



the
REFORMATION
herald

VOL. 48, SPECIAL ISSUE

Special Mid-Year
Week of Prayer

June 15–24, 2007

THE **FRUIT** OF THE

Spirit



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During this special mid-year week of prayer, believers around the world will carefully consider the beautiful topic: *The Fruit of the Spirit*.

Every tree is known by the type and condition of fruit it bears. Likewise, every believer is known by his or her spiritual fruit. Just as a healthy tree will not produce diseased fruit infested with wiggling insect larvae, so will a true Reformer not produce deformed fruit tainted with the unwelcome savor of selfishness.

“There can be no growth or fruitfulness in the life that is centered in self. If you have accepted Christ as a personal Saviour, you are to forget yourself, and try to help others.”¹

“‘He that abideth in Me,’ said Jesus, ‘and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without Me ye can do nothing’ (John 15:5). When we live by faith on the Son of God, the fruits of the Spirit will be seen in our life; not one will be missing.”²

With this glorious promise before us, these readings should be deeply pondered in every assembly and shared also with isolated believers. **Sabbath, June 23, 2007** is set aside as a day of **prayer with fasting**. **Sunday, June 24**, a **special offering** will be gathered to promote new areas of missionary labor around the world.

Let us wholeheartedly focus our heart on earnestly seeking to bear wholesome fruit in our life through the gracious power of the Master Gardener!

References:

¹ *Christ's Object Lessons*, pp. 67, 68.

² *The Desire of Ages*, p. 676.

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Official Church Publication of the
Seventh Day Adventist
Reform Movement

“The age in which we live calls for
reformatory action.”
—*Testimonies*, vol. 4, p. 488.

Editor: D. Sureshkumar
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Subscription rates:

United States US \$12.95
Foreign (surface mail) US \$16.00
Foreign (air mail) US \$20.00
Single issue US \$ 3.50

THE REFORMATION HERALD®

(ISSN 0482-0843) features articles on Bible doctrine that will enrich the spiritual life of those who seek to know more about God. It is published quar-

terly by the Seventh Day Adventist Reform Movement General Conference, P. O. Box 7240, Roanoke, VA 24019-0240, U.S.A.
Web: <http://www.sdarm.org>
e-mail: info@sdarm.org

It is printed and distributed by Reformation Herald Publishing Association.
Manuscripts, inquiries, address

changes, subscriptions, payments, and donations should be mailed to the address below. Periodical postage paid at Roanoke, Virginia 24022.

POSTMASTER: Send address changes to: The Reformation Herald, P. O. Box 7240, ROANOKE, VA 24019.
Illustrations: iStock.com on the front cover; Getty Images, unless specified otherwise.

The Fruit of the Spirit: *A Visible Growth in Jesus Christ*

The fruit of the Spirit is a physical manifestation of the transformed life of Christians. It consists of visible attributes: love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, and temperance. These are not individual fruits from which we pick and choose. But the fruit of the Spirit is ONE “nine-fold fruit” which illustrates a visible growth in Christ Jesus. These are the graces that all Christians should be producing in their life with Jesus Christ.

Many years ago I heard a story about twin brothers. Occasionally they had to be sentenced to “time out”—being sent to their room if they had been bad. But that discipline was not very effective because there was a big-old fruit tree right beside their window. They would climb out the window onto the roof, into the branches, down the tree, and into the fields, where they would play for a while, then come back over the fence, across the backyard, up the tree, and back into the window, and no one ever knew that they were gone.

Then one day they overheard their father saying to their mother, “Honey, this tree has not borne fruit for years. I am going to cut it down tomorrow morning.” The boys were horrified. They came up with a serious plan. That night, they went to their bedroom early, gathered

together all of their money, went out the window, down the tree, and into town, where they bought all of the apples they could find, and some black cotton twine. Returning home, they proceeded to tie apples onto every branch of the tree that they could reach. Then they went to bed, and waited for their father to get up in the morning.

The father got up and went outside. Then he came back in, calling out, “Honey! Honey! It is the most astonishing thing I have ever seen! This tree which has not borne fruit for years, this morning is laden with apples! You have to see this. It is completely full of big, red, juicy apples! I cannot believe my eyes! It is a pear tree!”

Not only does fruit need to grow, but the kind of fruit which grows on the outside is a reflection of the nature of the tree. Apples grow on apple trees; pear trees produce pears. And the fruit of the Spirit which grows in your life is an outgrowth of the nature within.

As the Holy Spirit is welcomed and begins His work, the fruit will begin to manifest itself in the life, producing that which is in essence the very character of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

Those who receive the seal of God will be those who have not only been swept and cleaned, but who have actually been the dwelling place of the Holy Spirit and, as a result, have manifested His fruit in their life. While we

pray for the outpouring of the latter rain, we must be aware that this special gift will be given for a special purpose. And it will be given only to one whose life is clearly recognized by his or her love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control. The fruit of the Spirit is given to a person who abides in the Vine.

“As you receive the Spirit of Christ, . . . you will grow and bring forth fruit. The graces of the Spirit will ripen in your character. Your faith will increase, your convictions deepen, your love be made perfect. More and more you will reflect the likeness of Christ in all that is pure, noble, and lovely.”¹

“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.** It is the privilege of every Christian not only to look for but to hasten the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ (2 Peter 3:12, margin). Were all who profess His name bearing fruit to His glory, how quickly the whole world would be sown with the seed of the gospel. Quickly the last great harvest would be ripened, and Christ would come to gather the precious grain.”²

May we grow in the fruit of the Spirit that we may hasten the harvest and be ready to go home.

References:

¹ *Sons and Daughters of God*, p. 32.

² *Christ Object Lessons*, p. 69. [Emphasis supplied.]

Love

*Compiled from the writings of
Ellen G. White*

4

Love is power. Intellectual and moral strength are involved in this principle, and cannot be separated from it. The power of wealth has a tendency to corrupt and destroy; the power of force is strong to do hurt; but the excellence and value of pure love consist in its efficiency to do good, and to do nothing else than good. Whatsoever is done out of pure love, be it ever so little or contemptible in the sight of men, is wholly fruitful; for God regards more with how much love one worketh than the amount he doeth. Love is of God. The unconverted heart cannot originate nor produce this plant of heavenly origin, which lives and flourishes only where Christ reigns.

Love cannot live without action, and every act increases, strengthens, and extends it. Love will gain the victory when argument and authority are powerless. Love works not for profit nor reward; yet God has ordained that great gain shall be the certain result of every labor of love. It is diffusive in its nature and quiet in its operation, yet strong and mighty in its purpose, to overcome great evils. It is melting

and transforming in its influence, and will take hold of the lives of the sinful and affect their hearts when every other means has proved unsuccessful. Wherever the power of intellect, of authority, or of force is employed, and love is not manifestly present, the affections and will of those whom we seek to reach assume a defensive, repelling position, and their strength of resistance is increased. Jesus was the Prince of Peace. He came into the world to bring resistance and authority into subjection to Himself. Wisdom and strength He could command, but the means He employed with which to overcome evil were the wisdom and strength of love.¹

Are we lacking in love?

A man may have a knowledge of the Scriptures which will not make him wise unto salvation. . . . His knowledge, begun in ambition, is carried forward in pride; but his soul is destitute of the divine love, the gentleness and meekness of Christ. . . . The "fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance." Neither talent, eloquence, nor selfish study of the Scriptures, will produce love to God or conformity to the image of Christ. Nothing but divine power can regenerate the human

heart and character, and imbue the soul with the love of Christ, which will ever manifest itself in love to those for whom He died.²

The Lord Jesus, on the Mount of Olives, plainly stated that "because iniquity shall abound, the love of many shall wax cold" (Matthew 24:12). He speaks of a class who have fallen from a high state of spirituality. Let such utterances as these come home with solemn, searching power to our hearts. Where is the fervor, the devotion to God, that corresponds to the greatness of the truth which we claim to believe? The love of the world, the love of some darling sin, has weaned the heart from the love of prayer and of meditation on sacred things. A formal round of religious services is kept up; but where is the love of Jesus? Spirituality is dying. Is this torpor, this mournful deterioration, to be perpetuated? Is the lamp of truth to flicker and go out in darkness because it is not replenished by the oil of grace? . . .

Self-esteem and self-sufficiency are killing spiritual life. Self is lifted up; self is talked about. Oh, that self might die! "I die daily," said the apostle Paul. When this proud, boasting self-sufficiency and this complacent self-righteousness permeate the soul, there is no room for Jesus. He is given an inferior place, while self swells into importance and fills the whole temple of the soul. This is the reason why the Lord can do so little for us.³

“The fruit of the Spirit is love” (Galatians 5:22).

We do not so much need the grand church edifice, the worshipers adorned in costly array to harmonize with the church; this will not move one soul toward the kingdom of heaven. Display will not awaken the tender sympathies whereby soul meets soul. We need faith, obedience, genuine love for God and for humanity. This alone will exert the heaven-born influence that will move the hearts of men. There are moral icebergs in our churches. There are plenty of formalists who can make an imposing display, but cannot shine as lights in the world. God looks with pitying tenderness upon a church whose worshipers, although poor and ignorant, are sincere. They may be scorned and neglected by the world, but they are beloved of God. The glory of the church of God is in the piety of its members, for there is the hiding of Christ's power. The influence of the sincere children of God may be esteemed as of little worth, but it will be felt throughout time, and rightly revealed in the day of reward. The light of a true Christian, shining forth in steadfast piety, in unwavering faith, will prove to the world the power of a living Saviour. In His followers Christ will be revealed as a well of water, springing up into everlasting life. Although scarcely known to the world, they are acknowledged as God's peculiar people, His chosen vessels of salvation, His channels whereby light is to come to the world.⁴

In these last days, when iniquity shall abound, and the love of

many shall wax cold, God will have a people to glorify His name, and stand as reprovers of unrighteousness. They are to be a “peculiar people,” who will be true to the law of God.⁵

What is genuine love?

“He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them,” said Jesus, “he it is that loveth me: and he that loveth me shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him, and will manifest myself to him” (John 14:21). Here faith and works are combined. The one who loves, obeys: the love of the heart shapes the conduct. When the Lord speaks to us, saying, “Go forward,” it is not for us to stand and talk of difficulties, but promptly to obey, knowing that God understands the nature of every difficulty.⁶

“You must have charity,” is the cry heard everywhere, especially from those who profess sanctification. But true charity is too pure to cover an unconfessed sin. While we are to love the souls for whom Christ died, we are to make no compromise with evil. We are not to unite with the rebellious and call this charity. God requires His people in this age of the world to stand for the right as unflinchingly as did John in opposition to soul-destroying errors.

The apostle teaches that while we should manifest Christian courtesy we are authorized to deal in plain terms with sin and sinners; that this is not inconsistent with true charity.⁷

Wherever a soul is united to Christ, there is love. Whatever else the character may possess, it is valueless without love, not love that is soft, weak, sentimental, but such love as dwells in the heart of Christ.

Without love, everything else profiteth nothing; for it cannot possibly represent Christ, who is love.⁸

If we have the love of Christ in our souls it will be a natural consequence for us to have all the other graces—joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance;” and “against such there is no law” (Galatians 5:23). The law of God does not condemn and hold in bondage those who have these graces; because they are obeying the requirements of the law of God. They are law keepers, and therefore they are not under the bondage of the law.⁹

How can we cultivate deeper love?

Before judging others, our first work is to watch and pray, to institute a warfare against the evils of our own hearts through the grace of Christ. We are to stand under the shadow of the cross of



The love of Jesus . . . will prompt us to forgive our brethren, even though they have done us injury.

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Calvary, humbling our hearts, confessing our sins, and entreating the Lord to pardon our defects of character, and strengthen our love for our brethren. If we neglect this heart searching in the light of divine truth, self-love will blind our eyes, and we shall have a much better opinion of ourselves than God has of us. The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked. And it is written, “He that trusteth in his own heart is a fool” (Proverbs 28:26).¹⁰

O, how much unhappiness would be saved, how many evil thoughts would be quenched, if believers would take up the work that Christ has said must be done to prevent evil speaking! We pray, “Forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those that trespass against us.” Do we do our part to remove every stumbling block from before the feet of our brother? Too often our prayers are hindered by our pride of heart, by our refusal to confess faults and to remove wrong impressions. Let us remember that our prayers are not acceptable to God while we suffer a fellow worker to misapprehend us. If we are not to blame for the misunderstanding that exists, we can, perhaps, make an explanation that will remove the misunderstanding. If we are to blame, if we have left a wrong impression on a brother’s mind, we are certainly under obligation to do all in our power to remove this impression.

