

The Reformation Herald

April-June 2004

Vol. XLV, NO. 2

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GENERAL CHURCH PAPER OF THE SEVENTH DAY ADVENTIST REFORM MOVEMENT

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"[Jesus] studied the word of God, and His hours of greatest happiness were found when He could turn aside from the scenes of His labors to go into the fields, to meditate in the quiet valleys, to hold communion with God on the mountainside or amid the trees of the forest. The early morning often found Him in some secluded place, meditating, searching the Scriptures, or in prayer."

—Counsels on Health, p. 162.

the Reformation Herald

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"The age in which we live calls for
reformatory action."

—Testimonies, vol. 4, p. 488.

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The Urgent Need

The rapidly unfolding events in the fields of science, politics, economics, religion and ethics—which are focalized daily by the mass media—show that we are living in the final hours of earth's history. The sun of grace and mercy is about to set forever. Yet the people are in a condition of indifference. God is ready to intervene powerfully in the affairs of this world. His work has to be finished on earth. And before that, the Holy Spirit is going to be poured out in greatest fullness in the showers of latter rain.

Mankind naturally lapses into lethargy concerning spiritual matters. One of the causes of this problem is that people fool themselves by reversing values. They love that which they should hate, and they hate that which they should love. For this type of spiritual and moral disease there is only one remedy, namely, a true repentance and a total conversion. Unless there is a genuine revival and reformation under the Spirit of God, the professed followers of Christ will not be prepared to stand in the judgment and go through the time of trouble, and they will not be ready for the coming of Christ.

Revivals: True and False

In the unconscious mind of some Christians, the terms “revival” and “reformation” carry certain connotations which tend to block the way to achieving God's purpose. As a matter of fact, many think of past revivals, or weeks of prayer, or camp meetings in which they took part. There they saw many individuals coming forward in response to altar

calls. But they also saw that in these persons the desire to change their lives soon died away. Many a stirring sermon, many a tearful resolution and honest decision, starts with a courageous shout, but eventually ends in a moan.

“Revival and reformation are two different things. Revival signifies a renewal of spiritual life, a quickening of the powers of mind and heart, a resurrection from the spiritual death. Reformation signifies reorganization, a change in ideas and theories, habits and practices. Reformation will not bring forth the good fruit of righteousness unless it is connected with the revival of the Spirit. Revival and reformation are to do their appointed work, and in doing this work they must blend.”¹

An Individual Preparation Needed

As a preparation for this great event, the believers in the threefold message, as a people and as individuals, need a deep revival and thorough reformation. A call to turn to God wholeheartedly in search of genuine repentance and conversion must resound in our mist. This is our greatest and most urgent need. When this work is accomplished, all other needs that we may have, both individually and collectively, will be met. The revival and reformation that God demands is not to be compared to a quick flight from one city to another, but rather to a prolonged and uninterrupted journey to the kingdom of glory.

All our doctrines may be correct. We may reject false teachings, and make no room for those who are not true to our principles. We may

labor with untiring energy to promote the last message of the eternal Gospel. But this is not sufficient. To present the theory of our belief to unbelievers does not constitute us true witnesses for Christ.

Let us each ask ourselves, what can I do to reach the souls that are lost? God calls for a work to be done by us. Unless this work is first done in our own hearts our entire course of action will be in vain.

“Faith claims God's promises, and brings forth fruit in obedience.”²

“A sin-hating God calls upon those who profess to keep His law to depart from all iniquity.”³

Attachment and Detachment

The warfare in which we are engaged has no neutral position. Christ requires complete possession. Self must die in order for Christ to reign on the throne of the heart.

“A union with Christ by living faith is enduring; every other union must perish. . . . There must be a painful work of detachment, as well as a work of attachment. Pride, selfishness, vanity, worldliness--sin in all its forms--must be overcome, if we would enter into a union with Christ.”⁴

Therefore, we must seriously consider the need of this hour and pray, “Lead me in thy truth, and teach me” (Psalms 25:5). Then the divine hand is extended to our aid and divine wisdom will order our steps as divine love encircles us. K

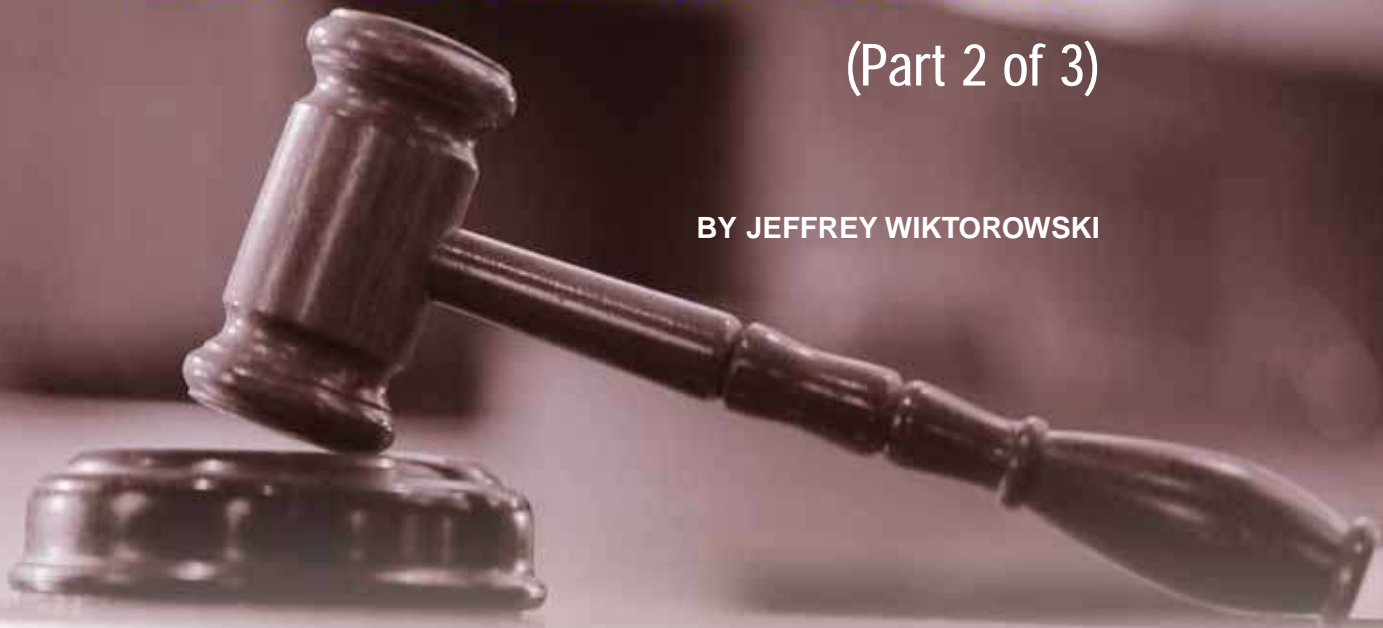
References:

- ¹ *Review and Herald*, February 25, 1902.
- ² *The Desire of Ages*, p. 126.
- ³ *Testimonies*, vol. 4, p. 166.
- ⁴ *The Faith I Live By*, p. 221.

PENDING: Your Case in Court

(Part 2 of 3)

BY JEFFREY WIKTOROWSKI



In the parable of the marriage supper (Matthew 22:1-14), the two calls that were made to the Jewish nation were left unheeded. Then a third call was made—to the Gentiles. Many received the invitation, “both bad and good” (Matthew 22:10). In order to determine who are worthy of attending the marriage supper, the king examines the guests. The investigation (actually the investigative judgment) is followed by Christ’s reception of the kingdom (Daniel 7:10-14; Luke 12:36; GC 426-428). The parable of the ten virgins (Matthew 25:1-13) sheds additional light on the coming of our High Priest to the most holy place for the investigative judgment and for the marriage (the reception of the kingdom). There is a parallel, in certain aspects, between both parables.

THE TEN VIRGINS

“All the virgins are watching for the bridegroom. . . . At the call, the sleeping eyes are opened, and everyone is aroused. They see the procession they are to join moving on . . . They hear the voice of the bridegroom and the voice of the bride. The five wise virgins trim their lamps and go forth to meet the bridegroom.

The foolish virgins made no provision for their lamps; and when aroused from their slumbers, they found that their lights were going out. . . . While they went to buy [oil], the procession moved on and left them behind. The bridal train entered the house, and the door was shut. When the foolish virgins reached the banqueting hall, they received an unexpected denial. They were left outside in the blackness of the night.

“This parable is not a representation of open sinners, but of those who profess Christ. The bride is the church who is waiting for the appearing of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. . . .

Under the proclamation of [the three messages of Revelation 14] the cry was made, ‘Behold, the bridegroom cometh.’ The believers in these [three] messages were compelled to go out from the churches. . . . But there was a delay in the coming of the Bridegroom, in order that all might have an opportunity to hear the last message of mercy to a fallen world.

“Had those who claimed to believe the truth acted their part as wise virgins, the message would ere this have been given to every nation, kindred, tongue, and people. But five were foolish. The truth should have been proclaimed by the ten virgins,

but only five had made the provision essential to join the company that walked in the light given to them. . . .

Many who went forth to meet the Bridegroom under the messages of the first and second angels, refused the third, the last testing message to be given to the world; and a similar position will be taken when the last call is made.

Every specification of this parable should be carefully studied. . . . We are not to rest in the idea that because we are church members we are saved, while we do not give evidence that we are conformed to the image of Christ. . . .

This representation should call forth our earnest study in order that we may know what preparation to make that we may enter in and partake of the marriage supper of the Lamb.”²

THE SPECIFICATIONS OF THE PARABLE

The bride

The bride often represents God’s church. See examples in 2 Corinthians 11:2; Ephesians 5:25, 32; Isaiah 62:5.

