



the
REFORMATION
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Vol. 50, No. 3

THE
Word
WAS MADE
Flesh

Find Time \ On the Other Side of the Cross \ High Heels Dangerous . . .

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

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Directing Our *Best Energies*

There is an old saying, "If life hands you lemons, make lemonade." In other words, even the sour things in life can be made into something pleasant if we choose to add the right ingredients to the equation.

In the spiritual realm, difficult circumstances and complications often trigger challenges and trials in our Christian walk. Yet the apostle bids us, "Wherein ye greatly rejoice, though now for a season, if need be, ye are in heaviness through manifold temptations: That the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honour and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ: Whom having not seen, ye love; in whom, though now ye see him not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory: Receiving the end of your faith, even the salvation of your souls" (1 Peter 1:6-9).

While the goal of many professed Christians may simply appear to be eternal life, the true aim is actually much deeper than that. The great spiritual victory is in the possession of a Christlike character worthy of being preserved. Even if there were no eternity, it is still worthwhile to follow Christ in this temporal life. Nothing the world has to offer can match the peace, the joy, and the wonderful depth of experience that come through following in the footsteps of the Man of Calvary. The road is thorny, but the bloodstained feet of our Lord have pressed down the briars to pave our way. When circumstances arise to try our faith, the Comforter is ever present to bring assurance and cheer.

Living in a fast-paced world

Today's lifestyle is surely depicted with accuracy in the book of Daniel.

There is no question that we are clearly living in "the time of the end: many shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall be increased" (Daniel 12:4). How often our plans are foiled and uprooted by rapidly changing circumstances! The Lord may have led us in a certain direction yet, through delay and inaction on our part, our dreams may have failed us. Opportunities may have been missed. So, when such a sharp curve appears in the road, it is then time to put into place "Plan B" or even "Plan C." Whatever the case, we cannot afford the luxury of despair. We must redeem the time, for the days are evil. "Long delays tire the angels. It is even more excusable to make a wrong decision sometimes than to be continually in a wavering position, to be hesitating, sometimes inclined in one direction, then in another. More perplexity and wretchedness result from thus hesitating and doubting than from sometimes moving too hastily. . . .

"God requires promptness of action. Delays, doubtings, hesitation, and indecision frequently give the enemy every advantage. . . . Victories are frequently lost through delays. There will be crises in this cause. Prompt and decisive action at the right time will gain glorious triumphs, while delay and neglect will result in great failures and positive dishonor to God. Rapid movements at the critical moment often disarm the enemy, and he is disappointed and vanquished, for he had expected time to lay plans and work by artifice."¹

Priorities

Whatever tactics the enemy of souls may attempt, whatever circumstances may occur to hinder us, we cannot lose sight of the greatest priorities—



the matters that carry eternal weight. The formation of our character is at stake. How will we respond? What action will we take? And in the long run, how would we like our obituary to read? What about the headstone at our gravesite? When all is said and done and our life is over, what would others objectively identify as having been the real motto of our life? What are the angels recording? Might they sadly say that we procrastinated our most wholehearted service for Christ until after it was too late? Might they sigh that a great work could have been done if it had not been for this or that circumstance? At that point, there will be no excuses.

"Opposing circumstances should create a firm determination to overcome them. One barrier broken down will give greater ability and courage to go forward. Press in the right direction, and make a change, solidly, intelligently. Then circumstances will be your helpers and not your hindrances. Make a beginning. The oak is in the acorn."² ✎

References

¹ *Testimonies*, vol. 3, pp. 497, 498.

² *Ibid.*, vol. 6, p. 145.



FIND TIME

By Dina Melnychuk

Often we hear people say, "There is no time!" Yes, in our modern century with high-speed trains and planes—even then, there is no time. There is simply not enough time. Why? Perhaps we want too much, or we have poor planning. Or maybe our plans go contrary to the will of God. Whom do we consult when we make our plans? Notice what apostle James says: "Go to now, ye that say, To day or to morrow we will go into such a city, and continue there a year, and buy and sell, and get gain: Whereas ye know not what shall be on the morrow. For what is your life? It is even a vapour, that appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away. For that ye ought to say, If the Lord will, we shall live, and do this, or that" (James 4:13–15).

Maybe we ask God too little or too seldom. Or maybe we don't ask at all.

A common Christian family's morning starts off with everyone in a rush, everyone hastening. Someone is taking a shower, someone is getting ready for

work, someone is getting some breakfast, and so on. Morning worship is done with a rush, and some don't even do it! Why? There is no time to pray. . . . Stop!!! Let us stop for a moment and reassess our priorities. What do we have time for, what *don't* we have time for?

At first let us think about why we need to pray, and who needs prayer the most, God or us?

It is also necessary for each of us to open our heart to God. "Prayer is the opening of the heart to God as to a friend. . . . Prayer does not bring God down to us, but brings us up to Him. . . . And yet the children of earth, who need so much the help that God only can give, seem satisfied to walk without the light of His Spirit, the companionship of His presence."¹

"Keep your wants, your joys, your sorrows, your cares, and your fears before God. You cannot burden Him; you cannot weary Him. He who numbers the hairs of your head is not indifferent to the wants of His children. 'The Lord is very pitiful, and of tender

mercy' (James 5:11). His heart of love is touched by our sorrows and even by our utterances of them. Take to Him everything that perplexes the mind. Nothing is too great for Him to bear, for He holds up worlds, He rules over all the affairs of the universe. Nothing that in any way concerns our peace is too small for Him to notice. There is no chapter in our experience too dark for Him to read; there is no perplexity too difficult for Him to unravel. No calamity can befall the least of His children, no anxiety harass the soul, no joy cheer, no sincere prayer escape the lips, of which our heavenly Father is unobservant, or in which He takes no immediate interest. 'He healeth the broken in heart, and bindeth up their wounds' (Psalm 147:3). The relations between God and each soul are as distinct and full as though there were not another soul upon the earth to share His watchcare, not another soul for whom He gave His beloved Son."²

It is plain and clear that prayer is necessary to us, instead of to God!

You may ask, "How much and when is it necessary to pray?" The answer is simple. "Continue in prayer, and watch in the same with thanksgiving" (Colossians 4:2). "There is no time or place in which it is inappropriate to offer up a petition to God. There is nothing that can prevent us from lifting up our hearts in the spirit of earnest prayer. In the crowds of the street, in the midst of a business engagement, we may send up a petition to God and plead

for divine guidance, as did Nehemiah when he made his request before King Artaxerxes. A closet of communion may be found wherever we are. We should have the door of the heart open continually and our invitation going up that Jesus may come and abide as a heavenly guest in the soul."³

Remembering my childhood when my parents taught me how to pray, I can say that their example was sincere. Each morning, waking up we enjoyed the calm singing of Father and the pleasant smell coming from kitchen. My father usually woke us up (Mother was already in the kitchen). He reminded us that after we took care of personal things, we needed to devote time for our personal prayer. When all the children (five of us) were gathered and ready, Mother joined us and we all had family morning worship. Usually Father read some verses from the Bible. After he explained the texts, each child had to recite a verse. We all sang a hymn after which we knelt down in a circle and would pray. Father usually prayed and thanked God for safekeeping through the night, for divine blessings, gifts, and for the blood that was shed on the cross for our sins. Then he asked for blessings and safekeeping for each and every one of us throughout the day. At the end we all said "Amen," and went to the kitchen where we were then served breakfast. After breakfast we each went to do our chores, and in the evening again we were gathered for evening worship, which was spent in the same way as morning worship. Only our personal prayers were offered before we went to sleep. As far as I can remember, we never left the house or went to sleep without prayer. If Father was not home, Mother conducted worship. Yes, our parents taught us from the time of our birth, because they had read "Train up a child in the way he should go: and when he is old, he will not depart from it" (Proverbs 22:6). Since we were trained this way from childhood, we have implemented the same ways and have taught our children the same way.

You may ask, "If we have family worship, why do we need to have our own personal devotions?"

Family Worship

"The daily service [in the ancient Hebrew sanctuary] consisted of the morning and evening burnt offering, the offering of sweet incense on the golden altar, and the special offerings for individual sins. And there were also offerings for sabbaths, new moons, and special feasts."⁴

In carrying on the daily routine, as parents we should care not only for the material welfare of our children, and for the spiritual education as well. Personal morning and evening devotions will not only teach the children to trust in the Lord and to rely on His saving power, but also to understand that we all need to depend on it.

"All members of the family center in the father. He is the lawmaker, illustrating in his own manly bearing the sterner virtues: energy, integrity, honesty, patience, courage, diligence, and practical usefulness. The father is in one sense the priest of the household, laying upon the altar of God the morning and evening sacrifice. The wife and children should be encouraged to unite in this offering and also to engage in the song of praise. Morning and evening the father, as priest of the household, should confess to God the sins committed by himself and his children through the day. Those sins which have come to his knowledge and also those which are secret, of which God's eye alone has taken cognizance, should be confessed. This rule of action, zealously carried out by the father when he is present or by the mother when he is absent, will result in blessings to the family. . . .

"The father must not betray his sacred trust. He must not, on any point, yield up his parental authority.

"The father . . . will bind his children to the throne of God by living faith. Distrusting his own strength, he hangs his helpless soul on Jesus and takes hold of the strength of the Most High. Brethren, pray at home, in your family, night and morning; pray earnestly in your closet; and while engaged in your daily labor, lift up the soul to God in prayer. It was thus that Enoch walked with God. The silent, fervent prayer of the soul will rise like holy incense to the

throne of grace and will be as acceptable to God as if offered in the sanctuary."⁵

Secret prayer

Certainly, younger children do not understand the necessity of personal prayer. From the very beginning we must teach them the Lord's Prayer. In due time, as they learn from those who give them the example, they too will pray to God and bring forth their petitions and requests. "We should pray in the family circle, and above all we must not neglect our own personal prayer, for this is the life of the soul. It is impossible for the soul to flourish while prayer is neglected. Family or public prayer alone is not sufficient. In solitude let the soul be laid open to the inspecting eye of God. Secret prayer is to be heard only by the prayer-hearing God. No curious ear is to receive the burden of such petitions. In secret prayer the soul is free from surrounding influences, free from excitement. Calmly, yet fervently, will it reach out after God. Sweet and abiding will be the influence emanating from Him who seeth in secret, whose ear is open to hear the prayer arising from the heart. By calm, simple faith the soul holds communion with God and gathers to itself rays of divine light to strengthen and sustain it in the conflict with Satan. God is our tower of strength. . . .

"It was thus that Enoch walked with God. These silent prayers rise like precious incense before the throne of grace. Satan cannot overcome him whose heart is thus stayed upon God."⁶

Dear friends, how much time do we spend in prayer and study of the Word of God?

How much time do we spend in nature, contemplating and communicating with God?

How much time do we spend studying our own heart and, through the eyes of Jesus, see all the filth thereof and, with His power, overcome it?

How much time do we spend teaching our children to make time for God and to commune with Him? Are you silent? Let everyone answer for himself or herself. One day, all will give account for themselves and their children, for whom we almost do not have time.

Personal morning and evening devotions will not only teach the children to trust the Lord and to rely on God's divine and saving power, but also to understand that we all need to depend on it.

An all too typical scene

Oh! At last it is Friday evening just before the opening of the Sabbath. Now we can rest and read a little, since we've been so busy all week and have had no time due to cares, turmoil, and so forth. You take a book and start reading with great interest, but not even 15 minutes have gone by and you are already asleep, and the book goes back on a shelf until a better opportunity when we'll have more free time. Now comes Sabbath morning. All of us go to church, sometimes forgetting our Sabbath school lessons and Bibles at home. We begin with a hymn, "Lord, I Love You" and we sing—not thinking about the words. Stop! What love towards God? About what love do we sing? How many times have we thought about Christ during the past week? Do we only have to love Jesus on Sabbath during Divine Service?

We know the verses, "So ought men to love their wives as their own bodies. He that loveth his wife loveth himself. . . . Nevertheless, let every one of you in particular so love his wife even as himself; and the wife see that she reverence her husband" (Ephesians 5:28, 33). If the husband or wife does something wrong, we quote these verses to each other. Yes, we really love each other. We consult, we converse, and we try to spend more time together. If the husband loves his wife, she tries to show mutual love and to make him happy. It is great!

But how do we understand the verse, "Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it" (Ephesians 5:25)? The husband is called to love his wife "even as Christ also loved" (not only loved in mere human power), "and gave himself for it." If a husband would actually give his life for his wife, we all

would speak of the great deed he had done. Everyone would say, "What a great act of love!"

But the love of God is greater than that! Unfortunately, very few exalt and praise it—most of the time we forget it. . . . There is just not enough time to kneel down and thank God for His love, for the cross of Calvary, and for His gift of salvation.

"Christ's love for His children is as tender as it is strong. And it is stronger than death. . . . Although sin has existed for ages, trying to counteract this love and obstruct its flowing earthward, it still flows in rich currents to those for whom Christ died."⁷

What do we do with this love? Do we respond to it? What do we render to it, and how much time do we give? How much time do we spend talking with the Lord? . . . Not enough? Why?

The sad answer: "Because my people hath forgotten me" (Jeremiah 18:15).

Imagine: the husband or the wife repeats: "I love you" but does not sleep in or contribute to the sustenance of the home. He or she is gone every night. His or her salary never makes it home. He or she shows up once a week for a few hours and beautifully declares, "I love you" and again disappears for a week. In such a case I am sure there would be no limit to your indignation, and at some point you would firmly declare that you can't do this anymore. And if it should continue this way your patience will come to an end, and you will file for divorce. A sad story; another family crash.

