# the REFORMATION Vol. 51, No. 2

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The age in which we live calls for reformatory action." – *Testimonies*, vol. 4, p. 488. *Editor* D. Sureshkumar

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# Home & Family

**Children's Corner** 

veryone loves to get something for free. Businesses monopolize on this by offering free things when they want you to buy something they otherwise might not entice you to purchase. Conscientious persons think twice before they get fish-hooked by this type of bait.

Many people often expect a "free ride" in life as well. Yet "the proverb, "The world owes me a living,' has in it the essence of falsehood, fraud, and robbery. The world owes no man a living who is able to work and gain a living for himself."<sup>1</sup>

Scripture makes it clear: "Let every man prove his own work, and then shall he have rejoicing in himself alone, and not in another. For every man shall bear his own burden" (Galatians 6:4, 5).

Even when performing welfare ministry, there are some guidelines to give us wisdom when we desire to help the needy in the best, most effective way possible:

"Instead of encouraging the poor to think that they can have their eating and drinking provided free or nearly so, we should place them where they can help themselves. We should endeavor to provide them with work, and if necessary teach them how to work. ... Let boys and girls be thoroughly taught some useful trade or occupation. We are to educate the poor to become self-reliant. This will be true help, for it will not only make them self-sustaining, but will enable them to help others."<sup>2</sup>

# How does this principle apply to the plan of salvation?

Salvation is a free gift. We cannot earn it—we are warmly urged to reach out and accept it. What a wonderful plan! What more could we want? The popular churches teach that this is enough. Yet deep down, we all know there is more to it than that. When we are drawn to the beauty of Christ and seek to develop a relationship with Him, we will want to become like Him in character. And, yes, God requires this from us—He does not simply toss us a "free ride" to Heaven. Only those who, with the help of Christ, develop a character like His will endure to eternity. Otherwise, Heaven itself would become polluted by sin-and our perfect Creator will not allow that to happen.

"There is cheap religion in abundance, but **there is no such thing as cheap Christianity**."<sup>3</sup>

"Heaven will be cheap enough, if we obtain it through suffering. We must deny self all along the way, die to self daily, let Jesus alone appear, and keep His glory continually in view.

"The work of salvation is not child's play, to be taken hold of at will and let alone at pleasure. It is the steady purpose, the untiring effort, that will gain the victory at last. It is he who endureth to the end that shall be saved. It is they who patiently continue in well-doing that shall have eternal life and the immortal reward."<sup>4</sup>

"We cannot earn salvation, but we are to seek for it with as much interest and perseverance as though we would abandon everything in the world for it.

"We are to seek for the pearl of great price, but not in worldly marts or in worldly ways. The price we are required to pay is not gold or silver, for this belongs to God. Abandon the idea that temporal or spiritual advantages will win for you salvation. **God calls for your willing obedience. He asks you to give up your sins**."<sup>5</sup> **R** 

### References

- <sup>1</sup> Testimonies, vol. 6, p. 278.
  - <sup>2</sup> Ibid., pp. 278, 279.
  - <sup>3</sup> Testimonies to Ministers, p. 339.
  - <sup>4</sup> *The Faith I Live By*, p. 359. [Emphasis supplied.]
  - <sup>5</sup> Christ's Object Lessons, p. 117. [Emphasis supplied.]

Piging Into Doctrine Counting the Co-Knowing the Knowing the

greeing to any serious commitment requires thoughtful consideration. This is no less true when responding to the call of Jesus Christ. The Lord declares, "If any man come to me, and hate not his father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple. And whosoever doth not bear his cross, and come after me, cannot be my disciple. For which of you, intending to build a tower, sitteth not down first, and counteth the cost, whether he have sufficient to finish it? ... Whosoever he be of you that forsaketh not all that he hath, he cannot be my disciple" (Luke 14:26-28, 33).

The servant of the Lord concurs: "We are not to rush into the acceptance of the gospel without any fixed stability of purpose. If we receive Jesus Christ, we must receive all the conditions, all the requirements."<sup>1</sup>

There is indeed a cost involved, and there are conditions to be met when

accepting the gospel call. We have been given complete freedom of choice; we can choose whether or not to accept the conditions necessary to follow the Master. Christ would be, most certainly willing and eager to accept all, but He cannot jeopardize all of heaven by risking the chance of a second rebellion. He loves us tremendously with an undying love—and that is why He clearly lays out the necessary conditions upon which our service will be acceptable in the sight of the heavenly government.

### The broad road is deceptive

Many professed Christians today dwell on the concept of unconditional love and total acceptance on the part of God. It is certainly true that our God is abundant in loving-kindness and tender mercy, but to dwell on only those aspects of His character is to paint a picture that is artistically unbalanced.

"We need Jesus more than doctrine," many say. How sad that they should make such a statement as if the two were in no way connected! In reality, "Christ, His character and work, is the center and circumference of all truth. He is the chain upon which the jewels of doctrine are linked. In Him is found the complete system of truth."<sup>2</sup>

Christ plainly warns: "Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven. Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ve that work iniquity" (Matthew 7:21–23).

Yes, these words in Matthew 7 are the st, e Conditions

A study from the Bible and Spirit of Prophecy prepared by B. Monteiro

words of the loving Jesus. Just as He addresses the lukewarm persons whom He spews out of His mouth in Revelation 3:16, the Lord speaks to all who have professed His name and even have done wonderful works in His name but have never actually known Him; they just have known about Him. Woe to all who would fall into such a trap! Wouldn't we be wise to find out how to avoid such self-deception? Obviously, there are some serious conditions that need to be met on our part in order to escape being among that rejected class!

> Let us not deceive ourselves: "The unconditional pardon of sin never has been, and never will be. Such pardon would show the abandonment of the principles of

righteousness, which are the very foundation of the government of God."<sup>3</sup>

# Why do people tend to give a weak, lukewarm message?

So often we want to give an easy message. We want to be nice to people, so we are tempted to give a soft, comfortable message to souls. We want to offer them peace. But if we are not careful, whose version of peace may it end up being—Christ's or Satan's? Deep down, all really need truth more than comfort. According to Inspiration, the good news is that we don't have to choose between the two: "There is comfort and peace in the truth, but no real peace or comfort can be found in falsehood."<sup>4</sup>

### Why are the "conditions of acceptance" so vital?

"Our own merit will never commend us to the favor of God; it is the worthiness of Jesus that will save us, His blood that will cleanse us; yet we have a work to do in complying with the conditions of acceptance."<sup>5</sup> So, obviously, if there is something for us to do, wouldn't these "conditions of acceptance" be important to know? Would our merciful, loving God withhold them from us? Of course not! "The conditions are plainly stated, and those who read the Word need make no mistake. If we will prove ourselves true and faithful, the Lord will comply with the conditions He has made."<sup>6</sup>

### What are the conditions?

### 1. Recognizing our sense of need

Most of us are familiar with the history recorded in Luke 18:10–14, where the publican who realized that he was a great sinner was forgiven, rather than the self-righteous Pharisee. "**The sense** of need, the recognition of our poverty and sin, is the very first condition of acceptance with God. 'Blessed are the poor in spirit; for theirs is the kingdom of heaven' (Matthew 5:3)."<sup>7</sup>

### 2. Willingness to obey God's commandments

Surprisingly enough, this is somewhat of an unpopular idea. We all tend to hope for a "free ride." Yet even the invitation to "come" unto Christ involves from our part the action of coming. Although it is certainly the goodness of God that draws us to repent (Romans 2:4), we must nonetheless actively respond to that wooing of the Holy Spirit by indeed coming to Him. We do a disservice to those whom we seek to teach if we fail to give them the complete picture of how this works. "There are souls perishing. They must know the terms of salvation. They must be taught that the conditions of acceptance are the same now as they were in Adam's day-obedience to all God's commandments."8

"Those who walk in obedience will know what truth is. . . . In order to know the truth, we must be willing to obey. Those whose affections are placed on the world are not willing to give up their plans for the plans of Christ."9

Let us consider for a moment the case of the paralytic at the pool of Bethesda. (See John 5:1-9.) Which came first-the healing or the man's obedience to Christ's command? The Spirit of Prophecy explains how this miracle occurred: "Jesus does not ask this sufferer to exercise faith in Him. He simply says, 'Rise, take up thy bed, and walk.' But the man's faith takes hold upon that word. Every nerve and muscle thrills with new life, and healthful action comes to his crippled limbs. Without question he sets his will to obey the command of Christ, and all his muscles respond to his will. Springing to his feet, he finds himself an active man.

"Jesus had given him no assurance of divine help. The man might have stopped to doubt, and lost his one chance of healing. But **he believed Christ's word, and in acting upon it he received strength**."<sup>10</sup>

Thus, as the man took action, he received a surge of divine power-he was healed! This is how humanity cooperates with divinity-successful teamwork between God and the person. There is a common misconception that people cannot obey until they are converted. But that is not what Inspiration says! Here is how the process is explained: "Until Christianity is planted in the heart, it cannot control the life, for it is the evil in the heart that must be corrected. It is not enough to have a form of godliness without holiness to the Lord, for it is like cleansing the outside of the cup while impurities remain within. A belief of doctrines, however pure they may be, will not save a soul from death, unless they are brought into contact with the life. The heart must be purified through obedience to the truth."11

So, the purest obedience comes from the heart, but none are to be discouraged from obeying, even if at first they find that their motives are flawed. They must at least mechanically take the first step forward. In the very act of obedience, the new habit of obeying begins to be established in place of the old. As the soul that recognizes the need for deeper heart work pleads to the Lord for it, he or she is helped as the heart is purified through obedience. This is a scriptural principle, that "ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit" until by God's grace you finally come to the point of "unfeigned love"-in other words, finally developing motives that are absolutely 100% pure-like Christ's! (1 Peter 1:22). This is what it means to have the mind of Christ. (1 Corinthians 2:16.)

# 3. Willingness to separate from the world

"[2 Corinthians 6:17 quoted.] Here is a promise to us on condition of obedience. If we will come out from the world, and be separate, and touch not the unclean He will receive us. Here are the conditions of our acceptance with God. We have something to do ourselves. Here is a work for us. We are to show our separation from the world. The friendship of the world is enmity with God. It is impossible for us to be friends of the world and yet be in union with Christ. But what does this mean: to be friends of the world? It is to unite hands with them, to enjoy what they enjoy, to love that which they love, to seek for pleasure, to seek for gratification, to follow our own inclinations. We do not in following inclination have our affections upon God; we are loving and serving ourselves. But here is a grand promise: 'Come out from among them and be ve separate.' Separate from what? The inclinations of the world, their tastes, their habits; the fashions, the pride, and the customs of the world. 'Come out from among them, and be ye separate, and touch not the unclean, and I will receive you.' In making this move, in showing that we are not in harmony with the world, the promise

of God is ours. He does not say *perhaps* I will receive you; **but**, **'I** *will* **receive you.' It is a positive promise. You have a surety that you will be accepted of God**. Then in separating from the world you connect yourself with God; you become a member of the royal family; you become sons and daughters of the Lord."<sup>12</sup>

# 4. Correcting ill feelings between ourselves and others

Jesus says, "If thou bring thy gift to the altar, and there rememberest that thy brother hath ought against thee; leave there thy gift before the altar, and go thy way; first be reconciled to thy brother, and then come and offer thy gift" (Matthew 5:23, 24).

