels of God will not accompany us there.

Sister White calls them Satan’s enchanted grounds, where people are lulled to sleep, and often it is a sleep of death.

We must overcome the addiction to the wine of Babylon, and drink the water of life that Jesus is offering to everyone freely. **AMEN.**

Timo Martin, Canada



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PUBLISHING

American Union Conference 2009
August 12 to 16

THEME: "Ye shall receive power" Acts 1:8

The 2009 American Union conference was held in the beautiful California mountains at the Leoni Meadows Christian Camp and Retreat Centre. The peaceful, quiet surroundings provided an excellent setting to worship together in unity, away from the distractions of the world.

The Conference commenced on Thursday evening with a service by Brother Larry Watts, who introduced the theme by speaking about power. His sermon was entitled, "What is Power?" Power is needed for, and is the basis of, revival. In a physical sense, power is the ability to accomplish something. What is it Jesus wants us to accomplish? Jesus spoke the wonderful words of the theme for the conference, "Ye shall receive power," to His followers ten days before the day of Pentecost. These words motivated the believers to seek God with humble, contrite hearts so they would receive the ability and power to carry out the great mission with which they had been entrusted.

The conference presented an opportunity for every individual to do the same thing during the few days everyone was together.

A series of workshops were conducted beginning Thursday and continuing until Friday morning. These workshops focused on personal revival. As each member dedicates himself or herself to his or her own revival and reception of the Holy Spirit's power, the collective experience will enrich everyone.

The first three workshops focused on the "Movings of the heart to Seek God." Seeking God and personal Revival, the Attitude of Repentance/our Work and Personal Devotions/cultivating Spiritual Life. . Once the heart is open to seek God, Then the next three workshops focused on "Gifts from Above for Personal Revival." The Gift of the Sacred Word, The Gift of the Holy Spirit, and the Gift of Salvation/Christ's Robe of Righteousness. Once the gifts have been received and are being put to use, the final three workshops focused on the "Fruit of Personal Revival." The Purpose of Existence, The power of Personal Revival and Standing for God/ Reflecting Jesus.

This brought us to the Sabbath. Brother Dering opened the Sabbath by speaking of, "Preparing the way for the Spirit." "There is nothing that Satan fears so much as that the people of God shall clear the way by removing every hindrance, so that the Lord can pour out His Spirit upon a languishing church and an impenitent congregation." RH 22-03-87. On Sabbath morning for the Divine Service, Brother Suarez brought a moving service entitled, "Ye Shall Receive Power," for His service in finishing the work. "If Satan had his way, there would never be another awakening, great or small, to the end of time." RH 22-10-87. "The end is near! We have not a



*Ye shall
receive
power*

moment to lose! Light is to shine from God's people in clear, distinct rays, bringing Jesus before the churches and before the world." RH 23-12-90. Brother Suarez emphasized the need for unity in the church and one way that unity comes from is by forgiving one another when we have wronged each other. We need the power of the Holy Spirit in order to accomplish this, and also to carry the message to the far corners of the world.

In the afternoon we were blessed to hear from the children who shared songs and verses about God's power in creation. The youth also shared music and some testimonies.

The Sabbath came to a close with Brother Barnedo sharing with us, "God's Power at work for Sanctification."

Each evening we were blessed with a musical hour. Many members and youth shared their musical talents by praising the Lord in song and testimony.

All too soon the conference came to a close. Sunday morning it was time to say farewell. In the closing meeting we were given the blessing and encouraged to "Go in the Spirit."