“Very close and sacred is the relation between Christ and His church—He the bridegroom, and the church the bride; He the head, and the church the body. Connection with Christ, then, involves connection with His church.”³

In the second application of Matthew 25, as the parable refers to the end of probation, “the bride is the church who is waiting for the second appearing of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ”⁴, while the New Jerusalem is the “Bridegroom’s home”⁵.

The procession

The bride is not alone. She is at the head of “the bridal party,” “the procession,” “the company that walked in the light.”⁶

The wise virgins

“[Christ] told His disciples the story of the ten virgins, by their

experience illustrating the experience of the church that shall live just before His second coming. . . .

They are called virgins because they profess a pure faith. By the lamps is represented the word of God. . . . The oil is a symbol of the Holy Spirit. . . . In the parable the wise virgins had oil in their vessels with their lamps. Their light burned with undimmed flame through the night of watching. It helped to swell the illumination for the bridegroom’s honor. Shining out in darkness, it helped to illuminate the way to the home of the bridegroom, to the marriage feast.

So the followers of Christ are to shed light into the darkness of the world. . . . The light of His glory—His character—is to shine forth in His followers. Thus they are to glorify God, to lighten the path to the Bridegroom’s home, to the city of God, to the marriage supper of the Lamb.”⁷

The servant of the Lord places herself hypothetically into the future and, looking back, she says: The wise virgins “had made the provision essential to join the company that walked in the light given to them.”⁸ They “joined the throng and entered the house with the bridal train,” and then “the door was shut.”⁹

“Thus in the short sentence, ‘They that were ready went in with Him to the marriage, and the door was shut,’ we are carried down through the Saviour’s final ministration, to the time when the great work for man’s salvation shall be completed.”¹⁰

Although we read that “every specification of this parable should be carefully studied,” we cannot enter into details in a short article. The main points, however, can be summarized as follows: “God has jewels in all the churches,”¹¹ and, under the loud cry, “Christ’s true followers” will come out of them, accept “the special truths for this time,” and take their stand with the remnant (GC 390). God has jewels

also among the believers in the threefold message, and these jewels, namely the wise virgins, will leave the foolish virgins in order “to join the company that walked in the light.” In other words, the faithful few who are sighing and crying (3T 266-267; 5T 210-212; 5T 524) will leave the professed people of God (5T 80; 5T 505; TM 234-236) and join those who are prepared, waiting for the soon coming of Christ. (Read also 9T 97; 3SM 386-387; EW 277, 278, especially EW 261). There are faithful souls, a small minority, in every church, every religious group, every self-supporting or independent ministry. Does that mean that we are free to join the true followers of Christ in the fallen churches? No way! They are responsible for the light that they have, and we are responsible for the light that we have received. And, before the close of probation, God will bring them together under the threefold message. As we consider the unfortunate divisions among the Advent people, one point should be clear to us: “The church—the Lord’s sanctuary—[that will be] the first to feel the stroke of the wrath of God” (5T 211) cannot be “the church,” “the remnant church,” that will receive the latter rain and be delivered from God’s wrath poured out in the seven last plagues (PK 727, 728).

When Christ has finished the work of atonement, when every case has been decided for life or death, when the number of His subjects is made up (GC 613, 614), all the living saints . . . identified with the threefold message of Revelation 14 will be a part of 144,000. After the partial resurrection, the saints will be 144,000 in number (EW 15, 37).

The foolish virgins

“The class represented by the foolish virgins are not hypocrites. They have a regard for the truth, they have advocated the truth, they are attracted to those who believe the truth; but they have not yielded

themselves to the Holy Spirit's working. They have not fallen upon the Rock, Christ Jesus, and permitted their old nature to be broken up...They receive the word with readiness, but they fail of assimilating its principles. Its influence is not abiding. The Spirit works upon man's heart, according to his desire and consent implanting in him a new nature; but the class represented by the foolish virgins have been content with a superficial work. They do not know God. They have not studied His character; they have not held communion with Him; therefore

they do not know how to trust, how to look and live. Their service to God degenerates into a form."¹²

"Satan uses those who claim to believe the truth, but whose light has become darkness, as his mediums to utter his falsehoods and transmit his darkness. They are foolish virgins indeed. . . .

The state of the church represented by the foolish virgins is also spoken of as the Laodicean state. . . .

These professors of religion claim to keep the law of God, but they do not keep it."¹³ (Read also TM 130.)



The oil, a symbol of the Holy Spirit and the righteousness of Christ

Jesus taught that being born again is essential to entering the kingdom of heaven. "Except a man be born again," the Lord said, "he cannot see the kingdom of God." And He explained that the new birth is not possible without the Holy Spirit. (John 3:3-5.)

"Without the Spirit of God, a knowledge of His word is of no avail. The theory of truth, unaccompanied by the Holy Spirit, cannot quicken the soul or sanctify the heart. One may be familiar with the commands and promises of the Bible; but unless the Spirit of God sets the truth home, the character will not be transformed. Without the enlightenment of the Spirit, men will not be able to distinguish truth from error, and they will fall under the masterful temptations of Satan."¹⁴

So greatly needed, "that oil is the righteousness of Christ."¹⁵

The last call

"A time of waiting intervenes, faith is tried; and when the cry is heard, 'Behold, the Bridegroom cometh; go ye out to meet Him,' many are unready. They have no oil in their vessels with their lamps. They are destitute of the Holy Spirit."¹⁶

"Many who went forth to meet the Bridegroom under the messages of the first and second angels, refused the third, the last testing message to be given to the world, and a similar position will be taken when the last call is made."¹⁷

Let us bear in mind one more important detail: The ten virgins will not give the last call; they will arouse when they hear the call.

History has a tendency to repeat itself. When Jesus finished explaining the parable of the ten virgins, He

said: "Watch, therefore, for ye know neither the day nor the hour wherein the Son of man cometh" (Matthew 25:13). "Watch ye, therefore, for ye know not when the master of the house cometh" (Mark 13:35-37).

"Jesus has left us word: 'Watch ye therefore: for ye know not when the Master of the house cometh, at even, or at midnight, or at the cock-crowing, or in the morning: lest coming suddenly He find you sleeping. And what I say unto you I say unto all, Watch.' We are waiting and watching for the return of the Master, who is to bring the morning, lest coming suddenly He find us sleeping. 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."¹⁸

Fill up your lamp

"In the parable [of Matthew 25] it was those that had oil in their vessels with their lamps that went in to the marriage. Those who, with a knowledge of the truth from the Scriptures, had also the Spirit and grace of God, and who, in the night of their bitter trial, had patiently waited, searching the Bible for clearer light—these saw the truth concerning the sanctuary in heaven and the Saviour's change in ministration, and by faith they followed Him in His work in the sanctuary above. And all who through the testimony of the Scriptures accept the same truths, following Christ by faith as He enters in before God to perform the last work of mediation, and at its close to receive His kingdom—all these are represented as going in to the mar-

riage. . . . He who is found wanting is cast out."¹⁹

The two parables (Matthew 22 and Matthew 25) represent the investigative judgment as applying only to those who have professed to accept God's provision for their salvation. Have we all accepted the redemption offered? Have we made it a life work to be so near to Jesus that His glory is seen in our life? The coming of our Savior is at the door, and soon, no one knows how soon, our names may come up in the investigative judgment that is going on in heaven. Will our lamps be trimmed and burning? Or will they grow dim and be ready to die out? Now is the time to fill our lamps in anticipation of the coming of the Bridegroom.

"Let none follow the example of the foolish virgins and think that it will be safe to wait until the [Sunday decree] crisis comes before gaining a preparation of character to stand in that time. It will be too late to seek for the righteousness of Christ when the guests are called in and exam-

ined. Now is the time to put on the righteousness of Christ—the wedding garment that will fit you to enter into the marriage supper of the Lamb."²⁰

R

References:

- ¹ *Christ's Object Lessons*, pp. 405, 414.
- ² *The Review and Herald*, October 31, 1899.
- ³ *Education*, p. 268.
- ⁴ *The Review and Herald*, October 31, 1899.
- ⁵ *Christ's Object Lessons*, p. 414.
- ⁶ *The Review and Herald*, October 31, 1899.
- ⁷ *Christ's Object Lessons*, p. 406, 407, 414.
- ⁸ *The Review and Herald*, October 31, 1899.
- ⁹ *Christ's Object Lessons*, p. 406.
- ¹⁰ *The Great Controversy*, p. 428.
- ¹¹ *The SDA Bible Commentary* [E.G. White Comments], vol. 4, p. 1184.
- ¹² *Christ's Object Lessons*, p. 411.
- ¹³ *The Review and Herald*, August 19, 1890.
- ¹⁴ *Christ's Object Lessons*, p. 408–411.
- ¹⁵ *Testimonies to Ministers*, p. 233.
- ¹⁶ *Christ's Object Lessons*, p. 408.
- ¹⁷ *The Review and Herald*, October 31, 1899.
- ¹⁸ *Testimonies*, vol. 2, p. 190.
- ¹⁹ *The Great Controversy*, pp. 427, 428.
- ²⁰ *That I May Know Him*, p. 350.

Will our lamps be trimmed and burning? Or will they grow dim and be ready to die out? Now is the time to fill our lamps in anticipation of the coming of the Bridegroom.

Have You Had an Answer to Prayer?

BY A. BALBACH

Prof. John Tyndall, a British scientist, maintained that prayer is of no value. More than that: He proposed a test to challenge God and those who believe in Him.

“Go into a hospital ward,” he said, “and divide the patients into two equal groups. Make sure that they have similar illnesses and that they receive the same medical attention, but let Christian people

pray for one group and neglect the other. Then we shall see if any improvement is shown in the patients prayed for.”

Such challenges are of no value, and even dangerous, for the following reasons:

God is not to be challenged. Presumption with reference to the Divinity is a dangerous attitude.