We need to make wrongs right. This is another idea that may not be popular because it is not always easy. But it is necessary nonetheless.

### 5. Ceasing all known sin

"If we regard iniquity in our hearts, if we cling to any known sin, the Lord will not hear us; but the prayer of the penitent, contrite soul is always accepted. When all known wrongs are righted, we may believe that God will answer our petitions."<sup>13</sup>

"'He that covereth his sins shall not prosper; but whoso confesseth and forsaketh them shall have mercy' (Proverbs 28:13). If any man has been dishonest and has wronged his neighbor and his God, there is but one course for him to pursue. He must confess his wrong; he must restore again that he has robbed; he must forsake his evil ways, and have repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ. . . .

"Do you manifest impatience and utter hasty words? Are you full of self-esteem? Have you lustful thoughts and practices? Are you doing things directly contrary to the purposes of God? Are you robbing your heavenly Father by withholding your talents and your heart from Him? Why not cease doing this way? Why not make a full surrender to God? He will impart to you His light and peace, and you will taste of His salvation. Do not any longer bring to God a lame, diseased offering. Your powers, mental and physical, are enfeebled by your own course of transgression; but such an offering is not acceptable to heaven. Why not come and be healed of your infirmities and offer a living sacrifice, holy, and without blemish? Have you been robbing God in tithes and offerings? . . . [Malachi 3:10 quoted.] Why not take the Lord at His word?"<sup>14</sup> (The above passage comes from an article entitled, "Conditions of Acceptance With God.")



### 6. Perseverance

Luke 18 gives a parable of contrast to reveal the importance of persistent prayer. "Perseverance in prayer has been made a condition of receiving."<sup>15</sup>

"We must agonize in order to subdue self; for self-ease and self-indulgence are the most deceptive of sins, stupefying the conscience and blinding the understanding. Oh, that those who have heard the testing message would awake from their sleep and no longer remain in careless indifference! We need the earnest desire of the importunate widow and the Syrophenician woman—a determination that will not be repulsed....

"Resolution, self-denial, and consecrated effort are required for the work of preparation. The understanding and the conscience may be united; but if the will is not set to work, we shall make a failure. Every faculty and feeling must be engaged. Ardor and earnest prayer must take the place of listlessness and indifference. Only by earnest, determined effort and faith in the merits of Christ can we overcome, and gain the kingdom of heaven."<sup>16</sup>

### 7. Cultivating faith

"Without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him" (Hebrews 11:6).

"The pure and holy garments are not prepared to be put on by anyone after he has entered the gate of the city. All who enter will have on the robe of Christ's righteousness and the name of God will be seen in their foreheads. This name is the symbol which the apostle saw in vision, and signifies the yielding of the mind to intelligent and loyal obedience to all of God's commandments. There will be no covering up of sins and faults to hide the deformity of character; no robes will be half washed; but all will be pure and spotless."17

"Comply with the conditions and believe [God] will accept you as His child. Be not faithless, but believing."  $^{118}$   $\mathcal{O}$ 

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- <sup>1</sup> Bible Training School, October 1, 1916.
- <sup>2</sup> Our High Calling, p. 16. [Emphasis supplied.]
- <sup>3</sup> Patriarchs and Prophets, p. 522.
- <sup>4</sup> The Desire of Ages, 671.
- <sup>5</sup> Steps to Christ, p. 95.
- <sup>6</sup> The Signs of the Times, March 15, 1899.
- <sup>7</sup> Christ's Object Lessons, p. 152. [Emphasis supplied.]
- <sup>8</sup> The Review and Herald, July 2, 1895. [Emphasis supplied.]
- <sup>9</sup> Our High Calling, p. 16. [Emphasis supplied.]
   <sup>10</sup> The Desire of Ages, pp. 202, 203. [Emphasis supplied.]
- <sup>11</sup> The Signs of the Times, May 7, 1894. [Emphasis supplied.]
- <sup>12</sup> Ibid., January 31, 1878. [Emphasis supplied.]
- <sup>13</sup> Steps to Christ, p. 95.
- <sup>14</sup> The Review and Herald, April 2, 1889.
- <sup>15</sup> Steps to Christ, p. 97.
- <sup>16</sup> The Youth's Instructor, May 24, 1900.
- <sup>17</sup> Ibid., August 18, 1886. [Emphasis supplied.]
  <sup>18</sup> Our High Calling, p. 119.

# Confession Restitution –What Are They?

### By Tony Maraizu

Many professed Christians think that confession can substitute restitution. For example, they retain items, money, and other possessions which they have unjustly acquired—thinking that since they have confessed their sins to God, restitution is no longer necessary. However, clear understanding of these two words will help everyone who wants to spend eternity with Christ Jesus.

### What is confession?

Confession is the acknowledgment of a crime, fault or something to one's disadvantage. It involves an open declaration of guilt, failure, debt, or accusation.

Restitution refers to the act of returning or restoring to a person a material object or right of which he or she has been unjustly deprived. Can God forgive someone who has confessed his or her sins while retaining the properties, money, or items which he or she unjustly acquired from others? Can mere confession make such person acceptable to God?

What about people who tarnish others' image by misrepresenting them to others, misstating their words, bearing false witness or injuring their influence? Is their confession accepted by God if they confess without going back to those whom they misrepresented and without taking back their words?

Before quote from the Bible and the Spirit of Prophecy, let me share this brief story with you.

Close to where I was working two years ago, there is a very big hospital. One day, a childless woman (who desperately wanted a baby) successfully stole a two-day-old baby girl who was born in that hospital, while the infant's mother was fast asleep. The kidnapper then traveled, along with the newborn, back to her home over 800 km away from the hospital. When the mother woke up, she cried and searched for her baby everywhere but could not find her. The case was reported to the police, efforts were made to recover the baby but in vain. Eventually the case died off since there was no suspect.

This thing happened in the year 1993. So in the year 2007 the same woman returned to the same hospital with a 15-year-old teenage girl and explained to the doctor in the hospital what she did 15 years ago. She admitted that, from the moment she stole the baby, she never had peace of mind. She said, "For 15 years now, I have been confessing the same sin over and over to God, but the 15 years of confession could not give me peace. A still voice always comes to me, telling me 'If you want peace, return this baby,' and that is why I am here."

Police were consulted, the real mother of the 15-year-old teenage girl came, and the girl was handed over to her mother. The other woman said, "Without a child, I am going home

# Zacchaeus had to make restitution for his corrupt deeds in order for his salvation to be complete.

very happily; my heart is at peace! Thank You, Jesus!"

# What does Inspiration say about this subject?

"If we have injured others through any unjust business transaction, if we have overreached in trade, or defrauded any man, even though it be within the pale of the law, we should confess our wrong, and make restitution as far as lies in our power. It is right for us to restore not only that which we have taken, but all that it would have accumulated if put to a right and wise use during the time it has been in our possession."<sup>1</sup>

"As those thus united in Christian fellowship offer prayer to God and pledge themselves to deal justly, to love mercy, and to walk humbly with God, great blessing comes to them. If they have wronged others they continue the work of repentance, confession, and restitution, fully set to do good to one another. This is the fulfilling of the law of Christ."<sup>2</sup>

"Again, when I say unto the wicked, Thou shalt surely die; if he turn from his sin, and do that which is lawful and right; if the wicked restore the pledge, give again that he had robbed, walk in the statutes of life, without committing iniquity; he shall surely live, he shall not die. None of his sins that he hath committed shall be mentioned unto him: he hath done that which is lawful and right; he shall surely live" (Ezekiel 33:14–16).

### A lesson from Zacchaeus

"Zacchaeus stood, and said unto the Lord; Behold, Lord, the half of my goods I give to the poor; and if I have taken any thing from any man by false accusation, I restore him fourfold. And Jesus said unto him, This day is salvation come to this house" (Luke 19:8, 9).

This passage above explains to us that every other thing Zacchaeus was doing—whether building a place of worship, fasting, praying, confessing was totally unacceptable to God without restitution. It was only when Zacchaeus made restitution to those he had wronged that Christ said, "This day is salvation come to this house."

Before Zacchaeus made restitution, he was probably engaged in many religious services, but salvation could never be possible until he first performed the act of restitution that was necessary.

"Zacchaeus had heard of Jesus. ... In this chief of the publicans was awakened a longing for a better life. ... He felt that he was a sinner in the sight of God. Yet what he had heard of Jesus kindled hope in his heart. Repentance, reformation of life, was possible, even to him. ... Zacchaeus began at once to follow the conviction that had taken hold upon him, and to make restitution to those whom he had wronged.

"Already he had begun thus to retrace his steps, when the news sounded through Jericho that Jesus was entering the town. Zacchaeus determined to see Him. . . . In the presence of the multitude, 'Zacchaeus stood, and said unto the Lord: Behold, Lord, the half of my goods I give to the poor; and if I have taken anything from any man by false accusation, I restore him fourfold. And Jesus said unto him, This day is salvation come to this house.'

"There are those who have had very meager opportunities, who have walked in ways of error because they knew no better way, to whom beams of light will come. As the word of Christ came to Zacchaeus, 'Today I must abide at thy house,' so the word will come to them; and those who were supposed to be hardened sinners will be found to have hearts as tender as a child's because Christ has deigned to notice them. Many will come from the grossest error and sin, and will take the place of others who have had opportunities and privileges but have not prized them. They will be

accounted the chosen of God, elect, precious; and when Christ shall come into His kingdom, they will stand next His throne.

"No sooner did Zacchaeus yield to the influence of the Holy Spirit than he cast aside every practice contrary to integrity. No repentance is genuine that does not work reformation. The righteousness of Christ is not a cloak to cover unconfessed and unforsaken sin...

"Every converted soul will, like Zacchaeus, signalize the entrance of Christ into his heart by an abandonment of the unrighteous practices that have marked his life. Like the chief publican, he will give proof of his sincerity by making restitution....