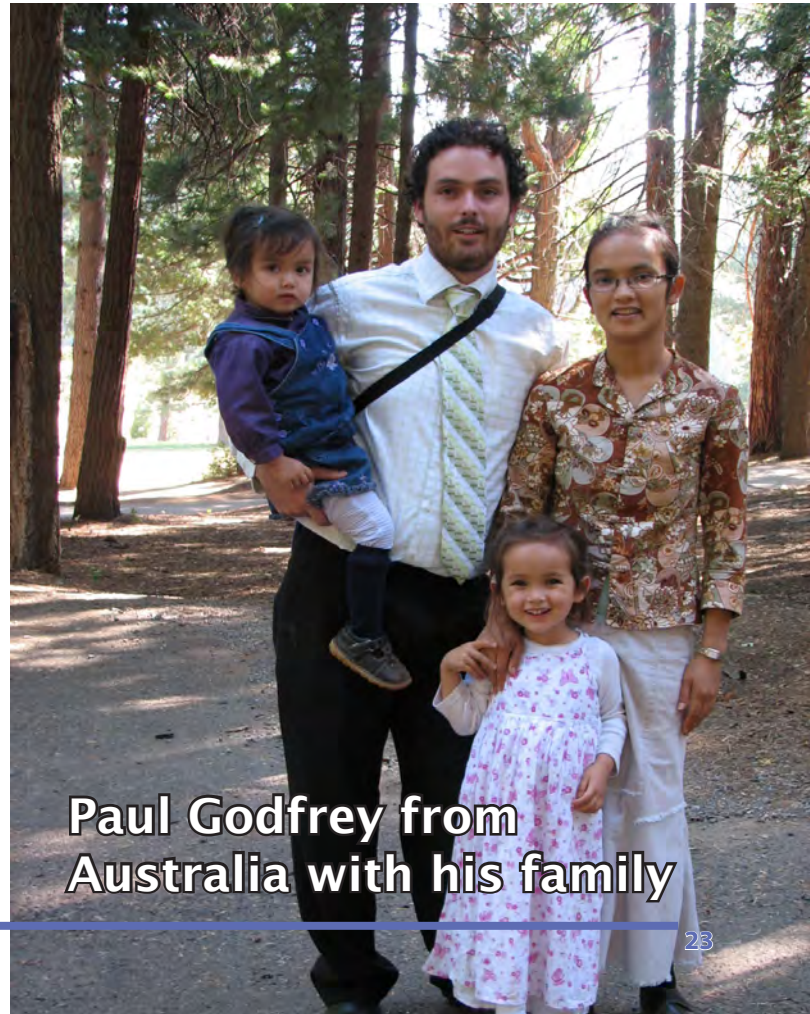
It truly was a blessed conference and may all those who attended be filled with the Spirit and share the blessing in their various local churches and communities; that soon the day may come when our work will be finished and we can go home to be with our Saviour for time and eternity. **Amen**



@ American Union Conference



@ American Union Conference



Paul Godfrey from Australia with his family

LOVE YOUR ENEMIES



CHILDREN'S CORNER

John Augustus was a lab technician in a laboratory-pharmacy of a large hospital. He was not a chemist by choice. He had taken the job because of economic hardship and it was the first job that came along. Although he was happy with his job, he was disappointed since he had aspired to be a medical doctor.

He might have achieved his goal sooner if Ben Tilden's father had not persuaded his father to sign as security on a note for a large sum of money, then failed to meet the obligation when the note fell due, thus leaving John's father to pay the indebtedness. Doing so had forced him to bankruptcy, and in consequence he lost everything he owned.

The loss of his father's fortune brought a still greater hardship to the young man when it came time to enter college. He had set his heart on becoming a doctor, and that necessitated pre-medical work. Ben Tilden had no financial burdens to carry. His wealthy grandmother paid all his bills. But John was obliged to earn every cent of his expenses and it was a hard, steady grind, with little to lighten the burden.

Only one star of hope shone brightly on the horizon of the future. That was the possibility of his winning the Stanhope Scholarship Prize. If he could accomplish this, it would mean his first year in medical school would be free from financial worries. True, a number of students had entered the race, including Ben Tilden, but John was working on the requirements with earnest energy, and he had faith in his ability to win. Many an hour when the young man should have been asleep was spent on his thesis. His teachers congratulated him on his exceptionally fine daily work, and he had a good right to expect a reward. But the afternoon when the papers were to be handed in, John's thesis mysteriously disappeared. He had left it in the desk in his room, and the desk was locked! There was no indication that the lock had been tampered with and no one seemed to know anything about it.

The dean made searching inquiries when the loss was reported but to no avail. There was no time for John to rewrite his thesis and when the great moment came, he found himself sitting in the

audience listening to a ceremony which awarded the prize he had prayed for and wished for and worked for, to Ben Tilden, who did not need it and who had wanted it only because of the \$5000 cheque his grandmother had promised him in addition to his expenses if he won. So by hook or crook Ben simply HAD to win. But John felt sure that his competitor had won by crook, and that if he had read Ben's thesis, it would have been identical to the one that he (John) had prepared, since Ben had not put in half the effort in preparation that John had. Ben had taken notice of John's work and the teacher's comments and praises.

Premedic graduation came and went. Ben Tilden entered upon his medical course and John Augustus took a special course in chemistry, a subject in which he had been much interested all through his school days. His heart was still set on being a doctor, but he knew that it would be some years at least before he could hope to collect the necessary cash, and in the meantime, this work would be good experience.