Christ said: “Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God” (Luke 4:12).

The apostle Paul wrote: “Be not deceived: God is not mocked.”

The Lord is not to be approached with man-made tests. When the Jews challenged Christ: “Let him come down from the cross, and we will believe him”), He ignored their insolent defiance, because they were not honest in their demand, since they had closed their eyes to greater miracles than the one they now wanted to see.

Hopeless scoffers may be destroyed if they go too far in their defiance of God’s mercy.

At the turn of the century, while H.F. Graff, a minister of

the gospel, was traveling in one of the southern states of Brazil, he was caught by a heavy rain and sought refuge in a tavern. The men in the pub noticed that the stranger was a missionary; and they began to scoff at God and at Christianity. So the pastor rebuked them politely, but they would not listen. Then one of those fellows, who was pitifully drunk, held out his pipe and uttered a challenge in a mocking tone: “If there is a God in heaven, He must be able to light this pipe.” While he was still holding out his hand for a bet, the irreverent man was suddenly struck down by a flash of a lightning, and there he lay dead before he could blurt out one more word of blasphemy.

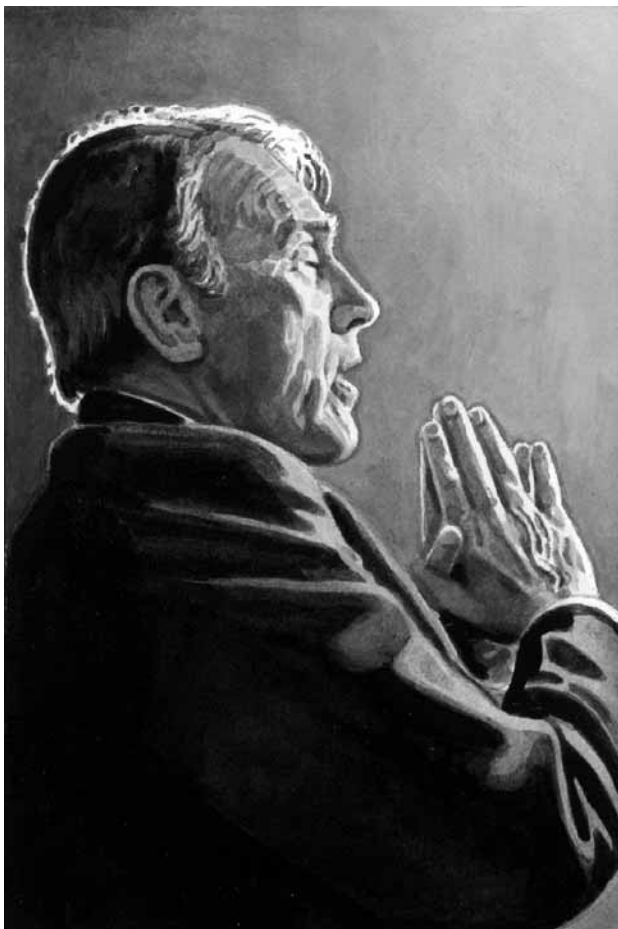
The question, “Does God answer prayer?,” is often heard in our days. We, human beings, should beware of challenging the Almighty for an answer. We should, instead, accept His challenge as all-sufficient to settle the question.

“Ye shall seek Me and find Me,” says the Lord, “When ye shall search for Me with all your heart” (Jeremiah 29:13).

“O taste and see that the Lord is good” (Psalm 34:8).

When, through presumption, we dare to put God to the test, one of three things may happen:

In most cases He ignores our audacity and gives us another chance to repent and come to our senses. On the other hand, however, the Lord may punish our effrontery if



we tempt Him despite our knowledge or because of our neglect to obtain the needed knowledge. (See example in 2 Kings 1:9-15). Nevertheless, in some cases God may answer by granting our request in view of our honest ignorance. (See example in 2 Kings 20:8, 10). It should be borne in mind, also, that sometimes God sends right answers to wrong prayers.

Here is an experience which shows how God often speaks to skeptics and atheists. In northeastern Brazil an atheist stood at a country crossroad close to an unpredictable bull. "God," he shouted, "if you exist, I challenge You to make this bull charge at me." Maybe that man was a bullfighter. The bull ignored him and kept on grazing. Then the atheist noticed that a rolled-up piece of paper, driven by the wind, was coming toward him. Out of curiosity he picked it up and read, "GOD IS LOVE." He could not get these words out of his mind, and became convinced that a merciful God was speaking to him. He began to read the Bible and in due time he was converted and became a consistent Christian.

Belief in God is more than an opinion; it is a firm conviction based on evidence and personal experience. We often see the manifestation of the hand of God in behalf of His servants.

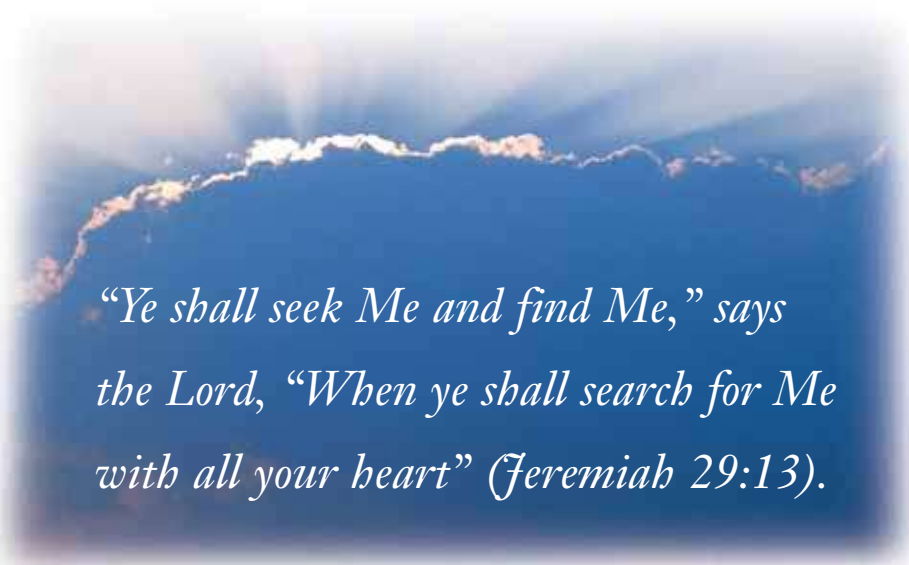
Therefore, not atheists, but faithful Christian believers, are qualified to say whether or not God answers prayer.

Answers to prayer in our days are becoming rare, because men do not meet the conditions: Proverbs 28:9; Isaiah 1:4, 15; 59:1, 2; James 1:6, 7; 4:3.

A drunkard said to me: I have prayed to all the saints in the world and received no help at all.

If a gambler prays that God may help him to win, of course he will get no help from God.

I have heard of a burglar, in jail, who prayed that God would bless



"Ye shall seek Me and find Me," says the Lord, "When ye shall search for Me with all your heart" (Jeremiah 29:13).

the prospective burglaries that he was planning to carry out as soon as he should be free.

Such prayers are an abomination to God.

The conditions on which the Lord promised to answer our prayers should be carefully heeded: Isaiah 58:6-9; Mark 11:24; Luke 18:1-7; 1 Thessalonians 5:17; James 5:14-16; 1 John 3:22; 5:14.

One day Dr. Charles L. Allen put the following question into his newspaper column: "Have you had an answer to prayer?" And he received more positive replies than he expected. "In fact," he says, "It took me about a week to read them all."

Of course, every rule has its exceptions. Dr. Allen says that some tried to belittle prayer, claiming that the so-called answers are but coincidences. There is evidently half a truth in this statement. Many but not all answers are coincidences. But educated, intelligent, and honest Christians insist that some answers cannot be coincidences, and we should not presume to deny their ability to make distinctions. On top of that, we should understand that no one is qualified to judge someone else's experience.

Those who think that prayer makes no difference in a person's life and that there is no such thing as direct answers to prayer should read

the books of Dr. Leslie D. Weatherhead (*Psychology, Religion, and Healing*) and of Dr. Archiblad J. Cronin (*The Citadel, The Keys of the Kingdom, etc.*). Also the books about the work of George Mueller in England are full of evidence that God does answer prayer. And what to say about the evidence brought forth by Dr. Roger Pilkington? In one of his books he tells an interesting story:

Dr. Pilkington arrived in one of the cities of South Wales to give a series of lectures to a group of post-graduate biology students. For some reason his hotel reservations were changed contrary to his expectations. At the other hotel, where he did not expect to be put up, the receptionist, a tired-looking middle-aged lady, was discussing with two gentlemen the subject of suicide. And she asked Dr. Pilkington how many aspirin tablets would be needed to kill a person. Then they changed the conversation to other subjects until Dr. Pilkington retired for the night.

When already in bed, a strange feeling, an inner voice, prevented him from falling asleep. He was impressed with the thought that that lady wanted to commit suicide. He ran downstairs and confronted her with the question: "I want to know why you are going to commit suicide." As she began to deny her intention, Dr.

Pilkington cut her short: "I shall not stop you. But you must tell me why you are going to kill yourself." Then the lady broke down and told him her problem.

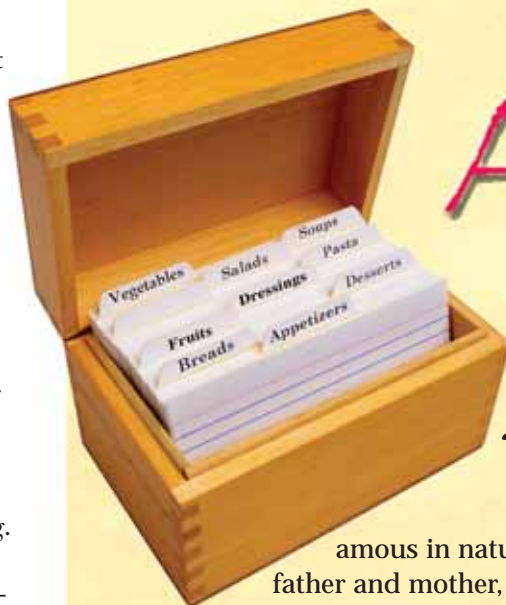
When her father turned forty-three, he became totally blind. And her doctor said that she would also become blind at approximately the same age. It was a hereditary condition. So, as she was now approaching her forty-third birthday, and was not prepared to spend the rest of her life as a helpless blind spinster, she had decided to leave the land of the living.