"To Zacchaeus the Saviour said, "This day is salvation come to this house." Not only was Zacchaeus himself blessed, but all his household with him.... They had been shut out from the synagogues by the contempt of rabbis and worshipers; but now, the most favored household in all Jericho, they gathered in their own home about the divine Teacher, and heard for themselves the words of life."<sup>3</sup>

### What about us?

Many who are deceived in thinking that confession has reconciled them to God while they still have another man's property in their possession shall be bitterly disappointed in the last day.

"If we have in any manner defrauded or injured our brother, we should make restitution. If we have unwittingly borne false witness, if we have misstated his words, if we have injured his influence in any way, we should go to the ones with whom we have conversed about him, and take back all our injurious misstatements.

"It will not be long before probation will close. If you do not now serve the Lord with fidelity, how will you meet the record of your unfaithful dealing? . . . If you have refused When this brother had righted every wrong, the injured ones asked: "Where is your church that we may worship with you? It must be God's church on earth!"

to deal honestly with God, I beseech you to think of your deficiency, and if possible to make restitution. If this cannot be done, in humble penitence pray that God for Christ's sake will pardon your great debt. Begin now to act like Christians. Make no excuse for failing to give the Lord His own. Now, . . . while it is not yet too late for wrongs to be righted, while it is called today, if ye will hear His voice, harden not your hearts."<sup>4</sup>

# When is a trespass offering appropriate?

Confession and restitution are for those who want to enjoy eternal life with their Saviour Jesus-therefore it is a matter of being honest with one's conscience. It should not be necessary for a pastor or a brother or a sister to ask you to do this; confession and restitution are between you and your God. Many who call themselves Christians and who are waiting for the Lord's coming feel free to say or write false messages, thus misrepresenting others. Some keep with them items or goods that belong to the church organization or to others and still go to church thinking that confession has justified them before God. How mistaken they continue to be! The pen of Inspiration also tells us that unless those who have damaged the reputation of others go back to those whom they have misrepresented and take back their statements, restoring and making restitution, there is no hope of eternal life for them. Even though they have confessed to God, restitution is obligatory.

This explains how much believers should be careful in their daily living. Many who will find restitution very difficult tend to avoid anything that will mandate them to make restitution. In our house-to-house evangelism, a man who was touched by the word of God said, "Some years back I ran away with someone's money, but now the man is dead. He asked, what can I do now, because I want to return the money?"

We asked him if the man had wife and children. He said he would find out. In cases where no family dependants exist, the following message tells what to do:

"You could at least have made efforts to correct your acts of injustice to your fellow men. You cannot make every case right, for some whom you have injured have gone into their graves, and the account stands registered against you. In these cases the best you can do is to bring a trespass offering to the altar of the Lord, and He will accept and pardon you. But where you can, you should make reparation to the wronged ones."<sup>5</sup>

The inspired message above makes us understand that such money should be brought to the house of the Lord to be used for the advancement of the gospel. Thus the Lord will accept and forgive you. But before this step is taken, sincere and necessary efforts must have been put forth to make amends to the ones that have been wronged. It is only when this is really impossible that such money can be forwarded to the church. And the elders of the church should know about it and pray for you.

### A powerful witness!

A young man went a far distance to confess his wrongs to one family he injured a long time ago. Before he left, however, he asked us to pray for him because he did not know what the outcome would be. The family knew him as a very wicked fellow. When he sincerely righted every wrong; the family asked him, saying, "Where is your church that we may worship with you? The church that tells you to do this must be God's church on earth!"

"Had the unbelievers with whom you have associated seen in you the transforming power of the truth, they would have had an argument in favor of Christianity which they could not controvert."<sup>6</sup>

"Whenever true repentance exists, it will be revealed in doing justice, in loving mercy, and in walking humbly with God. Wherein the least wrong has been done to others, it will lead to a full restitution, that the soul may be cleared from guilt."<sup>7</sup>

If you have restitution to make, ask the Lord for grace and He will surely give you such grace.

"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. But thou, O man of God, flee these things; and follow after righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, meekness. Fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on eternal life, whereunto thou art also called, and hast professed a good profession before many witnesses" (1 Timothy 6:6-12).

"For what shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? Or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?" (Mark 8:36, 37).

The answer is: Nothing!  $\mathscr{R}$ 

### References

- <sup>1</sup> The Desire of Ages, p. 556.
- <sup>2</sup> Gospel Workers, p. 500.
- <sup>3</sup> Conflict and Courage, pp. 301, 302.
- <sup>4</sup> The Faith I Live By, p. 132.
- <sup>5</sup> Testimonies, vol. 5, p. 339.

<sup>7</sup> Manuscript Releases, vol. 8, p. 161.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>6</sup> Ibid.

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# And He Began To

hat went ye out into the wilderness to see? A reed shaken with the wind?" (Matthew 11:7). Jesus spoke these words

with reference to John the Baptist, who had personally introduced the promised Messiah to the Jewish people when he announced: "Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world" (John 1:29). And he had heralded the establishment of Christ's kingdom by preaching the message: "Repent ye: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand" (Matthew 3:2). While he was preaching the message required for that time, the devil stopped him and caused him to be put in prison. Why? Only because he had spoken the truth, denouncing the open sin of Herod.

By A. Balbach

At first, John was not worried, because he thought: "Before long, Christ, the promised Saviour, will come and set me free. Wasn't this prophesied about His work? There can be no doubt that He will faithfully fulfill His predicted mission—to 'proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound' (Isaiah 61:1)." But did John interpret this prophecy correctly? Or had he taken literally that which was to be taken spiritually?

### Days of long-suffering

Well, . . . John waited day after day, and the Messiah didn't come to open the prison door. Weeks went by, and the expected miracle didn't happen. And John was becoming impatient as he saw his hopes frustrated. And, finally, the worst thing that can come to a servant of God came to him—he began to doubt.

The disciples of John brought him news about the work that Jesus was doing, and they must have raised the following questions in substance: "If this new teacher, called Jesus, is actually the promised Messiah, why doesn't He come to set you free? Isn't that His mission, according to the prophetic word?" These questions did not help the man that was behind prison bars, puzzling his brains to find the right answer. On the contrary, they made it worse for him by corroborating his doubts.

"To [John] the desert prophet all this [his imprisonment and what appeared to be a lack of concern on the part of Christ] seemed a mystery beyond his fathoming. There were hours when the whisperings of demons tortured his spirit, and the shadow of a terrible fear crept over him. Could it be that the long-hoped-for Deliverer had not yet appeared? Then what meant the message that he himself had been impelled to bear? John had been bitterly disappointed in the result of his mission. He had expected that the message from God would have the same effect as when the law was read in the days of Josiah and of Ezra (2 Chronicles 34; Nehemiah 8, 9); that there would follow a deep-seated work of repentance and returning unto the Lord. For the success of this mission his whole life had been sacrificed. Had it been in vain?"1

John the Baptist would not discuss his doubts with his companions. . . . If we explore the "reasons" for doubting, they tend to increase.



### A spiritual tug-of-war

On the one hand, John had guestions in line with his doubts, but, on the other hand, he also had evidences to establish his faith. He had seen "the Spirit of God descending like a dove, and lightening upon" Jesus; he had heard "a voice from heaven, saying, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased" (Matthew 3:16, 17); he remembered the power of the Holy Spirit that he felt resting upon himself as he came into the presence of the Son of God, whose spotless character impressed him greatly; and he had the testimony of other prophetic scriptures pointing to the Messiah, like that of Daniel 9:25-27. So, during his spiritual crisis, John shelved that which he

could not understand and held on to what was evident to him.

The way of a Christian can be compared to a row of stepping-stones across a swamp. While we all have stepping-stones of evidence for our faith to lead us triumphantly to the end of our journey, we must also face temptations to step into the mud of doubt. If we explore the "reasons" for doubting, they become more and more voluminous and abundant in our mind, and finally, we may get stuck in the quagmire of skepticism.

"Many, especially those who are young in the Christian life, are at times troubled with the suggestions of skepticism. There are in the Bible many things which they cannot explain, or even understand, and Satan employs these to shake their faith in the Scriptures as a revelation from God. They ask, 'How shall I know the right way? If the Bible is indeed the word of God, how can I be freed from these doubts and perplexities?'

"God never asks us to believe, without giving sufficient evidence upon which to base our faith. His existence, His character, the truthfulness of His word, are all established by testimony that appeals to our reason; and this testimony is abundant. Yet God has never removed the possibility of doubt. Our faith must rest upon evidence, not demonstration. Those who wish to doubt will have opportunity; while those who really desire to know the truth will find plenty of evidence on which to rest their faith."<sup>2</sup>

The first two important steppingstones of evidence that God has placed on the path of every Christian are:

- Personal experience with the Lord.
- The word of prophecy.

The apostle Peter describes these two stepping-stones as follows: "We have not followed cunningly devised fables, when we made known unto you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but were eyewitnesses of his majesty. For he received from God the Father honour and glory, when there came such a voice to him from the excellent glory, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased. And this voice which came from heaven we heard, when we were with him in the holy mount. We have also a more sure word of prophecy; whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the day star arise in your hearts" (2 Peter 1:16-19).

It is true that we cannot always see the hand of God in our experience. In this case, we should admit that our spiritual eyes may need medication. And we should pray to God to restore our discernment through the eyesalve that Christ is offering us (Revelation 3:18) and that we can obtain only from Him.

### Two cases in contrast

Judas Iscariot and John the Baptist, through their experiences, may teach us a lesson in connection with the two possibilities which are open before every human being. Judas suggested his doubts to the other disciples,<sup>3</sup> while John would not discuss his doubts with his companions. Judas defeated himself, while John was triumphant by following the right way: "Call unto me," says the Lord, "and I will answer thee" (Jeremiah 33:3).

### What did John do about his doubt?

John did not take his doubt to anyone who might tend to reinforce it. Instead, he sent two of his disciples to Jesus with the question: "Art thou he that should come, or do we look for another?" (Matthew 11:3). What was Jesus' answer?

Jesus did not say to them, "Yes, go back to John and tell him that I am the Messiah." Instead He told them to stay until sundown and watch attentively. And what did they see?

"As [John's disciples] stood wondering at [the Saviour's] silence, the sick and afflicted were coming to Him to be healed. The blind were groping their way through the crowd. . . . The voice of the mighty Healer penetrated the deaf ear. A word, a touch of His hand, opened the blind eyes. . . . His voice reached the ears of the dying, and they arose in health and vigor. Paralyzed demoniacs obeyed His word, their madness left them, and they worshiped Him. . . .

