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THE LAW &
THE GOSPEL

Come Apart and Rest Awhile / Is Prayer Really Necessary? / We Know Not the Hour

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"The age in which we live calls for reformatory action."
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STATE-OF-THE-ART *Communication*

*W*e read in Daniel 12:4 that in the time of the end “many shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall be increased.”

Without a doubt, people today are indeed running to and fro. The prophet Nahum was shown that in the day of preparation, “the chariots shall rage in the streets, they shall justle one against another in the broad ways: they shall seem like torches, they shall run like the lightnings” (2:4). Have you ever seen photographs of automobile traffic flowing at night? How appropriate was the prophet’s depiction given over 2,600 years ago!

Text-messaging vital matters

Yes, it’s true. Ever since Jesus Christ entered the Most Holy Place of the heavenly sanctuary in 1844, knowledge here on earth has rapidly increased. Among the greatest leaps in technological advancement have been those in the realm of communication. Communication in everyday life has been tremendously facilitated through telephone, telegraph, facsimile, cell phone, and e-mail. All of these inventions have become crucial to successful business in the civilized world, especially as they go hand-in-hand with the constant need to travel.

Some key matters to be communicated may include meeting someone’s arrival at an airport or preparing for some significant event. Yet such are but faint examples of the greatest, most solemn message that urgently needs to be conveyed in these hectic days: Prepare for the close of probation and get ready to meet the soon arrival of

Jesus Christ in the clouds of glory! God has given us “text messages” about this in His word—the Holy Bible.

“Christ is spoken of as walking in the midst of the golden candlesticks. Thus is symbolized His relation to the churches. He is in constant communication with His people. He knows their true state. He observes their order, their piety, their devotion. Although He is high priest and mediator in the sanctuary above, yet He is represented as walking up and down in the midst of His churches on the earth. With untiring wakefulness and unremitting vigilance, He watches to see whether the light of any of His sentinels is burning dim or going out.”¹

Static on the line?

Landline telephone communication is sometimes hindered by static. Likewise in the spiritual realm, Lot, the nephew of Abraham, encountered a breakdown of his communication with heaven when his wife became too busy focusing earthward. The same danger exists today.

More recent technology also has its pitfalls. Sometimes when talking on a cell phone, we need to stop and remain in one place to avoid losing connection. We have to pause in order to stay in tune with the signal coming from the satellite in the sky.

Again, likewise in the spiritual realm, there is a powerful signal coming from the sky—actually from the third Heaven where Christ is. Often we need to stop running around in order to stay tuned with it. Then when we get the full message from Him, we are duty-bound to communicate it also to others.

Spread the word!

Addressing a son in the faith, the apostle Paul desired “that the communication of thy faith may become effectual by the acknowledging of every good thing which is in you in Christ Jesus” (Philemon 6). Peter urges us to have your “conversation honest among the Gentiles: that whereas they speak against you as evildoers, they may by your good works, which they shall behold, glorify God in the day of visitation” (1 Peter 2:12).

“God expects those who bear the name of Christ to represent Him. . . . They are to be a sanctified, purified, holy people, communicating light to all with whom they come in contact.”²

It may often involve travel or inconvenience, yet “there is missionary work to be done in many unpromising places. The missionary spirit needs to take hold of our souls, inspiring us to reach classes for whom we had not planned to labor and in ways and places that we had no idea of working. The Lord has His plan for the sowing of the gospel seed. In sowing according to His will, we shall so multiply the seed that His word may reach thousands who have never heard the truth.

“Thousands upon thousands, and ten thousand times ten thousand angels are waiting to cooperate with members of our churches in communicating the light that God has generously given, that a people may be prepared for the coming of Christ.”³ What more advanced—more gratifying—form of communication can exist? And what a privilege it provides! *R*

References

¹ *The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 586.

² *Maranatha*, p. 112.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 104.

COME APART AND REST

*S*tress. Hurry. Tension. Rush. Sound familiar? We live in a society where more time is spent with the cares of this world than with the greatest treasures God has placed in it. The most important treasure we have is God's Word. Are we spending quality time with Jesus and His word? The Master invites us to take a pause from our busy schedule in order to invest some profitable time with Him.

The disciples of Christ had the same need. Although they were doing a good work for the worthwhile cause of the gospel, they needed to come apart to be alone with Jesus Himself. What kind of rest did they have with Him? Why

did they need this rest? What spiritual lessons are to be found as the Lord repeats the call today for us all to come apart and rest awhile?

The disciples' experience

When Christ had first called His twelve disciples, He soon sent them out to do missionary work. "[Jesus] called unto him the twelve, and began to send them forth by two and two; and gave them power over unclean spirits; . . . and they went out, and preached that men should repent" (Mark 6:7, 12).

It was when the twelve had returned from this missionary tour that Jesus saw it was already necessary to tell them: "Come ye yourselves apart into a desert place, and rest awhile: for there

were many coming and going, and they had no leisure so much as to eat" (verse 31).

In a lonely region near Bethsaida, Christ took His disciples to a place where "they would be away from the thoroughfares of travel, and the bustle and agitation of the city. The scenes of nature were in themselves a rest, a change grateful to the senses. Here they could listen to the words of Christ without hearing the angry interruptions, the retorts and accusations of the scribes and Pharisees. Here they could enjoy a short season of precious fellowship in the society of their Lord."¹

For what specific reasons did Christ call these men aside to rest—and what spiritual lessons can we learn from this?



AND REST AWHILE

A compilation of passages from the Bible and the Spirit of Prophecies with comments by Victor Sarmiento

“The rest which Christ and His disciples took was not self-indulgent rest. . . . They were vitalized by divine power and inspired with hope and courage.”

1. INSTRUCTION

First of all, Christ called His disciples apart to provide them with instruction.

“The rest which Christ and His disciples took was not self-indulgent rest. The time they spent in retirement was not devoted to pleasure seeking. They talked together regarding the work of God, and the possibility of bringing greater efficiency to the work.”²

“Jesus had called His disciples that He might send them forth as His witnesses, to declare to the world what they had seen and heard of Him. They were to be workers together with God for the saving of the world.”³

In order to witness for Christ, the disciples had to come apart with Je-

sus to spend time with Him, to learn and receive instruction from His lips. This is one of the reasons why they were called apart to rest. “(For the life was manifested, and we have seen it, and bear witness, and shew unto you that eternal life, which was with the Father, and was manifested unto us;) that which we have seen and heard declare we unto you, that ye also may have fellowship with us: and truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ” (1 John 1:2, 3).

Based on Strong’s Greek Dictionary of the New Testament, the definitions for “seen” and for “fellowship” are the following:

Seen (Hōraō). To behold, to perceive, to see with the eyes, to become acquainted with by experience, to experience.

Fellowship (Koinōnia). Fellowship, communion, community, communicate, joint participation, association.

After the disciples had spent time in communion with Jesus and had personally seen and heard Him, they would be better prepared to labor more effectively in His cause. The Word of God declares: “Ye are my witnesses, saith the Lord” (Isaiah 43:10).

We are to be workers together with God in presenting Jesus to the world. We are to be the channel to communicate to humanity the good news of salvation. This is why Christ is calling us to come apart and rest with Him—not for the purpose of spending time in the pleasures of this world, but that the Lord may impart to us His wisdom to better fit us to win souls for His kingdom.

“By daily communion with God [the laborer for Christ] becomes mighty in a knowledge of the Scriptures. His fellowship is with the Father and the Son; and as he constantly obeys the divine will, he becomes daily better fitted to speak words that will guide wandering souls to the fold of Christ.”⁴



"He who called the fisherman of Galilee is still calling men to His service. And He is just as willing to manifest His power through us as through the first disciples. However imperfect and sinful we may be, the Lord holds out to us the offer of partnership with Himself, of apprenticeship to Christ. He invites us to come under the divine instruction, that, uniting with Christ, we may work the works of God."⁵

2. PHYSICAL AND MENTAL REST

It is God's will that "above all things . . . thou mayest prosper and be in health, even as thy soul prospereth" (3 John 2).