Let the suspicious ones, who think and speak evil of their

brethren, remember that they are doing the devil’s drudgery. Let everyone pass over little differences and mistakes without comment. Do not magnify the small mistakes made by some one, but think of the good that is in him. Each time mistakes are thought of and talked about, they grow larger. A mountain is made out of a molehill. Ill-feeling and a lack of confidence are the result.

To many these words are applicable: “Why beholdest thou the mote that is in thy brother’s eye, but considerest not the beam that is in thine own eye? Or how wilt thou say to thy brother, Let me pull out the mote out of thine eye; and, behold, a beam is in thine own eye? Thou hypocrite, first cast out the beam out of thine own eye; and then shalt thou see clearly to cast out the mote out of thy brother’s eye” (Matthew 7:3–5).

So great is the intemperance in speech that much instruction has been given on this subject by the Great Teacher. He has given special directions for the discipline of the tongue. Study and obey these directions. Check the harsh words that, if spoken, would create difference and alienation. Speak words that will cement hearts, not estrange them—words that will heal, not wound. When difficulties arise among church members, let them be cleared away before the Sabbath comes. This should be regarded as a Christian duty by every church member. “Let the peace of God rule in your hearts . . . ; and be ye thankful” (Colos-

sians 3:15). Are you troubled and perplexed? Sweep away the rubbish that has been accumulating before the door of the heart, and open the door, inviting Jesus to come in and abide as an honored guest. Bring peace and comfort into your own heart and the hearts of others. This is most blessed missionary work.

The Lord has instructed me to say to His people, Work for perfection. Do nothing that will cause disaffection to spring up in hearts. Do not serve the enemy. Overcome your inclination to find fault and condemn. Give no place to him whose delight it is to accuse. Remember, my beloved brethren and sisters, that you are pleasing and helping Satan by every word you utter that disparages another.

I greatly desire that you shall follow the directions that Christ has laid down. As you do this, He will certainly help you to adjust the difficulties that exist. He will help you not to make dissension by magnifying little mistakes. The light that the Lord has given me is that He will greatly bless His people, if they will not think or speak evil of one another, but go directly to the one they think is in the wrong, and in a kind, compassionate manner point out his mistake. May the Lord help those who have learned to criticize, to learn to think no evil, and to speak only good words—words of comfort and healing. Then they will rejoice; for they will have evidence that they are laborers together with God.

Christ 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” (Ephesians 5:25–27).

My brethren and sisters, I beseech you to give diligent heed to these words, because the day of the Lord is right upon us. You have no time to lose. Do not neglect the word of God to you.

“We then, as workers together with him, beseech you also that ye receive not the grace of God in vain. (For he saith, I have heard thee in a time accepted, and in the day of salvation have I succored thee)” (2 Corinthians 6:1, 2).

Will you not, as servants of the Most High God, give heed to these words? Will you not respond to God’s mercy and compassion and love toward you by loving one another as Christ has loved you?¹¹

Bearing heavenly fruit

The love of Jesus needs to be brought to bear upon our lives. It will have a softening, subduing influence upon our hearts and characters. It will prompt us to forgive our brethren, even though they have done us injury. Divine love must flow from our hearts in gentle words and kindly actions to one another. The fruit of these good works will hang as rich clusters upon the vine of character.¹²

Obedience to all the commandments of God is the sure result of supreme love to God, and love to our neighbor. This is Christianity. Have we this love? Christ is asking us each, “Lovest thou me?” Can we answer from the heart, “Lord, thou knowest all things; thou knowest that I love thee?” If you love Jesus, you

will love him for whom Jesus died. Oh, that all could look on Jesus, and learn what is love! Purity and divine compassion shine forth in His character. The meekness and lowliness of Christ made His influence fragrant among the poor, the fatherless, the widow, and the oppressed. Oh, how many who claim to be Christians need the pruning knife of God! Unless by looking to Jesus, the perfect standard of character, they learn their own defects, they become lifted up when in prosperity, and flaunt the world’s colors; luxury, pride, and selfishness mark their footsteps. They study their ease, they seek to benefit themselves, to the neglect of their fellowmen.

And they go on in this way until the Husbandman, seeing the unproductive branches, with His pruning knife cuts the tendrils and the stray offshoots. “Every branch in me that beareth not fruit he taketh away: and every branch that beareth fruit, he purgeth it, that it may bring forth more fruit” (John 15:2).¹³

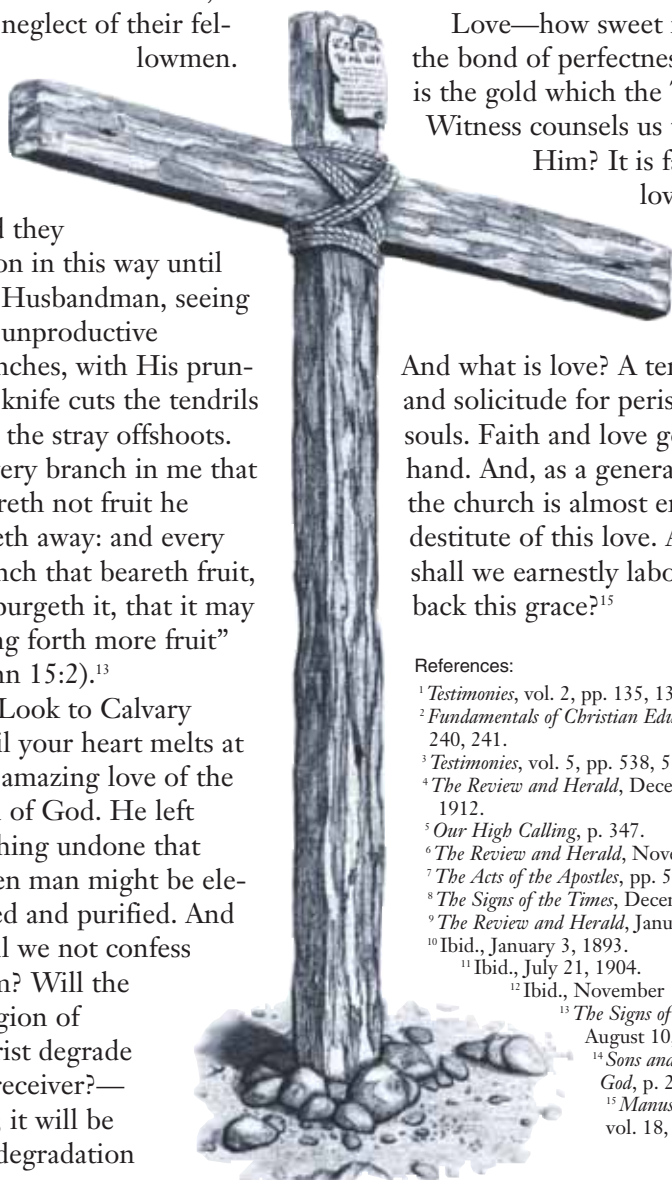
Look to Calvary until your heart melts at the amazing love of the Son of God. He left nothing undone that fallen man might be elevated and purified. And shall we not confess Him? Will the religion of Christ degrade its receiver?—No; it will be no degradation

to follow in the footsteps of the Man of Calvary.¹⁴

Do you appreciate salvation? Do you appreciate the great sacrifice that has been made for you? If you do, God help you to deny yourselves, and make this sacrifice for your fellow men. “Love one another, as I have loved you,” said Christ (John 15:12). He left the glory and splendor which He enjoyed on high. None of these were sufficient to hold Him there and prevent Him from coming down to elevate you. And now are you willing to engage in the work with all your energies, and help your fellow mortal around you? God give you a spirit of self-denial.

Love—how sweet it is! It is the bond of perfectness. What is the gold which the True Witness counsels us to buy of Him? It is faith and love combined. Faith leads us to act.

And what is love? A tender care and solicitude for perishing souls. Faith and love go hand in hand. And, as a general thing, the church is almost entirely destitute of this love. And now shall we earnestly labor to win back this grace?¹⁵



References:

- ¹ *Testimonies*, vol. 2, pp. 135, 136.
- ² *Fundamentals of Christian Education*, pp. 240, 241.
- ³ *Testimonies*, vol. 5, pp. 538, 539.
- ⁴ *The Review and Herald*, December 26, 1912.
- ⁵ *Our High Calling*, p. 347.
- ⁶ *The Review and Herald*, November 1, 1898.
- ⁷ *The Acts of the Apostles*, pp. 554, 555.
- ⁸ *The Signs of the Times*, December 28, 1891.
- ⁹ *The Review and Herald*, January 4, 1887.
- ¹⁰ *Ibid.*, January 3, 1893.
- ¹¹ *Ibid.*, July 21, 1904.
- ¹² *Ibid.*, November 16, 1886.
- ¹³ *The Signs of the Times*, August 10, 1891.
- ¹⁴ *Sons and Daughters of God*, p. 248.
- ¹⁵ *Manuscript Releases*, vol. 18, p. 284.



Joy and Peace

by F. Devai

8

*A*re grapes gathered from thorns or figs from brambles? Just

so every good tree produces good fruit, but a poisonous tree produces bad fruit." A tree never chooses what kind of fruit it produces. Good trees just naturally bear good fruit. Poisonous trees produce poisonous fruit naturally. Trees do not even choose how much fruit will grow on their branches. They just bear fruit. In fact, "A good tree cannot bear bad fruit, nor a poisonous tree good fruit" (Matthew 7:16–18, Weymouth).

Every human is like a tree. We are either good "trees of righteousness" (Isaiah 61:3) or we are a "bramble" (Judges 9:15). If we are good trees, then we bear good fruit. If we are poisonous trees, we bear bad fruit. Fortunately, we can choose what kind of tree we are. God helps us to be good trees.

Jesus makes this fruit grow in us. "Just as the branch cannot bear fruit of itself—that is, if it does not continue in the vine—so neither can you if you do not continue in me. I am the Vine, you are the branches. He who continues in me and in whom I continue bears abundant fruit, for

apart from me you can do nothing" (John 15:4, 5, Weymouth).

Paul talks about this same experience. Do "we need, as some do, letters of recommendation to you or from you? Our letter of recommendation is ourselves—a letter written on our hearts and everywhere known and read. For all can see that you are a letter of Christ entrusted to our care, and written not with ink, but with the Spirit of the ever-living God—and not on tablets of stone, but on human hearts as tablets" (2 Corinthians 3:1–3, Weymouth).

If you are a good tree, you will bear good fruit. How do you know that you have the fruit of being connected to Jesus? How do you know you are a letter of Christ written by His Spirit?

Looking at the world around us, we are too often reminded that, by nature, human beings have been evil since the Fall. In fact, they have become very agitated and turbulent beings, "for the imagination of man's heart is evil from his youth" (Genesis 8:21). Instead of following the Gospel, the good news of salvation, which would bring them back to God, they have drifted farther and farther away from their Creator. They should have allowed the Holy Spirit to lead them back to a state in which they would radiate peace, but, by yielding to the enemy, they have lost self-control and have developed an unruly nature. This is why the situation prevalent in the world today testifies of agitation, commotion, and rebellion.

If we turn our eyes away from the world and look at the people of God, considering their life as a



“The fruit of the Spirit is . . . joy, peace” (Galatians 5:22).

church and as families, we see that, to some extent, both men and women have been affected by the spirit of the world. Even God-fearing Christians are influenced by the restless, gain-getting spirit which prevails.

“Now you know full well the doings of our lower natures. Fornication, impurity, indecency, idol-worship, sorcery; enmity, strife, jealousy, outbursts of passion, intrigues, dissensions, factions, envyings; hard drinking, riotous feasting, and the like. And as to these I forewarn you, as I have already forewarned you, that those who are guilty of such things will have no share in the Kingdom of God. The Spirit, on the other hand, brings a harvest of love, joy, peace; patience towards others, kindness, benevolence; good faith, meekness, self-restraint” (Galatians 5:19–23, Weymouth).