"Thus the day wore away, the disciples of John seeing and hearing all."<sup>4</sup>

Then Jesus called John's two disciples and asked them to report what they had seen and heard of the power of God. "Go and tell John what you have witnessed," He said. When they brought John the answer that he had been anxiously waiting for, that was enough for him. He had all the evidence that he needed.

However, we must not overlook an important distinction. Evidence which may be sufficient for me might not be sufficient for someone else. It all depends on what kind of evidence interests us.

# John in contrast to the Jewish leaders

That which was to John convincing evidence of Christ's divinity was no evidence to the unbelieving Jews. God had promised to send them a Messiah that would deliver them from the bondage of sin, but they were not interested in such a Deliverer. They were looking for a Messiah that would break the Roman domination and exalt Israel as a powerful political kingdom. Such a Messiah had never been promised to them.

Yes, the Jews could have become a great nation two thousand years ago if they had accepted the Messiah.

"If Jerusalem had known what it was her privilege to know, and had heeded the light which Heaven had sent her, she might have stood forth in the pride of prosperity, the queen of kingdoms, free in the strength of her God-given power. There would have been no armed soldiers standing at her gates, no Roman banners waving from her walls. The glorious destiny that might have blessed Jerusalem had she accepted her Redeemer rose before the Son of God. He saw that she might through Him have been healed of her grievous malady, liberated from bondage, and established as the mighty metropolis of the earth. From her walls the dove of peace would have gone forth to all nations."5

The Old Testament prophecies pointing to the establishment of God's kingdom on earth could have been fulfilled from the days of Christ and the apostles. But, as the people of Israel did not know the day of their visitation, and as they took those prophecies as belonging to them unconditionally, God's glorious kingdom on earth will be set up after the millennium. Then those prophecies will have their complete and final fulfillment.

# "Let patience have her perfect work"

The experience of every true Christian can be described in these words:

"The path of the just is as the shining light, which shineth more and more unto the perfect day" (Proverbs 4:18). "Let patience have her perfect work, that ye may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing" (James 1:4).

"We may rejoice that all which has perplexed us in the providences of God [in our past experiences] will [one day] be made plain, things hard to be understood will then find an explanation; and where our finite minds discovered only confusion and broken purposes, we shall see the most perfect and beautiful harmony."<sup>6</sup>  $\Re$ 

### References

- $^{\scriptscriptstyle 1}$  The Desire of Ages, p. 216.
- <sup>2</sup> Steps to Christ, p. 105.
- <sup>3</sup> See *The Desire of Ages*, p. 719.
- <sup>4</sup> Ibid., pp. 216, 217.
- <sup>5</sup> Ibid., p. 577.
- <sup>6</sup> Steps to Christ, p. 113.



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### Good News



aster:

### By Paul Balbach

Mon the



hrist had compassion for suffering humanity. Wherever He went and saw the people in need, He sought to help, to relieve suffering, to comfort, and to

bless those around Him. Let us read about an example illus-

trating this point: "And, behold, two blind men sitting by the way side, when they heard that Jesus passed by, cried out, saying, Have mercy on us, O Lord, thou son of David. And the multitude rebuked them, because they should hold their peace: but they cried the more, saying, Have mercy on us, O Lord, thou son of David. And Jesus stood still, and called them, and said, What will ye that I shall do unto you? They say unto him, Lord, that our eyes may be opened. So Jesus had compassion on them, and touched their eyes: and immediately their eyes received sight, and they followed him" (Matthew 20:30-34, emphasis supplied).

There are so many examples in the Bible about Christ's compassion for suffering humanity:

# The widow of Nain whose son had died:

"And when the Lord saw her, **he had compassion** on her, and said unto her, Weep not" (Luke 7:13, emphasis supplied).

### The leper:

"And there came a leper to him, beseeching him, and kneeling down to him, and saying unto him, If thou wilt, thou canst make me clean. And Jesus, **moved with compassion**, put forth his hand, and touched him, and saith unto him, I will; be thou clean" (Mark 1:40, 41, emphasis supplied).

### The multitude who had not eaten:

"Then Jesus called his disciples unto him, and said, **I have compassion on the multitude**, because they continue with me now three days, and have nothing to eat: and I will not send them away fasting, lest they faint in the way" (Matthew 15:32, emphasis supplied).

### The multitude who had no shepherd:

"And Jesus, when he came out, saw much people, and was moved with compassion toward them, <u>because</u> they were as sheep not having a shepherd: and he began to teach them many things" (Mark 6:34, emphasis supplied).

Doesn't this sound like the condition the world finds itself today—without a shepherd? What is our attitude towards the "much people" who are like sheep, not being guided by the Shepherd? Are we judgmental towards them? Do we have a "better-than-thou" attitude toward them? Do we despise them for their situation?

### **Christ's method**

Do we know how to approach a person in need? We may turn people away from the truth and from Christ by our supposed zeal for the truth if we act without tact. We need to learn from Christ and move as He moved, speak as He spoke, and refrain from certain comments—sometimes even any comments—when it is not appropriate to use them.

### What would Christ do?

When someone in need comes to our church or calls us asking for some food for the family, do we take this opportunity and try to introduce him or her to Christ? Since we may be buying some food for the family, do we try to introduce him or her to vegetarianism? What would Christ do? What did Christ do in such situations?

### A five-step process

"Christ's method alone will give true success in reaching the people. The Saviour mingled with men as one who desired their good. He showed His sympathy for them, ministered to their needs, and won their confidence. Then He bade them, 'Follow Me.'"<sup>1</sup>

### 1. Friendship

We read above that "the Saviour mingled with men as one who desired their good." What is the key word here?

"Mingled": What kind of word is this? It is a verb. It implies action. What kind of action?

What does this word mean? It means to become acquainted, to get to know people, to associate with people, to make friends.

We have much learning to do here.

If you come to church and, during the fellowship meal, sit by yourself in a corner with only your family and/ or close friends and don't mingle, you are not associating. If you always sit with the same person all the time, you are not mingling. We must learn to mingle and associate even among ourselves, among those whom we already know.

What does "As one who desired their good" mean? It means to show a genuine interest in him or her as a person.

It does not mean that we are always talking about ourselves. In fact, it means the very opposite. We are to listen to people.

"The afflicted ones who came to [Jesus] felt that He linked His interest with theirs as a faithful and tender friend, and they desired to know more of the truths He taught."<sup>2</sup>

### 2. Sympathy

"He showed His sympathy for them." He had compassion for people. Show that you care about them, for their good. To show sympathy does not mean that you must agree with what they do. Sympathy does not mean condemnation either.

Sympathy means understanding. Sympathy means to put yourself "in their shoes." Sympathy means compassion.

Christ was a compassionate person. He had compassion for the people.

When someone tells you "I am struggling with cigarette smoking," what should you say?

"I don't smoke."

"I would never touch that stuff."

"Don't you know that smoking causes cancer?"

"That will kill you."

Statements like these will only discourage the person!

What should you say instead? Say something with compassion. Say: "It must be very hard for you." Say some encouraging words, like: "I also had struggles in my life in a different area, and by the grace of God, I have overcome. God is able to give you the victory, too." Say something that will give them HOPE.

"The sympathy that Christ ever expressed for the physical needs of His hearers won from many a response to the truths He sought to teach."<sup>3</sup>

### 3. He "ministered to their needs." He relieved their sufferings

Christ did not say to the multitude, "If you promise to follow me, I will feed you." Christ first healed, then He told them "follow Me" or "go and sin no more."

The servant of the Lord says: "To every student who is seeking a medical education I would say, Look beyond the present. Turn away from the transitory things of this life, from selfish pursuits and gratifications. For what purpose are you seeking an education? Is it not that you may relieve suffering humanity?"<sup>4</sup>

You cannot present doctrines to someone who is hungry, or to someone who has some deep sorrow or pain or special needs.

### 4. He "won their confidence"

When you show real concern for people, you may win their confidence. This is an excerpt from an e-mail I recently received:

"Hi! please, could you help me? ... I need someone I can trust and who can help me to raise up!!!"

"Give some of your leisure hours to your children; associate with them in their work and in their sports, and win their confidence. Cultivate their friendship."<sup>5</sup>

"The youth are the objects of Satan's special attacks; but kindness, courtesy, that tender sympathy that flows from a heart filled with love to Jesus, will give you access to them. You may win their confidence so that they will listen to your words, and thus be saved from many a snare of the enemy."<sup>6</sup>

"As you win [the children's] confidence in you as followers of Christ, it will be easy to teach them of the great love wherewith He has loved us."<sup>7</sup>

### 5. Teaching—"He bade them 'Follow Me.'"

"Wherever hearts were open to receive the divine message, [Christ] unfolded the truths of the way of salvation."<sup>8</sup>

"Deny yourself, take up your cross, and follow the Master. You can never give Him as much as He has given you. He gave His life for you. What have you given for Him?"<sup>9</sup>

### Conclusion

"Christ's method alone will give true success in reaching the people."<sup>10</sup>

Are you ready to follow the Master today?  $\Re$ 

### References

<sup>1</sup> *The Ministry of Healing*, p. 143. [Emphasis supplied.]

- <sup>2</sup> The Desire of Ages, pp. 254, 255.
- <sup>3</sup> The Review and Herald, January 18, 1912.
- <sup>4</sup> Counsels to Parents, Teachers and Students, p. 485.
- <sup>5</sup> *The Adventist Home*, p. 192.
- <sup>6</sup> Christian Education, pp. 222, 223.
- $^{7}$  The Desire of Ages, p. 517.
- <sup>9</sup> *The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 18.
- <sup>10</sup>General Conference Bulletin, April 8, 1901. [Emphasis supplied.]
- <sup>11</sup>*The Ministry of Healing*, p. 143.

**Character Builder** 

# Are You Upset With Your Brother?

"Every one who is angry with his brother shall be in danger of the judgement" (Matthew 5:22, RV).

ow can we manage those uneasy feelings we get if tension or conflict arises among our fellow brethren? The first thing we can do is to withdraw from any conflict and spend some time in introspection and study. Let us be sure we have love in our heart above all else. "Beloved, let us love one another: for love is of God; and every one that loveth is born of God, and knoweth God." "Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins. Beloved, if God so loved us, we ought also to love one another." "And this commandment have we from him, That he who loveth God love his brother also" (1 John 4:7, 10, 11, 21).