"Health is a blessing of which few appreciate the value; yet upon it the efficiency of our mental and physical powers largely depends. . . . By allowing ourselves to form wrong habits . . . by overworking mind or body, we unbalance the nervous system. Those who thus shorten their lives and unfit themselves for service by disregarding nature's laws, are guilty of robbery toward God. And they are robbing their fellow men also. The opportunity of blessing others, the very work for which God sent them into the world, has by their own course of action been cut short."⁶

Jesus is calling us to come apart from our busy schedule of work in order to rest. When our life is absorbed with a lot of anxiety and cares, the Bible compares us to the seed that fell among the thorns and gave not fruit. Why? Because the cares of this world choke the word. In the parable of the sower, "some [gospel seed] fell among thorns, and the thorns grew up, and choked it, and it yielded no fruit. . . . And these are they which are sown among thorns; such as hear the word, and the cares of this

world, and the deceitfulness of riches, and the lusts of other things entering in, choke the word, and it becometh unfruitful" (Mark 4:7, 18, 19).

"That [seed] which fell among thorns are they, which, when they have heard, go forth, and are choked with cares and riches and pleasures of this life, and bring no fruit to perfection" (Luke 8:14).

The only way that we as Christians can bear fruit is by abiding in Jesus Christ. This is explained in John 15:4–6.

3. FEED ON THE BREAD OF LIFE

Another vital and essential reason we are called to rest is to be fed. Sometimes we are so involved in our work that we even forget when it is time to eat. When this happens, there is an object lesson in it for us. Jesus says, "Labour not for the meat which perisheth, but for that meat which endureth unto everlasting life, which the Son of man shall give unto you: for him hath God the Father sealed" (John 6:27).

"Seek not merely for material benefit. Let it not be the chief effort to provide for the life that now is, but **seek for spiritual food**, even that wisdom which will endure unto everlasting life. This the Son of God alone can give."⁷

"As our physical life is sustained by food, so **our spiritual life is sustained by the word of God**. And every soul is to receive life from God's word for himself. As we must eat for ourselves in order to receive nourishment, so we must receive the word for ourselves. We are not to obtain it merely through the medium of another's mind. We should carefully study the Bible, asking God for the aid of the Holy Spirit, that we may understand His word."⁸

What prevents us from partaking of the Bread of Life? Too often it is the deceitfulness of riches. We should not be so engaged in our business that it hinders us from seeking and serving God properly. This is one of the reasons why the gospel seed is so often choked and unable to bear fruit—self-ambition gets in the way. Even among us who believe in the soon return of Christ, there are lovers of mammon. Our Lord clearly warns us to avoid "the deceitfulness of riches" (Mark 4:19).

The Word further admonishes, "No man can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon" (Matthew 6:24). "Labour not to be rich: cease from thine own wisdom." "A faithful man shall abound with blessings: but he that maketh haste to be rich shall not be innocent" (Proverbs 23:4; 28:20).

"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." "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" (1 Timothy 6:9, 10, 7, 8).

"Christians must work, they must engage in business, and they can do this without committing sin. But many become so absorbed in business that they have no time for prayer, no time for the study of the Bible, no time to seek and serve God. At times the longings of the soul go out for holiness and heaven; but there is no time to turn aside from the din of the world to listen to the majestic and authoritative utterances of the Spirit of God. The things of eternity are made subordinate, the things of the world supreme. It is impossible for the seed of the word to bring forth fruit; for the life of the soul is given to nourish the thorns of worldliness.

"And many who are working with a very different purpose, fall into a like error. They are working for others' good; their duties are pressing, their responsibilities are many, and they allow their labor to crowd out devotion. **Communion with God through prayer and a study of His word is neglected.** They forget that Christ has said, 'Without Me ye can do nothing' (John 15:5). They walk apart from Christ, their life is not pervaded by His grace, and the characteristics of self are revealed."⁹

The problem in our society today—and the solution

“In too many households prayer is neglected. Parents feel that they have no time for **morning and evening worship**. They cannot spare a few moments to be spent in thanksgiving to God for His abundant mercies—for the blessed sunshine and the showers of rain, which cause vegetation to flourish, and for the guardianship of holy angels.”¹⁰

“If ever there was a time when every house should be a house of prayer, it is now. Infidelity and skepticism prevail. Iniquity abounds. Corruption flows in the vital currents of the soul, and rebellion against God breaks out in the life. . . .

“In every family there should be a fixed time for morning and evening worship. How appropriate it is for parents to gather their children about them before the fast is broken, to thank the heavenly Father for His protection during the night, and to ask Him for His help and guidance and watchcare during the day! How fitting, also, when evening comes, for parents and children to gather once more before Him and thank Him for the blessings of the day that is past!”¹¹

The Lord is asking for a reformation in our homes. This should be our first work.

“Consecrate yourself to God in the morning; make this your very first work. Let your prayer be, ‘Take me, O Lord, as wholly Thine. I lay all my plans at Thy feet. Use me today in Thy service. Abide with me, and let all my work be wrought in Thee.’ This is a daily matter. Each morning consecrate yourself to God for that day. Surrender all your plans to Him, to be carried out or given up as His providence shall indicate. Thus day by day you may be giving your life into the hands of God, and thus your life will be molded more and more after the life of Christ.”¹²

One thing is needful

In the Bible there is an experience that reflects the life of many of us today: “Now it came to pass, as [Jesus and His disciples] went, that he entered into a certain village: and a certain

woman named Martha received him into her house. And she had a sister called Mary, which also sat at Jesus’ feet, and heard his word. But Martha was cumbered about much serving, and came to him, and said, Lord, dost thou not care that my sister hath left me to serve alone? bid her therefore that she help me. And Jesus answered and said unto her, Martha, Martha, thou art careful and troubled about many things: but one thing is needful: and Mary hath chosen that good part, which shall not be taken away from her” (Luke 10:38–42).

Choosing the good part

“The ‘one thing’ that Martha needed was a calm, devotional spirit, a deeper anxiety for knowledge concerning the future, immortal life, and the graces necessary for spiritual advancement. She needed less anxiety for the things which pass away, and more for those things which endure forever. Jesus would teach His children to seize every opportunity of gaining that knowledge which will make them wise unto salvation.”¹³

Again Christ admonishes us: “Take heed to yourselves, lest at any time your hearts be overcharged with surfeiting, and drunkenness, and cares of this life, and so that day come upon you unawares” (Luke 21:34).

Church fellowship

Another aspect of coming apart to rest with Jesus involves the importance of church fellowship. Christ has a body on this earth, yet some have the idea that they do not need to come to church and fellowship week after week with fellow believers. Those who are seeking communion with God will come to His house of worship to fellowship with the Lord and with one another. “If we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin” (1 John 1:7).

The experience of the early church is described as follows: “[The believers] continued steadfastly in the apostles’ doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers. . . . And all

that believed were together, and had all things common . . . and they, continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, did eat their meat with gladness and singleness of heart, praising God, and having favour with all the people. And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved” (Acts 2:42, 44, 46, 47).

The scriptures encourage us to continue meeting together as the second coming of Christ approaches. “Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching” (Hebrews 10:25). This implies assembling more frequently the closer we get to the end of earth’s history.