Dr. Pilkington, geneticist, had been studying the subject of hereditary faults of vision. He was an authority in this field. And as the lady described her father's condition, Dr. Pilkington assured her that it was not hereditary. She told him that she had been praying every day: "Please Lord, show me how I can commit suicide." But now she changed her mind and, feeling relieved, she said to the doctor: "You can go back to bed. I shall not kill myself."

Many times even wrong prayers get right answers from God. The scientist was convinced that the hand of God had led him to help that lady through a number of intelligently-oriented and purposeful circumstances, called providences.

"The best answer to all objections urged against prayer," says an American author, "is the fact that man cannot help praying."

It is as natural for man to pray as it is for migratory birds to fly to their summer homes, or as for hummingbirds to stick their long tongue deep into flowers to suck in nectar, or as for newborn mammals to rush for the mother's milk. By instinct, these creatures seek something that exists. And man, by prayer, also seeks supplies at an existent Fountain of blessings. This is why people of all walks of life—statesmen, doctors, scientists, and, sometimes, even professed atheists—kneel down before the throne of grace. R



A Happy

by Christopher Mweemba

The family is the institution of God lying at the foundation of all human society. It is monogamous in nature: "For this cause shall man leave his father and mother, and cleave to his wife" (Genesis 2:24; Matthew 19:5).

Wives are to be subject to their husbands (Ephesians 5:22), and husbands are to care for their own (1 Timothy 5:8), and are not to provoke their children to wrath (Ephesians 6:4). The filial obligations are obedience (Luke 2:51; Ephesians 6:1), reverence (Exodus 20:12), and grateful requital (1 Timothy 5:4).

Before you enter into the marriage relationship, remember that Jesus should be your Counselor. In order for Christ to counsel you, you must have a willing mind (2 Corinthians 8:12). It is only the power of will and power of self-control that can cast down imaginations, and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God, and brings into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ. Remember, your feelings, your impressions, your emotions and your plans, are not to be trusted, for they are not reliable.

The following Bible texts give us ten important words that will help every family to restore family order. As reformers (Isaiah 58:12), we are to hold on firmly to a "Thus saith the Lord" if we are to stand against every temptation that will come to our families.

- i. Romans 13:9—Love
- ii. Proverbs 14:25; Luke 16:10—Loyalty
- iii. II Corinthians 2:7—Forgiveness
- iv. Proverbs 17:17—Friendship
- v. Proverbs 15:13—Smiles
- vi. Romans 8:25—Hope
- vii. Ephesians 4:32—Tenderness
- viii. Ephesians 6:16—Faith
- ix. Ecclesiastics 3:4—Laughter
- x. James 1:27—Consideration



Family Recipe



The above words are the ingredients of our spiritual recipe that would make a delicious cake for each family.

In regard to measurements, bakers use kilograms, grams, pounds, ounces, quarts, pints, and so forth. We too, use measurements under the influence of the Holy Spirit, by exercising character qualities that are pleasing in God's sight. Our measurements are revealed in custom, speech, work, countenance, patience, time, and in likeness to Christ.

What to Take:

- Custom in the exercise of love and tenderness.
- Patience in regard to loyalty and hope.
- Speech applied to forgiveness and settling disagreements.
- Time devoted to true friendship.
- Countenance displaying smiles.
- Works of faith and consideration for others.

Method of Baking:

- Take love and loyalty and mix it thoroughly with faith.
- Blend with tenderness, kindness and understanding.
- Add hope, friendship and laughter.
- Sprinkle freely with smiles and consideration for others.
- Bake in bright sunshine.
- Serve daily in generous quantities and you will enjoy the real taste.

"The business of every Christian is to study the character of Christ."¹

¹ *That I May Know Him* p. 182.



Proactive or Waiting on?

BY JANET SURESHKUMAR

*T*here is a story of an old lady who died all alone. The few people who got close enough to her said that she lived a pathetic life. Most people felt sorry for her because they were certain that she did not have enough money to live any better.

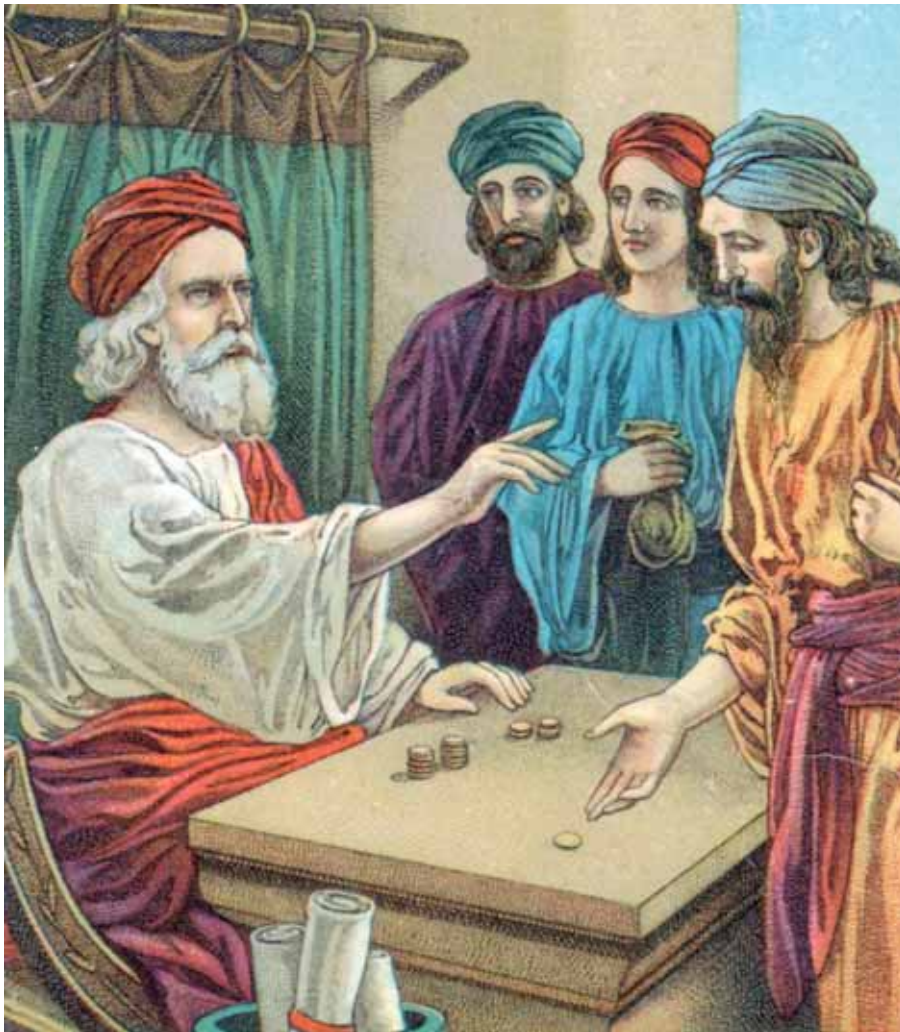
Her clothes were old and well-worn. She had very little food in her house. Often she ate out of garbage cans. She never disposed of anything and the house was filled with filth. Papers were scattered everywhere. When she died, no one even knew about it for a long time. Some of her neighbors finally realized that they had not seen

her for several days and went to investigate. Her frail body had already begun to decompose. In the process of cleaning out her house, thousands of dollars were found stuffed in various places throughout the house. This poor woman had a small fortune stored in her home, yet she had lived like a beggar. She had buried her wealth, and it did not do her or anyone else any good. She could have invested it and could have had even more money to provide for herself or to help other people. But it stayed hidden in the house.

Many, like this woman, bury their God-given abilities and energies to benefit no one. God has given to each person some natural abilities which can be increased with use. Romans 12:6-8, "Having then gifts differing according to the grace that is given to us . . ." While we are not entirely in control of whatever gifts we possess, we can take advantage of the opportunities God grants us and use those gifts to the best of our ability.

Distribution of God's gifts

No two Christians are alike, so each one of us has been given gifts or talents according to our abilities and we should use these talents for the benefit of all. "The talents that Christ entrusts to His church represent especially the gifts and blessings imparted by the Holy Spirit. [1 Corinthians 12:8-11 quoted.] All men do not receive the same gifts, but to every servant of the Master some gift of the Spirit is promised."¹



God gives talents to each individual according to His plan. Every person must use his or her own God-given talents to help the whole body function as it should (Romans 12:3-8; Ephesians 4:16). Jesus taught in a parable that if we use our talents for Him, He will give us more! But if we ignore our talents, or hide them, He will take away that which was given.

Matthew 25:14-30 tells a story of a man who went traveling into a far country. He called his servants to him, giving them each an amount of money, according to their individual abilities. To one he gave five talents; to another two talents; and to the third, knowing that he could not handle a heavy load of responsibility, he gave just one talent.

Each one was given the same opportunity to use his talent. While they were not told how to use them, they were expected to use them wisely. He did not expect the same result from each one.

What is talent?

Talent is understood as a unit of money in ancient times. It was a unit of measure or weight. The value of the coin would depend on its weight. While we cannot determine the exact amount of money this was, it was a substantial amount. In the parable of Jesus, talents also represent abilities or skills. The servants represent members of the church. Every member has some ability. There is not any “no talent” person. There is individual responsibility for different degrees of ability.