“The same law that was engraved upon the tables of stone is written by the Holy Spirit upon the tables of the heart. Instead of going about to establish our own righteousness we accept the righteousness of Christ. His blood atones for our sins. His obedience is accepted for us. Then the heart renewed by the Holy Spirit will bring forth ‘the fruits of the Spirit.’”¹

“Those who become new creatures in Christ Jesus will bring forth the fruits of the Spirit, ‘love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance’ (Galatians 5:22, 23). They will no longer fashion themselves according to the former lusts, but by the

faith of the Son of God they will follow in His steps, reflect His character, and purify themselves even as He is pure. The things they once hated they now love, and the things they once loved they hate. The proud and self-assertive become meek and lowly in heart. The vain and supercilious become serious and unobtrusive. The drunken become sober, and the profligate pure. The vain customs and fashions of the world are laid aside. Christians will seek not the ‘outward adorning,’ but ‘the hidden man of the heart, in that which is not corruptible, even the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit’ (1 Peter 3:3, 4).”²

It is God’s desire that every one of us may enjoy fullness of joy and peace, and that we comprehend and possess the fullness of the fruit of the Holy Spirit in our life. Our Lord Jesus expressed in John 15:11, “These things have I spoken unto you, that my joy might remain in you, and that your joy might be full.” And again, “Hitherto have ye asked nothing in my name: ask, and ye shall receive, that your joy may be full” (John 16:24). When the believer is in the presence of God, and in communion with Him by earnest prayer, there is fullness of joy and peace. “Thou wilt shew me the path of life: in thy presence is fullness of joy; at thy right hand there are pleasures for evermore” (Psalm 16:11).

Do you trust God?

What if you do not feel this peace and joy? What if you love

Jesus and accept Him, but you do not experience the fruit of connection with Him?

“There are many who, though striving to obey God’s commandments, have little peace or joy. This lack in their experience is the result of a failure to exercise faith. They walk as it were in a salt land, a parched wilderness. They claim little, when they might claim much; for there is no limit to the promises of God. Such ones do not correctly represent the sanctification that comes through obedience to the truth. The Lord would have all His sons and daughters happy, peaceful, and obedient. Through the exercise of faith the believer comes into possession of these blessings. Through faith, every deficiency of character may be supplied, every defilement cleansed, every fault corrected, every excellence developed.”³

“Words cannot describe the peace and joy possessed by him who takes God at His word. Trials do not disturb him, slights do not vex him. Self is crucified. Day by day his duties may become more taxing, his temptations stronger, his trials more severe; but he does not falter; for he receives strength equal to his need.”⁴

“There is peace in believing, and joy in the Holy Ghost. Believing brings peace, and trusting in God brings joy. Believe, believe! my soul says, believe. Rest in God. He is able to keep that which you have committed to His trust. He will bring you off more than conqueror through Him who hath loved you.”⁵

“Peace and rest will come to you as you bring your will into subjection to the will of Christ.”

Are you fully committed to God?

10 “A half service, loving the world, loving self, loving frivolous amusements, makes a timid, cowardly servant; he follows Christ a great way off. A hearty, willing service to Jesus produces a sunny religion. Those who follow Christ the most closely have not been gloomy. In Christ is light and peace and joy forevermore. We need more Christ and less worldliness, more Christ and less selfishness.”⁶

“Sin has destroyed our peace. While self is unsubdued, we can find no rest. The masterful passions of the heart no human power can control. We are as helpless here as were the disciples to quiet the raging storm. But He who spoke peace to the billows of Galilee has spoken the word of peace for every soul. However fierce the tempest, those who turn to Jesus with the cry, ‘Lord, save us,’ will find deliverance. His grace, that reconciles the soul to God, quiets the strife of human passion, and in His love the heart is at rest.”⁷

“Peace and rest will come to you as you bring your will into subjection to the will of Christ. Then the love of Christ will rule in the heart, bringing into captivity to the Saviour the secret springs of action.”⁸

“In the heart of Christ, where reigned perfect harmony with God, there was perfect peace. He was never elated by applause, nor

dejected by censure or disappointment. Amid the greatest opposition and the most cruel treatment, He was still of good courage. But many who profess to be His followers have an anxious, troubled heart, because they are afraid to trust themselves with God. They do not make a complete surrender to Him; for they shrink from the consequences that such a surrender may involve. Unless they do make this surrender, they cannot find peace.”⁹

“So long as we choose the easy path of self-indulgence and are frightened at self-denial, our faith will never become firm, and we cannot know the peace of Jesus nor the joy that comes through conscious victory.”¹⁰

Are you a grumbler?

“Nothing tends more to promote health of body and of soul than does a spirit of gratitude and praise. It is a positive duty to resist melancholy, discontented thoughts and feelings—as much a duty as it is to pray. If we are heaven-bound, how can we go as a band of mourners, groaning and complaining all along the way to our Father’s house?

“Those professed Christians who are constantly complaining, and who seem to think cheerfulness and happiness a sin, have not genuine religion. Those who take a mournful pleasure in all that is melancholy in the natural world, who choose to look upon dead leaves rather than to gather the beautiful living flowers, who see no beauty in grand mountain

heights and in valleys clothed with living green, who close their senses to the joyful voice which speaks to them in nature, and which is sweet and musical to the listening ear—these are not in Christ. They are gathering to themselves gloom and darkness, when they might have brightness, even the Sun of Righteousness arising in their hearts with healing in His beams.”¹¹

“God has shown me that He gave His people a bitter cup to drink, to purify and cleanse them. It is a bitter draught, and they can make it still more bitter by murmuring, complaining, and repining. But those who receive it thus must have another draught, for the first does not have its designed effect upon the heart. And if the second does not effect the work, then they must have another, and another, until it does have its designed effect, or they will be left filthy, impure in heart. I saw that this bitter cup can be sweetened by patience, endurance, and prayer, and that it will have its designed effect upon the hearts of those who thus receive it, and God will be honored and glorified. It is no small thing to be a Christian and to be owned and approved of God.”¹²

Bearing fruit with patience

“He brings forth fruit ‘with patience.’ None who receive God’s word are exempt from difficulty and trial; but when affliction comes, the true Christian does not become restless, distrustful, or despondent. Though we cannot see the definite out-

come of affairs, or discern the purpose of God's providences, we are not to cast away our confidence. Remembering the tender mercies of the Lord, we should cast our care upon Him, and with patience wait for His salvation."¹³

Do you share the good news with others?

"Pleasant words are as an honeycomb, sweet to the soul, and health to the bones" (Proverbs 16:24).

"Blessed are the peacemakers: for they shall be called the children of God' (Matthew 5:9). Christ is 'the Prince of Peace' (Isaiah 9:6), and it is His mission to restore to earth and heaven the peace that sin has broken. 'Being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ' (Romans 5:1). Whoever consents to renounce sin and open his heart to the love of Christ, becomes a partaker of this heavenly peace. . . .

"Christ's followers are sent to the world with the message of peace. Whoever, by the quiet, unconscious influence of a holy life, shall reveal the love of Christ; whoever, by word or deed, shall lead another to renounce sin and yield his heart to God, is a peacemaker.

"And 'blessed are the peacemakers: for they shall be called the children of God' (Matthew 5:9). The spirit of peace is evidence of their connection with heaven. The sweet savor of Christ surrounds them. The fragrance of the life, the loveliness of the character, reveal to the world the fact that they are children of God. Men take knowledge of them that they have been with Jesus. 'Everyone that loveth is born of God.' 'If any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is



none of His,' but 'as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God' (1 John 4:7; Romans 8:9, 14)."¹⁴

Created and perpetuated by grace

"The only power that can create or perpetuate true peace is the grace of Christ. When this is implanted in the heart, it will cast out the evil passions that cause strife and dissension."¹⁵

"There is no other ground of peace than this. The grace of Christ received into the heart, subdues enmity; it allays strife and fills the soul with love. He who is at peace with God and his fellow men cannot be made miserable. Envy will not be in his heart; evil surmisings will find no room there; hatred cannot exist. The heart that is in harmony with God is a partaker of the peace of heaven and will diffuse its blessed influence on all around. The spirit of peace will rest like dew upon hearts weary and troubled with worldly strife."¹⁶

"Those who take Christ at His word, and surrender their souls to His keeping, their lives to His ordering, will find peace and quietude. Nothing of the world can make them sad when Jesus makes them glad by His

presence. In perfect acquiescence there is perfect rest. The Lord says, 'Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on Thee: because he trusteth in Thee' (Isaiah 26:3). Our lives may seem a tangle; but as we commit ourselves to the wise Master Worker, He will bring out the pattern of life and character that will be to His own glory. And that character which expresses the glory—character—of Christ will be received into the Paradise of God. A renovated race shall walk with Him in white, for they are worthy."¹⁷

"The religion of Jesus is joy, peace, and happiness."¹⁸

May this be our experience. Amen!

References:

- ¹ *Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 372.
- ² *Steps to Christ*, p. 58.
- ³ *The Acts of the Apostles*, pp. 563, 564.
- ⁴ *The Faith I Live By*, p. 226.
- ⁵ *Testimonies*, vol. 2, pp. 319, 320.
- ⁶ *The Adventist Home*, p. 431.
- ⁷ *The Desire of Ages*, p. 336.
- ⁸ *Messages to Young People*, p. 73.
- ⁹ *The Desire of Ages*, p. 330.
- ¹⁰ *Testimonies*, vol. 5, p. 215.
- ¹¹ *The Ministry of Healing*, p. 251.
- ¹² *Early Writings*, p. 47.
- ¹³ *Christ's Object Lessons*, pp. 60, 61.
- ¹⁴ *Thoughts From the Mount of Blessing*, pp. 27, 28.
- ¹⁵ *The Desire of Ages*, p. 305.
- ¹⁶ *Thoughts From the Mount of Blessing*, pp. 27, 28.
- ¹⁷ *The Desire of Ages*, p. 331.
- ¹⁸ *Testimonies*, vol. 5, p. 579.

Long-suffering & Gentleness

by W. Volpp

12

The conflict between good and evil has been going on for over 6,000 years and each one of us is taking sides, either with the powers of light or with the powers of darkness. To enable us to struggle victoriously, God in His great love sent us His only-begotten Son to die for us. His sacrifice and long-suffering made it possible for all those who believe in Him and do the Father's will to have everlasting life. A small remnant of overcomers, faithful, and righteous souls, will be in the kingdom. Though oppressed and attacked by Satan, these few have been ready to appreciate and accept the great sacrifice made on Calvary. It is the Lord's desire to see them in His kingdom, where, as priests and kings, they are to show the victory they have obtained. While on earth, these faithful believers are engaged in the good fight of faith and the struggle against sin. This battle, by the grace of God, is to implant the purity of Christ's character in those who are born again. And this new birth to a new life enables them to bear the fruit of the Spirit with patience.

Fruit will grow and ripen only if it is attached to a living tree which is constantly nourished by the sap received from its roots. In a similar way, Christ, through the Holy Spirit, supplies the "sap" that is to develop spiritual maturity in us.

To be refreshingly different from the world

When we think of long-suffering and gentleness, two aspects of the fruit of the Spirit, our deep inner feelings are touched.

Of the 144,000, John writes: "Here is the patience of the saints: here are they that keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus" (Revelation 14:12).

How do we handle trials?

The apostle Paul admonishes us to exercise patience. "Ye have need of patience," he writes, "that, after ye have done the will of God, ye might receive the promise" (Hebrews 10:36). To do the will of God with patience or long-suffering means, not to oppose, but to welcome the leading hand of the Lord, so that we may receive His promises. James reminds us: "Take, my brethren, the prophets, who have spoken in the name of the Lord, for an example of suffering affliction and of patience. Behold, we count

them happy which endure. Ye have heard of the patience of Job, and have seen the end of the Lord; that the Lord is very pitiful, and of tender mercy" (James 5:10, 11).

Human suffering and patience seem to go together. When Job received counsels from his friends—counsels based on their personal opinion—he controlled his feelings and exercised patience. The attitude of Job should be an example to us. The fact that we often have to suffer is a sign that our arch-enemy is seeking to destroy us. But, on the other hand, trials are also permitted by the Lord in the interest of our preparation for Heaven.

Job's submission to God, as he accepted from the hand of the Almighty his suffering plus the loss of his children and properties, was recorded in the Bible to be an example to us. But we have our greatest example in Christ. We can see, in His own words, how painful it was for Him to submit to the plan of redemption and hold onto it to the very last. He prayed: "O my Father, if this cup may not pass away from me, except I drink it, thy will be done" (Matthew 26:42). Surrendering to the Father, Jesus uttered this supplication three times, praying for power and patience to bear whatever should come upon Him. Likewise, the apostle Peter bids each of us: "Giving all diligence,

“The fruit of the Spirit is . . . long-suffering, gentleness” (Galatians 5:22).

add . . . to patience godliness” (2 Peter 1:5, 6).