“There is necessity for diligence in prayer; let nothing hinder you. Make every effort to keep open the communion between Jesus and your own soul. Seek every opportunity to go where prayer is wont to be made. **Those who are really seeking for communion with God will be seen in the prayer meeting**, faithful to do their duty and earnest and anxious to reap all the benefits they can gain. They will improve every opportunity of placing themselves where they can receive the rays of light from heaven.”¹⁴

4. PREPARE FOR TRANSLATION

What is the greatest benefit that anyone can obtain for having a personal communion with Jesus? In the Old Testament we have the experience of one who knew and understood the importance of communing with God. We read that “Enoch walked with God: and he was not; for God took him” (Genesis 5:24).

“In the midst of a life of active labor, Enoch steadfastly maintained his communion with God. The greater and more pressing his labors, the more constant and earnest were his prayers. He continued to exclude himself, at certain periods, from all society. After remaining for a time among the people, laboring to benefit them by instruction and example, he would withdraw, to spend a season in solitude, hungering and thirsting for that divine knowledge

which God alone can impart. Communing thus with God, Enoch came more and more to reflect the divine image. His face was radiant with a holy light, even the light that shineth in the face of Jesus. As he came forth from these divine communings, even the ungodly beheld with awe the impress of heaven upon his countenance."¹⁵

"By faith Enoch was translated that he should not see death; and was not found, because God had translated him: for before his translation he had this testimony, that he pleased God" (Hebrews 11:5).

"For three hundred years Enoch had been seeking purity of soul, that he might be in harmony with Heaven.

prayer! How constant was His communion with God! Again and again in the history of His earthly life are found records such as these: 'Rising up a great while before day, He went out, and departed into a solitary place, and there prayed'. . . 'And it came to pass in those days, that He went out into a mountain to pray, and continued all night in prayer to God' (Mark 1:35; 6:12).

"In a life wholly devoted to the good of others, the Saviour found it necessary to withdraw from the thoroughfares of travel and from the throng that followed Him day after day. He must turn aside from a life of ceaseless activity and contact with

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

"There is need that God's chosen workmen should listen to the command to go apart and rest awhile. Many valuable lives have been sacrificed because of a disregard of this command. . . .

"When a laborer has been under a heavy pressure of care and anxiety, and is overworked in both body and mind, he should turn aside and rest awhile, not for selfish gratification, but that he may be better prepared for future duties. We have a vigilant foe, who is ever on our track, ready to take advantage of every weakness that would help to make his temptations effective. When the mind is overstrained and the body enfeebled, he presses upon the soul his fiercest temptations. Let the laborer carefully husband his strength, and when wearied with toil, let him turn aside and commune with Jesus."¹⁹ May the Lord bless us and give us an ear to hear His call to us here and now: "Come ye yourselves apart into a desert place, and rest a while." Amen! *R*

"[Christ] was wholly dependent upon God, and in the secret place of prayer He sought divine strength, that He might go forth braced for duty and trial."

For three centuries he had walked with God. Day by day he had longed for a closer union; nearer and nearer had grown the communion, until God took him to Himself. He had stood at the threshold of the eternal world, only a step between him and the land of the blest; and now the portals opened, the walk with God, so long pursued on earth, continued, and he passed through the gates of the Holy City."¹⁶

"To such communion [as Enoch had] God is calling us. As was Enoch's, so must be their holiness of character who shall be redeemed from among men at the Lord's second coming."¹⁷

Christ our Example

"There [went] a fame abroad of him: and great multitudes came together to hear, and to be healed by him of their infirmities. And he withdrew himself into the wilderness, and prayed' (Luke 5:15, 16). "No other life was ever so crowded with labor and responsibility as was that of Jesus; yet how often He was found in

human needs, to seek retirement and unbroken communion with His Father. As one with us, a sharer in our needs and weaknesses, He was wholly dependent upon God, and in the secret place of prayer He sought divine strength, that He might go forth braced for duty and trial. In a world of sin Jesus endured struggles and torture of soul. In communion with God He could unburden the sorrows that were crushing Him. Here He found comfort and joy. . . .

"As a man He supplicated the throne of God till His humanity was charged with a heavenly current that should connect humanity with divinity. Through continual communion He received life from God, that He might impart life to the world. His experience is to be ours."¹⁸

The time is overdue: We need this rest!

If Jesus saw in His life that it was necessary to come apart and rest awhile with the Father, how much more necessary is it for us today? The Lord

References

- ¹ *The Desire of Ages*, p. 361.
- ² *Ibid.* [Emphasis supplied.]
- ³ *Ibid.* p. 291.
- ⁴ *Gospel Workers*, p. 23.
- ⁵ *The Desire of Ages*, p. 297.
- ⁶ *Christ's Object Lessons*, p. 346.
- ⁷ *The Desire of Ages*, p. 385. [Emphasis supplied.]
- ⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 390. [Emphasis supplied.]
- ⁹ *Christ's Object Lessons*, pp. 51, 52. [Emphasis supplied.]
- ¹⁰ *Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 143.
- ¹¹ *Testimonies*, vol. 7, pp. 42, 43.
- ¹² *Steps to Christ*, p. 70.
- ¹³ *The Desire of Ages*, p. 525.
- ¹⁴ *Steps to Christ*, p. 98.
- ¹⁵ *Patriarchs and Prophets*, pp. 86, 87.
- ¹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 87.
- ¹⁷ *Gospel Workers*, p. 54.
- ¹⁸ *The Desire of Ages*, pp. 362, 363.
- ¹⁹ *Gospel Workers*, p. 245.



IS PRAYER *Really* NECESSARY?

*A Bible and Spirit of Prophecy compilation,
with comments by Tony Maraizu*

things ye have need of, before ye ask him." Did the Lord really say here that, since God knows all our needs before we ask Him, we need not pray?

It is often the case that people pick a portion of the scriptures and establish their doctrines and belief upon that little snippet of a text.

Christ Himself taught His disciples how to pray. If it were not necessary He would not have discussed the subject. Although people were praying prior to that time, the Lord made it a point to crystallize our understanding in this area. How do we know this? He said, "When thou prayest, thou shalt not be as the hypocrites are: for they love to pray standing in the synagogues and in the corners of the streets, that they may be seen of men" (Matthew 6:5). Yes, people were pray-

ing before Christ taught His disciples how to pray, meaning that Matthew chapter 6 was basically the Lord's correction on the subject of prayer. Here He was simply teaching His disciples what prayer is and how it should be offered. Thus, there is no safety for anyone to relax his or her vigilance on the grounds that our heavenly Father knows all his or her needs.

What is prayer?

"Prayer is the opening of the heart to God as to a friend."¹

It is "the presentation of our perplexities and necessities, and of our need of God's help against our adversary the devil."²

Do we all have perplexities? Yes. Do we have necessities? Yes. Do we have an adversary, the devil? Yes, unfortunately, we do. That is why God wants us to work together with Him, tapping into His infinite strength. Does God know our needs before we ask Him? Yes, of course, our heavenly Father

*M*any argue that it is not necessary to pray. In fact, someone said that for several years he has not prayed, yet he nevertheless lived in perfectly good health and enjoyed a lot of good things. He quoted Matthew 6:8, "For your Father knoweth what things ye have need of, before ye ask him." He said that since God knows of his necessities, there is no need for him to waste time in prayer. Does this explanation depict what Christ was actually saying in Matthew 6:8? "For your Father **knoweth what**

knows everything; in fact, He knows the end even from the very beginning. But why do we have to pray since He knows what we need before we ask Him?

Entwined with Him

Christ said, "I am the vine, ye are the branches: He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing" (John 15:5).

"We have a God whose ear is not closed to our petitions; and if we prove His word, He will honor our faith. He wants us to have all our interests interwoven with His interests, and then He can safely bless us; for we shall not then take glory to self when the blessing is ours, but shall render all the praise to God. God does not always answer our prayers the first time we call upon Him; for should He do this, we might take it for granted that we had a right to all the blessings and favors He bestowed upon us. Instead of searching our hearts to see if any evil was entertained by us, any sin indulged, we should become careless and fail to realize our dependence upon Him and our need of His help.