Three years had passed since John had entered the Princeton Hospital laboratory. He had made many friends in the medical fraternity, and really enjoyed his work, for it was to him only a stepping stone to higher things. Some day--he was sure of this--he would reach his goal. As he thought of his ambition he would smile. He could forget and forgive Ben Tilden in that contemplation. Then glancing down at his folded hands, his brows drew together in a heavy frown. He could forgive, but would he?

Ben Tilden graduated in medicine, and by irony of fate, entered Princeton Hospital for his Intern work. He made himself rather officious when he could, and discovering John Augustus, he came frequently to the window of the laboratory and made suggestions as to how things should be managed, and how the stock should be arranged.

As completely as possible, John ignored him, and once even hinted that there was plenty of work for doctors in the wards. After that, Ben made himself even more obnoxious. One day, when John returned from lunch, he found this fledgling doctor in the laboratory.

How he had gained entrance was a mystery, for the door was locked. But locks have not been a hindrance for Ben in the past. Finding John absent, and the opportunity to try out a pet theory of his own, he gained an entrance – somehow – and now had several shelves misarranged. He was in the act of setting down a large bottle of acid when John opened the door and entered. Evidently the intruder did not expect the chemist to return so soon, for in confusion he mumbled something about needing a formula filled, and finding no one there, he decided to make it himself.

There was a sharp note of anger in John's voice as he answered, "You have no business in here, Ben Tilden. You know very well it is against the rules of the hospital, and it will go hard with you if I report your meddling with chemical supplies."

There was a sneer in Tilden's face as he whirled to confront John. But the words that trembled on his tongue were never uttered, for his elbow struck the bottle he had just taken from the shelf, upsetting it. John reached out to catch it but too late to save a catastrophe. The neck struck a mortar standing near, and the burning acid splashed out over his hand and arm. But only a few sprinkles fell on Ben's clothes.

It was the sight of the ugly scars just healing and the memory of the pain so recently borne that brought the frown to the young man's face as he sat in the laboratory one evening. The sound of the distant clock brought him back to reality and with a sigh he arose and put away the book he had been reading and went home.

John was late in rising the next morning so he had only a few moments to scan the newspaper. What he saw when he opened it brought an exclamation to his lips. "TERRIBLE ACCIDENT," the bold headlines read. "Prominent young doctor badly injured." Yes, it was Ben Tilden. He had tried to beat the other cars across the intersection. Both cars were wrecked, and the other drive hurt slightly. But Ben was in the hospital with a faint chance for life.

John thought of several things as he walked to work. If Ben had played the game fair and square this may not have happened. But now what would be the outcome? A little prayer of thanksgiving to God for His love and protecting care, and a sincere wish that Ben might live, even if his ways were to be despised by himself.

In early afternoon, one of the leading physicians of the city came into the lab. John knew Dr. Wallace very well as he had done a lot of work for him, and had many times had private heart-to-heart talks with him about his aspirations to become a medical doctor. "What can I do for you, Doctor?" he asked.

"A blood transfusion, John. I wish you would give the work your careful attention. Success means the saving of a life."

"Who is it?" questioned John.

"I thought you knew," answered the doctor in some surprise. "Young Tilden, who is interning here. He was in a car accident last night, and has lost far too much blood."

"I'll do my best," John's voice sounded strange, even to his own ears.

The doctor left to complete his rounds and John stood with a dazed look on his face for several moments. Ben was his enemy! But after all he did not want to see him die. Oh, no! Could he find someone whose blood matched that of the young intern?

John had given his own blood twice that year to save others. He would have done that the previous week except that he was forbidden by the chief of staff at the hospital. He was too valuable an employee and was told he was not to consider another transfusion for at least three months.

Late that afternoon Doctor Wallace returned. "How is he doing?" John asked.

"Not well. Unless we give him a transfusion tonight he may slip through our fingers. His grandmother offered a nice sum of money to anyone who will give the blood, but of course it must match Tilden's."

John felt an icy hand grip his heart. He busied himself with some test tubes. "Come back in half an hour doctor. I should have someone for you by that time."

"All right. And I hope you succeed. It's the only possible chance for saving a life." He left the room and John found himself repeating the words. "Saving a life..."

Reluctantly he tested his own blood, almost praying it would be negative. He reasoned to himself. "My life is my own, and no one has a right to ask anything of me that will impair its usefulness in any way. I'm not responsible for any man's carelessness and why should I be concerned or take any risk? It's not fair, nor just. And yet..." Dr. Wallace's words rang in his ears. "Saving a life."