Dear friends! This is actually the kind of relationship most of us have with Jesus. We come on Sabbath for 2 or 3 hours, in the morning sing a few hymns, "Lord, I Love You" or "I Wish to Glorify the Saviour," and so forth. We stay for the lesson and sermon, and then leave for home without remorse

that we have played the hypocrite before the Lord. While at home, we enjoy a good meal and, of course, rest. This rest continues till the closing of the Sabbath. And we forget that there is an afternoon study. But for this part we don't have time since we decided to rest. When dismissed from the Sabbath hours, again we dive into a busy schedule doing that which attracts us most. We find time to wash the car, watch some video shows, browse the web, chat with friends, play tennis, table pool, and/or other occupations which Satan has laid in our path.

You may say: I need to work. After all, I have a family to look after. Correct. We should work: "For even when we were with you, this we commanded you, that if any would not work, neither should he eat" (2 Thessalonians 3:10). Yes, but if we pay attention only to work, forgetting about God and our duties to Him, we will work for a bag with holes, and we will never have enough.

"Except the Lord build the house, they labour in vain that build it: except the Lord keep the city, the watchman waketh but in vain. It is vain for you to rise up early, to sit up late, to eat the bread of sorrows: for so he giveth his beloved sleep" (Psalm 127:1, 2).

"Godliness with contentment is great gain. For we brought nothing into this world, and it is certain we can carry nothing out. And having food and raiment let us be therewith content. But they that will be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and hurtful lusts, which drown men in destruction and perdition. For the love of money is the root of all evil: which while some coveted after, they have erred from the faith, and pierced themselves through with many



sorrows" (1 Timothy 6:6–10). If a person wishes to give that which is God's to God, and that which is Caesar's to Caesar, he or she would find the time.

The majority of modern Christians seek churches which don't require a lot of time, change of character, effort, or contribution. Yet God calls for a change of character, and people leave God's church and go to find one with less requirements. But the Lord does not leave us. He does not file a divorce for such a disgraceful relationship toward Him. Instead, He is longsuffering and bids us: "Return, My children!" "For I have no pleasure in the death of him that dieth, saith the Lord God: wherefore turn yourselves, and live ye" (Ezekiel 18:32). "For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, saith

the Lord, thoughts of peace, and not of evil, to give you an expected end. Then shall ye call upon me, and ye shall go and pray unto me, and I will hearken unto you. And ye shall seek me,

and find me, when ye shall search for me with all your heart" (Jeremiah 29:11–13).

Dear Reader!

If you value earthly, temporary things above the heavenly, and if you haven't found enough time for God, then you have lived your life in vain. Let us trust more in God and in His sure promises. Then we will see the blessing: "Prove me now herewith, saith the Lord of hosts, if I will not open you the windows of heaven, and pour you out a blessing, that there shall not be room enough to receive it" (Malachi 3:10).

Food for thought and encouragement

My grandmother [from the former Soviet bloc] who used to tell us about their past history and about the great struggles in her life as she had lived

during a time of famine, said that she did not remember any of the believers dying of starvation at that time. They helped each other; even nonbelievers brought food; everyone had something to eat, and they experienced God's hand over them. True, they did not live in prosperity, but nobody died of hunger. The same history was shared by our brethren and sisters from Romania. They testified that they did not suffer so much during the economic crisis. God helped them in answer to their humble prayers.

Many examples show that God blessed His people miraculously.

Ask and it shall be given—but ask in faith, and if it is according to His will, surely ye shall receive.

"Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God. And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus" (Philippians 4:6, 7).

I am sure that some may contradict these concepts and say: Unbelievers never pray and ask; they live a carefree life of ease, and they never devote time for God. Yet they have everything in abundance! A very interesting remark. Again, let us turn to the Holy Scripture—what does it tell us? "Ye have said, It is vain to serve God: and what profit is it that we have kept his ordinance, and that we have walked mournfully before the Lord of hosts? And now we call the proud happy; yea, they that work wickedness are set up; yea, they that tempt God are even delivered" (Malachi 3:14, 15).

God's people have been tried in all ages. But—there is one "BUT". "They that feared the Lord spake often one to another: and the Lord hearkened, and heard it, and a book of remembrance was written before him for them that feared the Lord, and that thought upon his name" (verse 16).

What did Asaph, King David's chief musician say about the supposed "prosperity" of unbelievers: "As for me, my feet were almost gone; my steps had well nigh slipped. For I was envious at the foolish, when I saw the

prosperity of the wicked. For there are no bands in their death: but their strength is firm. They are not in trouble as other men; neither are they plagued like other men. . . . Behold, these are the ungodly, who prosper in the world; they increase in riches. . . . When I thought to know this, it was too painful for me; until I went into the sanctuary of God; then understood I their end" (Psalm 73:2–5, 12, 16, 17).

When did Asaph discover that he was wrong for envying the unrighteous? It was not until he entered into the tabernacle of the Lord that he understood their end. Only then did He acknowledge God's power, greatness and justice. Then he laid his hold upon God.

The Lord appeals to each one of us: "Be still, and know that I am God: I will be exalted among the heathen, I will be exalted in the earth." "O come, let us worship and bow down: let us kneel before the Lord our maker. For he is our God; and we are the people of his pasture, and the sheep of his hand" (Psalm 46:10; 95:6, 7). Today if you hear His voice, find time—that is, MAKE time—for prayer and devotion to God, then everything else shall be added unto you.

We all are familiar with the story of Paul when he stood before Felix and preached the truth. He spoke about abstinence and a future judgment. "Felix trembled, and answered, Go thy way for this time; when I have a convenient season, I will call for thee" (Acts 24:25). That was the most important moment in Felix's life, but he missed the opportunity. He never found the time. And the door was shut forever.

Dear Reader: Find time for God and for your children so that later you may not regret reaping the fruits of your carelessness. **Find time!** ☞

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¹ *Steps to Christ*, pp. 93, 94.

² *Ibid.*, p. 100.

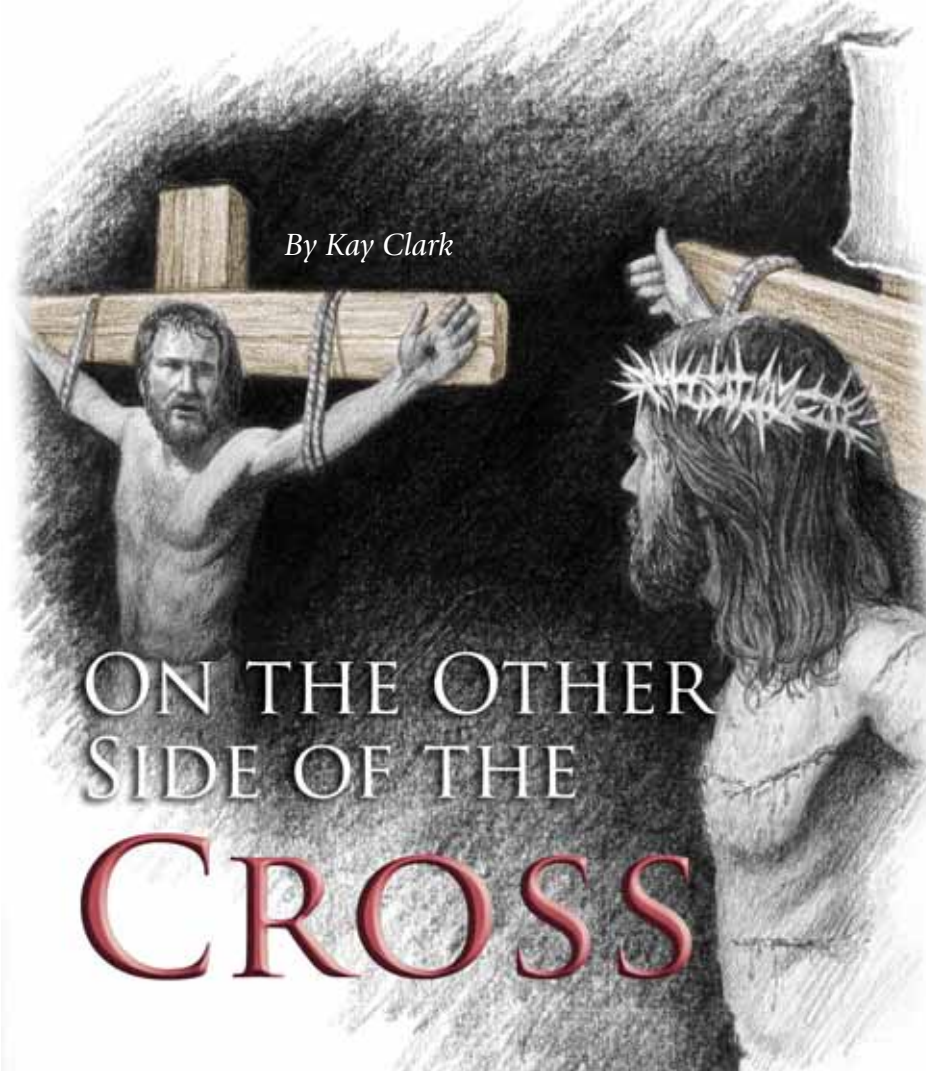
³ *Ibid.*, p. 99.

⁴ *Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 352.

⁵ *The Adventist Home*, pp. 212, 213.

⁶ *Steps to Christ*, pp. 98, 99.

⁷ *Testimonies to Ministers*, p. 519.



By Kay Clark

ON THE OTHER SIDE OF THE CROSS

Jesus suffered much from His accusers in the Sanhedrin, in the halls of Herod and Pilate, and from all in Jerusalem who thought Him to be guilty of blasphemy because He had claimed to be the Son of God. He was beaten, scourged, and mocked. A crown of thorns was placed upon His head and pressed down until a flow of blood ran down His face. He was mocked as a king by the Roman soldiers. He had nothing to eat or drink since the Passover meal which He had eaten with His disciples.

Taking into accounts all these things, He was in a very weakened condition physically. Because of His agonizing prayers in Gethsemane just prior to His having been taken captive, He was drained emotionally of all strength. Then came the burden of the heavy cross which was placed upon His shoulders.

A HELP IN THE TIME OF NEED

There was a man traveling from Cyrene, by the name of Simon, who entered the gate into Jerusalem at the same time Jesus and the two thieves, which were to be crucified with Him, were coming out, bearing their crosses. He had heard of Jesus but had never met Him; he did not know why he should find Him in such circumstances as he did.

Jesus had stooped under the heavy load to the point where He could bear the burden no longer. The soldier in charge looked around for someone who could carry the cross up the hill to the place of crucifixion. His gaze rested upon Simon, and he ordered him to take hold of the heavy timber. As Simon looked to the other side of the wooden cross his eyes met those of Jesus, and his sympathy went out to Him who had exchanged a glorious body for this one of frailty. The cross which Simon had been forced to bear

became the means of his being converted. As the events of Calvary were fulfilled, he, as well as others present, were convinced that surely this was the Son of God.

“REMEMBER ME”

There were two thieves crucified with Jesus, one on either side of Him. This position indicated that He had been determined by His accusers to be the worse of the accused. Agony of spirit was upon Him as He suffered separation from His Father in heaven, as a transgressor, because He bore the sins of all humanity upon Himself.

One of the thieves being crucified with Him recognized Him as one in whom no real guilt had been found. He had heard accounts of Jesus, how He had healed the sick and forgiven men and women of their sins. The Holy Spirit brought to him the hope that there, in his dying moments, he could also receive pardon from the dying Saviour. He cried out to Jesus, “Lord, remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom” (Luke 23:42). There was no hesitancy with Jesus as He assured the penitent one that he would be with Him, to be among the saved throughout eternity.

Thus we see another soul saved, as Simon of Cyrene was, in view of the cross of Christ. The conversation between Christ and the thief was heard by those who had taken away His clothing to cast lots for it. They could not take away from Him His power to forgive the sins of those who acknowledged Him as the Lifegiver.

WHERE ARE WE TODAY?

Jesus has given us the keys of His kingdom, His Holy Word. Through this Word He has led us down through the ages, from the very beginning, that we may know of His desire for humanity. He who created us in His image loves us with an undying love which passes all understanding. Prophecy foretold the cross and what it should mean to us. The recorded events allow us to see on both sides of the cross of Calvary so that we may see where we stand today, and what should be our relationship

with it. Will we be as the other dying thief who did not recognize the One who was hanging there dying with him, or will we see through the darkness into the glorious light which comes forth from Him who has the power to forgive?

All that we may profess to be or to do means nothing if we do not go to the basic need of all humanity. We with our carnal heart and mind cannot obey or live the life that Jesus calls us to life. We must come to the foot of that cross in a full surrender of everything in our life. It is when we do this and receive the mind, or character, of Christ that we may receive the revival that will bring about the change we need in our life.

WHAT IS SURRENDER?

To surrender is to give up self with all the fruit of the flesh which we have inherited, acquired, and cultivated. To surrender is to be in harmony with His will, His moral law, His character. All these are one and the same thing. (Galatians 2:20.)

Again, it is impossible to meet the requirements of God's law with our carnal mind. Paul states in Romans 8:6-9, "For to be carnally minded is death; but to be spiritually minded is life and peace. Because the carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be. So then they that are in the flesh cannot please God. But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his."

So, how hard must we try to meet the requirements of God's law? All our trying will be in vain. The carnal mind rejects the Word of God or raises objections to it; the mind of Christ believes it. The carnal mind tells us that we must do something of ourselves to obtain God's mercy and salvation. Instead, we must be crucified to self, to die a death to sin, to have our iron will replaced, that will which says that we must have our own way and do our own bidding. We must have it replaced with the divine, tender, loving mind of Jesus.