"Elijah humbled himself until he was in a condition where he would not take the glory to himself. This is the condition upon which the Lord hears prayer, for then we shall give the praise to Him."³

Avoiding vain, useless repetition

When Christ commented, "Your Father knoweth what things ye have need of, before ye ask him," He explained: "When ye pray, use not vain repetitions, as the heathen do: for they think that they shall be heard for their much speaking. Be not ye therefore like unto them" (Matthew 6:7, 8).

"Secret prayer is neglected, and this is why many offer such long, tedious, backslidden prayers when they assemble to worship God. They go over in their prayers a week of neglected duties, and pray round and round, hoping to make up for their neglect and pacify their condemned consciences, which are scourging them. They hope to pray themselves

into the favor of God. But frequently these prayers result in bringing other minds down to their own low level in spiritual darkness. If Christians would take home the teachings of Christ in regard to watching and praying, they would become more intelligent in their worship of God."⁴

A vibrant prayer life

"When Christ taught the people, He did not devote the time to prayer. He did not enforce upon them, as did the Pharisees, long, tedious ceremonies and prayers. He taught His disciples how to pray: "And when thou prayest, thou shalt not be as the hypocrites are: for they love to pray standing in the synagogues and in the corners of the streets, that they may be seen of men. Verily I say unto you, They have their reward. But thou, when thou prayest, enter into thy closet, and when thou hast shut thy door, pray to thy Father which is in secret; and thy Father which seeth in secret shall reward thee openly. But when ye pray, use not vain repetitions, as the heathen do: for they think that they shall be heard for their much speaking. Be not ye therefore like unto them: for your Father knoweth what things ye have need of, before ye ask Him. . . .

"Christ impressed upon His disciples the idea that their prayers should be short, expressing just what they wanted, and no more. He gives the length and substance of their prayers, expressing their desires for temporal and spiritual blessings, and their gratitude for the same. How comprehensive this sample prayer! It covers the actual need of all. One or two minutes is long enough for any ordinary prayer. There may be instances where prayer is in a special manner indited by the Spirit of God, where supplication is made in the Spirit. The yearning soul becomes agonized and groans after God. The spirit wrestles as did Jacob and will not be at rest without special manifestations of the power of God. This is as God would have it.

"But many offer prayer in a dry, sermonizing manner. These pray to men, not to God. If they were praying to God, and really understood what

they were doing, they would be alarmed at their audacity; for they deliver a discourse to the Lord in the mode of prayer, as though the Creator of the universe needed special information upon general questions in relation to things transpiring in the world. All such prayers are as sounding brass and a tinkling cymbal. They are made no account of in heaven. Angels of God are wearied with them, as well as mortals who are compelled to listen to them."⁵

Paternal peace

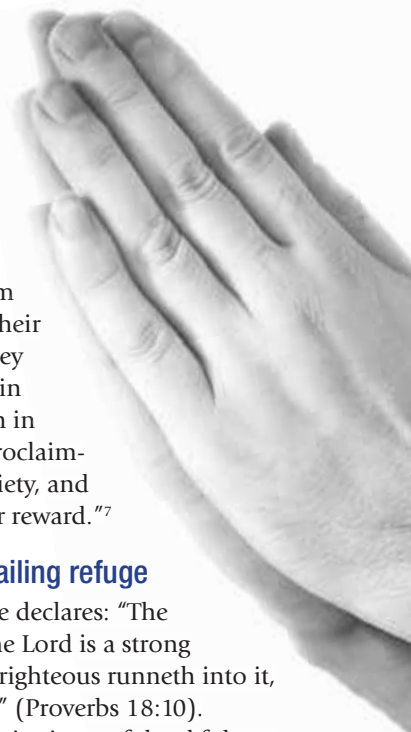
In a familiar Bible passage found in Luke 12:22–31, Jesus assures us of His never-ending care with regard to our necessary food and raiment, bidding us to focus primarily on preparing for the kingdom of heaven. The Master was eager to educate the minds of His disciples away from the worries and burdens of this life. He was constantly teaching them to depend upon God for their existence, affirming that none of us by worrying can add even one cubit to our stature. Many argue that praying does not matter as long as one works hard. But while hard work is certainly commendable, God in His holy Word also puts human accomplishment in its proper perspective: "Beware that thou forget not the Lord thy God. . . . And thou say in thine heart, My power and the might of mine hand hath gotten me this wealth. But thou shalt remember the Lord thy God: for it is he that giveth thee power to get wealth" (Deuteronomy 8:11, 17, 18).

We don't pray only because of physical blessings; prayer is actually essential for our spiritual growth. As faith without work is dead, so is work without faith; it is dead also.

Classic illustrations

The Bible records contain several examples of miraculous victories wrought solely through the power of prayer: Hannah in 1 Samuel 1:10, 11, 20; Elijah in 1 Kings 18:42–45; Peter in Acts 9:36–41.

There is clear evidence that without prayer, Hannah and Elijah would not have succeeded. Similarly, Dorcas would never have lived again without the prayer that Peter offered. And without



prayer Esther would probably have been executed for coming to the king when it was not yet time for her to do so, and Haman would have succeeded in his plan to kill all the Jews. (See Esther chapters 3 and 4.)

If doing the will of God frees us from prayer, then Jesus would not have spent so much time praying. He was with the Father, He never sinned, and He was constantly doing the will of God His Father. Nevertheless, Christ spent time fasting and praying sometimes all night long.

"Jesus was often found in prayer. He resorted to the lonely groves or to the mountains to make His requests known to His Father. When the business and cares of the day were ended, and the weary were seeking rest, Jesus devoted the time to prayer. We would not discourage prayer, for there is far too little praying and watching thereunto. And there is still less praying with the Spirit and the understanding also. Fervent and effectual prayer is always in place and will never weary. Such prayer interests and refreshes all who have a love for devotion."⁶

Common misunderstandings about prayer

The idea of prayer has often been misunderstood and abused. Some seem to think that sincere prayers need to be loud, so they exert physical strength with shouting, jumping, and all kinds of gestures.

Yet first and foremost, those who pray need to know to whom they are praying. Are you offering your prayers to God so that He will take care of you and protect you from your adversary the devil, or do you want to face the devil by yourself? The truth is that the devil is defeated not because we shout, pray aloud or shake our body when we pray, but simply because we put our trust in the Lord, and do those things which are pleasing to Him. Thus the Lord fights the battle for us.

"(For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds;) casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God,

and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ." "What shall we then say to these things? If God be for us, who can be against us?" (2 Corinthians 10:4, 5; Romans 8:31).

Anyone who is praying to God must apply the method that Christ taught. "Thou, when thou prayest, enter into thy closet, and when thou hast shut thy door, pray to thy Father which is in secret; and thy Father which seeth in secret shall reward thee openly."

The only way to receive things from the Lord is to follow exactly what He says; we can't do things our own way and expect to receive anything from the Lord.

Let us consider these inspired steps:

1. Enter into thy closet.
2. When thou hast shut thy door.
3. Pray to thy Father which is in secret.
4. Thy Father which seeth in secret shall reward thee openly.

When we pray, we pray to God and not to man. No reasonable human being will shout, jump, or make any noise or outward display to someone who is in secret. Therefore, we should know how our prayers should be offered.

"Thou, when thou prayest, enter into thy closet" means you can talk to your heavenly Father in secret anywhere. Can one pray in secret even while in the midst of a crowd? Yes, such prayers can be done without others observing.

Shouting is not appropriate when praying to God, for He hears us when we speak from the heart even when our supplication is not audible. For instance, when Hannah besought the Lord for a son, Eli was present but could not hear any voice since the woman only moved her lips. She was praying only in her heart. But did God hear Hannah's silent petition? He most certainly did! (1 Samuel 1:12-17, 20.)