Brethren and sisters, how much do we love each other? Are we on our knees praying for each other? Are we willing to give ourselves for His church as Christ did? If we are on our knees, maybe what is upsetting us now, might not bother us at all if we had a correct frame of mind. Are we praying: "Lord, bless your people?" Love must be sincere. We are to be devoted to one another in brotherly love: "Let love be without dissimulation. Abhor that which is evil; cleave to that which is good. Be kindly affectioned one to another with brotherly love; in honour preferring one another" (Romans 12:9, 10). We do well to remember 1 John 2:1: "If any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous." We all have an Advocate, and we all have sinned and come short of the glory of God. (Romans 3:23.)

### Digging deeper—even to the heart

Call to mind the words of the Lord through Moses: "Thou shalt not hate thy brother in thine heart." "Thou shalt not avenge, nor bear any grudge against the children of thy people, but thou By Laurie Stanton

shalt love thy neighbour as thyself: I am the Lord" (Leviticus 19:17, 18).

When the Saviour spoke the sermon on the mount, He tried to help His hearers understand that the Word of God had a deeper meaning than they had heretofore understood. They had been taught that whoever killed his brother would be in danger of the judgment. "But," Christ said, "whosoever is angry with his brother without a cause shall be in danger of the judgment . . . but whosoever shall say, Thou fool, shall be in danger of hell fire" (Matthew 5:21, 22). The law is not just a matter of rules or forms, the law is spiritual.

"The Saviour's words revealed to His hearers the fact that, while they were condemning others as transgressors, they were themselves equally guilty; for they were cherishing malice and hatred."<sup>1</sup> Many were continually trying to find a cloak for their disobedience to the law. If they could find a technicality that made it seem that they were keeping the law, they felt their conscience was clean. God looks beyond outward appearances. He sees the heart, and this is what Christ was trying to teach. "For the Lord seeth not as man seeth; for man looketh on the outward appearance, but the Lord looketh on the heart" (1 Samuel 16:7).

Dale Carnegie once explained, "Your character is what you really are, while your reputation is merely what others think you are." What do you think is more important to God: what kind of person other people think you are, or what kind of person you really are? Christ spoke clearly on this subject: "Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven" (Matthew 7:21).

Let us take a closer look at the meaning of the Saviour's words. "The spirit of hatred and revenge originated with Satan, and it led him to put to death the Son of God. Whoever cherishes malice or unkindness is cherishing the same spirit, and its fruit will be unto death. . . . 'Whosoever hateth his brother is a murderer: and ye know that no murderer hath eternal life abiding in him' (1 John 3:15)."<sup>2</sup> Let's assume we have no murderous feelings for our brother, but examine what feelings we do have more closely. "In the gift of His Son for our redemption, God has shown how high a value He places upon every human soul, and He gives to no man liberty to speak contemptuously of another. We shall see faults and weaknesses in those about us, but God claims every soul as His property—His by creation, and doubly His as purchased by the precious blood of Christ. All were created in His image, and even the most degraded are to be treated with respect and tenderness."3

# Appropriate words for the genuine Christian

Christ asks us to speak well of each other, to look for the positive attributes in each other's characters, to encourage each other to do better for the Lord. His will for us is: "If it be possible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably "If you have committed one wrong and they twenty, confess that one as though you were the chief offender."

with all men" (Romans 12:18). We cannot control other's behaviors, we can only control our own.

"Our brother may have done us a greater wrong than we have done him, but this does not lessen our responsibility. If when we come before God we remember that another has aught against us, we are to leave our gift of prayer, of thanksgiving, of freewill offering, and go to the brother with whom we are at variance, and in humility confess our **own** sin and ask to be forgiven."<sup>4</sup>

# Whom does Christ address when you are the victim of actual wrong or injustice?

"Recompense to no man evil for evil. . . . Avenge not yourselves" (Romans 12:17, 19). This can be a hard saying for one who has legitimately been hurt and wronged by unkind acts of others, but this is what the Lord asks. Note that Christ's focus was not on the other person, the person with whom we may be upset, the person who caused our hurt feelings or resentment or anger. He does not focus on whether the feelings are justified; in fact, the implication is that they may BE justified. The words "grudge not," "be reconciled," "forbear," and "forgive one another," imply that someone has wronged another, that there IS something for which to forgive the person. Is Christ's focus on the wrong that was done, or the person who did it? No. His focus is on us, on what we will do with our feelings, on our reaction to the other person. His healthy advice is to forgive the person, to forbear, and to not hold a grudge.

"If we keep uppermost in our minds the unkind and unjust acts of others we shall find it impossible to love them as Christ has loved us; but if our thoughts dwell upon the wondrous love and pity of Christ for us, the same spirit will flow out to others."<sup>5</sup>

God wishes us to be accountable to each other. It may be that apologizing for your "lesser" wrong may prompt your brother or sister to apologize for his or her own failing, and thus prevent a great harm to the church/ body of Christ. There should be no need to be defensive toward each other, for remember the promise: "If God be for us, who can be against us?" (Romans 8:31). Review what David said about Shimei, a man who cursed and threw rocks at David and his men. in 2 Samuel 16:5-14. We must do what is right and follow the voice of our Friend and Saviour and do His bidding, and He can see to the working out of our problems. Our duty is not to worry about the slights and faults of our brethren and sisters—(yes we should pray for them as we do for our own families); our job is to "Let [your] loins be girded about, and [your] lights burning" (Luke 12:35).

### Wake up to the danger!

Time is so short now that Satan is working on us harder than ever to distract us with any little conflict or disagreement. He wants anything but to allow us time to reflect on the defects in our spiritual existence. Our sins have separated us from God, and he wishes to keep it that way. Instead of the defects in our brethren and sisters, God actually wants us to focus on repentance for our own sins, justification, sanctification, and preparation for the Latter Rain, which will soon come. Satan wants us to be like the foolish virgins who did not have enough oil, while God wants us to be without spot or wrinkle, to learn the overcomer's experience. "The examples in God's word of genuine repentance and humiliation reveal a spirit of confession in which there is no excuse for sin or attempt at self justification."6 As the pen of Inspiration so adeptly points out: "There have ever been two classes among those who profess to be followers of Christ. While one class study the Saviour's life and earnestly seek to correct their defects and conform to the Pattern, the other class shun the plain, practical truths which expose their errors."<sup>7</sup> Pray to God that this will not be said of us! Rather, let our prayer be: "Search me, O God, and know my heart: try me, and know my thoughts: and see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting" (Psalm 139:23, 24).

"The law of God is the mirror to show man the defects in his character. But it is not pleasant to those who take pleasure in unrighteousness to see their moral deformity. They do not prize this faithful mirror because it reveals to them their sins. Therefore, instead of instituting a war against their carnal minds, they war against the true and faithful mirror, given them by Jehovah for the very purpose that they may not be deceived, but that they may have revealed to them the defects in their character."<sup>8</sup>

In great mercy Jesus tells us these things because He knows what is required for us to overcome our enemy, and He knows who will enter the city of God as conquerors. He provides us with all the information we need to enter there.

Continuing to examine our responsibilities on this subject, even statements that might injure one's influence in any way should be rectified: "If we have in any manner defrauded or injured our brother, we should make restitution. If we have unwittingly borne false witness, if we have misstated his words, if we have injured his influence in any way, we should go to the ones with whom we have conversed about him, and take back all our injurious misstatements."<sup>9</sup>

Has Christ set an example in this area for us? He had no harsh rebuke or anger for the one who betrayed him, but showed him love and gave him every chance to repent and change. He let Peter know he forgave him even before he denied his Saviour. He also had a consistent response toward another of His creation: Lucifer who became Satan. Christ Himself, when contending with Satan about the body of Moses, "durst not bring against him a railing accusation" (Jude 9). Had He done this, He would have placed Himself on Satan's ground, for accusa-

tion is the weapon of the evil one. He is called in Scripture, "The accuser of our brethren" (Revelation 12:10).

### Appeal

Brethren and sisters, let us not be known to the holy angels who protect and care for us, working every day for our salvation, as "accusers of our brethren." We should assure that this type of report should not have to be carried by heavenly messengers to the place where our Saviour is now interceding for us, and left there to be dealt with at some future date. Let us remember what the Lord says: "I will bless thee . . . and thou shalt be

a blessing" (Genesis 12:2). We are sure none of us would want to be part of the reason the Lord is delaying to come back and take us home. Let the Lord defend us if we speak the truth. And remember, "we will not be able to meet the trials of this time without God."10 So, let's make sure we aren't shaming our Saviour, and that angels can walk by our sides. There is so much other than conflict on which to focus: Let the Lord "stablish you in every good word and work" (2 Thessalonians 2:17). Let us be like our Lord: "merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and plenteous in mercy." "He hath not dealt with us after our sins; nor rewarded us according to our iniquities" (Psalm 103:8, 10).

Finally, as we began with the need for introspection and study, here are a few verses to commit to memory if we are having trouble with this specific subject:

"Grudge not one against another, brethren, lest ye be condemned: behold, the judge standeth before the door" (James 5:9).

"Forbearing one another, and forgiving one another, if any man have a quarrel against any: even as Christ forgave you, so also do ye" (Colossians 3:13).

"A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another. By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another" (John 13:34, 35).

Let us be reconciled to our brother or sister (Matthew 5:23, 24), let us speak frankly of matters of difficulty, that we may give our enemy no ground on which to stand. Let us have confidence, and "know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren" (1 John 3:14).

### References

- <sup>1</sup> Thoughts From the Mount of Blessing, pp. 55, 56.
- <sup>2</sup> Ibid., p. 56.
- <sup>3</sup> Ibid., pp. 56, 57.
- <sup>4</sup> Ibid., pp. 58, 59.
- <sup>5</sup> Steps to Christ, p. 121.
- <sup>6</sup> Ibid., p. 41.
- <sup>7</sup> The Great Controversy, p. 43.
- <sup>8</sup> The Review and Herald, March 8, 1870.
- <sup>9</sup> Thoughts From the Mount of Blessing, p. 59.

<sup>10</sup> Our High Calling, p. 125.

# A Lesson From the

A Bible and Spirit of Prophecy compilation, with comments by Jackson Zamy

he life of Judas is to be for us today a book of study from which many lessons of warning can be learned. The Holy Scriptures declares that "whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning" (Romans 15:4). So, the experience of Judas with the Saviour should be for us a serious theme for meditation. Judas was among the disciples, living with Christ 24 hours a day-yet tragically, this disciple was not transformed by the sanctifying power of the Lord. Likewise, today, the church of God is composed of two classes of people-those Christians who in heart and life genuinely follow in the crucified Saviour's footsteps, and, on the other hand, others who are secretly resisting Christ's bloodstained path

of self-denial. All who claim to be followers of Christ should take time to study the case of Judas and take diligent heed to the shocking dangers it unveils.