THE GIFT OF GOD

As we read in Ephesians 2:8, 9: "For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast."

What is this grace which is here spoken of? "Grace means favor to one who is undeserving, to one who is lost. The fact that we are sinners, instead of shutting us away from the mercy and love of God, makes the exercise of His love to us a positive necessity in order that we may be saved."¹

This grace, or free gift of God, is not given in acknowledgement of any human's merit, or worth, or righteousness; it is ours through the righteousness of Christ. Therefore, we must let His righteousness become ours. We cannot obtain this gift so freely offered to us as long as we retain the carnal mind.

Our pride and preconceived opinions must be laid at the foot of the cross as the pure, simple faith revealed in God's Word thoroughly humbles our heart.

OUR CHOICE

The choice which we have is the same as that of the penitent thief on the cross. He heard of Jesus and the perfect life which He had lived and the good works which He had done during His lifetime on earth. Now that he was brought face to face with Him, as both of them were dying, his faith reached out to Him with the simple plea that he would be remembered by Him and that salvation would come to him. At that moment that free gift of God's grace was received by the lost one and his destiny was changed. He acknowledged his sinful condition and the power to forgive and to save which rested in Jesus. This same desire to be free from the slavery of sin and its sure results must be within us today.

When we think of the idols which we want to hold onto, but which will stand between us and our Saviour, we must ask ourselves, "Are we willing to give up everything for Jesus and be fully surrendered to Him, our only way to salvation?" If this is our choice, then we will freely receive that gift which He

offers to us, that grace that is greater than all our sins.

THE GOSPEL AND THE CROSS

"Hanging upon the cross Christ was the gospel. Now we have a message, 'Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world' (John 1:29). . . . This is our message, our argument, our doctrine, our warning to the impenitent, our encouragement for the sorrowing, the hope for every believer."² The gospel is the power (the right, the privilege) unto salvation through Jesus Christ our Lord to those who believe. Jesus, the spotless Lamb of God, gave freely and unselfishly of Himself to all who came to Him for help; those who came with a faith in Him for relief from suffering, for the hope of life rather than of death.

It is the privilege of each of us to carry this gospel to a dying world. We must be sincere and earnestly seek the power of the Holy Spirit that we may be used by Him as we go forth to proclaim the solemn truths for these last days.

So that we may be what we must be and do what we should do, we need to have the Spirit of Christ abiding within us. Then we will have a burden for the perishing souls around us, we will become sanctified through the truth and will show forth the example of Christ in self-denial, in meekness, and in love.

CONCLUSION

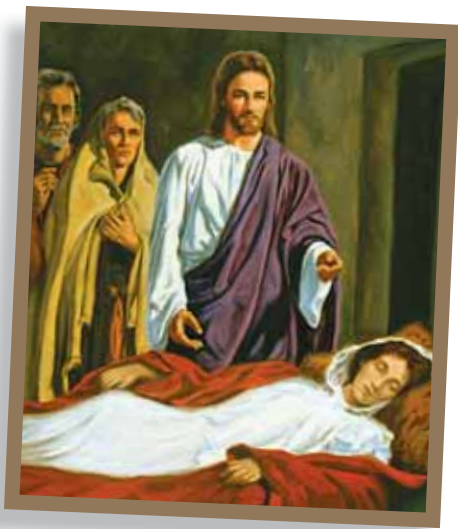
As the penitent thief on the cross, we must recognize our sins and our need of a Saviour. Then, before it is too late, we must offer up our life to Him who can cleanse us from all our dross and give us His robe of righteousness in which we will be accepted into the kingdom.

Let us think upon these things and make our calling and election sure. Let us look beyond the cross to the glories which lie ahead when all things are made perfect. Amen. *R*

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² *The SDA Bible Commentary* [E.G. White Comments], vol. 6, p. 1113.



Christ's DOUBLE Ministry

Compiled by Dorival N. Dumitru
[Emphasis supplied throughout.]

Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature" (Mark 16:15). "The divine commission needs no reform. Christ's way of presenting truth cannot be improved upon. The Saviour gave the disciples practical lessons, teaching them how to work in such a way as to make souls glad in the truth. He sympathized with the weary, the heavy laden, the oppressed. He fed the hungry and healed the sick. Constantly He went about doing good. By the good He accomplished, by His loving words and kindly deeds, He interpreted the gospel to men."¹

"Entire days were devoted to labor, and entire nights were spent in prayer, that He might be braced to meet the wily foe in all his deceptive working, and fortified to do His work of uplifting and restoring humanity."²

His Nights of Prayer

"No other life was ever so crowded with labor and responsibility as was that of Jesus; yet how often He was found in prayer! How constant was His communion with God! Again and again in the history of His earthly life are found records such as these: 'Rising up a great while before day, He went out, and departed into a solitary place, and there prayed.' 'Great multitudes came together to hear, and to be healed by Him of their infirmities. 'And He withdrew Himself into the wilderness, and prayed.' And it came to pass in

those days, that He went out into a mountain to pray, and continued all night in prayer to God' (Mark 1:35; Luke 5:15, 16; 6:12).

"In a life wholly devoted to the good of others, the Saviour found it necessary to withdraw from the thoroughfares of travel and from the throng that followed Him day after day. He must turn aside from a life of ceaseless activity and contact with human needs, to seek retirement and unbroken communion with His Father. As one with us, a sharer in our needs and weaknesses, He was wholly dependent upon God, and in the secret place of prayer He sought divine strength, that He might go forth braced for duty and trial. In a world of sin Jesus endured struggles and torture of soul. In communion with God He could unburden the sorrows that were crushing Him. Here He found comfort and joy."³

"Through weary days He toiled, and through long nights He bent in prayer for grace and endurance that He might do a larger work. With strong crying and tears He sent His petitions to heaven, that His human nature might be strengthened, that He might be braced to meet the wily foe in all his deceptive workings, and fortified to fulfill His missions of uplifting humanity."⁴

His Days of Intensive Labor

"The Saviour was an untiring worker. He did not measure His work by hours. His time, His heart, His strength, were given to labor for the benefit of

humanity. Entire days were devoted to labor."⁵

"Brief as was the period of His public ministry, He accomplished the work He came to do. How impressive were the truths He taught! How complete His lifework! What spiritual food He daily imparted as He presented the bread of life to thousands of hungry souls! His life was a living ministry of the word. He promised nothing that He did not perform."⁶

"Toward the close of His ministry in Galilee, He again visited the home of His childhood. Since His rejection there, the fame of His preaching and His miracles had filled the land. None now could deny that He possessed more than human power. The people of Nazareth knew that He went about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed by Satan. About them were whole villages where there was not a moan of sickness in any house; for He had passed through them, and healed all their sick. The mercy revealed in every act of His life testified to His divine anointing."⁷

By Love, We May Work as Jesus Worked

"To His workers [Jesus] says, 'I have given you an example, that ye should do as I have done' (John 13:15)."⁸

1 TIME IN PRAYER. "While engaged in our daily work, we should lift the soul to heaven in prayer. These silent petitions rise like incense before the throne of grace; and



the enemy is baffled. The Christian whose heart is thus stayed upon God cannot be overcome. No evil arts can destroy his peace. All the promises of God's word, all the power of divine grace, all the resources of Jehovah, are pledged to secure his deliverance. It was thus that Enoch walked with God. And God was with him, a present help in every time of need.

"Christ's ministers must watch unto prayer. They may come with boldness to the throne of grace, lifting up holy hands without wrath or doubting. In faith they may supplicate the Father in heaven for wisdom and grace, that they may know how to work, how to deal with minds.

"Prayer is the breath of the soul. It is the secret of spiritual power. No other means of grace can be substituted, and the health of the soul be preserved. Prayer brings the heart into immediate contact with the Well-spring of life, and strengthens the sinew and muscle of the religious experience. Neglect the exercise of prayer, or engage in prayer spasmodically, now and then, as seems convenient, and you lose your hold on God. The spiritual faculties lose their vitality, the religious experience lacks health and vigor."⁹

2 EARNEST LABOR. "The man who loves God does not measure his work by the eight-hour system. He works at all hours and is never off duty. As he has opportunity he does good. Everywhere, at all times and in

all places, he finds opportunity to work for God. He carries fragrance with him wherever he goes."¹⁰

"In the past God has raised up men, and He still has men of opportunity waiting, prepared to do His bidding—men who will go through restrictions which are only as walls daubed with untempered mortar. **When God puts His Spirit upon men, they will work. They will proclaim the word of the Lord; they will lift up their voice like a trumpet. The truth will not be diminished or lose its power in their hands.** They will show the people their transgressions, and the house of Jacob their sins."¹¹

"Let no man despise thy youth; but be thou an example of the believers, in word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity. Till I come, give attendance to reading, to exhortation, to doctrine. Neglect not the gift that is in thee, which was given thee by prophecy, with the laying on of the hands of the presbytery. Meditate upon these things; give thyself wholly to them; that thy profiting may appear to all. Take heed unto thyself, and unto the doctrine; continue in them: for in doing this thou shalt both save thyself, and them that hear thee" (1 Timothy 4:12–16).

"Some who have learned to imitate Christ in meekness, do not show His diligence in doing good. Others are active and zealous, but they are boastful; they have never learned humility. Still others leave Christ out of their work. They may be pleasing in their manners; they may show sympathy for their fellowmen; but their hearts are not centered on the Saviour, and they have not learned the language of heaven. **They do not pray as Christ prayed; they do not place His estimate upon souls; they have not learned to endure hardship in their efforts to save souls.** Some, knowing little of the transforming power of grace, become egotistical, critical, harsh. Others are plastic and yielding, bending this way and that to please their fellowmen."

"However zealously the truth may be advocated, if the everyday life does not testify to its sanctifying power, the words spoken will avail nothing. An

inconsistent course hardens the heart and narrows the mind of the worker, and places stumbling blocks in the way of those for whom he labors."¹²

"When we give ourselves wholly to God and in our work follow His directions, He makes Himself responsible for its accomplishment. He would not have us conjecture as to the success of our honest endeavors. Not once should we even think of failure. WE ARE TO COOPERATE WITH ONE WHO KNOWS NO FAILURE."¹³

"Watch ye therefore, and pray always, that ye may be accounted worthy to escape all these things that shall come to pass, and to stand before the Son of man" (Luke 21:36).

"My brethren, the Lord is coming, and we need to bend every energy to the accomplishment of the work before us. I appeal to you to give yourselves wholly to the work. Christ gave His time, His soul, His strength, to labor for the benefit and blessing of humanity."¹⁴

"Why are we not more in earnest? Why are so large a number idle? Why are not all who profess to love God seeking to enlighten their neighbors and their associates, that they may no longer neglect so great salvation? The Saviour was an untiring worker. He did not measure His work by hours. His time, His heart, His strength, were given to labor for the benefit of humanity. Entire days were devoted to labor, and entire nights were spent in prayer, that He might be ready to meet the wily foe."¹⁵ ✎

References

¹ *Welfare Ministry*, p. 56.

² *Testimonies*, vol. 9, p. 45.

³ *The Desire of Ages*, pp. 362, 363.

⁴ *The Ministry of Healing*, p. 500.

⁵ *Testimonies*, vol. 9, p. 45.

⁶ *Welfare Ministry*, p. 56.

⁷ *The Desire of Ages*, p. 241.

⁸ *The Ministry of Healing*, p. 500.

⁹ *Gospel Workers*, pp. 254, 255.

¹⁰ *Testimonies*, vol. 9, p. 45.

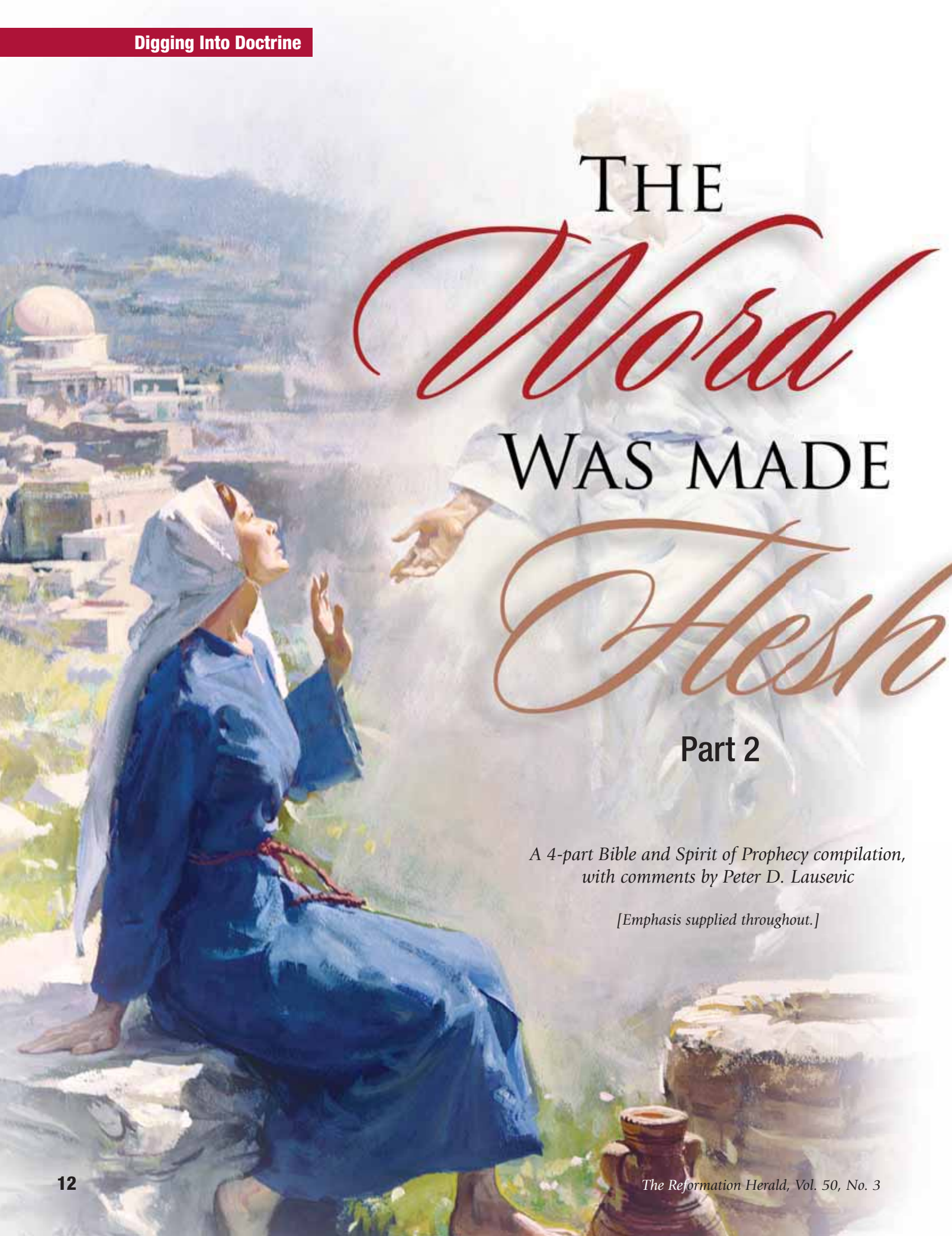
¹¹ *Testimonies to Ministers*, p. 411.