But sad to say, many prayers are offered today in such a way that people see and hear them, but not God. Jesus said "Verily I say unto you, They have their reward" (Matthew 6:5).

What is their reward? "They do not receive their reward from God, but

from men, from whom they seek their reward. They feel a certain satisfaction in publicly proclaiming their piety, and this is their reward."⁷

A never-failing refuge

Scripture declares: "The name of the Lord is a strong tower: the righteous runneth into it, and is safe" (Proverbs 18:10).

Whether in times of thankfulness and joy, or difficulties and perplexity, let us offer our simple, sincere prayers. "Christ will present these [prayers], mingled with the fragrance of His Spirit, to the Father. They will be wholly accepted; for if we have taken Christ to be our personal Saviour, we are born again. We are sons and daughters of God, members by adoption of the royal family."⁸ "Do not spend a long time in prayer before a congregation unless you know that God is inditing the prayer. Let the prayers made in public be short and full of earnestness. The effectual, fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much; but the prayer uttered in a low, monotonous tone and spiritless manner is not accepted by God. The voice of prayer should rise to God from hearts burdened by a sense of need. Let there be a revival of the Holy Spirit, that your prayers may be filled with the power of heaven."⁹ "Pray without ceasing. In everything give thanks: for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you" (1 Thessalonians 5:17, 18). *R*

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THE LAW & THE GOSPEL

*A Bible and Spirit of Prophecy compilation,
with comments by Paul Balbach
[Emphasis supplied throughout.]*

Are you a Christian?" asked a stranger. I responded, "Yes, I am a Christian."

"Well," said the stranger, "I am a New Testament Christian—are you?"

I said, "No, I am a Bible Christian."

I understood the second question, and that is why I answered "no" in response. In reality I am a New Testament Christian, but I am an Old Testament Christian as well.

Many Christians today refer to the New Testament only, saying that "Christ did away with the law, and therefore we do not need to keep the law any longer." What such persons do not realize is that the law and the gospel are a perfect whole. Each one is incomplete without the other.

Ministers preach today that the atonement makes us free from the law of God, and they praise the "free grace and mercy." Thus they teach people to despise the law of God as if God gives them liberty to commit sin.

The scriptures are clear that "all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God; being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus: . . . Do we then make void the law through faith? God forbid: yea, we establish the law" (Romans 3:23, 24, 31).

"Many at the present day say, 'Believe, only believe, and live.' Faith

and works go together, **believing and doing are blended.** The Lord requires no less of the soul now, than He required of Adam in Paradise before he fell—perfect obedience, unblemished righteousness. . . . The gospel does not weaken the claims of the law; it exalts the law and makes it honorable. Under the New Testament, no less is required than was required under the Old Testament."¹

It is the work of the enemy to disconnect the law and the gospel. The law and the gospel are one—they cannot be separated. One depends upon the other. Christ's sacrifice on the cross

“Do we . . . make void the law of God through faith? God forbid: yea, we establish the law” (Romans 3:31).

proves that the law must be kept, yet God showed His merciful love toward us by the death of His Son.

An illustration

A pastor was once stopped by a policeman alongside a road for speeding. The policeman noticed a Bible on the passenger’s seat and asked the driver: “Are you a Christian?” “Yes,” responded the driver, “I am a pastor.” “Do you preach the law?” asked the policeman, and the driver said, “I preach the law of God, and I preach the gospel of grace as well.”

At this moment, the driver was pleading for grace or mercy from the police officer. The officer said that “grace does not do away with the law,” and he issued the driver a ticket. However, he gave the driver a “break” by reducing the penalty, because the driver showed good behavior.

In this example, both law and grace were applied as they should always be. In the secular world, this is not always true, but in God’s kingdom, it is always true.

There are many injustices practiced in this world of sin. Evil people are often let go free and are not held accountable for their actions, while innocent ones are sometimes wrongfully accused or persecuted and much unfair suffering has resulted.

The 1888 crisis

Adventism suffered a great crisis in the past, in a time leading up to the year 1888, now 122 years ago. Pastors debated with Protestant preachers, and they loved to prove that “we are right” and that “the Sabbath is the correct day of worship.” In all their zeal, they left Christ off from their preaching, so they were preaching an incomplete gospel, which is actually a false gospel.

Sister Ellen G. White, speaking about the 1888 crisis, said: “We have not held up before the people the righteousness of Christ and the full significance of His great plan of

redemption. **We have left out Christ and His matchless love** and brought in the theories and reasonings, preached arguments.”²

The Lord’s messenger did not neglect her duty. Several references in the testimonies show that Sister White had all along preached the law and the gospel being in perfect harmony. Also Bro. James White, her husband, preached the harmony between the law and the gospel.

At an early time in Advent history, she recorded: “My husband spoke to a crowded house one hour and a half. His discourse was upon ‘I and My Father Are One,’ **showing the relation the law sustains to the gospel.**”³

Later she confirmed again, “**I spoke with much freedom upon the perfect harmony of the law and the gospel.** My text was Luke 10:25–28. Elder Van Horn spoke again in the evening to a full house.”⁴

In the years leading up to 1888, how did God interpose to help His people? He did not leave them in darkness. He sent messages to them through His servants.

“The Lord in His great mercy sent a most precious message to His people through Elders Waggoner and Jones. This message was to bring more prominently before the world the uplifted Saviour, the sacrifice for the sins of the whole world. It presented justification through faith in the Surety; it invited the people to receive **the righteousness of Christ**, which is made manifest in obedience to all the commandments of God. Many had lost sight of Jesus. They needed to have their eyes directed to His divine person, His merits, and His changeless love for the human family. All power is given into His hands, that He may dispense rich gifts unto men, imparting the priceless gift of **His own righteousness** to the helpless human agent. This is the message that God commanded to be given to the world. It is the third angel’s message, which

is to be proclaimed with a loud voice and attended with the outpouring of His Spirit in a large measure.”⁵

In the two to three years before October 1888, and also after 1888, Elders Jones and Waggoner preached Justification by Faith. They went from camp meeting to camp meeting preaching this message. Sister White accompanied them at several of these meetings and testified that the messages were heaven-sent.

The 1888 crisis repeated today

Is it possible that the disconnection between the law and the gospel still exists today among Christians and even among many professed Seventh-day Adventists?

“The third angel’s message is the proclamation of the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus Christ. The commandments of God have been proclaimed, **but the faith of Jesus Christ has not been proclaimed by Seventh-day Adventists as of equal importance**, the law and the gospel going hand in hand.”⁶

“The constant dwelling upon the law in Galatians, and not presenting the gospel of Jesus Christ in distinct lines, is misleading souls. **The preaching of Christ crucified has been strangely neglected by our people.**”⁷

Fellow believers: By word, pen, or action, are you neglecting to preach Christ and Him crucified? Are you repeating the mistakes of the Advent preachers prior to 1888? Or are you preaching cheap grace which does not save from sin?

The law defined

“Christ came to our world to represent the character of God as it is represented in His holy law; for **His law is a transcript of His character. Christ was both the law and the gospel.** The angel that proclaims the everlasting gospel proclaims the law of God; for the gospel of salvation brings men to obedience of the law, whereby

their characters are formed after the divine similitude."⁸

The law is called "The gospel mirror."⁹

What is the job of a mirror? It shows that your face is dirty, but it does not clean it.

"There is no saving quality in law to pardon the transgression of law."¹⁰

"The law is the echo of God's own voice, giving to every soul the invitation, Come up higher; be holy, holier still."¹¹

"The law is the gospel of Christ veiled."¹²

The gospel defined

"The gospel of Jesus is nothing more or less than the law defined, showing its far-reaching principles."¹³

"The law of Jehovah is the tree; the gospel is the fragrant blossoms and fruit which it bears."¹⁴

"The law of God is not weakened by the gospel, but the power of sin is broken."¹⁵

"However deep are [the sinner's] sins of transgression, the blood of Jesus Christ can cleanse him from all sin."¹⁶

The law and the gospel are united

"Mercy and truth are met together; righteousness and peace have kissed each other" (Psalm 85:10).