As we admire God for His patience and long-suffering, He also wants to develop these characteristics in us. How can we learn them? Usually, when a person lives all alone, he or she does everything according to his or her own will. And such a one is very patient and long-suffering, unless he or she becomes dissatisfied with himself or herself. Not until one comes in contact with others, whose wishes he or she must respect as his or her own, will one show how impatient, irritable, and hot-tempered he or she actually may be. But such times provide an opportunity for us to see what we are really like.

The apostle Paul states: “Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith; prove your own selves. Know ye not your own selves, how that Jesus Christ is in you, except ye be reprobates?” (2 Corinthians 13:5). If we ask a person, “Are you patient?” he or she may not give a very accurate answer. But if we ask his or her neighbor, the answer will likely be closer to the truth. Since self-knowledge (knowledge of one’s own character) is deceptive, God made man a social being.

Where do we learn patience and long-suffering?

Our first social circle is the family—father, mother, brothers and sisters. This is the place where Christian virtues are to be impressed upon children and where parents need a lot of patience. It is here that the parents go through an experience that is to result in blessings to them-

selves. Here they have a chance to practice self-control whenever their irascibility threatens to lift up its head. In the family life they have the best opportunity to realize God’s patience with us.

The family circle is the first environment where we are to show patience. And this is probably the most difficult place. Many individuals exercise patience in society, because they know that there they would have to suffer, immediately, the consequences of their impatience. Let us therefore cultivate self-possession in our family, practicing patience in dealing with our loved ones. Even when we are provoked to the utmost, we can still, by the grace of God, resist the enemy and keep our temper. This is a great victory.

Mutual forbearance in the marriage relationship

“We must have the Spirit of God, or we can never have harmony in the home. . . . If one errs, the other will exercise Christlike forbearance and not draw coldly away.

“Neither the husband nor the wife should attempt to exercise over the other an arbitrary control. Do not try to compel each other to yield to your wishes. You cannot do this and retain each other’s love. Be kind, patient, and forbearing, considerate, and courteous. By the grace of God you can succeed in making each other happy, as in your marriage vow you promised to do.”¹

“He who manifests the spirit of tenderness, forbearance, and love will find that the same spirit will be reflected upon him.”²

Patience in the training of children

“Let parents seek, in their own character and in their home life, to exemplify the love and beneficence of the heavenly Father. Let the home be full of sunshine. This will be worth far more to your children than lands or money. Let the home love be kept alive in their hearts, that they may look back upon the home of their childhood as a place of peace and happiness next to heaven. The members of the family do not all have the same stamp of character, and there will be frequent occasion for the exercise of patience and forbearance.”³

“Fathers and mothers may study their own character in their children. They may often read humiliating lessons as they see their own imperfections reproduced in their sons and daughters. While seeking to repress and correct in their children hereditary tendencies to evil, parents should call to their aid double patience, perseverance, and love.”⁴

“Parents are too fond of ease and pleasure to do the work



"True gentleness is a gem of great value in the sight of God."

appointed them of God in their home life. We should not see the terrible state of evil that exists among the youth of today if they had been properly trained at home. If parents would take up their God-given work and would teach self-restraint, self denial, and self-control to their children, both by precept and example, they would find that while they were seeking to do their duty, so as to meet the approval of God, they would be learning precious lessons in the school of Christ. They would be learning patience, forbearance, love, and meekness; and these are the very lessons that they must teach to their children.”⁵

The role of parents and children

Parents truly do play an important part in the education of their children. If, by the grace of God, they possess a kind spirit, they are able to exert a powerful influence on their offspring. The right example set before them, which makes them happy, is an easy lesson for the children to learn.

Sullen, grumpy parents will never be able to build a healthy home atmosphere. This is the work of a kind father and mother. In the presence of this fruit of the Spirit (namely, kindness, gentleness, friendliness), there will be no hatred or envy, no contention or offense. The spirit of kindness will unite all the members of the family. King David prayed:

“Thou hast also given me the shield of thy salvation: and thy gentleness hath made me great” (2 Samuel 22:36).

“You are to represent Christ in His meekness and gentleness and love.

“True gentleness is a gem of great value in the sight of God.

“We want a spirit of gentleness. We cannot live right in the family circle without it. In order to have the proper control of our children, we must manifest a spirit of gentleness and of meekness and of long-suffering. We do not want to have a faultfinding, fretful, scolding spirit. If we teach them to have a spirit of gentleness, we must have a spirit of gentleness ourselves; . . . if we would have them manifest a spirit of love toward us, we must manifest a gentle, loving spirit toward them. But at the same time there need be no weakness or unwise indulgence on the part of parents. The mother must have firmness and decision. She must be as firm as a rock, and not swerve from the right. Her laws and rules should be carried out at all times and under all hazards, but she can do this with all gentleness and meekness. . . .

“The very expression of the countenance has an influence for good or evil. . . . [If one] is filled with the love of Christ, he will manifest courtesy, kindness, tender regard for the feelings of others, and will communicate to his associates, by his acts of love, a tender, grateful, happy feeling. It will be made manifest that he is living for Jesus. . . . He will be able to say to the Lord, ‘Thy gentleness hath made me great.’”⁶

Kindness goes hand in hand with sympathy, which is feeling for others, affectionate understanding, and the sharing of

another’s emotions, troubles, and so forth. This state of mind will affect all family members if parents are imbued with kindness in their approach to each other. Kindness is also associated with respect. Where this attitude prevails, children will show great respect to their loved ones, namely father and mother, complying with the requirements of the fifth commandment of the Decalogue.

Kindness, gentleness, friendliness with all

Where the English versions of the Bible say “kindness” or “gentleness” (Galatians 5:22), Luther’s translation reads “friendliness.”

Friendliness is a friendly feeling and behavior, an attitude of a friend, or readiness to be a friend. Our attitude toward a friend is different from the way we act in relation to strangers. With a friend we have a much closer connection than with others.

“A friend loveth his friend at all times, and a brother is born for adversity” (Proverbs 17:17).

“A man that hath friends must shew himself friendly: and there is a friend that sticketh closer than a brother” (Proverbs 18:24).

“Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends” (John 15:13).

There is deep meaning in the fact that Christ calls us His friends: He has revealed to us the things that He heard from the Father (John 15:15) and has disclosed to us the principle that motivated the plan of redemption—that God so loved us when we were yet His enemies that He sent His only begotten Son to die for us (Romans 5:10; John 3:16).

Kindness in the true sense of the word is deep-seated in the Supreme Being. This property (special quality), which is an expression of true love (“God is love”—1 John 4:8), is not innate in human beings. By grace, we receive it from God, the Source; and it keeps growing as we cultivate it in the “soil” of love in our heart by yielding to the guidance of the Holy Spirit.

Respect for employers

“Let as many servants as are under the yoke count their own masters worthy of all honour, that the name of God and his doctrine be not blasphemed” (Timothy 6:1).

Respect for the authorities

“Submit yourselves to every ordinance of man for the Lord’s sake: whether it be to the king, as supreme; or unto governors, as unto them that are sent by him for the punishment of evildoers, and for the praise of them that do well” (1 Peter 2:13, 14).

Respect for the servants of the Lord

“Let the elders that rule well be counted worthy of double honour, especially they who labour in the word and doctrine” (1 Timothy 5:17).

“The history of John affords a striking illustration of the way in which God can use aged workers. When John was exiled to the Isle of Patmos, there were many who thought him to be past service, an old and broken reed, ready to fall at any time. But the Lord saw fit to use him still. . . .

“The most tender regard should be cherished for those whose life interest has been bound up with the work of God.

These aged workers have stood faithful amid storm and trial. They may have infirmities, but they still possess talents that qualify them to stand in their place in God’s cause.”⁷

“The Lord desires the younger laborers to gain wisdom, strength, and maturity by association with the aged laborers who have been spared to the cause. Let the younger men realize that, in having such laborers among them, they are highly favored. Let them show great respect for the men of gray hairs, who have had long experience in the development of the work. Let them give them an honored place in their councils. God desires those who have come into the truth in later years to take heed to these words.”⁸

Sympathy towards widows, orphans, and the suffering

“Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this, To visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world” (James 1:27).

Care for the outcasts and the erring

A friendly Christian can help many mournful and depressed people. While the Good Shepherd is searching for the missing sheep, we should help the erring sheep find the Shepherd. If you, dear brother or sister, show a stray soul the way to the Saviour, great will be your joy when you shall meet him or her in the courts of heaven. There will be indescribable joy among the redeemed.

“Come close to the great Heart of pitying love, and let the current of that divine compassion flow into your heart and from you to the hearts of others. Let

the tenderness and mercy that Jesus has revealed in His own precious life be an example to us of the manner in which we should treat our fellow beings, especially those who are our brethren in Christ. Many have fainted and become discouraged in the great struggle of life, whom one word of kindly cheer and courage would have strengthened to overcome. Never, never become heartless, cold, unsympathetic, and censorious. Never lose an opportunity to say a word to encourage and inspire hope. We cannot tell how far-reaching may be our tender words of kindness, our Christlike efforts to lighten some burden. The erring can be restored in no other way than in the spirit of meekness, gentleness, and tender love.”⁹

“Mildness, gentleness, forbearance, long-suffering, being not easily provoked, bearing all things, hoping all things, enduring all things—these are the fruit growing upon the precious tree of love, which is of heavenly growth. This tree, if nourished, will prove to be an evergreen. Its branches will not decay, its leaves will not wither. It is immortal, eternal, watered continually by the dews of heaven.”¹⁰

The Lord is willing to help us so that the fruit of the Spirit may grow and fully mature in our life for the heavenly garner. The harvest is not far off.

“O taste and see that the Lord is good: blessed is the man that trusteth in him” (Psalm 34:8).

References:

¹ *The Adventist Home*, p. 118.

² *Ibid.*, p. 120.

³ *Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 176.

⁴ *The Adventist Home*, p. 173.

⁵ *Child Guidance*, p. 94.

⁶ *My Life Today*, p. 53.

⁷ *The Acts of the Apostles*, pp. 572, 573.

⁸ *Testimonies*, vol. 7, p. 289.

⁹ *Ibid.*, vol. 5, pp. 612, 613.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, vol. 2, pp. 134, 135.

Goodness

by J. Moreno

16



How great is thy goodness, which thou hast laid up for them that fear thee; which thou hast wrought for them that trust in thee before the sons of men!" (Psalm 31:19).

"O taste and see that the Lord is good: blessed is the man that trusteth in him" (Psalm 34:8).

Goodness is the sixth grace of the fruit of the Holy Spirit. Benignity, meekness, love, and courtesy are often considered synonymous with goodness and are thereby associated with this fruit of the Spirit.

The goodness of God

When Moses besought God to show him His glory, his petition was answered with the following words: "I will make all my goodness pass before thee, and I will proclaim the name of the Lord before thee; and will be gracious to whom I will be gracious, and will shew mercy on whom I will shew mercy. . . . And the Lord descended in the cloud, and stood with him there, and proclaimed the name of the Lord. And the Lord passed by before him, and proclaimed, The Lord, The Lord God, merciful and gra-

acious, longsuffering, and abundant in goodness and truth" (Exodus 33:19–34:5, 6).

The apostle inquires, "Despisest thou the riches of his goodness and forbearance and longsuffering; not knowing that the goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance?" (Romans 2:4).

"Behold therefore the goodness and severity of God: on them which fell, severity; but toward thee, goodness, if thou continue in his goodness" (Romans 11:22).

Psalm 136 contains 26 verses extolling God's great goodness, which is to be proclaimed to every living creature on the face of the earth. This goodness guides the children of God in all types of circumstances, for God's love is everlasting.

The goodness of Christ

In the Holy Bible, Christ is called "The Good Shepherd" who cares for His flock. The good shepherd is not afraid to make sacrifices. He is not worried about time; at any hour of the day or of the night he is ready to attend to the needs of his sheep. The good shepherd finds the best pastures for his flock, whatever sacrifice this may require on his part. The good shepherd identifies himself with each one of his sheep and knows each one by name.

"Christ, the heavenly Shepherd, cares for His flock that is scattered throughout the world. He knows us all by name. He knows the very house in which we live, and the name of each inmate. He cares for each one as if there were not another in the whole world.

"The shepherd went before his sheep and met all the dangers.



“The fruit of the Spirit is . . . goodness” (Galatians 5:22).

He encountered the wild beasts and the robbers. Sometimes the shepherd was killed while guarding his flock.