¹² *Gospel Workers*, p. 144.

¹³ *Christ's Object Lessons*, p. 363.

¹⁴ *Gospel Workers*, p. 115.

¹⁵ *The Review and Herald*, January 12, 1911.



THE
Word
WAS MADE
Flesh

Part 2

*A 4-part Bible and Spirit of Prophecy compilation,
with comments by Peter D. Lausevic*

[Emphasis supplied throughout.]

In the likeness of sinful flesh

Prophecy declares that the birth of Jesus would be unique. Indeed, it would be a miracle. "Therefore the Lord himself shall give you a sign; Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel" (Isaiah 7:14).

This miracle was explained to Mary prior to the time of conception. "And the angel answered and said unto her, The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee: therefore also that holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God" (Luke 1:35).

"The angel of the Lord appeared unto [Joseph] in a dream, saying, Joseph, thou son of David, fear not to take unto thee Mary thy wife: for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Ghost" (Matthew 1:20).

The psalmist prophesied of the Messiah's experience: "Thou art he that took me out of the womb: thou didst make me hope when I was upon my mother's breasts. I was cast upon thee from the womb: thou art my God from my mother's belly" (Psalm 22:9, 10).

In reality, Jesus was a contradiction of terms. "Jesus loved His brothers, and treated them with unfailing kindness; but they were jealous of Him, and manifested the most decided unbelief and contempt. They could not understand His conduct. Great contradictions presented themselves in Jesus. He was the divine Son of God, and yet a helpless child. The Creator of the worlds, the earth was His possession, and yet poverty marked His life experience at every step."¹

In order to save humanity from the penalty of sin, it was necessary that One equal with God should taste death for every human being. "Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus: who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God" (Philippians 2:5, 6). "We see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honour; that he by the grace of God should taste death for every man" (Hebrews 2:9).

In order for this salvation to be possible, Jesus had to be made in the likeness of humans. He "made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men" (Philippians 2:7).

"It became him, for whom are all things, and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings" (Hebrews 2:10). "Wherefore in all things it behoved him to be made like unto his brethren, that he might be a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people" (verse 17). The word translated as "behooved" often is used in reference to a debt owed. From this we can see that it was required of Christ to partake of our flesh and blood, to partake of our human nature in order to be our High Priest. "For in that he himself hath suffered being tempted, he is able to succour them that are tempted" (verse 18).

"For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin. Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need" (Hebrews 4:15, 16).

He had to partake of flesh and blood in reality. "Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same; that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil; and deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage" (Hebrews 2:14, 15).

He had to be of the seed of Abraham. "For verily he took not on him the nature of angels; but he took on him the seed of Abraham" (verse 16).

He was of the seed of David as well. "Remember that Jesus Christ of the seed of David was raised from the dead according to my gospel" (2 Timothy 2:8).

"Think of Christ's humiliation. He took upon Himself fallen, suffering human nature, degraded and defiled

by sin. He took our sorrows, bearing our grief and shame. He endured all the temptations wherewith man is beset. He united humanity with divinity: a divine spirit dwelt in a temple of flesh. He united Himself with the temple. "The Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us" (John 1:14), because by so doing He could associate with the sinful, sorrowing sons and daughters of Adam."²

What did the plan of salvation require?

Since the law could not save us on its own (as it only condemns), what did God have to do in order to bring salvation to humanity? "And being found in fashion as a man, [Christ Jesus] humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross" (Philippians 2:8).

This was impossible in the law itself. "For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh" (Romans 8:3).

Jesus identifies Himself with humanity. This is revealed in His prophecy of the final judgment hour: "Then shall the King say unto them on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world: For I was an hungred, and ye gave me meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink: I was a stranger, and ye took me in: Naked, and ye clothed me: I was sick, and ye visited me: I was in prison, and ye came unto me" (Matthew 25:34-36).

"Christ is our example; He identified Himself with suffering humanity; He made the necessities of others a consideration of His own. When His brethren suffered, He suffered with them. Any slight or neglect of His disciples is the same as if done to Christ Himself."³

"To redeem man, Christ became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. The humanity of the Son of God is everything to us. It is the golden linked chain which binds our souls to Christ and through Christ to God. This is to be our study. Christ was a real man, and He gave proof of

“By beholding [Christ] we shall be changed into His image, our character will be made like His.”

His humility in becoming a man. And He was God in the flesh.”⁴

“Jesus declared, ‘I am the resurrection, and the life’ (John 11:25). In Christ is life, original, unborrowed, un-derived. ‘He that hath the Son hath life’ (1 John 5:12). *The divinity of Christ is the believer’s assurance of eternal life.*”⁵

The awesome mystery

“The work of redemption is called a mystery, and it is indeed the mystery by which everlasting righteousness is brought to all who believe. In consequence of sin, the race was at enmity with God. At an infinite cost and by a process mysterious to angels as well as to men, Christ assumed humanity. Hiding His divinity, laying aside His glory, He was born a babe in Bethlehem. *In human flesh He lived the law of God that He might condemn sin in the flesh*, and witness to heavenly intelligences that the law was ordained to life, to ensure the happiness, peace, and eternal good of all who obey. But the same infinite sacrifice that is life to those who believe is a testimony of condemnation to the disobedient, speaking death and not life.”⁶

“Christ saw man’s fearful danger, and He determined to save him by the sacrifice of Himself. That He might accomplish His purpose of love for the fallen race, **He became bone of our bone and flesh of our flesh.**”⁷

“Sin-burdened, struggling souls, Jesus in His glorified humanity has ascended into the heavens to make intercession for us. ‘For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin. Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace’ (Hebrews 4:15, 16). We should be continually looking unto Jesus, the Author and Finisher of our faith; for by beholding Him we shall be changed into His image, our character will be made

like His. We should rejoice that all judgment is given to the Son, **because in His humanity He has become acquainted with all the difficulties that beset humanity.**”⁸

“When in the fullness of time the Son of the infinite God came forth from the bosom of the Father to this world, He came in the garb of humanity, clothing His divinity with humanity. **The Father and the Son in consultation decided that Christ must come to the world as a babe, and live the life that human beings must live from childhood to manhood, bearing the trials that they must bear, and at the same time living a sinless life, that men might see in Him an example of what they can become, and that He might know by experience how to help them in their struggles with sin. He was tried as man is tried, tempted as man is tempted.** The life that He lived in this world, men can live, through His power and under His instruction.”⁹

This was after 4,000 years of sin. “The story of Bethlehem is an exhaustless theme. In it is hidden ‘the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God’ (Romans 11:33). We marvel at the Saviour’s sacrifice in exchanging the throne of heaven for the manger, and the companionship of adoring angels for the beasts of the stall. Human pride and self-sufficiency stand rebuked in His presence. Yet this was but the beginning of His wonderful condescension. **It would have been an almost infinite humiliation for the Son of God to take man’s nature, even when Adam stood in his innocence in Eden. But Jesus accepted humanity when the race had been weakened by four thousand years of sin. Like every child of Adam He accepted the results of the working of the great law of heredity.** What these results were is shown in the history of His earthly ancestors. He came with such a heredity to share our sorrows and tempta-

tions, and to give us the example of a sinless life.”¹⁰

Christ redeemed us in that fallen nature of Adam after the Fall. “Satan had pointed to Adam’s sin as proof that God’s law was unjust and could not be obeyed. **In our humanity, Christ was to redeem Adam’s failure.** But when Adam was assailed by the tempter, none of the effects of sin were upon him. He stood in the strength of perfect manhood, possessing the full vigor of mind and body. He was surrounded with the glories of Eden, and was in daily communion with heavenly beings. It was not thus with Jesus when He entered the wilderness to cope with Satan. **For four thousand years the race had been decreasing in physical strength, in mental power, and in moral worth; and Christ took upon Him the infirmities of degenerate humanity. Only thus could He rescue man from the lowest depths of his degradation.**”¹¹

“The Lord now demands that every son and daughter of Adam, through faith in Jesus Christ, serve Him in human nature which we now have. The Lord Jesus has bridged the gulf that sin has made. He has connected earth with heaven, and finite man with the infinite God. Jesus, *the world’s Redeemer, could only keep the commandments of God in the same way that humanity can keep them.*”¹²

To what extent will God save? “But this man, because he continueth ever, hath an unchangeable priesthood. Wherefore **he is able also to save them to the uttermost** that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them” (Hebrews 7:24, 25).

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³ *Testimonies*, vol. 4, p. 63.

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⁶ *The Youth’s Instructor*, July 20, 1899.

⁷ *The Signs of the Times*, September 4, 1902.

⁸ *Reflecting Christ*, p. 20.

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¹¹ *Ibid.*, p. 117.

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Raise the Standard

Higher, Still Higher

By Abel Karife Barraza

to think that God is satisfied with a divided service.

Most have read Matthew 6:33: “Seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you.”

God would like to see us seeking His kingdom as the first priority in our life. He assures us that if we do what He says, all His blessing will eventually be ours.

“In every line of useful labor and every association of life, [Christ] desires us to find a lesson of divine truth. Then our daily toil will no longer absorb our attention and lead us to forget God; it will continually remind us of our Creator and Redeemer. The thought of God will run like a thread of gold through all our homely cares and occupations. . . . We shall ever be learning new lessons of heavenly truth and growing into the image of His purity.”¹

These practical lessons will fit us for the heavenly courts. So that we may have a place in the kingdom, Jesus has placed before us a high objective which we should strive to achieve. “Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect” (Matthew 5:48).

The sure source of instruction

We have no sure source of instruction other than the Bible. The apostle Paul declares: “All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works” (2 Timothy 3:16, 17).

The servant of the Lord says, “God will have a people upon the earth to maintain the Bible, and the Bible only, as the standard of all doctrines and the basis of all reforms.”²

Let us strive to be part of that people while aiming at Christian perfection as our most prized objective.

Hearing only?

In order to uplift the “standard,” we must heed the instruction: “Be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves” (James 1:22).

A “standard” is a banner. In the year 1880, Peru and Chile were at war. Among the Peruvian army, there was one regiment consisting of 520 men, led by a young captain named Alfonso Ugarte Bernal. As the fight ensued, on June 7, the battle turned worse than expected. That day this 33-year-old captain lost almost all his men and eventually the battle. But he had the “Banner,” which any army considers sacred—and to avoid seeing it trampled upon by his enemies, he fled. Not knowing where his path would lead him, he finally ending up at a cliff on the Pacific shore known as

“El Morro.” Having nowhere to turn, the captain, continued on horseback, galloping and jumping until he vanished in the cold waters of the sea, thus preventing his enemies from trampling upon his banner. After more than a month of searching, his body was found on July 16. The war was over.

What a wonderful lesson this young man teaches us! There are so many ungodly people who are ready to give even their life for their ideals. The question to us is: Are we also yearning—determined to give our life for Jesus’ banner? And if so, how much are we determined to give up for God’s cause? So many appear

“Our faith requires us to elevate the standard of reform and take advance steps. The condition of our acceptance with God is a practical separation from the world.”

Speaking of the “hearing-only class” of believers, Jesus compared them to a foolish man. He said, “Every one that heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them not, shall be likened unto a foolish man, which built his house upon the sand” (Matthew 7:26).

That house had no solid foundation and it fell. “And great was the fall of it” (verse 27). Do you realize the importance of obedience? “It is the doing of the words and works of Christ that testifies to the saving qualities of your faith.”³

Why then do so many act in opposition to God’s Word? “Some stumble at the word of truth. It does not harmonize with their inclinations, and therefore they refuse to be doers of the word.”⁴

“With many who claim to be Christians there is a painful certainty that they are not progressing heavenward, but are swayed by the customs and practices of the world. Fashions the most unlovely and unhealthful, the most contradictory to the laws of nature, are readily accepted by them. By eagerly beholding these fashions, they become changed to the likeness of what they so much admire. Thus they hasten to adopt the world’s standard, where pride and fashion complete in them the transformation which Satan delights to see accomplished, and they become unstable as water.”⁵

These venture to go along with the world’s current, forgetting that “Christians should not follow the customs and practices of the world.”⁶

Keeping God’s favor

There is only one way to be in God’s favor. Jesus said; “If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed” (John 8:31). He told His disciples; “I say unto you, That except your righteousness shall exceed the

righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven” (Matthew 5:20). And He added, “When ye shall have done all those things which are commanded you, say, We are unprofitable servants: we have done that which was our duty to do” (Luke 17:10). If we cannot do more, Christ is longing to see at least what He has required from us.