### A talented man

Judas was a man of keen discernment and ability. "The disciples were anxious that Judas should become one of their number. He was of commanding appearance, a man of keen discernment and executive ability, and they commended him to Jesus as one who would greatly assist Him in His work."<sup>1</sup> Due to this ability that Judas possessed, it would have been a great disappointment for the disciples if Jesus had refused to accept him in their midst.

We must not assume that Judas was only a traitor in whom there was nothing good. The Spirit of Prophecy says: "Had Judas died before his last journey to Jerusalem he would have been regarded as a man worthy of a place among the twelve, and one who would be greatly missed."<sup>2</sup>

### JUDAS' POSITION AMONG THE DISCIPLES

### An evangelist

It is recorded in the book of Matthew that Jesus called the twelve disciples and ordained them, entrusting to them the commission to preach the gospel to the world, and giving them power to cast out demons and to heal the sick (Matthew 10:1). So, Judas was actually one of them (verse 4). The same duty with which the other disciples were entrusted, he also was entrusted. "The Saviour did not repulse Judas. He gave him a place among the twelve. He trusted him to do the work of an evangelist. He endowed him with power to heal the sick and to cast out devils. But Judas did not come to the point of surrendering himself fully to Christ."3

### A treasurer

Apart from being an evangelist, Judas was also a treasurer among the disciples. "As treasurer for the disciples, he was called upon to provide for the needs of the little company, and to relieve the necessities of the poor."<sup>4</sup>

# What bad points were found in the life of Judas?

Judas was an active member among the disciples. He was doing the work of an evangelist as we are doing today. But in his life were found many evil traits.

1. Love of money. The love of money was one of the things that lead to Judas' failure. He had a strong love for money. He was the one in charge of the money collected for the needs of missionary work. But "this little money was to Judas a continual temptation, and from time to time, when he did a little service for Christ, or devoted a little time to religious purposes, he paid himself out of the meager fund collected to advance the light of the gospel."<sup>5</sup>

2. Pride, selfishness, love of position. "Judas was highly regarded by the disciples and had great influence over them. He himself had a high opinion of his own qualifications, and looked upon his brethren as greatly inferior to him in judgment and ability. They did not see their opportunities, he thought, and take advantage of circumstances. The church would never prosper with such shortsighted men as leaders. Peter was impetuous; he would move without consideration. John, who was treasuring up the truths that fell from Christ's lips, was looked upon by Judas as a poor financier. Matthew, whose training had taught him accuracy in all things, was very particular in regard to honesty, and he was ever contemplating the words of Christ, and became so absorbed in them that, as Judas thought, he could not be trusted to do sharp, far-seeing business. Thus Judas summed up all the disciples, and flattered himself that the church would often be brought into perplexity and embarrassment if it were not for his ability as a manager. Judas regarded himself as the capable one, who could not be overreached. In his own estimation he was an honor to the cause, and as such he always represented himself."6

"Judas was ... offended at Christ's act in washing the feet of His disciples. If Jesus could so humble Himself, he thought, He could not be Israel's king. All hope of worldly honor in a temporal kingdom was destroyed. Judas was satisfied that there was nothing to be gained by following Christ."<sup>7</sup>

# Did Judas have any chance to be changed and be saved?

The apostle John, speaking about the love of God, declared: "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life" (John 3:16). God did not send His son to the world to save a category of people but to bring salvation to everyone who believes. Therefore, through His sacrifice, Jesus "is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him" (Hebrews 7:25).

"When Judas was chosen by our Lord, his case was not hopeless. He had some good qualities. In his association with Christ in the work, by listening to His discourses, he had a favorable opportunity to see his wrongs, to become acquainted with his defects of character if he really desired to be a true disciple. He was even placed in a position by our Lord where he could have his choice either to develop his covetous disposition or to see and correct it."<sup>8</sup>

"Nothing that could be done to save Judas had been left undone. After he had twice covenanted to betray his Lord, Jesus still gave him opportunity for repentance. . . . No appeal that the divine-human heart of Christ could make had been spared."<sup>9</sup>

### A special opportunity offered

At the Lord's Supper, just before Judas betrayed the Saviour, he was given an opportunity to repent. We read that Jesus rose, laid aside His garments, took a towel, girded Himself, poured water into a basin, and started washing the feet of the disciples (See John 13:4, 5.) "Judas was the first whose feet Jesus washed."<sup>10</sup>

"Had Judas accepted [the] last chance given him by Christ, the poor sinner would never have betrayed his Lord, and the words of Christ would never have been spoken, 'Ye are not all clean' (John 13:11)."<sup>11</sup> "Judas, had he repented, would have been received and pardoned. The guilt of his soul would have been washed away by the atoning blood of Christ. But, self-confident and self-exalted, cherishing a high estimate of his own wisdom, he justified his course."<sup>12</sup>

# More than one Judas in the church today

"The history of Judas is given as a representation of the history of some who will be in the church till the close of this earth's history. There are more than one Judas among the professed followers of Christ. They are to be found in every country, in every church. Persons that are not Christians are brought into church relationship. They may appear to serve Christ; but because of this, it does not follow that they have the love of Christ in their hearts. There are those who have the name of being in the service of Christ, but who are inspired by the same spirit as was Judas."13

"There will be those among Sabbathkeepers who are no truer at heart than was Judas; but the cases of such should be no excuse to keep others from following Christ."<sup>14</sup>

### Avoiding the path of Judas

Since the word of God declares that there is more than one

Judas in the church today, we ourselves need to understand in what points we could—unknowingly—actually be like Judas!

### Perilous love of money

We read in the Bible that "the love of money is the root of all evil" (1 Timothy 6:10).

"How many today are like Judas betraying their Lord! How many are sacrificing principle for the sake of worldly gain! Thus they crucify Christ afresh, and put Him to open shame."<sup>15</sup>

"How many today are, like Judas, betraying their Lord? Those who follow dishonest practices in business, sacrifice Christ for gain and reveal a wisdom that is after Satan's order. Speculation for selfish gain will not be brought into the life of the man who has that faith which works by love and purifies the soul."<sup>16</sup>

### The slime of pride and selfishness

Judas had such a high esteem of himself that he considered the other disciples as inferior. So are many in the church today. Like Judas, they think that they are the only ones who can do things better, and that without them nothing can be done properly. They are always ready to impose their opinions upon others. They have such a high view of themselves that they become proud and selfish. But the scriptures admonish us in these words: "In lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves" (Philippians 2:3). "Many are arbitrary, dictatorial, overbearing, boastful, proud, and unconsecrated. Yet some of these persons are ministers, handling sacred truths. Unless they repent, their candlestick will be removed out of its place."<sup>17</sup>

In the words addressed to the Galatians, the apostle Paul said: "As we have therefore opportunity, let us do good unto all men, especially unto them who are of the household of faith" (Galatians 6:10). To the Philippians, he said: "Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others" (Philippians 2:4).

"Judas was constantly planning to benefit self. In this he represents a large class of professed Christians of today. Therefore we need to study his case. We are as near to Christ as he was. Yet if, as with Judas, association with Christ does not make us one with Him, if it does not cultivate within our hearts a sincere sympathy for those for whom Christ gave His life, we are in the same danger as was Judas."<sup>18</sup>

# The peril of trusting in one's own wisdom

"We may learn an important lesson from the experience of Judas. We may be called disciples of Christ; we may hold our religious convictions firmly, and be able to present clear, connected arguments in their support; and yet, like Judas, we may hold the truth in unrighteousness. . . . When we trust to our own wisdom and judgment, as a large number do, we are in the sure path to shame and confusion of face. It is only through divine grace that we can overcome the defects in our character; but unless we make continued efforts to subdue them, they will become stronger, as in the case of Judas."19

We need to strive against the defects of our character in the strength of Jesus!

### The evil of accusing the brethren

"If Satan can employ professed believers to act as accusers of the brethren, he is justly pleased; for those who do this are just as truly serving him as was Judas when he betrayed Christ, although they may be doing it ignorantly. Satan is no less active now than in Christ's day, and those who lend themselves to do his work will manifest his spirit."<sup>20</sup>

# The stubbornness of not practicing the truth

"There are today those who have acted as did Judas. Every opportunity has been given them to hear the word of truth, and to be sanctified through it; but they refuse to eat the bread of life. They have been given light, but they have refused to walk in it, and the light has become darkness to them."<sup>21</sup>

"In this age, if those who come under the precious influence of the truth do not become transformed in character, they will, like Judas, go from light to darkness; and how great will be their darkness."<sup>22</sup>

The Bible tells us that we should not be only hearers of the word but also doers (James 1:22).

### Not taking part in the holy Communion

Many people, for a light reason, frequently decide not to take part in the holy Communion. So the word 'you are not all clean' pronounced in the case of Judas, may also be said of them. The word of God says: "None should exclude themselves from the Communion because some who are unworthy may be present. Every disciple is called upon to participate publicly, and thus bear witness that he accepts Christ as a personal Saviour. It is at these, His own appointments, that Christ meets His people, and energizes them by His presence. Hearts and hands that are unworthy may even administer the ordinance, yet Christ is there to minister to His children. All who come with their faith fixed upon Him will be greatly blessed. All who neglect these seasons of divine privilege will suffer loss. Of them it may appropriately be said, 'Ye are not all clean.' "23

### Conclusion

Judas was with Jesus, he heard His instructions, he walked with the Saviour, but he was not saved. The same thing may happen to many of us today. "God has appointed means, if we will use them diligently and prayerfully, that no vessel shall be shipwrecked, but outride the tempest and storm, and anchor in the haven of bliss at last. But if we despise and neglect these appointments and privileges, God will not work a miracle to save any of us, and we will be lost as were Judas and Satan."<sup>24</sup>

We need to be careful of the way we deal with sin. Judas was lost because he cherished pride and love of money. So we should not tolerate any thing in us that would lead us to betray our Saviour in our life. We also need to guard against every tendency to neglect the work of sanctification of our souls. As Judas had the opportunity to walk with Jesus, we also have the privilege today to be among God's people. But we should be careful-this alone cannot save us. Our only safety is to let our prayer ascend to the Lord asking Him as did David: "Hold up my goings in thy paths, that my footsteps slip not" (Psalm 17:5).

If some of the traits that were in the life of Judas are seen in you, flee to Jesus without delay. For "He who washed the feet of Judas longs to wash every heart from the stain of  $\sin^{25}$   $\mathcal{N}$ 

### References

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- <sup>24</sup> Testimonies to Ministers, p. 453.
- <sup>25</sup> The Desire of Ages, p. 656.