"The gospel has not abolished the law, or detracted one tittle from its claims. It still demands holiness in every part. There is no such thing as making the law void through faith in Christ."¹⁷ "Between the law and the gospel there is no contradiction, but the closest union. They are in perfect harmony."¹⁸

"The law and the gospel are inseparably bound together."¹⁹

Do you know what this union (law and gospel) does?

"The law and the gospel, blended, will convict of sin."²⁰

"The law points out man's duty and shows him his guilt. To Christ he must look for pardon and for power to do what the law enjoins [commands]."²¹

The law and the gospel are united as closely as the Father is united with the Son.

"The gospel calls men to repentance. Repentance of what?—Of sin. And what is sin?—It is the transgression of the law. Therefore the gospel calls men from their transgression back to obedience to the law of God."²²

The law and the gospel were always combined. When God gave the tables of the law to Moses, He showed him Christ's sacrifice.

"While Moses was in the mount, God presented to him, not only the tables of the law, but also the plan of salvation. He saw that the sacrifice of Christ was prefigured by all the types and symbols of the Jewish age."²³

"The law and the gospel go hand in hand. The one is the complement of the other. The law without faith in the gospel of Christ cannot save the transgressor of law. The gospel without the law is inefficient and powerless. The law and the gospel are a perfect whole."²⁴

The everlasting gospel

"Christ was both the law and the gospel. The angel that proclaims the everlasting gospel proclaims the law of God; for the gospel of salvation brings man to obedience of the law, whereby their characters are formed after the divine similitude."²⁵

"Christ . . . came to rescue truth from the rubbish of error, and reset it in the framework of the Gospel, presenting the law of God in its original dignity and purity."²⁶

"Christ and Him crucified is the message God would have His servants sound through the length and breadth of the world. The law and the gospel will then be presented as a perfect whole."²⁷

The faith of Jesus is the gospel

"In describing the remnant people of God, John says, 'Here is the patience of the saints: here are they that keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus' (Revelation 14:12). This is the law and the gospel."²⁸

"The faith of Jesus.' It is talked of, but not understood. What constitutes the faith of Jesus, that belongs to the third angel's message? Jesus becoming our sin-bearer that He might become

our sin-pardoning Saviour. He was treated as we deserve to be treated. He came to our world and took our sins that we might take His righteousness. And **faith in the ability of Christ to save us amply and fully and entirely is the faith of Jesus.**"²⁹

Deep significance

The Lord's messenger declares, "Oh, that I had language to present these lofty themes! I lay down my pen in sorrow that my words are so feeble to deal with grand and awful truth; as I contemplate, I seem to shrink into nothingness before its vast significance. The themes connected with the law and the gospel seem too great for such a weak, ignorant mortal as I to handle. From time to time I venture in the simplest language to present that which has been revealed to me concerning the plan of salvation, but again and again I mourn that my expression falls so far short of the glory of the truth as it is in Jesus."³⁰ *R*

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Heavenly Investment

*S*ister Grisel lived in another country—far from her maternal home and family. As she thought of her dear loved ones, she wondered if they

had had anything to eat that day. Here she was with plenty of bread on her table. How wonderful it would be if she could share something with her family! But the distance did not allow her that opportunity. So Sister Grisel said a little prayer, imploring the Lord to provide for her family. Then she decided to share with her neighbors all the bread she had. As she began to knock on doors to offer what she had to others, she felt a peace in her heart.

Later that day Sister Grisel called her family by phone. Her mother informed her that on that very day the family had had nothing to eat, but someone had appeared “out of the blue” with some loaves of bread to provide for their need. It is amazing how the Lord’s promise never fails!

Even today we can experience that as we give we receive.

It is God’s desire that we be not captivated by the possessions of this earth, but that we lay up treasure in heaven. For this reason God gave the following principle to the people of Israel: “The poor shall never cease out of the land: therefore I command thee, saying, Thou shalt open thine hand wide unto thy brother, to thy poor, and to thy needy, in thy land” (Deuteronomy 15:11).

“But right now, money is tight—what if I feel poor, too?”

Many people may argue that they don’t have means to help others. But the

Lord desires that we detach ourselves from selfishness and self-compassion and give of what we have to those in a worse condition than we are.

“The poor man’s gift, the fruit of self-denial, comes up before God as fragrant incense. And every act of self-sacrifice strengthens the spirit of beneficence in the giver’s heart, allying him more closely to the One who was rich, yet for our sakes became poor, that we through His poverty might be rich.”¹

Others may refer to the decadence of society and say that many take advantage of their good desire to help. The Bible confirms this statement, “Because iniquity shall abound, the love of many

By Karol Nina-Rodriguez

shall wax cold" (Matthew 24:12). Another verse completes the balanced picture: "He that shall endure unto the end, the same shall be saved" (verse 13). Only those who are not shaped by circumstances but rather are faithful in carrying out their duty will be saved.

Some might believe that just by praying for the poor they are complying with God's command, but the Bible states this is not so: "If a brother or sister be naked, and destitute of daily food, and one of you say unto them, Depart in peace, be ye warmed and filled; notwithstanding ye give them not those things which are needful to the body; what doth it profit?" (James 2:15, 16). Your prayers avail nothing if you do not work accordingly. It is our duty to provide for those in need. This is why God has given us so much, so we can also share.

Blessings come as a result

The Israelites received many blessings when they did this work, and so today we are also partakers of those blessings:

We have joy in our heart: "The effort to bless others will react in blessings upon ourselves. This was the purpose of God in giving us a part to act in the plan of redemption. He has granted men the privilege of becoming partakers of the divine nature and, in their turn, of diffusing blessings to their fellow men. This is the highest honor, the greatest joy, that it is possible for God to bestow upon men. Those who thus become participants in labors of love are brought nearest to their Creator."²

We lend to God: "He that hath pity upon the poor lendeth unto the Lord; and that which he hath given will he pay him again" (Proverbs 19:17). God is the Owner and Creator of the universe. Everything is His, and if we lend to Him we will receive abundantly!

We receive more than what we give: "He which soweth sparingly shall reap also sparingly; and he which soweth bountifully shall reap also bountifully" (2 Corinthians 9:6). Everything we need God will supply if we, in the same way and with a cheerful heart, give to those in need.

A duty that reveals our love

Whenever we share our blessings with those in need, we show that we love God over all things and our neighbor as ourselves. We cannot genuinely love God if we are not moved by others' pain and sorrow.

"Whoso hath this world's good, and seeth his brother have need, and shutteth up his bowels of compassion from him, how dwelleth the love of God in him? My little children, let us not love in word, neither in tongue; but in deed and in truth" (1 John 3:17, 18). There are many around us that need the love and compassion of a kind heart. As we have received from Jesus, we will freely give to others because they too, like us, are bought with the precious blood of our Saviour. And don't we appreciate Jesus' saving blood? As we value Him, we should value those bought with it as well.

Jesus feels so strongly about the welfare work. He has commanded His children to help those in need. He says: "Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me" (Matthew 25:40). Isn't that amazing! When we favor others with the gifts God has bestowed upon us, we are serving Jesus Himself! This will be what Christ takes into account on the judgment day, to sentence us either to eternal life or to eternal damnation. Our eternal salvation depends on how we have shared with others the blessings that God has granted us.