If we examine ourselves, we will discover how far distant we are from reaching heaven. “Our faith requires us to elevate the standard of reform and take advance steps. The condition of our acceptance with God is a practical separation from the world. . . . The world may despise you because you do not meet their standard, engage in their dissipating amusements, and follow their pernicious ways; but the God of heaven promises to receive you, and to be a Father unto you.”⁷

What a wonderful promise! It should be enough to encourage us to fight against our own inclinations.

Many think that they are separated from the world because they no longer fellowship with world companions. But they still long for the worldly things and even dare to show a worldly appearance within the church.

“The standard of piety is low among professed Christians generally, and it is hard for the young to resist the worldly influences that are encouraged by many church members. The majority of nominal Christians, while they profess to be living for Christ, are really living for the world.”⁸ But “the great Head of the church, who has chosen His people out of the world, requires them to be separate from the world. He designs that the spirit of His commandments, by drawing His followers to Himself, shall separate them from worldly elements.”⁹

“The truly converted laborer in [God’s cause] will not be molded after the customs and practices of the world but will stand in moral independence. He will set an example that will be consistent with his profession, coming out from the world, and maintaining a separation from its spirit and fashions. He will not be turned in the least from his steadfast purpose to be one with Christ, nor yield an iota from his stand of fidelity to God, in opposition to pride, to indulgence in selfish amusement, to expenditure of means for the gratification of inclination or love of display, but will be an example in spirit, deportment, and dress.”¹⁰

“The church is to be as God designed it should be, a representative of God’s family in another world.”¹¹

Conclusion

“It is these [worldly] things that separate God from His people, that shut the ark away from them. [Modern] Israel have been asleep to the pride, and fashion, and conformity to the world, in the very midst of them. They advance every month in pride, covetousness, selfishness, and love of the world. . . . And as soon as any have a desire to imitate the fashions of the world, that they do not immediately subdue, just so soon God ceases to acknowledge them as His children.”¹²

God is speaking to each one of us. It is not a trifling thing to cherish worldly fashions—pleasing Satan in his designs. As individuals, as well as a church, let us raise the standard so that we do not want to put Jesus out of our life. May God bless us all! ✎

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- ⁸ *Counsel to Parents, Teachers, and Students*, p. 326.
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Rich, Royal... and **Needing Reform**

By B. Monteiro
[Emphasis supplied throughout.]

As the old saying goes, he had everything going for him—a winning personality. Who was he? What was he like?

“This young man’s tastes and desires were not offensive, but favorable to the growth of spirituality. As he saw Jesus blessing the little children, he was convinced that this must be a good man. He was sure that he could live in perfect harmony with Him. **Hastening to the Saviour, he knelt before Him.**”¹

Was he a worldly-minded apostate or hardened heathen? Not at all. . . . We read that “he had been flattered for his amiable traits of character. He was willing to do good things.”²

Perhaps you know someone like this. A “good” person. Perhaps you are

such a one. Perhaps I am. Yet into what fatal deception had this individual fallen?

“He flattered himself that by his integrity in dealing with his fellowmen he was fulfilling the law. The perfection of character he thought he possessed, ranked him in the same state spiritually as was Paul when, touching the letter of the law, he thought himself blameless. But no human standard can save a soul from death. God’s standard must be seen, acknowledged, and followed.”³

Human standards of measuring what constitutes a good person are pitifully deceiving. We may even try to sandwich a few Bible verses into the equation, but the computation will still be inaccurate.

The individual’s story is found in Matthew chapter 19. Let us read the whole passage about this earnest, successful, young man who hurriedly ran toward Jesus. His first question was a monumental one with great significance. As always, Christ’s response was timeless and powerful.

“Good Master, what good thing shall I do, that I may have eternal life? And [Jesus] said unto him, Why callest thou me good? there is none good but one, that is, God: but if thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments. . . . The young man saith unto him, All these things have I kept from my youth up: what lack I yet? Jesus said unto him, **If thou wilt be perfect, go and sell that thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come and follow me**” (Matthew 19:16, 17, 20, 21, emphasis supplied).

In your conscience, has a still, small voice been reminding you lately of Christ’s appeal to the rich young ruler?

Perhaps this is a Bible story that always used to apply to someone else—not necessarily in a direct way to you or to me. After all, most of us are not really all that rich. And we’re not usually rulers. And we already follow Christ, of course. We’ve done it for years, even from our youth.

But please remember—the 144,000 follow the Lamb “whithersoever he goeth” (Revelation 14:4), not just part way. Sanctification is a progressive



I was shown that it is the will of God that the saints should cut loose from every encumbrance before the time of trouble comes, and make a covenant with God through sacrifice. If they have their property on the altar and earnestly inquire of

God for duty, He will teach them when to dispose of these things. Then they will be free in the time of trouble and have no clogs to weigh them down.

"I saw that if any held on to their property and did not inquire of the Lord as to their duty, He would not make duty known, and they would be permitted to keep their property, and in the time of trouble it would come up before them like a mountain to crush them, and they would try to dispose of it, but would not be able. I heard some mourn like this: 'The cause was languishing, God's people were starving for the truth, and we made no effort to supply the lack; now our property is useless. Oh, that we had let it go, and laid up treasure in heaven!' I saw that a *sacrifice* did not increase, but it decreased and was *consumed*. I also saw that God had not required all of His people to dispose of their property at the same time; but if they desired to be taught, He would teach them, in a time of need, when to sell and how much to sell. Some have been required to dispose of their property in times past to sustain the Advent cause, while others have been permitted to keep theirs until a time of need. Then, as the cause needs it, their duty is to sell."⁴

A three-step process: **SELL, GIVE, COME**

To those who currently sense this particular call from heaven, the Lord has given three steps:

1 **SELL.**

2 GIVE to the poor. (DON'T BE STUBBORN AND INSISTENT UPON GETTING ABSOLUTE "TOP DOLLAR"—THE MAXIMUM PRICE—

work.

What if He is now taking you into uncharted waters? Are you still going to follow? Or are you going to say "thus far and no further. I've had enough"?

Please notice that the article you are now reading is in the regular *Reformation Herald* feature entitled "The Prophetic Word." In our previous issue, we spoke about the economic crisis the world is currently undergoing. As more and more prophecies are fulfilling, now may be an appropriate time to think about some things in a different way than we ever have needed to before. The reality is that the closer we get to the end of time, the more closely the call to the rich young ruler will apply to an increasing number of believers.

The servant of the Lord writes:

"The Lord has shown me repeatedly that it is contrary to the Bible to make any provision for our temporal wants in the time of trouble. I saw that if the saints had food laid up by them or in the field in the time of trouble, when sword, famine, and pestilence are in the land, it would be taken from them by violent hands and strangers would reap their fields. Then will be the time for us to trust wholly in God, and He will sustain us. I saw that our bread and water will be sure at that time, and that we shall not lack or suffer hunger; for God is able to spread a table for us in the wilderness. If necessary He would send ravens to feed us, as He did to feed Elijah, or rain manna from heaven, as He did for the Israelites.

"Houses and lands will be of no use to the saints in the time of trouble, for they will then have to flee before infuriated mobs, and at that time their possessions cannot be disposed of to advance the cause of present truth.

FOR YOUR SALE!! REMEMBER, YOU'RE GOING TO BE GIVING OF THE PROCEEDS ANYWAY!!!) Do not insist so strongly upon basing your selling price on the neighbor's. Base it on however God impresses you, even if it is less. Base it on the fact that you're going to be giving more away, not aiming to become more increased with goods. How much time is lost to the cause of God by selfishly waiting to achieve the absolutely greatest maximum returns on investments. Then—surprise—the market drops substantially and we actually end up losing more by overambition.

3 **THEN COME AND FOLLOW CHRIST.**

Why was it difficult for the rich young ruler? Why did he feel sorrowful at Christ's amazing command? It was because he had great possessions; he had become rich. The riches had become cumbersome. Probably they were even causing him stress. Yet he still did not want to part with them simply because they were so plentiful. They had become a habit. They had become part of him. They had become an intrinsic part of his identity and sense of pride. They were symbolic of his accomplishment. They were tangible proof that he had been successful. If he were to sell them, surely he would expect that at least it would be in exchange for something that would be another good investment. He was stacking up for the future—that may have been his method of becoming rich in the first place. After all, why not continue in the same successful pattern? Many Christians would feel that their practice of smart investing has been indicative of good stewardship. It would certainly appear to be so from reading the parable of the talents.

But there is more than one way to be a good steward. Good stewardship is not limited merely to something delivered back in the same typical package. Good stewardship involves first of all our heart, our attitude. The first step to sound stewardship is a humble realization that what we think we own is not ours anyway. Then we handle these

matters with godly fear because it all belongs to the Master, who has other children whom He loves besides just ourselves and our families. And when the Master says, "SELL THAT THOU HAST, AND GIVE TO THE POOR," good stewardship means to do exactly that. Sometimes "the poor" may partly include the one to whom you are selling the item! Then you cannot get top dollar without defrauding your Master and going against His will!

"Some of the **Sabbathkeepers** who say to the world that they are looking for Jesus' coming, and that they believe we are having the last message of mercy, give way to their natural feelings, and barter, and trade, and are a proverb among unbelievers for their keenness in trade, for being sharp, and always getting the best end of a bargain. Such **would better lose a little and exert a better influence in the world, and a happier influence among brethren and show that this world is not their god.**"⁵

The rich ruler was young. Surely he needed the proceeds of all these things to prepare for the future. He was not an old man freely giving away his stuff just before dying, when he would not need it anyway. Since he was young, his possessions might still come in handy for years to come. Maybe a famine could arise in the future, and he would need something with which to bargain in order to avoid starvation. Plus, he was also a ruler. He had power and influence. Without his riches, it also could be likely that he'd lose some prestige among his peers. In view of all these factors, how would you respond in such a situation? How would I?

The Bible tells us how the young man responded:

"When the young man heard that saying, he went away sorrowful: for he had great possessions" (Matthew 19:22).

He went away sorrowful! How strange! It was odd for a person to leave the presence of Jesus sorrowfully. Most went away beaming with tremendous delight over newfound health or great spiritual fulfillment. Even children left with joy overflowing in their hearts. To pay a visit to Christ was

a wonderfully rewarding experience. Yet this man went away sorrowful. How tragic!

Typical worldly concerns, we might say. We tend to judge that man rather harshly. Surely we would never be afflicted with such ambition—or would we? What about the disciples—were they immune to such concerns? Let's see what thoughts this incident triggered even in the mind of devoted Peter:

"Then said Jesus unto his disciples, Verily I say unto you, That a rich man shall hardly enter into the kingdom of heaven. And again I say unto you, It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God. When his disciples heard it, they were exceedingly amazed, saying, Who then can be saved? But Jesus beheld them, and said unto them, With men this is impossible; but with God all things are possible. Then answered Peter and said unto him, Behold, we have forsaken all, and followed thee; what shall we have therefore?" (Matthew 19:23–27).

Peter is thinking, "by the way, we're following You, Lord, but what's in this for us?" Perhaps he was afraid or reluctant to ask this question before. After all, it seems a rather self-centered, unattractive thing to ask openly. But it's evidently something that Peter had been wondering about. . . . Now is his big chance to ask a question that has secretly been troubling him. What will be Christ's answer?

"Jesus said unto them, Verily I say unto you, That ye which have followed me, in the regeneration when the Son of man shall sit in the throne of his glory, ye also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel. And every one that hath forsaken houses, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands, for my name's sake, shall receive an hundredfold, and shall inherit everlasting life. But many that are first shall be last; and the last shall be first" (Matthew 19:28–30).

Sitting upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel. . . . Likely to be during the millennium, for sure. But when it says Israel—not the Gentile

world—it shows something special. A unique calling. These people are those who have really sacrificed a lot. They have forsaken houses and lands—symbolic of solid wealth. They did not sell something only to reinvest in something bigger. They GAVE. They FORSOOK their possessions and their dearest earthly ties in order to follow the bleeding Lamb of God, the Man of sorrows acquainted with grief.

The steps in the right order

Why did the rich young man have to sell before giving to the poor? Why couldn't he just give what he had directly to the poor? Perhaps it was because what he had was not what they really needed. Likewise, perhaps many of the things we have are not what the worthy poor really need. Such items might be sold and the proceeds given instead.

"When Jesus presented to the rich young ruler the condition of discipleship, Judas was displeased. He thought that a mistake had been made. If such men as this ruler could be connected with the believers, they would help sustain Christ's cause. If Judas were only received as a counselor, he thought, he could suggest many plans for the advantage of the little church. His principles and methods would differ somewhat from Christ's, but in these things he thought himself wiser than Christ."⁶

Remember: When Jesus spells out a certain step-by-step pattern to follow, do not presume to try to improve on the idea as Judas thought to do.