The “five talent” man

The first servant, knowing that his master was just, but strict, went out immediately and put the five talents to work for him. He investigated many business ventures before deciding what he would do with the money. Satisfied with his decision, he invested it. Trade implies carrying on transactions for a long period of time, not instant success. He eventu-

ally showed a 100% return on his investments. Matthew 25:16.

The “two talent” man

The second servant did not have as much to work with. His master, when he handed him the two talents, said nothing further. He didn’t tell him how to spend or invest the money. He did not give him project reports or business plans. But this servant, although not quite as smart as the first man, knew that his master intended for him to use it wisely. He went to work to figure out how he could best utilize what his master had entrusted to him. He did not sit and complain because someone else received five talents. He went to work and was faithful in what he had received and also received a 100% return. Matthew 25:17.

The “one talent” man

The third servant, known for his laziness, received just one talent. He looked at it, wondering what good one little talent would do. How could he use such a meager amount? He thought about his master, remembering the times he had rebuked him for his laziness. He was quite afraid of his master. He clutched the talent in his hand. Going quickly to his quarters he sat down to think. Yes! That’s what he would do! He would not spend his master’s money. No. That would be wrong. He would put it away in a safe place, not telling anyone where it was. In fact, he told no one that he

even had the talent. Perhaps once in awhile he might have pulled the talent out to look at it. But then, thinking about how stern his master was, he hid it away again. He was faithless instead of faithful, burying his talent in the ground. This, as he perceived it, was a simple and sensible way to protect things of value.

The day of accounting

When the lord returned from his mission, he called his servants to him, expecting them to give an accurate account of his money. The first servant came in and stood tall and proud in front of his master. In his hands he brought the accounting books, proof of how he had managed his lord’s money. The master was pleased.

The second servant came in. Humbly he stepped up to his master and handed him his records. With head bowed, he waited for his master to speak. He wasn’t ashamed at how he had used his lord’s money, but he wasn’t as self-assured as his mate. The master looked at the records and said, “Well done! You are a good and faithful servant.”

Now it was time for the third servant to come before his lord. “Well, servant” said the lord in his booming voice, “What have you to say for yourself? I am very pleased with these servants. They have each doubled what I gave them and how about you?”

The third servant was trembling. Clutched tightly in his hand was the

The more we are given, the more we are accountable for. Ability plus opportunity equals responsibility.

original talent. He stepped up to the lord and opened up his hand. "Here is your talent. I have not used it nor spent it. I was afraid that no matter what I did with it I would not please you. Therefore, I hid my talent away in a safe place. I was afraid to make a mistake, so I did nothing with it."

He had failed to use what the master had given him. He was not guilty of any grievous sin, he had simply failed to use what God had given him. If he had just used the talent, he would have been commended by the master.

Why did he make such a mistake?

The third servant had lack of faith and trust in his master and his goodness. He was afraid of losing the talent (Matthew 25:25), or his master, or perhaps he feared the punishment that would come upon him. The master had faith in his servant. But the servant did not trust himself nor was he confident in his ability. The one talent was not a measure of worth, but the master's knowledge of his ability.

Notice here, the other two servants did not serve out of fear, but out of love. "There is no fear in love; but perfect love casteth out fear: because fear hath torment. He that feareth is not made perfect in love" (1 John 4:18).

"When the Lord takes account of His servants, the return from every talent will be scrutinized. The work done reveals the character of the worker." The more we are given, the more we are accountable for. Ability plus opportunity equals responsibility.

The reward

When the master returned, the five talent man was rewarded. Matthew 25:21, "His lord said unto him, well done, thou good and faithful servant: thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things: enter thou into the joy of

thy lord." His attitude of goodness and faithfulness resulted in faithful service. He was rewarded with greater responsibility. Those who serve faithfully will receive more opportunities for service.

The two talent man was also rewarded. Matthew 25:23 says, "His lord said unto him, well done, good and faithful servant; thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy lord." Although he returned only with four talents he received equal commendation.

The reproof

The one talent man was rebuked (Matthew 25:26-30). He was condemned for not trying. The lord seized the talent from the third servant. "You wicked and lazy servant, get out of my sight. I will deal with you later."

He was selfish with what he had, but also indifferent to the needs of others. He had wanted to store what he had. He had refused to think of his master's best interest. He was unsure about what to invest in. He had the inverse problem of "proactive vs. waiting on God"; because he wanted God to come to him and tell him exactly how to invest—rather than using his talents. Wavering too long, he was still sitting on the money when the boss got back, and was demoted to a lower position. He not only lost his talent, but also life eternal.

With the third servant gone, the master handed out the rewards. To

the first servant he gave the talent, which the third servant had returned to him. He said, "You deserve this, for you handled the goods I gave you well. Take this and invest it as well."

Recognition of talents

The special gifts of the Spirit are not the only talents represented in the parable. It includes all gifts and endowments, whether original or acquired, natural or spiritual, no matter how insignificant they may seem to be. Perhaps our talent is helping those in need, or it could be musical or artistic ability. We may be good at story telling, writing, preaching, giving a Bible studies or maybe something more humble than that. Maybe it is just doing humble housework, or being a servant. It doesn't matter. God gives each of us at least one talent. He expects us to put it to use. (See *Messages to Young People*, pp. 359, 360.) "Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might" (Ecclesiastes 9:10).

The Lord has given us a talent. Someday He will call us to stand before the throne. He will say, "Where is that treasure I gave you that day? Did you use it for my purpose? Or is it stored away?" God does not say, "See what you can do with what I have given you." He says, "I will hold you accountable for what I have given you."

Kinds of talents

God has committed to us talents of speech, intellect, time, means, mental abilities, influence, health and strength, kind impulses and affections; and He holds us responsible for the use we make of these good gifts.

"The power of speech is a talent that should be diligently cultivated. Of all the gifts we have received from God, none is capable of being a greater blessing than this."

"Our time belongs to God. . . . Of no talent He has given will He require a more strict account than of our time. . . . Parents should teach



their children the value and right use of time.”⁴

“Health is a blessing of which few appreciate the value; yet upon it the efficiency of our mental and physical powers largely depends. Our impulses and passions have their seat in the body, and it must be kept in the best condition physically and under the most spiritual influences in order that our talents may be put to the highest use.”⁵

“Our money has not been given us that we might honor and glorify ourselves. As faithful stewards we are to use it for the honor and glory of God. . . . All we possess is the Lord’s, and we are accountable to Him for the use we make of it.”⁶

“God also entrusts men with means. He gives them power to get wealth. And He asks for a return of His own.”⁷

“Occupy Till I Come”

There is another story in Luke 19:12-27 which tells of a nobleman who gave ten servants money, and told them to “Occupy till I come” (Verse 13). He did not tell the servants what they should be doing. He did not give them job descriptions. He did not set one of them over the other. He just gave them one pound each, and then he went away on a journey, and said he would be back.

When he returned, he called the men up to give an account. He did not say to the men, “Now I hope that you have made a lot of money for me by your trading and business deals.” He just asked them how they had fared. The first man told him that his pound had gained ten pounds. The nobleman was pleased, and put him in charge of ten cities.

The second man, not quite as successful, but just as diligent, handed the nobleman five pounds in return for the pound. The master did not scold him, but praised him for his effort, and made him lord over five cities. Judging the men by their abilities and diligence, he did not overburden them with responsi-

bilities they could not handle. He knew that both of these men would do their best to judge the cities in which they were put in charge.

Now came the third man trembling, because he was afraid of the nobleman. He had been told that he was strict and would not be pleased with his efforts, no matter how hard he tried. Because of his fear, this man did not do anything with the money. He just kept it wrapped and handed it back to the master, exactly as it was. Instead of an appreciation for being diligent in not spending the money on himself, or wasting it, the master rebuked the servant because he did nothing with it. His master told him that he was a wicked and lazy servant. He took the money from this slothful servant and gave it to the one who had gained the most.

Invest and increase the talent

How are our talents increased? It has been left to us to decide what to do with our talents and abilities. We can invest them and cultivate them to their fullest—and even discover talents we did not know that we had—or we may just bury our talents and go on our way. It is the use we make of the talents given to us, that makes us strong.

“Talents used are talents multiplied. Success is not the result of chance or of destiny; it is the outworking of God’s own providence, the reward of faith and discretion, of virtue and persevering effort. The Lord desires us to use every gift we have; and if we do this, we shall have greater gifts to use.”⁸

The time is coming for the Master’s return and we will be required to give account of how we used our talents for the Lord. We all want to hear, “Well done, good and faithful servant” at our Master’s return. God will not force us to use our talents in His service. We were not created to be robots without freedom of choice. It is up to us to decide whether we will use or misuse the talents we have been given.

“We shall individually be held responsible for doing one jot less than we have ability to do. The Lord measures with exactness every possibility for service. The unused capabilities are as much brought into account as are those that are improved. For all that we might become through the right use of our talents God holds us responsible.”⁹

This is not a question of what we would do if we had a particular talent. It is what we are doing with what we have, that counts. Before we are given greater talents, responsibility, or material wealth, we must first prove that we are faithful with what we presently have.

Use them or lose them

God has given each of us some talents, just as the nobleman gave these ten men silver. The nobleman did not tell the servants how to make the best of what he had given them. God does not tell us how to make the best of the talents He has given us. He just tells us to use them. The rest is up to us. Whatever your talents, no matter how small, use them by improving them to the utmost.