Part 2

By Pam Stemmler

n our last issue of the *Reformation Herald*, we began this series of how the character of God is revealed in the orderliness of His creation. We considered the magnificence of the first five days of creation and pondered the lessons to be learned from each category of created works. Let's continue!

### Day 5

Day 5 is the day created for the special joy of people like my neighbor, who loves studying birds. That is the day when all flying organisms and swimming animals were made. You are probably getting the picture, that the more we would study any of these creatures, the more examples we would find of God's orderliness in nature. There is system in their birth order, their habitations, their communicative abilities and messages. They understand the importance of system and order.

We have order demonstrated in the classification of species, because they have "family characteristics" that don't change over time. They remain constant. Praise the Lord, there is something consistent in our Earth.

Did you know that birds have system in their songs? They have "making the home songs" (boundary line placement), "needing a partner" songs (mating songs), encouragement songs (while Mrs. is making the nest or examining it), cheering songs (while they are feeding the offspring), and traveling songs (for migratory purposes), as well as "perseverance songs" (like the Ganada geese as they travel overhead).

I learned a wonderful lesson years ago, which taught me that God has purpose behind everything, even if I don't have a clue to



know what it is. Have you ever wondered why the birds sing so early in the morning? Is it only to praise the Lord for His goodness and mercy, as though that would be enough and be worthy for us to take as an example?

A scientist wondered about this same question and set his mind to see if there was an answer. As he delighted in experiments, he began to study plants very carefully. He noted that, in the early morning hours, before the dew is evaporated by sunshine, the sound frequency of the song of the birds opens the little stomata (mouths) of the plants so that they can absorb the moisture. Isn't that a wonderful thought? Our God plans for everything.

### Day 6

Here is a day for which we should be really thankful. It is the day that humans were created, along with lots of fuzzy mammals to keep us company. Yes, birds, fish, and creepy crawly things can teach us lessons, but if you want a close companion, usually you reach for something with legs and some kind of fur.

There is just so much that I would like to share, but this article is not about object lessons from creatures. Job tells us we should ask them some questions and they, the creatures, would answer us. Let's take time to prayerfully consider all these wonderful things that God has made.

We could consider some interesting facts from 4-legged creatures. Have you ever studied their parenting patterns?



Seeds are fertilized; babies are born, fed, protected, taught, weaned, reprimanded, and finally sent out into the wild blue yonder to fend for themselves. Most mammal parents don't let their "children" just go and do as they please. There is order to be kept; there is discipline. In fact, watch nature carefully. It is surprising.

We had the pleasure of watching several litters of puppies enter the world and be cared for by their mama. Little fuzzy creatures are jealously guarded by the exhausted mama and quickly learn how to get their food. What a temptation to pick up these little creatures to snuggle them, but it is too soon. They are weak and mama knows what is best. They are to be left with her and if you get too close, she will smile (kind of), with a low snarl, to let you know that your hands should be off. Time is given them to strengthen and when she knows it is ok, she will let you have your chance (if she trusts you).

Then the puppies start to grow, learn, and move. They play, yet stay very close to mama for a time. After a bit, they even start to get a little selfish and irritate each other, but the mama quickly disciplines them, by a growl, a nudge or even a little nip to teach them to get along. She wants peace in the dog house. Mama dogs understand the need for order. Even when the puppies are old enough to explore, they quickly return at the command of mama. If not—uh-oh! They will learn. Mama is very diligent to make sure that she is teaching what they will need for grownup doghood. They can't have their own way. They must learn to obey.

Then comes the awful time for the puppies to be weaned. It was so interesting to observe that although the mama dog is always protectively keeping track of her "children," the time came for them to "grow up a bit." Then the lesson of temperance was added. When she said no, she meant it. They were not drinking from her any more and she was firm at times. Puppies cried, but they had to learn. It wasn't long before the weaning was past and then they could all play together happily again. Creatures understand what it takes to cohabit peacefully!

Well, I have only touched the surface, but I think we have the picture except for one very, very important part of the Creation. Can you guess what I missed? YOU! We will come back to more lessons from you in a little bit. Remember, you were made in the image of the Creator.

God's design was for beauty, system, and order to make life enjoyable, conducive to happiness, and holiness. Then what happened? We'll see next time! *M* 



# Jerusalem's Border

PART 2

A Bible and Spirit of Prophecy compilation, with comments by J. P. Jean-francois [Emphasis supplied throughout.]

nlarge the place of thy tent, and let them stretch forth the curtains of thine habitations: spare not, lengthen thy cords, and strengthen thy stakes; For thou shalt break forth on the right hand and on the left; and thy seed shall inherit the Gentiles, and make the desolate cities to be inhabited" (Isaiah 54:2, 3).

# Lessons from the failure of ancient Israel

What is written about Israel's failure to fulfill her mission? "For of old time I have broken thy yoke, and burst thy bands; and thou saidst, I will not transgress; when upon every high hill and under every green tree thou wanderest, playing the harlot. Yet I had planted thee a noble vine, wholly a right seed: how then art thou turned into the degenerate plant of a strange vine unto me?" (Jeremiah 2:20, 21).

"Israel is an empty vine, he bringeth forth fruit unto himself: according to the multitude of his fruit he hath increased the altars; according to the goodness of his land they have made goodly images" (Hosea 10:1).

"And now, O inhabitants of Jerusalem, and men of Judah, judge, I pray you, betwixt me and my vineyard. What could have been done more to my vineyard, that I have not done in it? wherefore, when I looked that it should bring forth grapes, brought it forth wild grapes? And now go to; I will tell you what I will do to my vineyard: I will take away the hedge thereof, and it shall be eaten up; and break down the wall thereof, and it shall be trodden down: and I will lay it waste: it shall not be pruned, nor digged; but there shall come up briers and thorns: I will also command the clouds that they rain no rain upon it. For the vineyard of the Lord of hosts is the house of Israel, and the men of Judah his pleasant plant: and he looked for judgment, but behold oppression; for righteousness, but behold a cry" (Isaiah 5:3-7).

"As a nation the children of Israel failed of receiving the benefits that God desired to give them. They did not appreciate His purpose or cooperate in its execution. But though individuals and peoples may thus separate themselves from Him, His purpose for those who trust Him is unchanged. 'Whatsoever God doeth, it shall be forever' (Ecclesiastes 3:14)."<sup>1</sup>

"The warning was not heeded by the Jewish people. They forgot God, and lost sight of their high privilege as His representatives. The blessings they had received brought no blessing to the world. All their advantages were appropriated for their own glorification. They robbed God of the service He required of them, and they robbed their fellow men of religious guidance and a holy example. Like the inhabitants of the antediluvian world, they followed out every imagination of their evil hearts. Thus they made sacred things appear a farce, saying, 'The temple of the Lord, the temple of the Lord, are these' (Jeremiah 7:4), while at the same time they were misrepresenting God's character, dishonoring His name, and polluting His sanctuary."<sup>2</sup>

"Hear, O heavens, and give ear, O earth: for the Lord hath spoken, I have nourished and brought up children, and they have rebelled against me. The ox knoweth his owner, and the ass his master's crib: but Israel doth not know, my people doth not consider. Ah sinful nation, a people laden with iniquity, a seed of evildoers, children that are corrupters: they have forsaken the Lord, they have provoked the Holy One of Israel unto anger, they are gone away backward. . . . How is the faithful city become an harlot! it was full of judgment; righteousness lodged in it; but now murderers" (Isaiah 1:2-4, 21).

"How is the gold become dim! how is the most fine gold changed! the stones of the sanctuary are poured out in the top of every street" (Lamentations 4:1).

"The people of Israel lost sight of their high privileges as God's representatives. They forgot God and failed to fulfill their holy mission. . . . They shut themselves away from the world in order to escape temptation. The restrictions that God had placed upon their association with idolaters as a means of preventing them from conforming to the practices of the heathen, they used to build up a wall of separation between themselves and all other nations. . . .

"Priests and rulers became fixed in a rut of ceremonialism. They were satisfied with a legal religion, and it was impossible for them to give to others the living truths of heaven. They thought their own righteousness all-sufficient, and did not desire that a new element should be brought into their religion. The good will of God to men they did not accept as something apart from themselves, but connected it with their own merit because of their good works. The faith that works by love and purifies the soul could find no place for union with the religion of the Pharisees, made up of ceremonies and the injunctions of men."<sup>3</sup>

# What happened to the Jewish people because of this failure?

"Because they failed of fulfilling God's purpose, the children of Israel were set aside, and God's call was extended to other peoples. If these too prove unfaithful, will they not in like manner be rejected?"<sup>4</sup>

"The Jewish leaders thought themselves too wise to need instruction, too righteous to need salvation, too highly honored to need the honor that comes from Christ. The Saviour turned from them to entrust to others the privileges they had abused and the work they had slighted. God's glory must be revealed, His word established. Christ's kingdom must be set up in the world. The salvation of God must be made known in the cities of the wilderness; and the disciples were called to do the work that the Jewish leaders had failed to do."<sup>5</sup>

# What about us—are we failing today as well?

"All these things happened unto them for ensamples: and they are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come" (1 Corinthians 10:11).

"The experiences of Israel were recorded for our instruction. [1 Corinthians 10:11 quoted.] With us, as with Israel of old, success in education depends on fidelity in carrying out the Creator's plan. Adherence to the principles of God's word will bring as great blessings to us as it would have brought to the Hebrew people."<sup>6</sup>

"Like ancient Israel the church has dishonored her God by departing from the light, neglecting her duties, and abusing her high and exalted privilege of being peculiar and holy in character. Her members have violated their covenant to live for God and Him only. They have joined with the selfish and world-loving. Pride, the love of pleasure, and sin have been cherished, and Christ has departed. His Spirit has been quenched in the church. Satan works side by side with professed Christians; yet they are so destitute of spiritual discernment that they do not detect him. They have not the burden of the work. The solemn truths they profess to believe are not a reality to them. They have not genuine faith. Men and women will act out all the faith which they in reality possess. By their fruits ye shall know them. Not their profession, but the fruit they bear, shows the character of the tree. Many have a form of godliness, their names are upon the church records; but they have a spotted record in heaven. The recording angel has faithfully written their deeds. Every selfish act, every wrong word, every unfulfilled duty, and every secret sin, with every artful dissembling, is faithfully chronicled in the book of records kept by the recording angel."7

"The parable of the vineyard applies not alone to the Jewish nation. It has a lesson for us. The church in this generation has been endowed by God with great privileges and blessings, and He expects corresponding returns.