A lesson from a parable

The concept of helping the needy reminds me of the parable that Jesus told about the rich man and Lazarus. (See Luke 16:19–31.) Lazarus was a poor and sick man that needed the sympathy and kindness of others, yet he was a faithful servant of the Lord who endured his trials faithfully. On the other hand, the rich man had plenty of wealth with which he could have easily helped those in need. This man was a professed believer. He knew what God required of him, but instead of fulfilling God's word and actually helping his neighbor, he went on in self-gratification, ignoring Lazarus's need. We can deduce that this person

was basically a nominal Christian. He did not really have God's love in his heart because he saw his brother in need and had the means to help him—but he simply ignored that duty. Soon both died, and Jesus portrays their destiny in an allegory form. Lazarus prepared himself for heaven. What about the rich man? His stingy attitude had caused him not to develop a character worthy of heaven. Self was cherished, and God was dishonored; thus he was walking in the wide path that leads to perdition. Sad, but this is the condition of many professed people of God. They misuse the means God has provided them, and, if their course is not changed, they will be found wanting. "Many who profess to be Christians provide abundantly for themselves, supplying all their imaginary wants, while they give no heed to the wants of the Lord's cause. They have thought it gain to rob God by retaining all, or a selfish proportion, of His gifts as their own. But they meet with loss instead of gain."³

Putting the principle into action

God should be the first and best in our life. He is the Alpha and Omega; He should be everything to us. And when we trust and depend on Him in this way, we are not to cherish idols; we are not to cherish wealth or anything this world has to offer. Our heart will be filled with gratitude, for He has saved us, and nothing that He asks will be too dear for us not to offer Him. Jesus wants to save us! And by asking us to give to others He is cleansing our heart from pride, selfishness, and avarice. He is teaching us how to love.

Giving as we receive is the great rule of life. Will you lay up treasure in heaven today and not worry so much over the treasures on earth? Will you give blessings that you may receive blessings? If you lack this quality, ask the Lord to help you. Then you will see blessings in your life that you didn't even know they existed! *R*

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THE REMEDY FOR Chaos

*A Bible and Spirit of Prophecy
compilation, with comments
by Pam Stemmler*

As soon as they disobeyed God, the results of rebellion were seen in Adam and Eve: First shame, then coldness, and then fear. But then something very precious was given to them. It was the promise of a Redeemer who would save them from the power of rebellion. You know His name. It is Jesus. In types or symbols, for thousands of years, God's plan was revealed to His people.

A basic sacrificial ceremony illustrated the Redeemer's mission. When the people of Israel came to Mt. Sinai, however, they were introduced to a new, more elaborate system.

A big step: An entire nation meets with God

"Read the directions that were given to Moses to be made known to the children of Israel as God was about to come down upon the mount to speak in their hearing His holy law. What did He command Moses to have the peo-

ple do? To be ready against the third day; for on the third day, said He, the Lord will come down upon the mount in the sight of all the people. They were to set bounds about the mount. 'And the Lord said unto Moses, Go unto the people, and sanctify them today and tomorrow, and let them wash their clothes' (Exodus 19:10). That great and mighty God who created the beautiful Eden and everything lovely in it is a God of order, and He wants order and cleanliness with His people. That mighty God directed Moses to tell the people to wash their clothes lest there should be impurity in their clothing and about their persons as they came up before the Lord. And Moses went down from the mount unto the people, and they washed their clothes, according to the command of God."¹

The next step: The sanctuary service

As Israel became a nation commissioned to proclaim God's plan to all

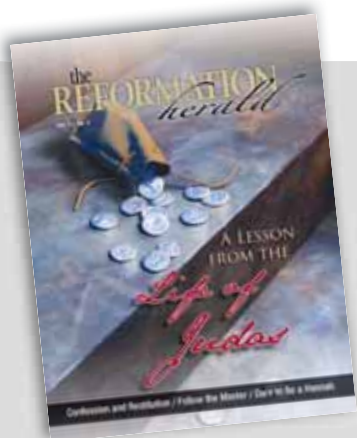
nations, a more detailed ceremonial system was instituted. This was the sanctuary service. Every single detail was given to Moses from the pattern of the heavenly sanctuary to be replicated in the sanctuary on Earth. It would be a moveable tabernacle at first, finally changing to a permanent structure. It was beautiful in design, and each little part had significance in symbolizing the work of the Redeemer.

The sanctuary was a symbol of the dwelling place of God. No uncleanness could enter there. No disorder, no chaos, no rebellion, only peace and harmony should be there. Precious woods, metals, fabrics, and gorgeous colors were intricately designed to teach wonderful lessons, the foremost being the exceeding holiness of God.

"And to show how careful [the Israelites] were to be in regard to cleanliness, Moses was to put a laver between the tent of the congregation and the altar, 'and put water there,

to wash withal' (Exodus 40:30). And Moses and Aaron, and Aaron's sons that ministered before the Lord, were to wash their hands and their feet thereat when they went into the tent of the congregation, and when they went in before the Lord.

"This was the commandment of the great and mighty God. There was to be nothing slack and untidy about those who appeared before Him when they came into His holy presence. And why was this? What was the object of all this carefulness? Was it merely to recommend the people to God? Was it merely to gain His approbation? The reason that was given me was this, that a right impression might be made upon the people. If those who ministered in sacred office



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"If men could see how hateful sin is, they would not tolerate it, nor educate themselves in it. They would reform in life and character."

should fail to manifest care, and reverence for God, in their apparel and their deportment, the people would lose their awe and their reverence for God and His sacred service. If the priests showed great reverence for God by being very careful and very particular as they came into His presence, it gave the people an exalted idea of God and His requirements. It showed them that God was holy, that His work was sacred, and that everything in connection with His work must be holy; that it must be free from everything like impurity and uncleanness; and that all defilement must be put away from those who approach nigh to God."²

If our God is so holy as He has seen fit to have Scripture makes this clear, then how should we approach Him? It could never be carelessly or thoughtlessly, but with prayer, humility, reverence, and with a clean body, spirit, and mind.

The sanctuary was not just a building or tabernacle. It was a system of ceremonies. Each specific service was designed to impress the beholders that sin was ugly and sin cost life. That is why there was death. Not because our God needs appeasing—but because sin brings death as its sure result. God was seeking to teach the people the results of rebellion. This is what was demonstrated in the sanctuary service.

The symbol behind the sanctuary

"Now the Lord of glory was dying [at Calvary], a ransom for the race. In yielding up His precious life, Christ was not upheld by triumphant joy. All was oppressive gloom. It was not the dread of death that weighed upon Him. It was not the pain and ignominy of the cross that caused His inexpressible agony. Christ was the prince of sufferers; but His suffering

was from a sense of the malignity of sin, a knowledge that through familiarity with evil, man had become blinded to its enormity. Christ saw how deep is the hold of sin upon the human heart, how few would be willing to break from its power. He knew that without help from God, humanity must perish, and He saw multitudes perishing within reach of abundant help."³

"It was not the spear thrust, it was not the pain of the cross, that caused the death of Jesus. That cry, 'uttered with a loud voice' (Matthew 27:50; Luke 23:46), at the moment of death, the stream of blood and water that flowed from His side, declared that He died of a broken heart. His heart was broken by mental anguish. He was slain by the sin of the world."⁴

"Sin is the opposite of holiness; sin crucified the Son of God. If men could see how hateful sin is, they would not tolerate it, nor educate themselves in it. They would reform in life and character."⁵

Spiritual and practical cleansing

The sanctuary service did not end merely as a theoretical ritual, thank God. It illustrated, through type and symbol, that the Redeemer would remove sin and its power and would grant us the ability or power to live a new life through Jesus Christ. Praise the Lord! We have hope.

I find it an interesting thought, that where Christ, the Redeemer, gives new life, there rebellion and chaos are put away. How is this applicable in our daily living? *R*

References

- ¹ *Testimonies*, vol. 2, p. 611.
- ² *Ibid.*, pp. 611, 612.
- ³ *The Desire of Ages*, pp. 752, 753.
- ⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 772.
- ⁵ *Testimonies to Ministers*, p. 145.