Are we ready to engage in the work God has left us to do? We should be asking, “Lord, what wilt Thou have me to do? How can I honor and glorify Thy name upon the earth? What am I doing with what you have given me now?” We will not be held accountable for what others possess, but will give an account for how we handle what we ourselves possess. If we don’t use what God has given us, we will lose it and be counted as worthless servants. Let us be proactive! Not just waiting on! **R**

References:

- ¹ *Christ’s Object Lessons*, p. 327.
- ² *Ibid.*
- ³ *Ibid.*, p. 335.
- ⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 342-345.
- ⁵ *Messages to Young People*, p. 235.
- ⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 310.
- ⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 351.
- ⁸ *Christ’s Object Lessons*, p. 353.
- ⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 363.

The Sealing of God's People (13)

Objections Answered (2)

BY A. C. SAS

OBJECTION No. 4

The 144,000 will pass through the time of Jacob's trouble. How can they be said to have passed through all the plagues during that time if they are resurrected towards the end of the seven last plagues?

ANSWER

Those who died in the message of the third angel are sleeping in their tomb until the beginning of the seventh plague, therefore they are resting during the six plagues. The Spirit of Prophecy says that they (the 144,000) "have passed through the time of trouble such as never was since there was a nation; they have endured the anguish of the time of Jacob's trouble."¹ Can we harmonize this declaration with the other Testimonies? Yes, we can.

Jacob's trouble commences when Jesus ends His priestly ministry in the heavenly sanctuary, when the door of probation closes (see PP 201). It will last from that time until Jesus comes in the clouds of heaven. A part of the 144,000 will pass through all the plagues while the other part will not. The reason is:

a) The 144,000 are universally scattered (PK 189), but the plagues are not universal (GC 628).

b) Part of the 144,000 will be sleeping in the dust during the six plagues and will be resurrected at the beginning of the seventh plague.

After the partial resurrection, the time of Jacob's trouble is still on. Those who are resurrected will pass

through a part of the time of trouble and therefore it can be said that they passed through it.

Let us consider another aspect of the matter: 144,000 is sometimes used as the title of that company, whether it is complete, or only a part of that number is taken. We have a similar example in the Bible. The disciples of Jesus were called "the twelve" whether all or only a part of them were present:

"And that he was seen of Cephas, then of the twelve" (1 Corinthians 15:5).

The Bible calls the disciples "the twelve." When Jesus appeared to them, not all the 12 were present. Judas had already committed suicide. Thomas was not with them (John 20:24). There were not more than ten, but still the Bible says that Jesus was seen by the twelve. This was their title. So it is also with the 144,000. Part of this number will pass through all the plagues and it can be said: "the 144,000 pass through the time of Jacob's trouble", the whole identified by a part of them.

After the partial resurrection the time of trouble is not yet finished. From that time on, all the 144,000 will pass through the remainder of it.

OBJECTION No. 5

The 144,000 live in the time of the fourth plague. Therefore those who are raised at the partial resurrection are not included in this number (144,000).

ANSWER :

This argument is based on the writings of Elder Uriah Smith:

"We remember that the 144,000 live through the time when power is given unto the sun to 'scorch men with fire.' "²

We have already stated that the writer does not contradict himself. In this article about the 144,000 being sealed, he says:

"Finally, it may be said that those who die in the message cannot be a part of the 144,000; for this company come 'out of great tribulation' (Revelation 7:14), which would not be true of those who sleep in the grave till six of the plagues are fulfilled. This conclusion should hardly be accepted without a little further consideration. Mark the situation. Raised at the beginning of the seventh plague, they pass through the whole period of that judgment, and witness all its accumulated calamities. From certain passages of scripture it is concluded that the plagues will cover the space of one year. This would give nearly two months after the seventh vial began to be poured out, before the end. But the plagues are cumulative. The first does not cease when the second begins; but the second adds its horrors to the first, the third adds to the others, and so on to the seventh. In the seventh is therefore found the climax of them all."³

Consider the fifth plague. Those who received the sores at the first plague still suffer the effect of the

sores when the fifth one is poured out. (See Revelation 16:2, 10, 11.)

The plagues being cumulative, even after the partial resurrection, they see the sun scorching the wicked. We have already explained that not all of them will pass through the fourth plague because this plague is not universal (GC 628) but the 144,000 are universally scattered. Those who have never died will see the sun scorching the people from the beginning of that plague, and the rest of the 144,000 will see it after the partial resurrection.

OBJECTION No. 6

That sister mentioned in 2SM 263 will be resting in the time of trouble. How can she be one of the 144,000 if these pass through Jacob's trouble?

ANSWER

We do not know whether the prophetess was referring to the short time of trouble, just before the close of probation (EW 85), or to the time of the great tribulation, Jacob's trouble. Whatever the case may be, we can see no problem in understanding her declaration.

If the quotation refers to the time prior to the close of probation, all will agree that she will be sleeping then. After the close of probation she will still be sleeping until the beginning of the seventh plague. Therefore, during the longest part of the time of trouble she will be resting. But at the end, when the trouble is not yet over, she will come forth from the grave, not at the last trumpet, but at the voice of God. Passing through the seventh and last plague she will still pass through the great tribulation, for a very short period of time. Therefore, of her it can be declared, that she came out of great tribulation.

OBJECTION No. 7

The 144,000 are the firstfruits. They cannot be made up of those living in the last days, because these

are the last fruits of the gospel harvest.

ANSWER

The Bible tells us that they are the firstfruits:

"These were redeemed from among men, being first-fruits unto God and to the Lamb." Revelation 14:4.

At the second coming of Jesus He takes His people to the heavenly garner, but they, the righteous (144,000), are already bound or sealed in bundles. We read that the sealing or binding of the 144,000 in bundles takes place during the preaching of the third angel's message:

"Said the angel, 'The third angel is binding, or sealing, them in bundles for the heavenly garner.'"⁴

"I then saw the third angel. Said my accompanying angel, 'Fearful is his work. Awful is his mission. He is the angel that is to select the wheat from the tares, and seal or bind, the wheat for the heavenly garner.'"⁵

Besides this, we know that the 144,000, are the first ones Jesus will see when He comes, because they will all then be alive, while the others will be sleeping in the dust. A portion of them were the first to be resurrected, and this took place in the partial resurrection. After Jesus acknowledges the 144,000 and declares, "My grace is sufficient for you" (EW 16), He calls the other saints from their graves. It is fitting to call the 144,000 the first-fruits.

OBJECTION No. 8

The 144,000 remain without an intercessor through the time of trouble. They cannot be those that are raised in the partial resurrection at the beginning of the seventh plague. (See GC 649.)

ANSWER

After the close of probation, there will be no more intercession. Jesus' work in the heavenly sanctuary has been finished. The saints will be

without an intercessor from the very beginning of the time of trouble. We read about that time as follows:

"As Jesus moved out of the Most Holy place, I heard the tinkling of the bells upon His garment, and as He left, a cloud of darkness covered the inhabitants of the earth. There was then no mediator between guilty man, and an offended God. While Jesus had been standing between God and guilty man, a restraint was upon the people; but when Jesus stepped out from between man and the Father, the restraint was removed, and Satan had the control of man. It was impossible for the plagues to be poured out while Jesus officiated in the Sanctuary; but as his work there is finished, as his intercession closes, there is nothing to stay the wrath of God, and it breaks with fury upon the shelterless head of the guilty sinner, who has slighted salvation, and hated reproof. The saints in that fearful time, after the close of Jesus' mediation, were living in the sight of a holy God, without an intercessor. Every case was decided, every jewel numbered."⁶

When Jesus ends His work in the sanctuary the plagues will be poured out:

"I saw that the four angels would hold the four winds until Jesus' work was done in the sanctuary, and then will come the seven last plagues."⁷

The statement in GC 649 says that the 144,000 have "stood without an intercessor through the final outpouring of God's judgments." We understand that the seventh plague, the last one, is the final outpouring of God's judgments. During the seventh plague, the last one, all the 144,000 are alive, because the partial resurrection takes place at the beginning of the seventh plague. They stand without an intercessor.

Therefore part of the 144,000 will be without an intercessor, during all the seven plagues, and the rest of them during the last plague. (Remember that the plagues are

cumulative.) The “final outpouring” of the wrath of God is the seventh plague. All the 144,000 will then be alive. We can see no inconsistency in this Testimony and other parts of the Spirit of Prophecy.

OBJECTION No. 9

The 144,000 are seen on Mount Sion in Revelation 14:1. Those standing on the sea of glass in chapter 15:2, 3 are not the 144,000. They are others.

ANSWER

In Revelation 15 we read:

“And I saw as it were a sea of glass mingled with fire: and them that had gotten the victory over the beast, and over his image, and over his mark, and over the number of his name, stand on the sea of glass, having the harps of God. And they sing the song of Moses the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb, saying, Great and marvellous are thy works, Lord God Almighty; just and true are thy ways, thou King of saints” (Revelation 15:2, 3).

Of this company on the sea of glass we read that:

- a) they had gotten the victory over the beast, his image, and his mark;
- b) they have harps in their hands;
- c) they sing the song of Moses and of the Lamb.

In Revelation 14 we read:

“And I looked, and lo, a Lamb stood on Mount Sion, and with him an hundred and forty and four thousand, having his Father’s name written in their foreheads. And I heard a voice from heaven, as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of a great thunder: and I heard the voice of harpers harping with their harps: and they sung as it were a new song before the throne, and before the four beasts, and the elders: and no man could learn that song but the hundred and forty and four thousand, which were redeemed from the earth” (Revelation 14:1-3).

Here we see that the 144,000:

- a) have the name of the Father in their foreheads (compare Revelation 7:2-4);
- b) they have harps in their hands;
- c) they were singing a new song (the song of Moses and of the Lamb).