“So the Saviour guards His flock of disciples. He has gone before us. He has lived on earth, as we live. He was a child, a youth, a man. He overcame Satan and all his temptations, so that we may overcome.

“He died to save us. Though now He is in Heaven, He does not forget us for a moment. He will safely keep every sheep. Not one that follows Him can be taken by the great enemy.”¹

The greatest proof of the love and goodness of Jesus was revealed on the cross of Calvary.

“For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life” (John 3:16).

Christ “identified Himself with our interests, bared His breast for the stroke of death, took man’s guilt and its penalty, and offered in man’s behalf a complete sacrifice to God. By virtue of this atonement He has power to offer to man perfect righteousness and full salvation. Whosoever shall believe on Him as a personal Saviour shall not perish but have everlasting life.”²

“Thank God for the gift of His dear Son and pray that He may not have died for you in vain. The Spirit invites you today. Come with your whole heart to Jesus, and you may claim His blessing.”³

“Christ’s death proves God’s great love for man. It is our pledge of salvation. To remove the cross from the Christian would be like blotting the sun from the sky. The cross brings us

near to God, reconciling us to Him. With the relenting compassion of a father’s love, Jehovah looks upon the suffering that His Son endured in order to save the race from eternal death, and accepts us in the Beloved.

“Without the cross, man could have no union with the Father. On it depends our every hope. From it shines the light of the Saviour’s love, and when at the foot of the cross the sinner looks up to the One who died to save him, he may rejoice with fullness of joy, for his sins are pardoned. Kneeling in faith at the cross, he has reached the highest place to which man can attain.”⁴

The goodness of the Holy Spirit

The psalmist prayed, “Teach me to do thy will; for thou art my God: thy spirit is good; lead me into the land of uprightness” (Psalm 143:10).

Why? “(For the fruit of the Spirit is in all goodness and righteousness and truth)” (Ephesians 5:9).

“Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities: for we know not what we should pray for as we ought: but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered. And he that searcheth the hearts knoweth what is the mind of the Spirit, because he maketh intercession for the saints according to the will of God” (Romans 8:26, 27).

“This is the word of the Lord unto Zerubbabel, saying, Not by might, nor by power, but by my spirit, saith the Lord of hosts” (Zechariah 4:6).

Jesus explained that “the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you” (John 14:26).

“For the Holy Ghost shall teach you in the same hour what ye ought to say” (Luke 12:12).

The Holy Spirit has played an important role in the life of human beings from the beginning of the world—and this will continue until the final fulfillment of God’s beneficent plans for the human race.

“The Holy Spirit was the highest of all gifts that He could solicit from His Father for the exaltation of His people. The Spirit was to be given as a regenerating agent, and without this the sacrifice of Christ would have been of no avail. The power of evil had been strengthening for centuries, and the submission of men to this satanic captivity was amazing. Sin could be resisted and overcome only through the mighty agency of the Third Person of the Godhead, who would come with no modified energy, but in the fullness of divine power.”⁵

“When one is fully emptied of self, when every false god is cast out of the soul, the vacuum is filled by the inflowing of the Spirit of Christ. Such a one has the faith that purifies the soul from defilement. He is conformed to the Spirit, and he minds the things of the Spirit. He has no confidence in self. Christ is all and in all. He receives with meekness the truth that is constantly being unfolded, and gives

“Teach me to do thy will; for thou art my God: thy spirit is good; lead me into the land of uprightness” (Psalm 143:10).

the Lord all the glory, saying, ‘God hath revealed them unto us by His Spirit’ (1 Corinthians 2:10). . . .

“The Spirit that reveals, also works in him the fruits of righteousness. Christ is in him, ‘a well of water springing up into everlasting life’ (John 4:14). He is a branch of the True Vine, and bears rich clusters of fruit to the glory of God. What is the character of the fruit borne?—The fruit of the Spirit is ‘love,’ not hatred; ‘joy,’ not discontent and mourning; ‘peace,’ not irritation, anxiety, and manufactured trials. It is ‘long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance’ (Galatians 5:22, 23).”⁶

“Those who have this Spirit will be earnest laborers with God. . . . They speak words of solid sense, and from the treasure of the heart bring forth pure and sacred things according to the example of Christ.”⁷

The goodness of God’s children

“Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the spirit which is of God; that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God” (1 Corinthians 2:12).

“In the time of ancient Israel every offering brought as a sacrifice to God was carefully examined. If any defect was discovered in the animal presented, it was refused; for God had commanded that the offering be ‘without blemish.’ So Christians are bid-

den to present their bodies, ‘a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God’ (Romans 12:1). In order to do this, all their powers must be preserved in the best possible condition. Every practice that weakens physical or mental strength unfits man for the service of his Creator. And will God be pleased with anything less than the best we can offer? Said Christ: ‘Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart’ (Matthew 22:37). Those who do love God with all the heart will desire to give Him the best service of their life, and they will be constantly seeking to bring every power of their being into harmony with the laws that will promote their ability to do His will. They will not, by the indulgence of appetite or passion, enfeeble or defile the offering which they present to their heavenly Father. . . .

“Paul writes to the Corinthians: ‘Let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God’ (2 Corinthians 7:1).”⁸

As we comply with the conditions given in God’s word, the promise is sure: “Ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth” (Acts 1:8).

To be a Christian is to be Christlike. God the Father, Jesus Christ the Son of God, and the Holy Spirit, manifest pure good-

ness in this world, since this is the essence of the character of God. Likewise, God’s children in this world must manifest the same graces—the fruit of the Holy Spirit. Christ has placed this work in the care of His church. In order for the church to be successful in this world, it must have the guidance of the Holy Spirit.

“Many long intensely for friendly sympathy. . . . We should be self-forgetful, ever looking out for opportunities, even in little things, to show gratitude for the favors we have received of others, and watching for opportunities to cheer others and lighten and relieve their sorrows and burdens by acts of tender kindness and little deeds of love. These thoughtful courtesies that, commencing in our families, extend outside the family circle help make up the sum of life’s happiness. . . .

“We should all become witnesses for Jesus. Social power, sanctified by the grace of Christ, must be improved in winning souls to the Saviour. Let the world see that we are not selfishly absorbed in our own interests, but that we desire others to share our blessings and privileges. . . .

“If we are courteous and gentle at home, we shall carry the savor of a pleasant disposition when away from home. If we manifest forbearance, patience, meekness, and fortitude in the home, we shall be able to be a light to the world.”⁹

“Fathers and mothers . . . should feel it a duty, by their own teaching and example, with the assisting grace of God, to so mold the character of the chil-

dren from their earliest years that they will be pure and noble and will be attracted to the good and true. . . . Let the love for truth and purity and goodness be early implanted in the soul.”¹⁰

Zealous of good works

We must always keep in mind that our Lord and Saviour “gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works” (Titus 2:14). “For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them” (Ephesians 2:10). To this end, we should consider the example of the early Christian church:

“The disciples prayed with intense earnestness for a fitness to meet men and in their daily intercourse to speak words that would lead sinners to Christ.”¹¹

“Under the training of Christ the disciples had been led to feel their need of the Spirit. Under the Spirit’s teaching they received the final qualification, and went forth to their lifework. No longer were they ignorant and uncultured. No longer were they a collection of independent

units or discordant, conflicting elements. No longer were their hopes set on worldly greatness. They were of ‘one accord,’ ‘of one heart and of one soul’ (Acts 2:46; 4:32). Christ filled their thoughts; the advancement of His kingdom was their aim. In mind and character they had become like their Master, and men ‘took knowledge of them, that they had been with Jesus’ (Acts 4:13).”¹²

“God’s servants are to work together, blending in kindly, courteous order, ‘in honor preferring one another’ (Romans 12:10). There is to be no unkind criticism, no pulling to pieces of another’s work; and there are to be no separate parties. Every man to whom the Lord has entrusted a message has his specific work. Each one has an individuality of his own, which he is not to sink in that of any other man.”¹³

In the days of the apostles, only one interest prevailed; one living desire absorbed all others. The ambition of the believers was to reveal the similitude of Christ’s character, as well as to promote His kingdom.

“The church beheld converts flocking to her from all directions. Backsliders were reconverted. Sinners united with believers in seeking the pearl of great price. Some who had been the bitterest opponents of the gospel became its champions. . . . Every Christian saw in his brother a revelation of divine love and benevolence. One interest prevailed; one subject of emulation swallowed up all others. The ambition of the believers was to reveal the likeness of Christ’s character and to labor for the enlargement of His kingdom. . . .

“So mightily can God work when men give themselves up to the control of His Spirit.”¹⁴

“If we would humble ourselves before God, and be kind and courteous and tenderhearted and pitiful, there would be one hundred conversions to the truth where now there is only one. But, though professing to be converted, we carry around with us a bundle of self that we regard as altogether too precious to be given up. It is our privilege to lay this burden at the feet of Christ and in its place take the character and similitude of Christ. The Saviour is waiting for us to do this.”¹⁵

“Those who are working for Christ today may reveal the same distinguishing excellencies revealed by those who in the apostolic age proclaimed the gospel. God is just as ready to give power to His servants today as He was to give power to Paul and Apollos, to Silas and Timothy, to Peter, James, and John.”¹⁶

Conclusion

We are living in the time of the latter rain, and the Lord desires to bestow the Holy Spirit upon His people. Let us take God’s promise seriously, that He may help us in our preparation. Then He will bless us with the experience enjoyed by the apostles during the days of the early rain.

References:

- ¹ *The Story of Jesus*, pp. 75, 76.
- ² *In Heavenly Places*, p. 65.
- ³ *Steps to Christ*, p. 55.
- ⁴ *The Acts of the Apostles*, pp. 209, 210.
- ⁵ *The Desire of Ages*, p. 671.
- ⁶ *Gospel Workers*, p. 287.
- ⁷ *Sermons and Talks*, vol. 2, p. 72.
- ⁸ *The Great Controversy*, pp. 473, 474.
- ⁹ *The Adventist Home*, pp. 428, 429.
- ¹⁰ *Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 176.
- ¹¹ *The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 37.
- ¹² *Ibid.*, p. 45.
- ¹³ *Ibid.*, p. 275.
- ¹⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 48, 49.
- ¹⁵ *Testimonies*, vol. 9, pp. 189, 190.
- ¹⁶ *The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 278.



Faith

by N. S. Brittain

20

We all know the biblical definition of faith: “Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen” (Hebrews 11:1). The Oxford Dictionary goes a little further: “Trust; belief in religious doctrine or divine truth; religion; fidelity; confidence.” Sometimes faith is looked upon as something to discuss, to argue about as though it is something abstract or perhaps ethereal. It is, though, very real and has real results as seen in actions.

Faith is trust

We may trust an idea, a principle, another person or persons. We may buy an article, a tool or vehicle because we trust that the manufacturer has made the article well and perhaps better than another manufacturer. Our trust is perhaps so strong that we place our life in the reliance we have in the very vehicle or tool that we have chosen. This is faith in action. If we trust an idea or principle we will act in such a way that we demonstrate our agreement with that idea. But if we do not trust an idea, we will not act in accord with that idea.

Sometimes our trust in a person may be small or great and to some degree this depends upon our experience and/or knowledge of that person. Our experience of a person may be such that we would trust him or her with our life; on the other hand, from our experience we might not trust them “as far as we can see them.” So our trust in a person is to a great degree dependent upon our experiences in life with that person. Faith is a learning process, a developing trust built on a growing experience.

True and false

Sadly, in life there may be many things that can be both true and false.

So it is with faith. Our trust may be based upon real understanding and experience, or it may be based upon feelings and expectations. Some prospectors looking for gold have been mesmerized by something that looks very much like the real thing—iron pyrites—commonly called “fool’s gold.” Real faith will stand any test, but false faith we know as presumption.

A man may buy a very good motor car. He enjoys its performance for perhaps five years. Everything works well as he expects it to do, but one day he comes to an intersection and applies the brakes to stop—but it

does not and there is the inevitable collision. What has gone wrong? The car had always stopped before this, and he had every expectation that it would stop on this occasion. He presumed on past experience that it would always be so. There was one problem—he had not serviced the brakes on time. Real faith is based upon the fulfillment of conditions. Presumption expects, but does not fulfill the conditions upon which the expectation may be based.

The faith of the Christian is based upon his or her reliance on the Word of God, his or her Father. Sadly, many Christians base their faith upon a partial fulfillment of the conditions upon which they expect to receive the blessings of God. While it is true that our heavenly Father sends His blessings on the just and the unjust (Matthew 5:45), such blessings received without the proper response will inevitably result in loss of life. Cain enjoyed all the blessings that God had given but he failed to fully meet the conditions upon which the continuance of the blessings depended. He presumed that his sacrifice would be sufficient. He had not that faith-trust that meets the full requirements of God.