"How many have come to Christ, ready to cast their interests in with His, and, like the rich young ruler, earnestly desiring to inherit eternal life! But when the cost is presented to them—when they are told that they must forsake all, houses and lands, wife and children, and count not their lives dear unto themselves—they go away sorrowful. They want the treasures of heaven, and the life that measures with the life of God, but they are not willing to give up their earthly treasures. They are not willing to surrender all to obtain the crown of life."⁷

To those who are feeling cumbered about by the things of this world: Remember again the step-by-step process outlined by Jesus: **1. Sell.** (Get rid of stuff.) **2. Give.** (Be willing to sacrifice of those proceeds for the good of others.) **3. Come** and follow Jesus. (You'll then be free to discern His leading without being dragged down and confused by all the things that have been getting in your way.)

To attempt to carry out this process by mixing up the order of steps will not work. If Abraham had gone a different direction first instead of where God led, he would have gotten lost. Being lost at this point in earth's history can have very dangerous consequences. Due to the nearness of the close of probation and Christ's return, we may not now have the luxury of time to retrace our steps too many times. Therefore do not try to improvise on God's plan. Stick to the narrow way. Follow the GPS—God's Plan of Salvation, God's Positioning System, God's Preparation to Sacrifice.

"A great work needs to be done in our churches. The members are not prepared for the coming of the Lord. God's law needs to be written in mind and heart. **Many, like the rich young ruler, when tested and tried, will refuse to deny self, to take up the cross and follow Christ.** . . .

"Man sells himself cheaply when he spends his life in securing worldly advantages; for in the ambition to secure earthly estate, God is forgotten, and he reaps loss to all eternity. His money and lands cannot pay a ransom for his soul. **Better, far better, to have shattered hopes and the world's denunciation with the approval of God, than to sit with princes and forfeit heaven.** 'Ye cannot serve God and mammon,' Christ declares."⁸

Positive role models

Abraham went out, not knowing where he was to go. God did not make the whole pathway clear. He simply told him what to do step by step. (See Genesis 12:1.)

Gideon wisely chose to destroy his father's idols BEFORE he dared to go out to battle. There is a lesson in this

for us when we want to advance for God. (Judges 6:15, 25–31.)

The widow of Zarephath gave her only food to the man of God FIRST and was spared from starvation. (1 Kings 17:12–16).

Today, we like to have every road-map and destination clear. In the current Information Age, we insist on having everything spelled out. But perhaps there is a reason why God did not provide modern computerized technology to Abraham on his spiritual journey. He wanted the patriarch simply to trust Him step by step.

The Lord bids us, "Seek not ye what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink, neither be ye of doubtful mind. For all these things do the nations of the world seek after: and your Father knoweth that ye have need of these things. But rather seek ye the kingdom of God; and all these things shall be added unto you" (Luke 12:29–31).

"Laying aside His royal robe and kingly crown, [Christ our great example] stepped down from His high command in the heavenly courts, and, clothing His divinity with humanity, came to this world to help human beings to rid themselves of selfish practices, and to give themselves to the service of God in helping others.

"The healing of diseased souls and diseased bodies—this was Christ's work in our world, and it is our work also. His words to the rich young ruler, 'Sell that thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven,' are spoken to all who possess this world's goods. If they will follow Christ's example, using their entrusted possessions to relieve the physical and spiritual necessities of those less fortunate than themselves, they will secure the enduring riches of eternal life. . . .

"Self-surrender is the keynote of the teachings of Christ. Often it is presented and enjoined in language that seems authoritative, because God sees that there is no other way to save man than to cut away from his life that which, if entertained, would demoralize the whole being.

"The work of evangelizing the world has been greatly hindered

by personal selfishness. Some, even among professed Christians, are shortsighted, unable to see that the work of the gospel is to be supported by the goods that Christ has entrusted to them. Are we obeying the Saviour's instructions? Are we following His example? If we are truly converted, we shall regard ourselves as God's almoners, and will dispense for the advancement of His work the means that He has placed in our hands. **Money is needed in order that the work waiting to be done all over our world may be carried forward. If Christ's words were obeyed, there would be thousands where there are hundreds willing to carry out His directions to the ruler.**"⁹

"The young ruler represents *many* in our world today. God has entrusted His goods to them, that they may advance His kingdom by planting the standard of truth in places where the message has never been heard. But they do not carry out God's purpose. The words, 'Deny thyself, take up thy cross, and follow me,' cut directly across their cherished plans, and they refuse to obey. God's messages come to His people, but they have not been, and are not yet, willing to receive them. He is testing them as He was testing the young ruler when He said to him, 'If thou wilt be perfect, go and sell that thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come and follow me.'"¹⁰

Let us then tear out of our heart every fiber of selfishness. Why go away from the presence of Christ sorrowful? The future is coming fast. He has shown a better way. Listen to His still, small voice, and see if Christ's famous appeal to the young man somehow applies with greater force now, even if it never did before. *R*

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A Crisis in the Camp

By A. Balbach

"Who is on the Lord's side?"

In the third month after the children of Israel left Egypt, the land of bondage, they reached the Desert of Sinai. There they set up their tents in front of Mount Sinai, which was all in smoke, because the Lord had come down upon it in fire.

The people shook with fear when they saw the mountain shaking and heard the voice of God speaking the words of the Law. They pleaded with Moses: "Speak thou with us, and we will hear: but let not God speak with us, lest we die" (Exodus 20:19).

Since the people had seen the powerful hand of God protecting them from the plagues of Egypt and opening the Red Sea before them, they were convinced that Jehovah, the true God, was with them. The proclamation of the Law at Mount Sinai, where they had seen the greatest manifestation of the presence of God, was necessary before they could proceed on their journey toward the Promised Land.

Moses said to them: "Fear not: for God is come to prove you, and that his fear may be before your faces, that ye sin not" (verse 20). Moses emphasized that the purpose of God in giving His Law to the people was to keep them from sinning. And, after the Ten Command-

ments were repeated to them, they said: "All the words which the Lord hath said will we do" (Exodus 24:3).

"When every commandment of the law had been declared by Moses to all the people, he took the blood . . . and sprinkled both the book itself and all the people" (Hebrews 9:19, RSV). And he said, "Behold the blood of the covenant, which the Lord hath made with you concerning all these words" (Exodus 24:8).

Recording that experience many years later, Moses wrote: "The Lord spake unto you out of the midst of the fire. . . . And he declared unto you his covenant, which he commanded you to perform, even ten commandments; and he wrote them upon two tables of stone" (Deuteronomy 4:12, 13).

A few days after the Israelites had promised to serve no other god but Jehovah by keeping every commandment of His holy Law—the Decalogue—a serious crisis arose in the camp.

Moses and Joshua had been called to come up to the Lord on the mountain, and as the Israelites were anxiously waiting for their return day after day, they became impatient, indulged in murmuring, and began to doubt. In their feeling of helplessness, some even suggested it would be better to return to Egypt. After a few weeks, many in the camp said that their leader had disappeared forever, and that they now had to find a solution.

Rather than perishing in the desert, they reasoned, why not return to Egypt? "And when the people saw that Moses delayed to come down out of the mount, the people gathered themselves together unto Aaron, and said unto him, Up, make us gods, which shall go before us; for as for this Moses, the man that brought us up out of the land of Egypt, we wot not what is become of him" (Exodus 32:1).

A fearful crisis, almost beyond description! In this difficult situation, several parties—God, Satan, the people, Aaron, and Moses—played a significant role, which we will analyze in a few words.

God

Someone may say, God certainly knew what was going to happen. Then

He could have kept everything under His control so that things would not develop into a critical situation. He could, for example, have sent Moses back to the camp before the people started to become restless and unruly. Or He could have struck down some of those who began to show the wrong spirit. He could have manifested Himself to Aaron and to the people in some way, assuring them that He was still there. Why didn't the Lord take any preventive measures until the apostasy spiraled into rioting, and the shout, "Back to Egypt," echoed through the whole camp?

God could also have precluded the fall of our first parents as well as all other adversities through preventive measures. Why didn't He? Because all created intelligences were endowed with freedom of option. And we must all be put to the test. God will have in His kingdom only those who will obey Him by free choice. A question that should bother all rational human beings at this time is: Are we all sure that we have made the right choice?

Satan

The enemy is always on the alert to promote his work of destruction. Therefore, the apostle Peter warns us: "Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour" (1 Peter 5:8).

The people of Israel, at the foot of Mount Sinai, were not warned specifically about the danger and the test before them. The knowledge of the Law of God which they committed themselves to obey was all the knowledge they needed for the imminent test. And how about us? Do we need to be warned at every step? No!

About the Jews who were not prepared to recognize the promised Messiah, Jesus said; "They have Moses and the prophets; let them hear them" (Luke 16:29). What does He say about us? "They have the Bible and the Spirit of Prophecy. Let them hear them."

The people

"During this [time of waiting and suspense to Israel], there was time



for [them] to meditate upon the law of God which they had heard, and to prepare their hearts to receive the further revelations that He might make to them. They had none too much time for this work; and had they been thus seeking a clearer understanding of God's requirements, and humbling their hearts before Him, they would have been shielded from temptation. But they did not do this, and they soon became careless, inattentive, and lawless. . . .

"How often, in our own day, is the love of pleasure disguised by a 'form of godliness'! A religion that permits men, while observing the rites of worship, to devote themselves to selfish or sensual gratification, is as pleasing to the multitudes now as in the days of Israel."¹

Every crisis in the church reveals three classes of people. Where principles are involved, there are those who will stand up for the truth, even at the cost of their life. Others will be ready to sacrifice principles for the sake of convenience, under perilous circumstances. The indifferent majority will choose the popular side. Read 1 Kings 18:21.

With the cloud of God's presence before them, and in spite of all the evidence that they had seen, the Israelites turned their heart back to Egypt. What excuse did they have? "We do not know what has become of Moses." This is no excuse at all.

Aaron

Aaron is a type of weak, vacillating, irresponsible leadership. He is a fit representative of the clergy of the popular churches in our days. Aaron wanted to keep the people happy and stay out of trouble. "And there are still pliant Aarons, who, while holding positions of authority in the church, will yield to the desires of the unconsecrated, and thus encourage them in sin."²

Moses

When uncontrolled frenzy seemed to possess the crowd, the Lord spoke to Moses: "Go, get thee down; for thy people, which thou broughtest out of the land of Egypt, have corrupted themselves. . . .² Now therefore let me alone, that my wrath may wax hot against them, and that I may consume them: and I will make of thee a great nation" (Exodus 32:7, 10). Was it the purpose of God to destroy the people of Israel? No! The Lord only wanted to put Moses to the test—to see if he was willing to plead for them, showing fatherly love and interest for them. This would certainly imply the application of some drastic, corrective measures. "For whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth" (Hebrews 12:6).

"And Moses besought the Lord his God, and said, Lord, why doth thy wrath wax hot against thy people, which thou hast brought forth out of the land of Egypt with great power, and with a mighty hand? Wherefore should the Egyptians speak, and say, For mischief did he bring them out, to slay them in the mountains, and to consume them from the face of the earth? Turn from thy fierce wrath, and repent of this evil against thy people" (Exodus 32:11, 12).

As he approached the camp, Moses was filled with righteous indignation over the abominable scene—a heathen revelry, an imitation of the savagery that characterized the Egyptian feasts. He took the idol, threw it into the fire, ground it to dust, scattered it on the brook that descended from the mountain, and made the people drink of it.

Then Moses turned to his guilty brother and sternly rebuked him: "What did this people unto thee, that

We should spend more time on our knees, weeping and pleading for our people.

thou hast brought so great a sin upon them?" Consider the excuse that Aaron presented in self-defense: "Let not the anger of my lord wax hot: thou knowest the people, that they are set on mischief. For they said unto me, Make us gods, which shall go before us: for as for this Moses, the man that brought us up out of the land of Egypt, we wot not what is become of him" (Exodus 32:21–23).

Aaron's apology implies the following ideas characteristic of an irresponsible leader:

He would not accept any incrimination for the apostasy. "Why do you blame me?" This is the attitude of every person who, instead of admitting his evident guilt, will try to find a "scape-goat".

He tried to project into the people the blame that rightly belonged to him. "Why are you angry with me? You know these people. You are aware that they are determined to do evil. How could I stop them?" This is the alibi also used by modern Aarons.

He indirectly suggested that, if Moses had not stayed so long before returning from the mountain, the people would not have rebelled.

Aaron's self-justification reminds us of an old story—the arguments used by Adam and Eve when called to account for their disobedience. Many years later, Moses wrote about his intercession for the rebellious people: "And I took the two tables, and cast them out of my two hands, and brake them before your eyes. And I fell down before the Lord, as at the first, forty days and forty nights: I did neither eat bread, nor drink water, because of all your sins which ye sinned, in doing wickedly in the sight of the Lord, to provoke him to anger. For I was afraid of the anger and hot displeasure, wherewith the Lord was wroth against you to destroy you. But the Lord hearkened unto me at that time also. And the Lord was very angry with Aaron to have destroyed him:

and I prayed for Aaron also the same time" (Deuteronomy 9:17–20).

The experience of Moses was recorded for a purpose. Romans 15:4. We should spend more time on our knees, weeping and pleading for our people. Read Joel 2:12–17. This is our great need as we see that "the night is far spent" and "the day is at hand" (Romans 13:12).

Back to the experience at Mount Sinai: Standing at the entrance to the camp, Moses called out: "Who is on the Lord's side? let him come unto me" (Exodus 32:26). All the members of the tribe of Levi, who had not taken part in the apostasy, stood at the right side of Moses. Those of the other tribes who have sinned, but were repentant, stood at the left. But there was a third group, mostly from the mixed multitude, who persisted in their rebellion against God.

Then Moses commanded the Levites to gird on their swords and kill the impenitent ones, who wanted to go back to Egypt. "And there fell of the people that day about three thousand men" (Exodus 32:28).