He looked at the result. He knew what he must do, but still he stood for a few minutes rapt in thought, trying to make a final decision.

At last he called his assistant to take charge of the lab and he left the building. A walk in the fresh air would give him courage and strength. He walked to a park and sat on a bench. The fight within himself was not quite over. Suddenly he became aware that children were talking near him. He could not see them, for they were on the other side of the hedge.

"I tell you, Nito, you cannot be bad to Frankie any more."

"Yes I can," replied the boy. "Frankie is a bad boy. He broke my

wagon and won't fix it."

"No!" and the word was spoken with emphasis. "I, your sister, tell you that the lady at the mission said, 'you must forgive your enemies, and be good to them.'" Evidently the boy was not convinced for he said, "Who cares about the lady at the mission. I'm going to beat up Frankie."

The girl began her argument from another angle. "You cannot come to our mission if you fight, for Jesus tells you to love everybody. Jesus never fights."

Before the girl could say more, a policeman appeared on the scene, and the boy ran across down the street. John determined to meet the child who stood up so courageously for the right; so he went around the hedge and came face to face with a crippled girl in an old wheelchair.

"Where did your brother go?" he asked.

She shook her head. "I guess he ran away. He is afraid of the policeman. But they are always good to me. Do you think Nito will ever learn to love Jesus?"

"Yes, I think he will, especially if his little sister keeps her faith in Him. But tell me about yourself."

"Nito is my older brother so he carried me around when I was little. But one day he ran fast with the boys and he dropped me hard. After that I never walked again. But," she added, "Nito, is not mean to me, and I love my brother oh so much. He is very sorry, but I never let him say a word about it. When you love people, you don't be bad to them."

"No I guess you don't," for them - mused John. "But if you have no love in your heart, well, that's different."

Bidding his new friend good-bye John walked back to the hospital. As he climbed the steps, he thought, "if a cripple for life can forgive and forget, why not a strong man who has suffered less than half of that."

Dr. Wallace came hurrying in. "Did you find someone John? We haven't a moment to lose."

"Yes," he answered quietly, "everything is ready."

Together they went to the lab, but when the doctor found out who was to donate the blood, he objected vehemently. "I cannot let you make this sacrifice, John, for that is what it is. I know you have been forbidden to give blood for a few months. Remember, your own life is at stake. The world, with all its needs waits for your service. If Tilden recovers, he will be at best only a wreck of a man. No, John, you cannot give your blood to him. I will not accept it."

John laid his hand on the surgeon's arm. "Listen, Dr. Wallace. Your patient, Ben Tilden, - yes, twice - did me great wrong - never mind that - but ever since I have hated him, and vowed that some day I would get even. In the last hour I have learned the real meaning of a Bible verse I had forgotten. There is no longer any rancor in my heart, I am willing to pay the price, for 'greater love hath no man that this, that a man lay down his life for his friend.'"

The next day John lay in a hospital bed, his face as white as his pillows. There was a quiet peacefulness in his heart. He was "even" with Ben at last. The door opened softly and Dr. Wallace entered.

"So they obeyed my orders and put you to bed. Well, here you stay for a week. Not a word..." the physician laid his hand over the young man's lips. "I'm doing the talking now. I came to say two things. Firstly, the transfusion was a success, and the patient will recover. Second Ben Tilden's grandmother sent you this," and he held up a slip of blue paper. "I'm making the deposit for you in the bank myself, and adding enough to your credit to see you through medical school. We need such young men as you in the medical profession."

"But, Doctor--" the patient struggled to speak.

"Not a word! Not a word, my boy, you are a real hero!" And he was gone.

With a smile on his lips and thankfulness to the Lord in his heart, John fell asleep, dreaming of better days to come.



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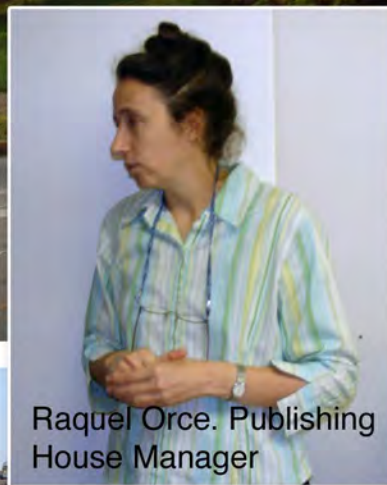
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