The faith of Jesus

Speaking of the remnant in the last days, the Revelator speaks



“The fruit of the Spirit is . . . faith” (Galatians 5:22).

of God’s people as they “that keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus” (Revelation 14:12.) In the Greek, the phrase, “the faith of Jesus” may be understood two ways. Either as “the faith of Jesus” or as “faith in Jesus”; we can consider both.

Our Saviour had implicit faith-trust in His Father. This complete trust brought obedience of the highest order. He explained, “He that sent me is with me: the Father hath not left me alone; for I do always those things that please him” (John 8:29). And in the Garden of Gethsemane, when meeting the greatest test concerning His Father’s will, Jesus said, “O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me: nevertheless not as I will, but as thou wilt” (Matthew 26:39). He yielded His whole work and life into the hands of His Father.

“While the Redeemer of sinful mortals was laboring and suffering for us, He denied Himself, and His whole life was one continued scene of toil and privation. Had He chosen to do so, He could have passed His days on earth in ease and plenty, and appropriated to Himself all the pleasures and enjoyments of this life. But He did not; He considered not His own convenience. He lived not to gratify Himself, but to do good and to save others from suffering, to help those who most needed help. He endured to the end. The chastisement of our peace was upon Him, and He hath borne the iniquity of us all. The bitter cup was apportioned to us to drink. Our sins mingled it.

But our dear Saviour took the cup from our lips and drank it Himself, and in its stead He presents to us a cup of mercy, blessing, and salvation.”¹

Our Saviour demonstrated His faith-trust in His Father by the fulfillment of the task upon which They had agreed before the creation of this world. (Revelation 13:8.)

Faith in Jesus

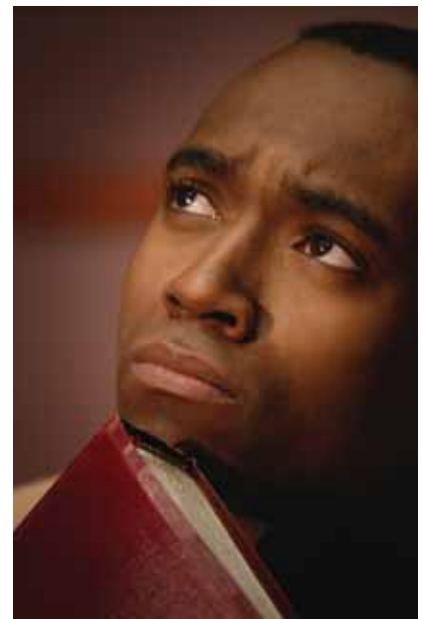
While God’s people in the last days will demonstrate a similar faith to that of their Redeemer in the goodness of God, by doing this they will also demonstrate by their life their faith-trust in Jesus. Faith has been likened to the hand that a man reaches out to receive a gift. Through our Saviour, God has promised the gift of eternal life. Our faith-trust in Jesus will be seen in our reliance upon His gift of salvation both today and for tomorrow.

The free gift of His grace is available to all those who will receive it. Someone may provide a nicely prepared meal for us, but we receive no benefit if we do not eat it. The psalmist says, “O taste and see that the Lord is good” (Psalm 34:8). We must place the food in our mouth, chew it, and swallow or we receive no benefit. Jesus, by His life, death, and resurrection has provided the means for our reconciliation with God and He invites us, “Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest” (Matthew 11:28). Jesus has done His part for our salvation. Will

we respond? How will we know how to respond?

“The faith in Christ that saves the soul is not what it is represented to be by many. ‘Believe, believe,’ is their cry; ‘only believe in Christ, and you will be saved. It is all you have to do.’ While true faith trusts wholly in Christ for salvation, it will lead to perfect conformity to the law of God. Faith is manifested by works. And the apostle John declares, ‘He that saith, I know him, and keepeth not his commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him’ (1 John 2:4).

“It is unsafe to trust to feelings or impressions; these are unreliable guides. God’s law is the only correct standard of holiness. It is by this law that character is to be judged. If an inquirer after salvation were to ask, ‘What shall I do to inherit eternal life?’ the modern teachers of sanctification would answer, ‘Only believe that Jesus saves you.’ But when Christ was



The more we trust Jesus, the more we have faith in Him and His word, the more we will be content and happy.

asked this question He said, 'What is written in the law? How readeest thou?' And when the questioner replied, 'Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, . . . and thy neighbor as thyself,' Jesus said, 'Thou hast answered right: this do, and thou shalt live' (Luke 10:25–28). True sanctification will be evidenced by a conscientious regard for all the commandments of God, by a careful improvement of every talent, by a circumspect conversation, by revealing in every act the meekness of Christ."²

However, salvation is not received as a reward for our faith in Jesus. If it were, then we would be earning salvation by merit of our faith. Rather, faith is the means of appropriating salvation—the way of receiving the gift so wonderfully given.

Partial faith

One day Jesus was teaching His disciples the meaning of for-

givenness. They found this a bit difficult to comprehend and declared, "Lord, increase our faith" (Luke 17:5). They were always finding difficulties in adjusting their life to the teachings of their Master because the things He taught them seemed to be quite different from the normal understanding of the people around them. So they saw a need to trust Him more—to understand Him more—to know Him more.

Some modern disciples may find themselves in a similar situation. When faced with the teachings of the word of God, they respond with, "Oh, I have a problem with that verse!" Where is the problem? It is within them. Self does not wish to accept the instruction of the Master because it cuts across what they want to do, how they want to live. Some when faced with the instruction of the word feel that they are being "hit over the head with the Bible" or perhaps with the Spirit of Prophecy. This is not so—it is self that feels attacked because self does not wish to conform to the

perfect will of Jesus. They are in a similar situation to that of the early disciples. They do not have sufficient trust in His word, because they do not trust Him enough to know that His instruction is intended for their best good. And why do they not trust Him enough? Because they do not know Him enough. "And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent" (John 17:3). Our faith—our trust in Jesus will only be partial while we know Him only partially. "O, Lord, increase OUR faith!"

The power of faith

Many people dream of having power. They want to have power over others. Politicians, soldiers, leaders of societies most often want to have power to control the life of other people. Sadly, as Alexander the Great of Greece, they may not have power over themselves. How many presidents of various countries even have gone down in history as failures after their dreams have crumbled when they could not control their personal life.

Before anyone can have success, he or she must have control of himself or herself, but this is a very difficult need to meet. Our condition is one of weakness. "We are all as an unclean thing, and all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags; and we all do fade as a leaf; and our iniquities, like the wind, have taken us away" (Isaiah 64:6). Just as the apostle Paul, when we want to do what is right, we find ourselves doing wrong. And our excuse is usually, "I just couldn't



help it!" It is an admission of our own foolishness and weakness.

Jesus came to show us that it is possible to be strong, if we have faith, trust, and belief in Him. The apostle John says: "But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name" (John 1:12). And Paul says, "For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek" (Romans 1:16). If we humbly yield our weakness to Him, He will give us power to do His will. But first we must desire to know His will, and even then self may get in the way. We may say, "Yes, the Bible says that, BUT.....!" As soon as we say BUT, we are contradicting just what God says—self is getting in the way and demanding, as a spoiled child, that it should be pleased. We too often tend to do this instead of seeking what God knows is best for us. If we will simply trust His word, believe what is written, and have faith in the goodness of our Creator, all will be well.

"God has given us intellectual and moral power; but to a great extent every one is the architect of his own character. Every day the structure more nearly approaches completion. The word of God warns us to take heed how we build, to see that our building is founded upon the eternal rock. The time is coming when our work will stand revealed just as it is. Now is the time for all to cultivate the powers that God has given them, that they may form characters for usefulness here and for a higher life hereafter."³

Faith brings happiness

Sometimes we struggle with the inconsistencies of our charac-

ters and weaknesses. We want to be calm, contented, and happy. If we find that our happiness depends upon some thing, or some person outside of ourselves, then we are not truly happy. True happiness comes from within ourselves when we are within the boundaries of God's will for us. The apostle Paul knew this when he said, "But godliness with contentment is great gain" (1 Timothy 6:6). The more we trust Jesus, the more we have faith in Him and His word, the more we will be content and happy with our lot and the place where, in His wisdom, He has placed us. When we know Him as it is possible to know Him, we will cease to struggle against the instruction He has given for our life, we will bask in the sunshine of His love and be content. O Lord, increase my trust and faith in Thee, for without Thee I can do nothing.

"With the rich promises of the Bible before you, can you give place to doubt? Can you believe that when the poor sinner longs to return, longs to forsake his sins, the Lord sternly withholds him from coming to His feet in repentance? Away with such thoughts! Nothing can hurt your own soul more than to entertain such a conception of our heavenly Father. He hates sin, but He loves the sinner, and He gave Himself in the person of Christ, that all who would might be saved and have eternal blessedness in the kingdom of glory. What stronger or more tender language could have been employed than He has chosen in which to express His love toward us? He declares, 'Can a woman



forget her sucking child, that she should not have compassion on the son of her womb? yea, they may forget, yet will I not forget thee' (Isaiah 49:15).

"Look up, you that are doubting and trembling, for Jesus lives to make intercession for us. Thank God for the gift of His dear Son and pray that He may not have died for you in vain. The Spirit invites you today. Come with your whole heart to Jesus, and you may claim His blessing.

"As you read the promises, remember they are the expression of unutterable love and pity. The great heart of Infinite Love is drawn toward the sinner with boundless compassion. 'We have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins' (Ephesians 1:7). Yes, only believe that God is your helper. He wants to restore His moral image in man. As you draw near to Him with confession and repentance, He will draw near to you with mercy and forgiveness."⁴

We can have faith in the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ. We can have faith in the love of God. We can have faith in the ministration of the Holy Spirit. All heaven wants us to have faith in our eternal Saviour.

References:

¹ *Testimonies*, vol. 2, pp. 72, 73.

² *Faith and Works*, pp. 52, 53.

³ *Messages to Young People*, pp. 412, 413.

⁴ *Steps to Christ*, pp. 54, 55.

Meekness

by A. C. Sas

24

every evil that might be said against him or her without retaliating.

“Meekness is a precious grace, willing to suffer silently, willing to endure trials. Meekness is patient and labors to be happy under all circumstances. Meekness is always thankful and makes its own songs of happiness, making melody in the heart of God. Meekness will suffer disappointment and wrong and will not retaliate.”¹

The case of Moses

We have in the Bible examples of persons who were very patient and meek. One of these examples is Moses. We read of him: “(Now the man Moses was very meek, above all the men which were upon the face of the earth)” (Numbers 12:3).

But Moses had not always been like that. When he was a military officer in Egypt, his character was not that of a meek man. The Bible informs us what took place in the life of Moses:

“And it came to pass in those days, when Moses was grown, that he went out unto his brethren, and looked on their burdens: and he spied an Egyptian smiting an Hebrew, one of his brethren. And he looked this way and that way, and when he saw that there was no man, he slew the Egyptian, and hid him in the sand” (Exodus 2:11, 12).

Because of that act, lacking self-control, Moses had to flee from Egypt to the desert of Midian, where he had to do a humble work of shepherding the sheep and lambs. There he had to unlearn many things he had learned in Egypt, and learn other things which he had not learned before. The word of inspiration gives us an account about this servant of God:

“Moses was naturally of an impetuous spirit. In Egypt a successful military leader and a favorite with the king and the nation, he had been accustomed to receiving praise and flattery. He had attracted the people to himself. He hoped to accomplish by his own powers the work of delivering Israel. Far different were the lessons he had to learn as God’s representative. As he led his flocks through the wilds of the mountains and into the green pastures of the valleys, he learned faith and meekness, patience, humility, and self-forgetfulness. He learned to care for the weak, to nurse the sick, to seek after the straying, to bear with the unruly, to tend the lambs, and to nurture the old and the feeble.”²

There, in the wilderness, Moses learned meekness by tending the sheep. And he received blessings to share with us. There, in that isolation, he wrote the book of Genesis, which gives us an account of the origin of heaven and earth. This book is invaluable because it describes the beginning of human life, the fall of Adam and Eve, and the prom-

To be meek is defined as being “gentle, soft, mild, calm, docile, humble, tame, submissive, moderate, one who endures injury with patience and without resentment.”