Conclusion

"Love no less than justice demanded that for this sin judgment should be inflicted. God is the guardian as well as the sovereign of His people. He cuts off those who are determined upon rebellion, that they may not lead others to ruin. . . .

"Unless punishment had been speedily visited upon transgression [at Sinai], the same results would again have been seen. The earth would have become as corrupt as in the days of Noah."³

The Lord, in His mercy, destroys a few in order to save many, as He did at Mount Sinai; otherwise, He would have to kill many, as it happened in the Flood, in order to save a few. *✠*

References

¹ *Patriarchs and Prophets*, pp. 315, 317.

² *Ibid.*, p. 317.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 325.

High Heels Dangerous to Your Health

A black high-heeled shoe is positioned next to a yellow ruler. The ruler is vertical and shows measurements in inches and centimeters. The shoe's heel is approximately 4 inches high. The shoe is a classic pump style with a pointed toe and a thin stiletto heel.

Foot problems? It is estimated that 43 million people in the United States have them; but only fifteen million of them eventually seek medical help.

By Liliane Balbach

Studies of unshod natives in Africa show relatively few foot problems and no foot deformities in women.¹ What price are you willing to pay for being fashionable? Bunions, calluses, nerve irritations, ankle injuries, back, leg, and neck problems? In extreme cases, surgery? That is the price many women are paying for high-fashion footwear according to the American Physical Therapy Association (APTA).²

Women have the most foot surgeries

Dr. Michael Coughlin, an orthopedic surgeon, reviewed his surgical procedures to correct forefoot abnormalities

over a 15-year period and found that 87% of the procedures were done on women's feet. Foot abnormalities in women peaked in the fourth, fifth, and sixth decades of life. A study of 23,000 men found that only 4% had forefoot deformities.³

Another orthopedic surgeon states that from his 800 patients, who underwent surgeries for bunions, 94% were women. Of his 850 hammer toe surgeries, 80% were done on women.⁴

In 1993, the American Orthopedic Foot and Ankle Society (AOFAS) evaluated 356 healthy women to determine their shoe wearing habits. Eighty per cent of the women surveyed complained of foot pain and deformity. Some 88% of the women were wearing

shoes that were about 1/2 inch too narrow for their feet.⁵

Is it not obvious why so many women have foot problems? Almost nine out of ten women wear shoes that are too narrow or too small. Another problem is that women's shoes are not designed to fit the anatomy of their feet but rather the changing fashions of time. Men's shoes are designed to conform to the outer dimensions of the foot without causing it to compress or constrict. Women's typical, high fashion shoes, on the other hand, do not conform to the dimension of the foot. They often have a triangular toe box that constricts the normal rectangular dimensions of the forefoot.



Problems with high-heeled footwear

What's wrong with high heels? Higher heels increase the pressure on the forefoot. How much pressure is put on the forefoot by high-heeled shoes? Compared with no heel, forefoot pressure increases by 22% for 3/4-inch heel, 57% for a 2-inch heel, and 76% for a 3 1/4-inch heel.⁶ Deformities associated with high heels include potential for pain, callus, bunions, corns, hammer toes, and neuroma. Neuroma is a painful condition that develops from the pressure of high heels pinching the nerves between the bones of the feet as the weight is shifted to the front of the foot. Although some cases of neuroma can be eliminated with physical therapy, others require cortisone shots or surgery. Women who spend too many hours in heels more than 1 1/2 inches high are courting painful foot, leg, and back problems warned Maureen Wilhelm, a physical therapist and director of Sports Training and Physical Therapy in Livingston, NJ. The higher the heel, the more the body is forced into a posture that curves the spine and puts more stress on the back and neck, explained Wilhelm.⁷ High heels also tend to shorten the muscles and ligaments in the back of the legs. Wearing high heels for more than six months may cause the calf muscle to become shortened all the time. The body compensates for this tightness in the calf muscle by lowering the arch of the foot or affecting the knee, hip or back.

In 1998, Dr. C. Casey Kerrigan and her team from Harvard Medical School linked high heels to knee osteoarthritis. This painful, degenerative joint disease is characterized by the breakdown of the cartilage around the knee. This problem was caused by the very thin, stiletto heels. A later study looked at the chunkier heels now in fashion. The results revealed that wide heels increase the risk of developing osteoarthritis in the knees as much or more than the spindly-heeled stilettos. What is Dr. Kerrigan's recommendation in light of this evidence? She says: "It takes a long time to feel the effects of knee osteoarthritis, and once you do, it's too late." She concludes that low-heeled shoes or no heels are a woman's best choice against osteoarthritis.⁸

Reasons for Wearing High Heels

Why do women wear high heels? High heels tend to make the foot appear smaller by positioning it more vertically. They also constrict the widest part of the forefoot up to an inch, making it appear narrower. Some women who wear high heels feel that high heeled shoes enhance their figure and give the illusion that they are slimmer. High heels change the gait and posture causing the hips to sway more which some find sexually attractive. Many working women wear high heeled shoes because they feel it is part of their business attire. Height commands respect and projects an image of being in control. Some women feel this is important as they compete against the usually taller men.

Guidelines for buying shoes that fit

It is difficult to find shoes that fit women's feet because while the average foot is 3.66 inches wide at its broadest point, women's shoes are usually 3 inches wide. According to a survey by the AOFAS, foot widths in women can range anywhere from 3–4.5 inches. The following guidelines are given by the AOFAS:

- 1 Recognize that your forefoot spreads with age, and that you cannot wear the same shoe size as when you were in your twenties.
- 2 Measure the width of your foot. While you are standing barefoot on a piece of paper, have someone draw the outline of your foot. Measure the outline at the widest point. Always ask the sales clerk, if they have a "wide width" shoe. Finally the shoe industry is beginning to listen to the medical community, and not only to the fashion shoe designers. More stores are carrying "wide width" shoes. Many companies sell wide shoes on the web.
- 3 Measure the soles of your shoes. Ideally they should be as wide as your feet.

4 The length of your shoe should be half an inch longer than the measure from the heel to your longest toe. Few people realize that their feet grow over the years. While the heel stays the same, the front of the foot becomes wider and longer.

“Shall we refuse to be puppets of the fashion industry?”

5 Have both feet measured before buying shoes. Two out of three people have one foot significantly bigger than the other. Buy shoes to fit the largest foot.

6 Shop at the end of the day when your foot swells to its biggest size. Remember that comfort and fit depend not only on the length and width, but also on the height of the toe box.

7 High-heeled shoes increase the pressure on the front of the foot by at least 50%. AOFAS recommends that you wear high-heeled shoes only on special occasions. We say: If high-heeled shoes contribute to so many health problems, why even bother wearing them?

8 Choose round toe boxes and soft material over pointed toes and patent leather.

9 If you can't wiggle your toes in your new shoes, do not buy them.

10 Do not buy shoes that are small, planning to “break in” or make the leather to stretch. The tight shoe will deform your foot before you have a chance to “break it in.”

In most Western countries, boys and girls are involved in choosing their own shoes as young as 5 years old. Although most of them wear sneakers, by the time girls get to be twelve years of age, 15% are already wearing heels. By age fourteen, 30% of them are wearing high heels. The consequences

of introducing heels at such a young age increases the risk of deformity over time.⁹ As consumers, we can influence shoe manufacturers by refusing to purchase unhealthy, ill-fitting shoes for ourselves and our children.

A marvelous design of our Creator

Twenty-six jewel-like chips of ivory make up the bony structure of our foot. Our Creator designed each little bone to last as long as we shall live. Most of us will walk about 65,000 miles, or two and a half times around the world, during our lifetime. According to our Creator's design, our body weight is evenly spread through architecturally perfect arches which function as springs. How do you think He feels when we squeeze our foot into high fashion, pointed shoes and deform the body He has created?

How does He feel when we follow the fashion industry in the selection of our footwear instead of our Master Designer and Creator? As we study the anatomy and physiology of this beautiful body, given by our Creator, we are ashamed to realize that some of us take better care of our cars and tires than of our bodies and our feet. We cannot go to a store and buy a spare set of feet. When we say with David: “I will praise thee; for I am fearfully and wonderfully made” (Psalm 139:14), do we realize what we are really saying? We are acknowledging God to be the Master Designer of our bodies and thank Him for the wisdom and beauty of that design. When we do anything to modify or squeeze any part of our body, we are trying to improve on the original design of our Creator.

Do you know that the prophet Isaiah foresaw the coming of high-heeled fashionable footwear in our society? “Moreover the Lord saith, Because the daughters of Zion are haughty, and walk with stretched forth necks and wanton eyes, walking and mincing as they go, and making a tinkling with their feet: Therefore the Lord will smite with a scab the crown of the head of the daughters of Zion” (Isaiah 3:16, 17).

Why does the Bible condemn high heels? Obviously, for all the health reasons mentioned above. There is,

however, an additional reason which relates to the immorality of our age. Fashion experts acknowledge that high heels help to enhance a woman's sexual appeal by emphasizing certain parts of her body. Shall we refuse to be puppets of the fashion industry?

Make a choice

Several years ago, I attended a series of lectures by an orthopedic surgeon. He discussed the foot problems of his female patients who wore narrow and high-heeled shoes. After looking at several hundred slides of foot surgeries and deformed feet that were a direct result of improper shoe-wear, I determined never to buy another narrow, high-heeled pair of shoes again. Coming home, I evaluated all my shoes and threw out all those that did not meet the above recommendations. This was a painful process as I thought of how I had grieved my Saviour and paid money to deform the feet my Creator had given me.

You also may have been unaware of the health and moral consequences of wearing high-heeled shoes. If you are still struggling in light of the evidence, go to Calvary. Look at our Saviour nailed on the cross. Blood flowed freely from His forehead, His side, and from those precious feet. He suffered much so He could save us. All He asks us is a surrendered heart. Why not ask Him to give you the strength to do what is right? “It is God that girdeth me with strength, and maketh my way perfect. He maketh my feet like hinds' feet, and setteth me upon my high places” (Psalm 18:32, 33). *R*

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Where Is Your Flock?

Part 2

A study from the Bible and Spirit of Prophecy, with annotations by Cherie Shelor

In the first part of this series, we spoke of the blessings achieved when children cleave closely to their parents, spending time together as a unit as much as possible, at least until the children develop into the level of physical and mental maturity reached at about 20 years of age. This understanding was substantiated by both biblical and scientific evidence.

"We are numbered with Israel. All the instruction given to the Israelites of old concerning the education and training of their children, all the promises of blessing through obedience, are for us."¹ To sit back and expect others to carry out your sacred, parental responsibility in this regard is a terrible injustice.

"God had commanded the Hebrews to teach their children His requirements and to make them acquainted with all His dealings with their fathers. This was one of the special duties of every parent—one that was not to be delegated to another. In the place of stranger lips the loving hearts of the father and mother were to give instruction to their children. Thoughts of God were to be associated with all the events of daily life."² Deuteronomy 11:19 instructs, "Ye shall teach [God's laws] your children, speaking of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, when thou liest down, and when thou risest up." Obviously, this continuous kind of instruction can most effectively be

given by parents who invest significant quality time with their children.

"The family circle is the school in which the child receives its first and most enduring lessons. Hence parents should be much at home. By precept and example, they should teach their children the love and the fear of God; teach them to be intelligent, social, affectionate, to cultivate habits of industry, economy, and self-denial. By giving their children love, sympathy, and encouragement at home, parents may provide for them a safe and welcome retreat from many of the world's temptations."³

"The parents and children form a family firm, and whenever possible they should be kept together."⁴

A generation in peril

"There are Christian parents who do not discern that Satan is working cunningly to catch unwary souls. Unless fathers and mothers become converted, unless they prayerfully consider the home duties which they have to perform, which it is sinful negligence to leave undone, unless they work strenuously at every point to outgeneral the enemy, their hearts will be pierced with many sorrows, for their children will be a disgrace to them and to the church. . . .

"With what care parents should guard their children from careless, loose, demoralizing habits! Fathers and mothers, do you realize the importance of the responsibility resting on you?

Do you allow your children to associate with other children without being present to know what kind of education they are receiving? Do not allow them to be alone with other children. Give them your special care. Every evening know where they are and what they are doing."⁵

When we place our children alone and unsupervised among other children their age, we are making it very easy for the influence of the enemy of souls to take advantage of their inexperience. They become easily swayed by peer pressure as the common tendency of this era is to undermine all forms of authority (beginning with parents—and then extending outward also to the wider sphere).

"Examples of rebellion against parental and divine authority are ever before the youth; many form attachments for infidels and unbelievers, and cast in their lot with the enemies of God."⁶

May the Lord help us to reform in this area and keep our priorities straight! Let us realize that the time is now for us to make a decision. Whom will we follow: the idols and traditions of the world or the principles of truth? We may have to give up something—our plush house, that fancy "dream" car, a lucrative, super-absorbing job, whatever—in order to carry out this task more thoroughly. But are not the souls of our children and family more valuable than those material things?

"In this time of peril we are to keep our children separate and distinct from the world."

As Advent believers, we are well aware that we are living in the Day of Judgment. What is God's plan for His people in these end times? What further evidence do we have from Scripture that our children should be with us—especially in the solemn age in which we are living? Jesus is in the Most Holy Place in the heavenly sanctuary, continuing His work of intercession. We are living in the antitypical Day of Atonement. What then is required of us? We read in Joel chapter 2:

"Blow the trumpet in Zion, sanctify a fast, call a solemn assembly: Gather the people, sanctify the congregation, assemble the elders, **gather the children, and those that suck the breasts**: let the bridegroom go forth of his chamber, and the bride out of her closet" (verses 15, 16). (Notice that the children and babes are here included as part of the picture, not divorced from it as a separate unit.)