"We have been redeemed by a costly ransom. Only by the greatness of this ransom can we conceive of its results. On this earth, the earth whose soil has been moistened by the tears and blood of the Son of God, are to be brought forth the precious fruits of Paradise. In the lives of God's people the truths of His word are to reveal their glory and excellence. Through His people Christ is to manifest His character and the principles of His kingdom."<sup>8</sup>

"Ye adulterers and adulteresses, know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God? whosoever therefore will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God" (James 4:4).

"Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world" (1 John 2:15, 16).

"If you lower the standard in order to secure popularity and an increase of numbers, and then make this increase a cause of rejoicing, you show great blindness. If numbers were an evidence of success, Satan might claim the preeminence; for, in this world, his followers are largely in the majority. It is the degree of moral power pervading the college, that is a test of its prosperity. It is the virtue, intelligence, and piety of the people composing our churches, not their numbers, that should be a source of joy and thankfulness."<sup>9</sup>

"A laborer should never leave some portion of the work undone because it is not agreeable to perform, thinking that the minister coming next will do it for him. When this is the case, if a second minister follows the first, and presents the claims that God has upon His people, some draw back, saying, 'The minister who brought us the truth did not mention these things.' And they become offended because of the word. Some refuse to accept the tithing system; they turn away, and no longer walk with those who believe and love the truth. When other lines are opened before them, they answer, 'It was not so taught us,' and they hesitate to move forward. How much better it would have been if the first messenger of truth had faithfully and thoroughly educated these converts in regard to all essential matters, even if fewer had been added to the church under his labors. God would be better pleased to have six thoroughly converted to the truth than to have sixty make a profession and yet not be truly converted."<sup>10</sup>

"Remember that just as soon as you allow your influence to lead away from the straight and narrow path that the Lord has cast up for His people, your prosperity will cease; for God will not be your guide. Again and again the record of Nebuchadnezzar's life has been presented to me to present to you, that you may be warned not to trust in your own wisdom or to make flesh your arm. Do not lower the banner of truth or allow it to drop from your hands in order to unite with the solemn message for these last days anything that will tend to hide the peculiar features of our faith."11

### The call for us today

"Remove not the ancient landmark, which thy fathers have set" (Proverbs 22:28).

"The work of ministers and writers is to prepare a people to meet God. The standard of truth has been lowered in the dust. Family religion, family holiness, is now to be honored as never before. As a sanctifier, reprover, and comforter, the Holy Spirit is to do the work essential for this time. If ever a people needed to walk before God as did Enoch, Seventh-day Adventists need to now, showing their sincerity by pure words, clean words, words full of sympathy, tenderness and love. But it is

not to end here. There are times when words of reproof and sharp rebuke are called for. Those who are out of the right way need more than soft words to bring them back. Moral renovation must take place in every heart, else souls will perish in their sins. If we brought the instruction contained in the twelfth chapter of Romans into the practical life, we would be true believers. Those whose faith is spurious will show by their daily exhibition of character that they are not true Christians. Those who have put on Christ are transformed by the renewing of their minds. By their own experience they prove what is the good and acceptable and perfect will of God."12

"There is to be no change in the general features of our work. It is to stand as clear and distinct as prophecy has made it. We are to enter into no confederacy with the world, supposing that by so doing we could accomplish more. If any stand in the way, to hinder the advancement of the work in the lines that God has appointed, they will displease God. No line of truth that has made the Seventh-day Adventist people what they are is to be weakened. We have the old landmarks of truth, experience, and duty, and we are to stand firmly in defense of our principles in full view of the world."<sup>13</sup> R

### References

- <sup>1</sup> Education, p. 50.
- <sup>2</sup> Christ's Object Lessons, pp. 291, 292.
- <sup>3</sup> The Acts of the Apostles, pp. 14, 15.
- <sup>4</sup> Christ's Object Lessons, p. 304.
- <sup>5</sup> The Acts of the Apostles, p. 16.
- <sup>6</sup> Education, p. 50.
- <sup>7</sup> Testimonies, vol. 2, pp. 441, 442.
- <sup>8</sup> Christ's Object Lessons, p. 296.
- <sup>9</sup> Counsels to Parents, Teachers, and Students, p. 94.
- <sup>10</sup> Counsels on Stewardship, pp. 104, 105.
- <sup>11</sup> Testimonies, vol. 8, p. 162.
- <sup>12</sup> Pamphlet 70, pp. 5, 6.
- <sup>13</sup> Testimonies, vol. 6, p. 17.

# Dare to Be a

By Danica Tyler

t was the eve of my little boy's third birthday. He was fast asleep in his bed, and I opened my Bible to read a bit before I went to sleep. My Bible opened to the story of Hannah. As I read through the story, my heart was wrenched at the thought of her giving up her three-year-old. I couldn't imagine being able to do that with my own son. As I went on to read Ellen White's comments, I gained an even deeper respect for this mother.

"During the first three years of the life of Samuel the prophet, his mother carefully taught him to distinguish between good and evil. By every familiar object surrounding him, she sought to lead his thoughts up to the Creator.

... Though Samuel's youth was passed at the tabernacle devoted to the worship of God, he was not free from evil influences or sinful example. ... [Samuel's] early training led him to choose to maintain his Christian integrity."<sup>1</sup> As I thought about what I read, the importance of being a mother overwhelmed me. I remembered all those times I had been too busy for my boy doing other good things. Realizing that a child's whole destiny can be greatly influenced by the time they are three was another shocking thought. What if I was to give up my child the next day on his third birthday—the thought was awful. There were so many things I could have done better.

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# Would there ever have been a Samuel, a Moses, or a Timothy if there were not faithful mothers to guide them?

There are other mothers in the Bible who we can look up to just as we do Hannah. Remember with me the story of another mother, one whose baby, according to the law of the land, had to be killed. She stepped out in faith and made a basket boat. When the princess found the baby, what could have been a death knell was just the beginning of a beautiful story. This mother only had 12 years to train her boy. Can you imagine sending your 12-year-old off to a palace to be the prince where he could have anything he would want? He is going to be educated by Egyptian priests who will indoctrinate him in all the mysteries of their pagan religion in the most appealing way possible. You are not there every day to remind him that this is all nonsense. He is by himself. Will he stay true? Will he make the choice of following the God of his slave race, or choose to be the next Pharaoh?

When you think of Moses, he did a pretty outstanding job as a leader in Israel. God spoke to him face to face. He wrote the first five books of the Bible. The Jews still revere him as their number one prophet. He was a wonderful man of God. But would there have been a Moses if there wasn't a faithful mother in Israel? A mother who faithfully and quietly did her job. A job that isn't appreciated at the time but has the most far-reaching results.

Another story that has recently grabbed my attention is the story of two cousins. We don't know very much about them other than the fact that they were related and both were the mothers of two famous men—Jesus and John the Baptist. The fathers could have been the cousins but they weren't. To me this shows the importance of the mother. God handpicked these cousins because they would be faithful mothers.

We have the story of Timothy, a very young man whom Paul was able to trust with great responsibilities. Why could he be of so much use in the early church and be a part of turning the world upside down? Because he had a faithful mother and grandmother. There is no mention of these women doing some wonderful work turning their world upside down, but they did this by doing their number-one-job of being mothers.

In God's work there is always a need for more workers. As we look around for young people to join God's work, young people who will be the Samuels, Moseses and Timothys of today, there

are so few. Why?

Because mothers are neglecting their Godgiven responsibility to do something supposedly grander.

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her job properly, the work of the minister is greatly impeded. It is our job as mothers to aid the minister by doing our jobs faithfully.

As I thought about the things I had read the evening of my little boy's birthday, tears filled my eyes. I had a new sense of my responsibility as a mother. I asked God to help me be the mother He wants me to be and to please forgive me for the many times I had failed.

Does that mean I became the perfect mother right away? No. I am still learning how to be that perfect mom. But the practical step that I have taken is to read all I can on this very important subject and then try to do something with what I have read. There is so much in the Bible and the inspired writings if only we would search through them and drink them in as if our life depended on it.

Let us dare to follow Hannah's example.  $\mathscr{N}$ 

### Reference

<sup>1</sup> The Review & Herald, September 8, 1904.



### **SDARM World News**



# Canada

Baptismal service in Montreal, Quebec, June 2010.



# Ukraine

Missionary School students, June 2009 (left).

# Romania

Missionary School students and staff (below).





# Philippines

Philippine Union delegation session.



# Brazil

Southern Brazilian Union delegation session (right); Northern Brazilian Union delegation session (below), October 2009.



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Children's Corner

# BEING BIG When You're Little

s there any child who has never tried putting on the shoes of Mom or Dad at least once? Their shoes are so, so big, and there is a great, long space left over between your heel and the back of the shoe. But then you try to walk around the room anyway and pretend that you are Mom or Dad. It is fun to play as if you're big when you're still little!

Jesus loves little children—and, in fact, He actually tells grownups to be more like children in some ways. He explains, "Whosoever shall not receive the kingdom of God as a little child shall in no wise enter therein" (Luke 18:17). Why does Jesus say this?

By B. Monteiro

Christ knows that children tend to be forgiving to others and their thoughts are more innocent. Why is this? Children have not lived as long as grownups, so they have not seen as much evil in their short



lifetime. Many older people have had to see more sad things during the long time they have been in this wicked world. So, Jesus is telling the older ones to forget about all those bad, hurtful things they have suffered and remember how happy it was to be a brand, new child.

Now, here is another question: Does

Christ **only** tell the grownups to be like children? Or does He sometimes tell them **not** to be like children? He also says in His Word, "Be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine" (Ephesians 4:14). What does this mean?

Most children would not be stable if they did not have grownups to guide them. They would be like wild, untamed animals. Without God-fearing families, they would not know what to believe and what not to believe. People could trick them into getting mixed up with all kinds of lies. So, God tells Christian grownups not to act like that but, instead, to be sure and settled in the truth of Christ.

Sometimes your parents may say to you or even to another grownup, "Don't be such a baby. Don't be so childish." They are saying not to be like a person who has no discipline or self-control. A baby cries because it cannot speak and is untrained about how to behave. But an older child should already have enough patience to ask for something respectfully and even be helpful to others, not just self-centered.

So, that is why we do **not** want to be *childish*, but rather childlike. Then we can smile and bloom as a fresh, new flower. We can forgive others and think pure thoughts. This is Christ's plan for every human being made in His own image. This is why He says: "Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven. Whosoever therefore shall humble himself as this little child, the same is greatest in the kingdom of heaven" (Matthew 18:3, 4). To be "converted" means turned around—turned away from bad thoughts and habits and turned instead toward God. We are to be humble like a little child looking up to his or her parents-not thinking we are better or more important than anyone else. When we are humble like this, Christ can lift us up to become like Him in character. And that is even better than wearing grownup shoes! *R*