Truly, meekness is a great virtue, and it is one of the graces of the Holy Spirit: “But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance: against such there is no law” (Galatians 5:22, 23).

The opposite of meekness can be defined as being “arrogant, fierce, obstinate, wild, ruthless, unkind, implacable, rude, savage, one who is lacking kindness and sympathy.”

A person may appear to be very patient at a time when everything is running smoothly, but in adversity he or she will display who he or she really is. Someone once observed: “Step on his toe, and he will show his true colors. You will see his reaction whether he is meek or ruthless.”

Meekness is shown in those who are genuine followers of Jesus Christ at all times, under all circumstances, because they have been with and learned of Him. A meek person is ready to suffer reproach, false accusation, and

“The fruit of the Spirit is . . . meekness” (Galatians 5:22, 23).

ise of a Redeemer. While shepherding the flocks of his father-in-law, Moses also wrote the book of Job, whose patience and meekness are exemplary.

“The long years amid desert solitudes were not lost. Not only was Moses gaining a preparation for the great work before him, but during this time, under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, he wrote the book of Genesis and also the book of Job, which would be read with the deepest interest by the people of God until the close of time.”³

“How long did it take Moses to learn the lesson of meekness, and become fitted to be a general to lead the armies of Israel out of Egypt? He went through a long discipline. For forty years he tended sheep in the land of Midian, learning how to be a good shepherd to the flock. In his position of shepherd he was called upon to care for the weak, to guide the wayward, to seek for the wandering. This was an essential training for him who was to be the leader of Israel; for in the care of the flock of God he would be called upon to nourish the weak, to instruct the wayward, and to bring the lost one back to the fold.”⁴

The lessons Moses had learned in Midian were very valuable for him as he had to lead the children of Israel out of Egypt into the Promised Land. It was not an easy task to lead a rebellious, mixed multitude of people. They accused Moses many times, blaming him for the hardships they had to go through in the wilderness. But Moses now was a different person, and he would

not retaliate or take any vengeance against that stubborn people.

“Consider the life of Moses. Meekness in the midst of murmuring, reproach, and provocation constituted the brightest trait in his character.”⁵

“In the school of nature, with Christ Himself for teacher, [Moses] contemplated and learned lessons of humility, meekness, faith, and trust, and of a humble manner of living, all of which bound his soul closer to God.”⁶

“It was the grace of Christ that made Moses the meekest man on earth. As we learn of the divine Master, we shall manifest this precious attribute.”⁷

The Lamb of God

The meekness of a sheep is noticed when she is sheared. Very often the shearer, in the hurry to finish his work, jerks some pieces of her flesh as he shaves off the wool, yet the sheep does not cry. Even when she is to be slain, a sheep will not open her mouth. I have personally seen the killing of a lamb, and as the poor creature realized that she was going to die, tears ran down her cheeks, but no one could hear any wailing or groaning. The prophet Isaiah says about Jesus: “He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth: he is brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he openeth not his mouth” (Isaiah 53:7).



Are we naturally meek, patient, mild, and humble? Are we ready to keep silence before our accusers and those that ill-treat us? Let us

honestly admit that we are far from being meek. But just as Moses learned meekness, we can also learn it. He learned from the lambs in the desert to be patient, loving, caring, and meek. In a similar way, we can learn from the Lamb of God His divine attributes.

“Let the impulsive, the self-sufficient, the revengeful, behold the meek and lowly One, led as a lamb to the slaughter, unretaliating as a sheep dumb before her shearers. Let them look upon Him whom our sins have pierced and our sorrows burdened, and they will learn to endure, to forbear, and to forgive.”⁸

“When the sinner has a realization of his sin, he is in a condition to be drawn to Christ by the amazing love that has been shown for him on the cross of Calvary. When he is humble and penitent, he does not look for pardon to the law which he has broken, but he looks to God, who has provided forgiveness and sanctification through His well-beloved Son. As he beholds the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sins of the world, he grows to love Him, and by beholding he becomes changed into His image.”⁹

If we are ever to enter the heavenly bliss, we must become meek by taking upon ourselves the yoke of Jesus and learning of Him.



He extends to us an invitation:

“Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light” (Matthew 11:28–30).

“Take My Yoke”

Before we can become meek, we have to take upon ourselves the yoke of Jesus.

To plow the ground, two oxen were yoked together. A young, untrained bullock was positioned next to an older, trained ox. A one-piece yoke was put upon the neck of both. At first, the stubborn bullock did not know how to keep pace with the tamed ox, and most of the time his movements were disorderly and uncoordinated. When they were to pull the plow, the younger one stopped. And then, as the older one kept pulling, the younger one would suddenly run ahead and sometimes even cross the furrow ahead of his companion. Then the trained ox had to hold back the untrained bullock. It went on like this for some time, until the young, restless bullock finally learned to keep pace with the older ox.

Jesus invites us to take His yoke upon ourselves. Very often we, too, want to run ahead, when we should wait, or stubbornly stay behind when we should move on.

So long as we place our confidence entirely in the Lord, His guidance is with us. He holds us back when we want to run ahead and pulls us forward when we

want to stay behind. He tells us that we should learn of Him. He is meek and lowly in heart. As we keep pace with Jesus, day after day, we become trained and will imitate His life, His character, will move together, and become fitted to do service for Him.

“Our precious Saviour invites us to join ourselves to Him, to unite our weakness to His strength, our ignorance to His wisdom, our unworthiness to His merits. God’s providence is the school in which we are to learn the meekness and lowliness of Jesus.”¹⁰

Learning of Jesus

“We are to enter the school of Christ, to learn from Him meekness and lowliness.”¹¹

We may try to overcome our evil traits of character and attempt to become meek and patient. But unless we submit ourselves and put our neck under the yoke of Jesus we will never succeed, never learn the lesson that Moses learned.

“Men may acquire all the knowledge possible to be imparted by the human teacher, but God requires of them still greater wisdom. Like Moses, they must learn meekness, lowliness of heart, and distrust of self.”¹²

“Meekness and lowliness of heart will lead men to desire counsel at every step. And the Lord will say, ‘Take My yoke upon you, and learn of Me.’ It is our privilege to learn of Jesus. But when men, full of self-confidence, think that it is their place to give counsel instead of desiring to be counseled by their experienced brethren, they will listen to voices that will lead them in strange paths.”¹³

Sitting at the feet of Jesus, listening to His words, as Mary did, we will learn of Him. We will admire His life, His character,

His love, His condescension to become man in order to save humanity from their sins. We will learn how meek and lowly of heart He is.

“It is the Holy Spirit that will enable us to overcome, that will lead us to sit at the feet of Jesus, as did Mary, and learn His meekness and lowliness of heart.”¹⁴

“The lessons of Christlike meekness, lowliness of heart, reverence for sacred things, are taught nowhere effectively except in the school of Christ.”¹⁵

His yoke is not grievous

The yoke of Jesus is light, not heavy, burdensome, grave, or grievous. The apostle John tells us that the commandments of God are not heavy, not grievous—but light, and easy to bear. If we would try to carry that yoke alone, we would not be able to; we would succumb immediately. But Jesus is carrying the heavier part of it, and invites us to be coworkers with Him.

“For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments: and his commandments are not grievous” (1 John 5:3).

“The yoke is an instrument of service. Cattle are yoked for labor, and the yoke is essential that they may labor effectually. By this illustration Christ teaches us that we are called to service as long as life shall last. We are to take upon us His yoke, that we may be coworkers with Him.

“The yoke that binds to service is the law of God. The great law of love revealed in Eden, proclaimed upon Sinai, and in the new covenant written in the heart, is that which binds the human worker to the will of God. If we were left to follow our own inclinations, to go just where our will would lead us, we should fall into Satan’s ranks and become

possessors of his attributes. Therefore God confines us to His will, which is high, and noble, and elevating. He desires that we shall patiently and wisely take up the duties of service. The yoke of service Christ Himself has borne in humanity.”¹⁶

The meek shall inherit the earth

In the Bible we are promised that the meek shall be saved and will inherit the earth made new, and dwell therein throughout eternity. Here are some of the promises, both in the Old and New Testaments:

“The meek shall inherit the earth; and shall delight themselves in the abundance of peace” (Psalm 37:11).

“The righteous shall inherit the land, and dwell therein for ever” (Psalm 37:29).

“For the Lord taketh pleasure in his people: he will beautify the meek with salvation” (Psalm 149:4).

“Blessed are the meek: for they shall inherit the earth” (Matthew 5:5).

A reversal of this Scripture would read: “Cursed are the ruthless, for they shall not inherit the earth.”

“All haughtiness, all self-exaltation must be put away from us, and we learn the meekness and lowliness of Christ, or we shall find no place in the kingdom of God.”¹⁷

“Among the peculiarities which should distinguish God’s people from the world in these last days, is their humility and meekness.”¹⁸

Qualified for the Kingdom

“If we have Christ abiding

with us, we shall be Christians at home as well as abroad. He who is a Christian will have kind words for his relatives and associates. He will be kind, courteous, loving, sympathetic, and will be educating himself for an abode with the family above. If he is a member of the royal family, he will represent the kingdom to which he is going. He will speak with gentleness to his children, for he will realize that they, too, are heirs of God, members of the heavenly court. Among the children of God no spirit of harshness dwells; for ‘the fruit of the spirit is love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance: against such there is no law.’ The spirit that is cherished in the home is the spirit that will be manifested in the church. Oh, we must educate the soul to be pitiful, gentle, tender, full of forgiveness and compassion. While we lay aside all vanity, all foolish talking, jesting, and joking, we are not to become cold, unsympathetic, and unsocial. The Spirit of the Lord is to rest upon you until you shall be like a fragrant flower from the garden of God. You are to keep talking of the light, of Jesus, the Sun of righteousness, until you shall change from glory to glory, from character to character, going on from strength to strength, and reflecting more and more of the precious image of Jesus. When you do this, the Lord will write in the books of heaven, ‘Well done,’ because you represent Jesus.

“Christians should not be hard-hearted, unapproachable; Jesus is to be reflected in our deportment, and we are to have a character beautiful with the

graces of heaven. The presence of God is to be an abiding presence with us; and wherever we are, we are to carry light to the world. Those around you are to realize that the atmosphere of heaven surrounds you.

“But many of you say, ‘How can I help sinning? I have tried to overcome, but I do not make advancement.’ You never can in your own strength, you will fail; but help is laid upon One who is mighty. In His strength you may be more than conqueror. You should arise and say, ‘Through the grace of God, I will be an overcomer.’ Put your will on the side of God’s will, and with your eye fixed upon Him who is the Author and Finisher of your faith, you may make straight paths for your feet. When you are tempted, say, ‘Jesus is my Saviour, I love him, because He has first loved me.’ Show that you trust Him. As you walk the streets, as you work about your house, you can communicate with your Lord. Lay hold upon Him by living faith, and believe the word of God to the letter.”¹⁹

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Temperance

by D. Sureshkumar

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The fruit of the Spirit” sums up the nine visible attributes of a true Christian life and it stands out as encompassing character traits that all Christians must have. It is of these traits that Paul says, “against such there is no law.” In other words, there is nothing to condemn such a one who practices the virtues mentioned in Galatians 5:22, 23. These are not individual fruits from which we might pick and choose. But the fruit of the Spirit is ONE “nine-fold fruit” that illustrates the visible growth in Christ Jesus. These are the fruits that all Christians should be producing in their life with Jesus Christ.

At the end of the list of the fruit of the Spirit, Paul gives us

temperance. It’s not surprising that it appears there. After peace, patience, kindness, gentleness, faithfulness, and kindness, it takes self-control to live that kind of life. This gift of grace, which is self-control, as part of the fruit of the Spirit, must be formed, sharpened, fashioned, practiced, and lived. The only way to do that is by bringing “self” with all its desires under control.

What is temperance?

Many times, people think of the word “temperance” only in connection with alcohol. Regardless of what men and women think today about the term “temperance,” it literally means “self-control.”¹ The word is translated from the Greek word *egkrateia* (eg-krat’-i-ah), which is derived from two root words, *Eg* meaning “self,” (from which English derives the word “ego”), and *kratos* (strength), which refers to “one holding himself in, the virtue of one who masters his desires and passions, especially his sensual appetites.”²

Temperance is control over the whole person (spirit, soul, and body) which enables him or her to live a victorious life. Where this virtue subsists,

temptation can have little influence. It means the dominion which one has over oneself, a dominion over our own thoughts, words, and actions. As Paul says, “bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ” (2 Corinthians 10:5). That is temperance!