Consider God's counsel to Israel: "While the judgments of God were falling upon the land of Egypt, the Lord directed the Israelites not only to keep their children within their houses, but to bring in even their cattle from the fields. . . .

"As the Israelites kept their children within their houses during the time when the judgments of God were in the land of Egypt, so **in this time of peril we are to keep our children separate and distinct from the world. We are to teach them that the commandments of God mean much more than we realize.** Those who keep them will not imitate the practices of the transgressors of God's law."⁷

Brethren and sisters, we are instructed to have our family by our side. Our children should be with us as we are working, playing, learning, studying, and worshipping. Has our silver become dross and our wine mixed with water? (Isaiah 1:22). Have we compromised our purity?

Where does the concept of division/separation within the family get

its roots? From none other than the enemy of God—Satan himself. It began in the Garden of Eden and, tragically, it is practiced by the fallen churches of today. Are we not imitating the "beast"? Inexperienced children are left alone amid the influences of strangers. We must guard against this evil and realize that our children are precious gifts given to us by the Creator to love, protect, and establish in the word of God.

A divine commission

We as parents are given a divine commission.

"Here is your work, parents, to develop the characters of your children in harmony with the precepts of the Word of God. This work should come first, for eternal interests are here involved. The character building of your children is of more importance than the cultivation of your farms, more essential than the building of houses to live in, or of prosecuting any manner of business or trade.

"Neither the church school nor the college affords the opportunities for establishing a child's character building upon the right foundation that are afforded in the home.

"Those who do not make the crooked character straight in this life can have no part in the future immortal life. Oh, how important it is for the youth to keep straight. Parents act an important part in this matter. On them rests the sacred responsibility of training their children for God. To them has been given the work of helping their little ones form characters which will gain for them entrance into the courts above.

"Parents, for Christ's sake do not blunder in your most important work, that of molding the characters of your children for time and for eternity. An error on your part in neglect of faithful instruction, or in the indulgence of that unwise affection which blinds your eyes to their defects and prevents you from giving them proper restraint,

will prove their ruin. Your course may give a wrong direction to all their future career. You determine for them what they will be and what they will do for Christ, for men, and for their own souls."⁸

"To parents who have begun their training wrong, I would say, Do not despair. You need to be soundly converted to God. You need the true spirit of obedience to the Word of God. You must make decided reforms in your own customs and practices. . . . A "Thus saith the Lord" should guide you in all your plans of education. . . .

"Repent before God for your neglected work as home missionaries."⁹

There has been no other time in history when a society has been so agnostic toward the family. Satan has deceived us into thinking that we must be divided in order to conquer. This is error. Jesus made it clear that if a kingdom is divided against itself, that kingdom cannot stand. And if a house is divided against itself, that house cannot stand. God has called us who are living at the close of time to be ready and watching. Let us as individuals assemble our families together. As the body of believers, let us return to the "old paths" (Jeremiah 6:16), the original plan of God. We shall be asked one day soon, "Where is the flock that was given thee, thy beautiful flock" (Jeremiah 13:20). Let us be ready and able to look to the Lord unashamedly and say, "Here, Lord! Here is the beautiful flock you entrusted to me!"

References

¹ *The Ministry of Healing*, p. 405.

² *Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 592.

³ *Fundamentals of Christian Education*, p. 65.

⁴ *Manuscript Releases*, vol. 15, p. 44.

⁵ *Ibid.*, vol. 16, p. 144.

⁶ *Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 169.

⁷ *Child Guidance*, p. 304. [Emphasis supplied.]

⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 169, 170. [Emphasis supplied.]

⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 69.

USA

*Camp meeting in
Bethany, WV,
June 2009.*



Venezuela

*Believers and visitors in
Venezuela.*



Brazil

*The students with
teachers at the
missionary school
in Curitiba, May
2009 (below).*



Opening God's Work in

Suriname

By Ediberg Alves Peres

First impressions . . .

Here we were in a foreign country, the former Dutch Guiana. For some it may not have seemed a long journey, but to us it seemed as if we had traveled to another world. Having flown from Belém do Pará, Brazil, to Paramaribo, the capital of Suriname, when we arrived, we did not know anyone.

While my wife slept the rest of the night, I spent the remaining hours of that night until daybreak awake, worried, thinking of the future, and asking God to prepare a place for us.

Finding a house

When morning came, I noticed the presence of fellow Brazilians. Some employees of the hotel were Brazilians. This was a relief. On the other hand, we soon became worried because, through some information, we learned that it wouldn't be easy or cheap to find a house to rent in Paramaribo, especially since we were Brazilians.

Soon our comrade, brother Welison, arrived, and his wife would be arriving a month later.

After three nights at the hotel we found a house to rent. It was hard but we were able to convince a Hindu man to rent his house to two Brazilian couples to live in. He wanted to rent but only to one couple, even though the house has three small rooms. In the end he relented, but only on the condition that no religious meetings for the public would be held in the house. Having no other option, we accepted.

So, now we have a house to live in. It is a relatively primitive home; my wife and I still live there without any bathrooms or showers. We don't have running water. There is only a shared faucet where everybody gets water for the necessities of the house. But despite this, we like our little house.

Work and first contacts

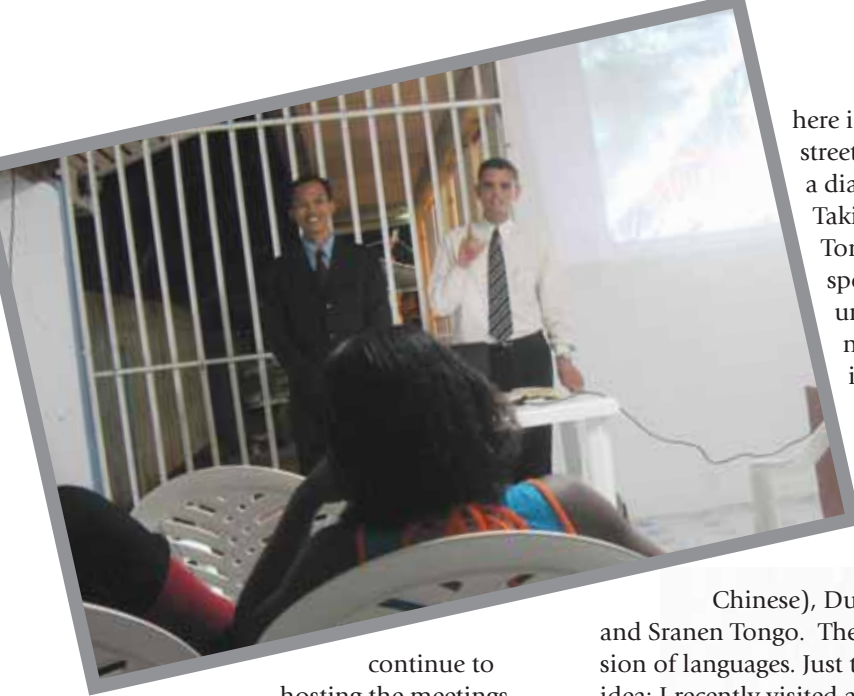
We started our colporteur work among the Brazilians. This way we came in contact with many of the

Brazilians that live here. The majority are people involved with the extraction of gold in the jungles of Suriname. The ones that don't work directly with prospecting have activities related to it. The prospectors come usually from Maranhão. The women are from Pará.

We have made many contacts with Brazilians. Some have accepted Bible studies, but not all that start the studies persevere to the end. They are more concerned with finding gold and returning to Brazil than they are with their soul's salvation. It is a pity that the majority of them spend everything on drinking and prostitution. This is the sad reality of the majority of the Brazilians here.

Interested Brazilians

Today we have a small family of interested Brazilians. One lady, sister Francisca, even tithes. She is SDA. She was the first person we have found that is genuinely interested in the message. We even started a small Sabbath School in her house when we first arrived, but the Hindu owner forbade her from



continue to hosting the meetings.

Coincidentally, while at the market we met another Adventist Brazilian. He even became our friend, so we began to share Bible studies with him. He has not made his final decision yet but has shown himself to be convinced of the present truth.

Through this brother, we met his grown children that also live here. They are Pentecostals. By the grace of God, even though one brother is a deacon in the Assembly of God church, he now understands almost all aspects of the present truth. He still has to make his decision.

He even contacted brother Welison's wife and took the couple to live in his house so that our sister takes care of the house and his children. He also lent us his garage, where we have been holding Sabbath morning and Sunday evening meetings for some months now.

In truth, the building is only a garage, but we have adapted it nicely for more extensive use. Our meetings often attract many visitors and curious people that come to watch. A few souls have begun to attend the meetings on a regular basis. Some Brazilian friends visit us but without demonstrating any real interest. At least they are listening, and the seeds of truth are being sown.

Contacts with Surinameses

There is a logical barrier to our efforts because of the language. We speak Portuguese, but the language spoken

here is Dutch. In the street they speak a dialect called Taki-Taki or Sranen Tongo. English is spoken and largely understood, but not all know it. In general a Surinamese speaks four languages: the native language (Hindi,

Chinese), Dutch, English, and Sranen Tongo. There is a confusion of languages. Just to give you an idea: I recently visited a Hindu couple. They spoke to me in Dutch but among themselves in Hindi.

TV programs and the radio alternate between one hour of English (films and documentaries), another hour Hindi, another of Dutch, Taki-Taki . . . and so on.

My wife and I have been studying Dutch from the time we first arrived. It is a difficult language, but I can already communicate in it. Before, I had to communicate in English, but not everybody understands that language, and my English is still very poor. At this point in time, although I can now communicate somewhat in English and Dutch, I'm still far from being able to hold an elaborate conversation in either of these languages. But I have already given some Bible studies in both.

Brother Welison also started studying Dutch but has dedicated more time to English.

In spite of the initial language barrier, we have already found some native friends here. This is the main objective of our mission—to gain the Surinameses. They are the aborigines in this country and won't leave; they are the future of the work here. We

have made friendships with some of them. This is the first important step.

What we are missing is literature in Dutch or even in English. I think that this is an excellent field for colporteur work among the natives. Our greatest desire is to produce literature on natural medicine in the Dutch language. This will be a great step in advancing the work here.

Work and subsistence

The colporteur work among the Brazilians here is not particularly effective at this point. The Brazilians here are not very interested in books. In reality, they are just seeking gold—and for this they are willing to risk their life in the face of hardship and disease in the Amazon forest. Seeking to provide for their need, we have introduced natural remedies to them. We have been selling books and natural remedies—this has been our only option. The brethren from our church in Brazil have been very supportive of our efforts here and have helped us in every way possible.

Thanks

I, together with brother Welison, thank God and brother Helenilson for motivating us to pursue the wonderful experience that we are having here in Suriname. I thank also the brethren that have helped us up to now. We are thankful also for the support that the South Brazilian Union has given us.

So far our work here has only just begun; there is much to do. These circumstances verify the words of Christ: "The harvest truly is plenteous, but the labourers are few" (Matthew 9:37). *R*





THE GAME OF Dishes

"It is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure"

(Philippians 2:13).

*N*ot the dishes again!" moaned the little Mary. "I wanted to go outside and play!"
"Of course," agreed Mother.
"There will be time for that, but this comes first. The angels like to see a clean kitchen. And we like for the angels to feel comfortable in our home, don't we?"
"Yes, but I don't like to wash dishes!" cried Mary.

Mother thought for a moment. "Mary," she said, "Don't you think that the God of heaven is big enough to change your mind?"

"He's big enough to do everything."

"That's right, Mary. He made the whole universe. Why not ask Him to help you LIKE washing the dishes?"

"LIKE washing the dishes! That's impossible!"

"Don't you think that God likes for the dishes to be clean?"

"Well, yes, but I like it better when Mother does the job!"

"Mary, I have an idea. Let's ask the Creator of the universe to help you *like* washing dishes. After all, He can do the impossible. Remember, that is His specialty. And it is His good pleasure to see you enjoying your task. So, why not try?"

Mary laughed, but she agreed to give it a try. After they rose from prayer, Mary said, "Mother, let's make a game of dishes. I'll sing, soap, scrub, and rinse. Then we can count how many dishes fill up the rack to be

dried. Then there will be another melody for drying!"

The kitchen was soon filled with song, and the little girl quickly forgot her troubles. The game of dishes was won, and Mary was the winner.

What made the victory possible? "Through faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God, so that things which are seen were not made of things which do appear" (Hebrews 11:3). Does this verse only speak of planets and such? Dirty dishes washed by hands motivated by cleansed hearts are a miniature miracle in themselves! Why not make a game of all those difficult chores? After all, nothing is too hard for God when it is His will!

Ellen White once wrote to an orphan boy: "You have the lesson of submission to learn. You consider it beneath you to do duties about the house—chores and little errands. You have a positive dislike for these little requirements; but you should **cultivate a love** for these very things to which you are so averse. Until you do this, you will not be acceptable help anywhere. **When engaged in these necessary small things, you are doing more real service than when engaged in large business and in laborious work.**"¹

We all have chores we don't like to face, so why not imitate the prayer of the psalmist: "Teach me to do thy will; for thou art my God: thy spirit is good; lead me into the land of uprightness. Quicken me, O Lord, for thy name's sake: for thy righteousness' sake bring my soul out of trouble" (Psalm 143:10, 11). The Creator is big enough to help if you let Him! ✨

¹ *Testimonies*, vol. 2, pp. 308, 309. [Emphasis supplied.]



By B. Monteiro