“The 144,000 sing a ‘new song before the throne’ (Revelation 14:3), which only they can learn. In a similar setting in ch 15:1-3. John listens as what appears to be the same group of people ‘stand on the sea of glass,’ which is ‘before the throne of God’ (ch 4:6 cf. 14:3; 15:2), singing ‘the song of Moses the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb.’”⁸

We understand that these are not two different companies. The 144,000 of Revelation 15:2, 3 and 14:1-5 are the ones who are victorious over the beast, his image, his mark, and the number of his name. They stand on the sea of glass, before the throne, on Mount Sion. The following Testimonies explain this:

“We all entered the cloud together, and were seven days ascending to the sea of glass, when Jesus brought the crowns, and with His own right hand placed them on our heads. He gave us harps of gold and palms of victory. Here on the sea of glass the 144,000 stood in a perfect square.”⁹

“While Satan has been urging his accusations, holy angels, unseen, have been passing to and fro, placing upon the faithful ones the seal of the living God. These are they that stand upon Mount Zion with the Lamb, having the Father’s name written in their foreheads. They sing the new song before the throne, that song which no man can learn save the hundred and forty and four thousand which were redeemed from the earth. ‘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.’”¹⁰

OBJECTION No. 10

The 144,000 are virgins, not defiled with women. (Revelation 14:4). Therefore they are single men, who have never been married.

ANSWER

In the Bible a woman symbolizes a church. A pure woman represents the church of God, and a corrupt woman represents an apostate church. See 2 Corinthians 11:2; Ephesians 5:25-27; Revelation 12:1; 17:3-6; Isaiah 4:1.

The 144,000 are not defiled with the false doctrines of other churches. They are not partakers in their communion and have no fellowship with them. They might have once been their members, but having accepted the truth and obeyed the Sabbath, keeping it according to the commandment, they are sealed. They are free from the errors and defilement of other churches that make up Babylon. But especially they believe and teach pure doctrine. In this sense they are virgins.

“So of the 144,000; though some of them may have once had a connection with corrupt churches, they sever that connection when it would become sin to retain it longer.”¹¹

In the parable the word “virgins” is used to represent those who profess a pure doctrine:

“They are called virgins because they profess a pure faith.”¹² R

References:

- ¹ *The Great Controversy*, p. 649.
- ² DR, 451.
- ³ *The Review and Herald*, August 10, 1897.
- ⁴ *Early Writings*, p. 89.
- ⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 118.
- ⁶ *Spiritual Gifts*, vol. 1, pp. 198, 199.
- ⁷ *Early Writings*, p. 36.
- ⁸ *SDA Bible Commentary*, vol. 10, p. 1029 (Revised Edition.)
- ⁹ *Early Writings*, p. 16.
- ¹⁰ *Prophets and Kings*, p. 591.
- ¹¹ DR, 584.
- ¹² *Christ’s Object Lessons*, p. 406.



CHRIST OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS (5)

Glorification

Compiled by A. C. Sas

When the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory: And before him shall be gathered all nations: and he shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats: And he shall set the sheep on his right hand, but the goats on the left. Then shall the King say unto them on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world” (Matthew 25:31-34).

“Father, I will that they also, whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am; that **they may behold my glory**, which thou hast given me: for thou lovedst me before the foundation of the world” (John 17:24).

“And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and jointheirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together” (Romans 8:17).

“Moreover whom he did predestinate, them he also called: and whom he called, them he also justified: and whom he **justified**, them he also **glorified**” (Romans 8:30).

“The eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that ye may know what is the **hope** of his calling, and what the **riches of the glory** of his **inheritance in the saints**” (Ephesians 1:18).

“When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also **appear with him in glory**” (Colossians 3:4).

“That ye would walk worthy of God, who hath **called you unto his kingdom and glory**” (1 Thessalonians 2:12).

“Whereunto he called you by our gospel, to the **obtaining of the glory** of our Lord Jesus Christ” (2 Thessalonians 2:14).

“Therefore I endure all things for the elect’s sakes, that they may also obtain the **salvation** which is in Christ Jesus **with eternal glory**” (2 Timothy 2:10).

“The elders which are among you I exhort, who am also an elder, and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, and also a **partaker of the glory that shall be revealed**: And when the chief Shepherd shall appear, **ye shall receive a crown of glory** that fadeth not away” (1 Peter 5:1, 4).

“But the God of all grace, who hath **called us unto his eternal glory** by Christ Jesus, after that ye have suffered a while, make you perfect, stablish, strengthen, settle you” (1 Peter 5:10).

“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. By thousands of voices, all over the earth, the warning will be given. Miracles will be

wrought, the sick will be healed, and signs and wonders will follow the believers.”¹

“When the **conflict of life is ended**, when the armor is laid off at the feet of Jesus, when the **saints of God are glorified**, then and then only will it be safe to claim that we are saved and sinless. True sanctification will not lead any human being to pronounce himself holy, sinless, and perfect. Let the Lord proclaim the truth of your character.”²

“And as **God spoke the day** and the hour of Jesus’ coming and delivered the everlasting covenant to His people, He spoke one sentence, and then paused, while the words were rolling through the earth. The Israel of God stood with their eyes fixed upward, listening to the words as they came from the mouth of Jehovah, and rolled through the earth like peals of loudest thunder. It was awfully solemn. And at the end of every sentence the saints shouted, ‘Glory! Alleluia!’ Their **countenances were lighted up with the glory of God**; and they **shone with the glory**, as did the face of Moses when he came down from Sinai. The **wicked could not look on them for the glory**.”³

“Soon we heard the voice of God like many waters, which gave us the **day and hour** of Jesus’ coming. The living saints, 144,000 in number, knew and understood the voice, while the wicked thought it was thunder and an earthquake. When

God **spoke the time**, He poured upon us the Holy Ghost, and our **faces began to light up and shine** with the **glory of God**, as Moses' did when he came down from Mount Sinai."⁴

"I once had the privilege of speaking to twenty thousand people, and oh, how glad I felt that I could honor Jesus before that immense throng! Only a little while longer, and we shall see Him as He is, and **be made like Him**. He is coming with clouds and with great glory. A multitude of **shining angels**, 'ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands,' will escort Him on His way. He will not wear that simple, seamless robe, **but robes of glory**, white, 'so as no fuller on earth can white them;' and on His vesture and on His thigh a name will be written, 'King of kings, and Lord of lords.' He will come to raise the dead, and to **change the living saints from glory to glory**."⁵

"Those who have **acted the most prominent part in the rejection and crucifixion of Christ** come forth to see Him as He is, and those who have rejected Christ come up and **see the saints glorified**, and it is at that time that the saints are changed in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, and are caught up to meet their Lord in the air."⁶

"Soon I heard the voice of God, which shook the heavens and the earth. There was a mighty earthquake. Buildings were shaken down, and fell on every side. I then heard a triumphant shout of victory, loud, musical, and clear. I looked upon this company who, as short time before were in such distress and bondage. Their captivity was turned. A **glorious light shone upon them**. How beautiful they then looked. All weariness and marks of care were gone. Health and beauty were seen in every countenance. Their enemies, the heathen round them, fell like dead men. They could not endure the light that shone upon the delivered, **holy ones**. This light and glory

remained upon them, until Jesus was seen in the clouds of heaven, and the faithful, tried company was **changed** in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, **from glory to glory**. And the graves were opened and the saints came forth, **clothed with immortality**, crying victory over death and the grave, and together with the living saints, were caught up to meet their Lord in the air; while the rich, **musical shouts of glory**, and victory, were upon every immortal tongue, and proceeding from every sanctified, holy lip."⁷

"Amid the reeling of the earth, the flash of lightning, and the roar of thunder, the voice of the Son of God calls forth the sleeping saints. He looks upon the graves of the righteous, then, raising His hands to heaven, He cries: 'Awake, awake, awake, ye that sleep in the dust, and arise!' Throughout the length and breadth of the earth the dead shall hear that voice, and they that hear shall live. And the whole earth shall ring with the tread of the exceeding great army of every nation, kindred, tongue, and people. From the prison house of death they come, **clothed with immortal glory**, crying: 'O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?' 1 Corinthians 15:55. And the **living righteous and the risen saints** unite their voices in a long, glad **shout of victory**."⁸

"The Lifegiver will call the dead from their prisonhouse, and as they come up from the grave, they will receive the finishing touch of immortality. They will rise from their dusty beds and exclaim, 'O Death, where is thy sting? O Grave, where is thy victory!' And they will be caught up with those who are translated to heaven without seeing death, to meet their Lord in the air. Then the **crown of immortal glory** will be placed upon each brow. What a wonderful sight are these exalted ones! The world knew them not, but they are the overcomers! Palm branches of victory will be placed in their hands, and again the gates will be opened, and

they will enter into the city with Jesus, and all the angels of God will strike their harps, and the heavenly arches will ring with the victory achieved through their God. They will stand before the throne of God, clothed with the white linen which is the righteousness of Christ."⁹

"**Through the study** of the Bible, converse is held with patriarchs and prophets. The truth is clothed in elevated language, which exerts a fascinating power over the mind; the thought is lifted up from the things of earth, and brought to **contemplate the glory of the future immortal life**."¹⁰

"The **righteousness of Christ must go before us if the glory of the Lord becomes our rereward**. If we do God's will, we may accept large blessings as God's free gift, but not because of any merit in us; this is of no value. Do the work of Christ, and you will honor God and come off more than conquerors through Him that has loved us and given His life for us, that we should have life and salvation in Jesus Christ."¹¹

"The plan of redemption will not be fully understood, even when the ransomed see as they are seen and know as they are known; but through the eternal ages, new truth will continually unfold to the wondering and delighted mind. Though the griefs and pains and temptations of earth are ended, and the cause removed, the people of God will ever have a distinct, intelligent knowledge of what their salvation has cost."¹²

"Christ came to earth and gave His life that we might have eternal salvation. He wants to encircle each of us with the atmosphere of heaven, that we may give to the world an example that will honor the religion of Christ. . . . In this life we are to be controlled by the spirit that rules in the heavenly courts. Righteousness and truth are to go before us. And the **glory of the Lord** will be the rereward of all who serve Him acceptably. They obtain **Christ's righteousness**."¹³