To a certain extent, temperance—self-control—is actually an overall foundation underlying all the other fruits of the Spirit. Why can we say this? It is because temperance is distinctly entwined with the power of choice. Only by self-control can we choose to **love** when faced with hatred. Only by self-control can we choose to experience **joy** in times of frustration and sorrow. Only by self-control can we choose to the path of **peace** in times of turmoil and pain. Only by self-control can we choose to be **long-suffering** when severely tried. Only by self-control can we choose to exercise **gentleness** under rough provocation. Only by self-control can we choose the way of **goodness** when evil is prevailing and temptation is rampant. Only by self-control can we choose to experience **faith** when all odds are against us. Only by self-control can we choose the grace of **meekness** when unjustly abused.

Temperance is the way of disciplined grace. It is grace because it is free; it is disciplined because there is something for us to do. Once we have understood and accepted God’s unmerited favor, we set out to grow in that grace. Self-control is not the negative or the dark side, nor is it some sort



*“The fruit of the Spirit is . . . temperance”
(Galatians 5:22, 23).*

of bad news, but it is an integral part of grace itself. Self-control is the human soil where this gift of grace grows and blossoms into the full flower of love. If we don't control ourselves and our feelings, then our appetites, our drives will control us. It's either self-control under the grace and power of the Holy Spirit, or something or someone else that is controlling us.

Self-control is essential. Yet, sadly, the human predicament is aptly described by the apostle Paul as follows: “I know that in me (that is, in my flesh,) dwelleth no good thing: for to will is present with me; but how to perform that which is good I find not. For the good that I would I do not: but the evil which I would not, that I do” (Romans 7:18, 19). In our limited realm, too often we find that our good intentions can all too easily disintegrate into ropes of sand. This is why genuine “self-control” in its best sense is not really human control at all. It can occur only when the human agent is under full control of a higher power, a loftier “*krateo*”—the omnipotent strength of Jesus Christ.

When is temperance most readily acquired?

“In childhood and youth the character is most impressible. The power of self-control should then be acquired. By the fireside and at the family board influences are exerted whose results are as enduring as eternity. More than any natural endowment, the habits established in early years decide whether a man will be vic-

torious or vanquished in the battle of life. Youth is the sowing time. It determines the character of the harvest, for this life and for the life to come.”³

Why is temperance so essential today?

As discussed earlier in this Week of Prayer, the people of God in the last days are to be distinguished for their exemplary **patience**: “Here is the patience of the saints: here are they that keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus” (Revelation 14:12). Yet “it is impossible for an intemperate man to be a patient man. First temperance, then patience.”⁴

“The world is given to self-indulgence. Errors and fables abound. Satan's snares for destroying souls are multiplied. All who would perfect holiness in the fear of God must learn the lessons of temperance and self-control. The appetites and passions must be held in subjection to the higher powers of the mind. This self-discipline is essential to that mental strength and spiritual insight which will enable us to understand and to practice the sacred truths of God's word. For this reason **temperance finds its place in the work of preparation for Christ's second coming.**”⁵

A serious problem

“Intemperance of any kind benumbs the perceptive organs and so weakens the brain-nerve power that eternal things are not appreciated, but placed upon a level with the common. The

higher powers of the mind, designed for elevated purposes, are brought into slavery to the baser passions. If our physical habits are not right, our mental and moral powers cannot be strong; for great sympathy exists between the physical and the moral. The apostle Peter understood this and raised his voice of warning to his brethren: ‘Dearly beloved, I beseech you as strangers and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts, which war against the soul’ (1 Peter 2:11)

“There is but little moral power in the professed Christian world. Wrong habits have been indulged, and physical and moral laws have been disregarded, until the general standard of virtue and piety is exceedingly low. Habits which lower the standard of physical health enfeeble mental and moral strength. The indulgence of unnatural appetites and passions has a controlling influence upon the nerves of the brain. The animal organs are strengthened, while the moral are depressed. **It is impossible for an intemperate man to be a Christian,** for his higher powers are brought into slavery to the passions.

“Those who have had the light upon the subjects of eating and dressing with simplicity in obedience to physical and moral laws, and who turn from the light which points out their duty, will shun duty in other things. If they blunt their consciences to avoid the cross which they will have to take up to be in harmony with natural law, they will, in order to shun reproach, violate the Ten Commandments. There is a

Temperance is the way of disciplined grace.

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decided unwillingness with some to endure the cross and despise the shame. **Some will be laughed out of their principles.** Conformity to the world is gaining ground among God's people, who profess to be pilgrims and strangers, waiting and watching for the Lord's appearing."⁶

Education

Temperance comes as a result of knowledge. The apostle Peter bids us, "add . . . **to knowledge temperance**" (2 Peter 1:5, 6).

The Scriptures bring out one example of a person who was given knowledge—enlightenment—and was taught about temperance: "When Felix came with his wife Drusilla, which was a Jewess, he sent for Paul, and heard him concerning the faith in Christ. And as he reasoned of righteousness, temperance, and judgment to come, Felix trembled, and answered, Go thy way for this time; when I have a convenient season, I will call for thee" (Acts 24:24, 25). How tragic was the decision of Felix! When opportunities for higher education in matters of temperance come to us, are we in danger of rejecting the light which so graciously shines upon our pathway? "The knowledge of God is the real essence of education. The education that would supersede this knowledge, or dismiss it from the mind, as Felix dismissed Paul, when he spoke to him of temperance, righteousness, and judgment to come, is not of God. . . .

"And today multitudes are saying the same [as did Felix]. Their minds are called to the deep sub-

jects of truth, problems as high as heaven and as broad as eternity; but they say, 'I cannot bring these subjects into my daily studies; for they would so stir up my mind as to unfit me for the daily routine of study. I have never mastered Bible problems. I cannot take up this study now. Go thy way for this time; when I have a convenient season, I will call for thee.'"⁷

Somehow, when we put things off, there never seems to be a "convenient" time. Going uphill—advancing—always tends to be inconvenient. Yet to be "inconvenienced" in this way would be nonetheless fruitful. Precious light may come to us on the subject of temperance. Living up to this light is for our benefit, both now and for eternity.

"The principles of temperance must be carried further than the mere use of spirituous liquors. The use of stimulating and indigestible food is often equally injurious to health, and in many cases sows the seeds of drunkenness. **True temperance teaches us to dispense entirely with everything hurtful and to use judiciously that which is healthful.** There are few who realize as they should how much their habits of diet have to do with their health, their character, their usefulness in this world, and their eternal destiny. The appetite should ever be in subjection to the moral and intellectual powers. The body should be servant to the mind, and not the mind to the body."⁸

How do we grow in temperance?

Pray for it. Christ is waiting to pour out all the gifts and

graces of His Holy Spirit upon His people.

Practice it. Every skill has to be practiced. Self-control does not come in a day. It comes in hits and misses, in successes and failures as we try to practice it day after day.

Cultivate the habits of godliness. On a practical level, the conversion of our life consists mainly of changing our habits. If we fail to build new habits into our life, when the crisis comes, we will fall back into the old habits. Self-control consists largely of building new habits of behavior into our life in the fruit of the Spirit.

Guard thoughts and desires. We need to remember that the mind is the source or origin of all we do and say. If we are going to control our words and actions, it must begin with our mind. Many people get this reversed, thinking that if they change their actions, then the right thoughts will come. That is wrong. Solomon says, "Keep thy heart with all diligence; for out of it are the issues of life" (Proverbs 4:23).

We must not constantly place ourselves where our weaknesses will be tested.

When we practice God's gift of self-control, we will begin to discover real changes in our life.

To gain self-control we have to be like the athlete. Preparation is necessary to the success of the contestants. Those who desire their names as participant for the prize have to undergo a rigorous preparatory training. Harmful lenience of diet, or any other indulgence that would weaken mental or physical strength, is strictly banned. The rules of the events are clearly acknowledged. The participants fix their attention with a purpose to win.

Our self-control involves three things: an aim or the goal, a list of training rules, and the effort or perseverance. (1) We must recognize our high calling and should keep our eyes focused on the goal, and run so that we can win a prize. (2) A list of training rules must be maintained. The champion athletes have a list of do's and don'ts. They practice every day, and with adequate sleep and nourishment, all go into strict training. So should we have a training routine, and the more we practice the better we grow. (3) We should maintain a constant, sustained effort. The athlete does not quit halfway through. He goes and keeps on going.

Put on Christ and be filled with His Spirit. To cultivate self-control we must put on Christ and be filled with His Spirit. History tells us that one of the Roman Caesars had a slave as a constant companion. The slave's duty was to whisper in the emperor's ear—"You are human." We need that reminder. We are only human, filled with human frailties and sins and shortcomings. On our own and by our own strength, we cannot exercise self-control. Only by the grace of God, the power of Christ, and the indwelling of the Spirit can we be self-controlled.

Firm consecration needed

Once again, we do not want to fall into the trap of Felix. Though he was a man of eminence—a Roman governor—nevertheless, his rejection of heaven-sent light was a foolish choice and rendered his ultimate legacy a disgrace. He had simply refused to turn away from worldly pleasures to dedicate himself to his Creator. But dedication to God—consecration to Christ—is paramount to a genuinely successful life.

"How many professed Christians are enfeebling their powers in the pursuit of gain or the worship of fashion; how many are debasing their godlike manhood by gluttony, by wine drinking, by forbidden pleasure."⁹

"The lower passions have their seat in the body and work through it. The words, 'flesh' or 'fleshly' or 'carnal lusts' embrace the lower, corrupt nature; the flesh of itself cannot act contrary to the will of God. We are commanded to crucify the flesh, with the affections and lusts. How shall we do it? Shall we inflict pain on the body? No; but **put to death the temptation to sin.** The corrupt thought is to be expelled. Every thought is to be brought into captivity to Jesus Christ. All animal propensities are to be subjected to the higher powers of the soul."¹⁰

"Self-control can be complete only in the strength which comes from Jesus Christ, ever true to the rightful dominion of the higher powers and attributes having dominion over the lower.

"The power of self-restraint grows by exercise. That which at first seems difficult, by constant repetition becomes habitual and easy until right principles, right actions enter into and become a part of ourselves, and through the grace of Christ mold the sinner into a new character. He becomes a new creature in Christ Jesus."¹¹

Hope for every struggling soul

"[Jesus] took the field of conflict to fight in man's behalf, that all who desired to leave the cruel bondage of the 'god of this world' (2 Corinthians 4:4), might be set free, to serve the living God. Through all the lowly experiences of life, the exalted Son of God, consented to pass, step by step, from the manger to the cross; for



'he took not on him the nature of angels; but he took on him the seed of Abraham' (Hebrews 2:16). And 'he was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin' (Hebrews 4:15). In the wilderness He fasted forty days, and was tried by every subtle temptation that the prince of darkness could devise. Weak and emaciated from hunger, worn and haggard with mental agony, He suffered the depth of temptation and sorrow, and 'he is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him' (Hebrews 7:25). The nature of man had become so weakened by transgression, that it was an impossibility for him to overcome in his own strength; for he was led captive at the will of Satan; but, **through the strength of Christ, every one may be an overcomer.** We may be more than conquerors through Him who has 'loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood' (Revelation 1:5)."¹²

May God help us to be temperate in all things.

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Abiding With God

Let every one, whate'er his calling be,
Therein abide with God: so wrote of old
Apostle Paul at Corinth, and to me.
With loving lips, tonight, that truth was told.
I had grown weary with my strifes and cares,
And murmured o'er the services of the day,
Wherein, I had forgotten, unawares,
That thus I still might honor and obey.

Therein abide with God: would I might ne'er forget,
That evermore I might with Him abide:
What matters how or where the stamp is set,
Or what the furnace where the gold is tried,
So that the metal has the sterling ring,
So that the likeness of the King is shown;
God's coinage still, that to the soul may bring
Such wealth as merchant princes have not known.

In market places where the race is swift,
And competition on temptation waits;
In quiet homes where unseen currents drift
A thousand petty cares through open gates;
Let each and all, whate'er the calling be,
Therein abide with God; from break of day
Till set of sun, they shall His purpose see,
And serve Him in His own appointed way.

So let me see and serve, and thus abide;
Not simply patient, or at best content,
Not with eye-service, wherein, love denied,
In rounds of duty solemn days are spent;
Give me, O Lord, a joy that is divine;
Touch Thou my lips with constant themes of praise;
Since, having Thee, all things I need are mine,
Whate'er my lot, whate'er my length of days.

—*New York Observer*

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