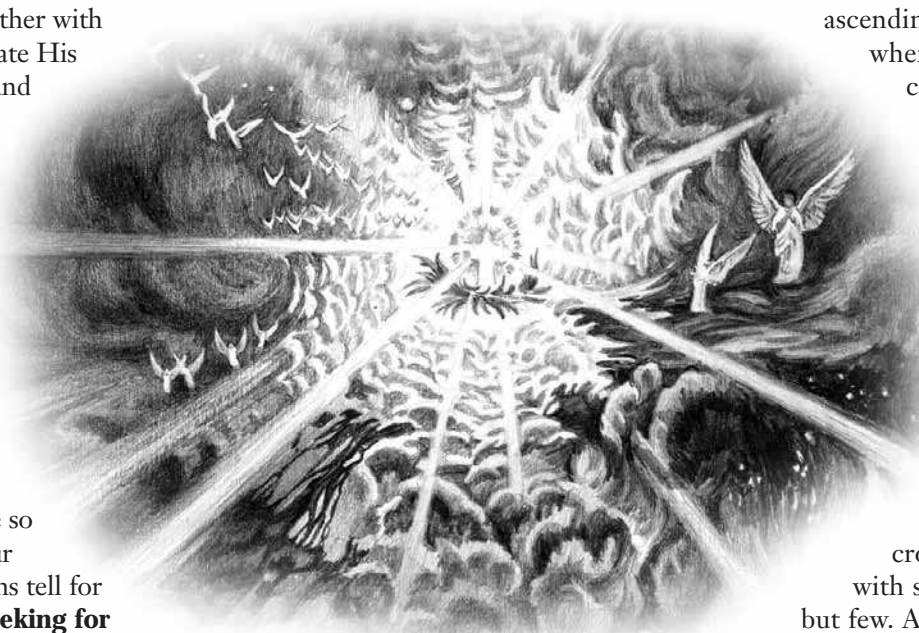
“O let us gather with Christ, and imitate His lovely example and character. God requires the whole heart. He has purchased it. It is His property. Withhold not from Christ that which belongs to Him. Are our affections divided? Let them be so no more. Let our words and actions tell for God. We **are seeking for**

glory, honor, immortality, eternal life. What a glorious hope is ours! Salvation is what we must have. Life, spiritual life, pray for it, wrestle for it. It is our privilege to enjoy it. We cannot glorify God with a dead faith. I have made my mark high for heaven and eternal life.”¹⁴

“**Immortal glory and eternal life** is the reward that our Redeemer offers to those who will be obedient to Him. He has made it possible for them to perfect Christian character through His name and to overcome on their own account as He overcame in their behalf. He has given them an example in His own life, showing them how they may overcome.”¹⁵

“Through the merits of a crucified and risen Redeemer, we may **look up and see the glory of God** shining from heaven to earth. We should be grateful to God for the plan of salvation. We have been blessed with many blessings, and in return we should give to God our undivided hearts. How sad it is that through our indifference to our eternal interests we are far from Christ, we do not keep our eyes directed above, to the **eternal glory** that **awaits the overcomer.**”¹⁶

“Those who have honored his name, who have been **colaborers** with him in seeking the salvation of souls, **shall enter into his joy**, and



sit down with Him on His throne, to **share in His eternal glory.**”¹⁷

“Hope has been set before us, even the hope of eternal life. Nothing short of this blessing for us will satisfy our Redeemer, but it is our part to lay hold upon this hope by faith in Him who has promised. We may expect to suffer, for it is those who are partakers with Him in His sufferings who shall be **partakers with Him in His glory.**”¹⁸

“When we look at the cross of Calvary, we cannot doubt God’s love or His willingness to save. He has worlds upon worlds that give Him divine honor; but so great was His love for the fallen race that he gave His wellbeloved Son to die that they might be redeemed from eternal death. In view of this great salvation, we cannot afford to lose our souls; we cannot afford to sin against God. Life, **eternal life in the kingdom of glory** is worth everything. But if we would obtain this precious boon, we must live a life of obedience to all of God’s requirements; we must carry out the principles of the Christian religion which are the principles of the divine law in all our daily life.”¹⁹

“We all entered the cloud together, and were seven days

ascending to the sea of glass, when Jesus brought the crowns, and with His own right hand placed them on our heads.

He gave us **harp** **of gold and palms of victory.** Here on the sea of glass the 144,000 stood in a perfect square. Some of them had very bright crowns, others not so bright. Some crowns appeared heavy with stars, while others had but few. All were perfectly **satisfied with their crowns.** And they were all clothed with a **glorious white mantle** from their shoulders to their feet. Angels were all about us as we marched over the sea of glass to the gate of the city. Jesus raised His mighty, glorious arm, laid hold of the pearly gate, swung it back on its glittering hinges, and said to us, ‘You have washed your robes in My blood, stood stiffly for My truth, enter in.’ We all marched in and felt that we **had a perfect right** in the city.”²⁰ K

References:

- ¹ *The Great Controversy*, p. 612.
- ² *The Signs of the Times*, May 16, 1895.
- ³ *Early Writings*, p. 34.
- ⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 15.
- ⁵ *The Signs of the Times*, April 8, 1889.
- ⁶ *Manuscript Releases*, vol. 9, p. 252.
- ⁷ *The Review and Herald*, December 31, 1857.
- ⁸ *The Great Controversy*, p. 644.
- ⁹ *The Review and Herald*, July 29, 1890.
- ¹⁰ *Sons and Daughters of God*, p. 108.
- ¹¹ *Faith and Works*, pp. 27, 28.
- ¹² *God’s Amazing Grace*, p. 98.
- ¹³ *In Heavenly Places*, p. 113.
- ¹⁴ *Spiritual Gifts*, vol. 2, pp. 216, 217.
- ¹⁵ *Testimonies*, vol. 3, p. 365.
- ¹⁶ *The Signs of the Times*, December 15, 1890.
- ¹⁷ *The Southern Watchman*, December 18, 1902.
- ¹⁸ *That I May Know Him*, p. 79.
- ¹⁹ *The Southern Watchman*, July 14, 1908.
- ²⁰ *Early Writings*, pp. 16, 17.



General Conference staff members gathered to commemorate the service of three retiring staff members.



Baptism in Toronto, Canada



Field delegation session in Italy, 2004



The Hungarian Field has been engaged in a series of projects to develop the medical missionary work. They have held demonstrations and opened booths at many fairs throughout the country. The results have been seen as souls have come forward to dedicate their hearts to the Lord.

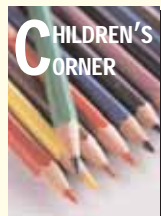


The work of God has been opening up in the southern Japanese island of Okinawa. In January of 2004 the brethren held a spiritual congress during which three souls dedicated their lives to the Lord through baptism.



Over 1600 souls gathered in Cuzco, Peru for a youth congress February 24-29, 2004. The main speakers were Br. Matheus Souza Silva, Regional Secretary for South America, and Br. David Zic, GC Secretary. Music presented by various quartets, choirs and instrumental groups dominated the meeting. The youth also had the opportunity to explore the nearby ancient Inca city of Machu Picchu.

MOVING? Please let us know.



Plants That Flourish

In the summertime, farmers often sponsor what is known as a county fair. This is a special event where people can show what they have grown—their best tomatoes, squashes, cucumbers, and so forth. Judges examine and compare the vegetables that have come from the earth. They award prizes for the biggest and best tasting ones—and of course, the finest fruits come from the best plants.

The Judge of all the earth also examines the spiritual fruits of the beings He has planted on earth—the human race. And His Word reveals that happiness comes to the choicest plants. Let us look for a moment into the very first chapter of the book of Psalms. It starts off like this: “Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful” (Psalm 1:1). What does this mean?

Happy is the child who does not live the way ungodly people say to live. Those who do not respect or obey God may try to give you ideas that are not good. They may tell you to join them in wrong things that could appear fun or exciting. But happy is the one who firmly resists the temptation to follow in their pathway. Happy is the one that does not stay around ungodly people, nor sit around those who speak badly about the truths of God and the people that honor Him.

Instead, concerning the happy child: “His delight is in the law of the Lord; and in his law doth he meditate day and night” (verse 2). Happiness comes from thinking often about the things of God and keeping His commandments fresh in our minds.

A promise then comes to us: “And he shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that bringeth forth his fruit in his season; his leaf also shall not wither; and whatsoever he doeth shall prosper” (verse 3).

Can you picture a beautiful tree, lush and green as it is constantly watered? When the season comes for it to bear fruit, it bears generously every time.

But what about the ungodly? Do they bear good, sweet fruit? Are they like this? “The ungodly are not so: but are like the chaff which the wind driveth away” (verse 4).

What is chaff? It is the leftover part of the cereal plant that ends up as dry, useless straw once the good part—the grain—has been harvested. No one even misses the chaff when it blows away in the wind.

“Therefore the ungodly shall not stand in the judgment, nor sinners in the congregation of the righteous. For the Lord knoweth the way of the righteous: but the way of the ungodly shall perish” (verses 5 and 6).



Which way would you like to be? As a fruitful tree that can draw on God’s strength so firmly as to stand in the final judgment—a tree that can flourish so much that it is even worthy to be transplanted into the perfect paradise garden of God? Even though the ungodly may seem to be having a fun time now, they are as those flowers that wilt very quickly and soon are gone.

Like the judge at the county fair, our Master makes it clear that “many are called, but few are chosen” (Matthew 22:14). So why not join the faithful psalmist in His words inspired by that loving Judge who knows what is best for our greatest happiness, “I am like a green olive tree in the house of God: I trust in the mercy of God for ever and ever” (Psalm 52:8).