12

WE
KNOW
NOT
THE HOUR

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

While Jesus was unveiling events to occur at the time of the end, He declared: "Watch therefore: for ye know not what hour your Lord doth come" (Matthew 24:42). The Bible has many predictions about the signs that would occur prior to Christ's return. In Revelation 6:12, 13, we read about three events that would take place, after which the heaven would depart as a scroll, indicating the Lord's second coming: The prophet John describes: "I beheld when [Christ] had opened the sixth seal, and, lo, there was a

great earthquake; and the sun became black as sackcloth of hair, and the moon became as blood; and the stars of heaven fell unto the earth, even as a fig tree casteth her untimely figs, when she is shaken of a mighty wind." These are events which Jesus referred to in Matthew 24:29. According to history, the earthquake mentioned above took place in 1755, the darkness of the sun in 1780, and the falling of the stars in 1833. Jesus spoke also of other events that would take place upon the earth right before His coming. (See Matthew 24:6-8.)

The apostle Paul, under the inspiration of the Spirit, prophesied thus:

"In the last days perilous times shall come. For men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, without natural affection, trucebreakers, false accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers of those that are good, traitors, heady, highminded, lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God; having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof: from such turn away" (2 Timothy 3:1-5). These things are happening around us just as they were predicted. Jesus revealed that before the end would come, the everlasting gospel would be proclaimed to the whole

world (see Matthew 24:14), indicating the fulfillment of the three angels' messages of Revelation 14. The mark of the beast is still to come (Revelation 13:11, 16, 17) and then will come the seven last plagues (Revelation 16) after the close of probation.

Yet the coming of Jesus has another connotation that seems to be ignored by many today. This essential point should actually engross our mind the most as we are already living in the time of its fulfillment. How do we understand this coming? The Word of God will answer.

The work of Jesus in heaven

When Jesus ascended to heaven, He entered the heavenly sanctuary to perform His work as High Priest (Hebrews 8:1; 1 Timothy 2:5). Those things which were a shadow of things to come had to be fulfilled not only by His death on the cross, but also by His ministration in heaven. In the past, the high priest would enter the most holy place once a year for the purification of the sanctuary from sin (Leviticus 16:29–34; Hebrews 9:7). This is the very work that Jesus is now doing in our behalf in heaven. Paul says: "Christ is not entered into the holy places made with hands, which are the figures of the true; but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us" (Hebrews 9:24).

But there is another phase included in the work of Christ in heaven. His position in heaven as an advocate (1 John 2:1) indicates that there is a work of judgment being carried out now. Scripture declares: "The time is come that judgment must begin at the house of God;" and "some men's sins are open beforehand, going before to judgment; and some men they follow after" (1 Peter 4:17; 1 Timothy 5:24).

This work of judgment was revealed in a vision to the prophet Daniel, as he describes: "I beheld till the thrones were cast down, and the Ancient of days did sit, whose garment was white as snow, and the hair of his head like the pure wool: his throne was like the fiery flame, and his wheels as burning fire. A fiery stream issued and came forth

from before him: thousand thousands ministered unto him, and ten thousand times ten thousand stood before him: *the judgment was set, and the books were opened*" (Daniel 7:9, 10, emphasis supplied).

"For eighteen centuries this work of ministration continued in the first apartment of the sanctuary. The blood of Christ, pleaded in behalf of penitent believers, secured their pardon and acceptance with the Father, yet their sins still remained upon the books of record. As in the typical service there was a work of atonement at the close of the year, so before Christ's work for the redemption of men is completed there is a work of atonement for the removal of sin from the sanctuary. This is the service which began when the 2300 days ended. At that time, as foretold by Daniel the prophet, our High Priest entered the most holy, to perform the last division of His solemn work—to cleanse the sanctuary."¹

A crucial work

It is very important for us to understand what the work of Jesus in heaven consists of, so we may know how we should live during this time. We have just considered that there is a work of judgment going on in heaven. Since we are now being judged, what are the things that we should always bear in mind? Regarding the judgment, we read: "Fear God, and keep his commandments: for this is the whole duty of man. For *God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing*, whether it be *good*, or whether it be *evil*" (Ecclesiastes 12:13, 14). And Jesus Himself declared: "I say unto you, That every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment. For by thy words thou shalt be justified, and by thy words thou shalt be condemned" (Matthew 12:36, 37). Here we see that our words and actions will determine whether or not we will be condemned. Let us now see what is being taken into account during this judgment time:

"As the books of record are opened in the judgment, the lives of all who

have believed on Jesus come in review before God. Beginning with those who first lived upon the earth, our Advocate presents the cases of each successive generation, and closes with the living. *Every name is mentioned, every case closely investigated. Names are accepted, names rejected.* When any have sins remaining upon the books of record, *unrepented of and unforgiven, their names will be blotted out of the book of life*, and the record of their *good deeds* will be *erased* from the book of God's remembrance."²

"Every man's work passes in review before God and is registered for *faithfulness* or *unfaithfulness*. Opposite each name in the books of heaven is entered with terrible exactness every *wrong word*, every *selfish act*, every *unfulfilled duty*, and every *secret sin*, with every *artful dissembling*. *Heaven-sent warnings or reproofs neglected, wasted moments, unimproved opportunities*, the *influence exerted for good* or for *evil*, with its *far-reaching results*, all are chronicled by the recording angel."³

"In the judgment the use made of every *talent* will be scrutinized. How have we employed the capital lent us of Heaven? Will the Lord at His coming receive His own with usury? Have we improved the *powers entrusted us*, in hand and heart and brain, to the glory of God and the blessing of the world? How have we used our *time*, our *pen*, our *voice*, our *money*, our *influence*? What have we done for Christ, *in the person of the poor*, the *afflicted*, the *orphan*, or the *widow*? God has made us the depositaries of His holy word; what have we done with the light and truth given us to make men wise unto salvation? . . .

"Money, time, and strength are sacrificed for display and self-indulgence; but few are the moments devoted to prayer, to the searching of the Scriptures, to humiliation of soul and confession of sin."⁴

Many—even among those who profess the third angel's message—do not truly realize the solemnity of the work taking place in heaven. They are living a careless, casual existence, and in some respects are conform-

ing to the world. In their words and actions, they are denying Christ by not keeping foremost in mind the fact that there is a record of all their deeds in the book in heaven. I would say, if there is a time when we have to consider our ways and purify our souls, it is now.

Watch and pray — When?

There will come a time when the Father will reveal the time of the second coming of Jesus. After the ministration of Christ is finished in the second apartment of the sanctuary, He will declare: "He that is unjust, let him be unjust still: and he which is filthy, let him be filthy still: and he that is righteous, let him be righteous still: and he that is holy, let him be holy still" (Revelation 22:11). At that time, the case of every soul will have been decided for life or death. There will be no mediator to plead on behalf of the transgressors of God's law. Here is what the servant of the Lord saw in a vision regarding that time: "As Jesus moved out of the most holy place, I heard the tinkling of the bells upon His garment; and as He left, a cloud of darkness covered the inhabitants of the earth. There was then no mediator between guilty man and an offended God. . . . Every case was decided, every jewel numbered. . . .

"The last tear for sinners had been shed, the last agonizing prayer offered, the last burden borne, the last warning given. The sweet voice of mercy was no more to invite them. When the saints, and all heaven, were interested for their salvation, they had no interest for themselves. Life and death had been set before them. Many desired life, but made no effort to obtain it. They did not choose life, and now there was no atoning blood to cleanse the guilty, no compassionate Saviour to plead for them, and cry, 'Spare, spare the sinner a little longer.' All heaven had united with Jesus, as they heard the fearful words, 'It is done. It is finished.' The plan of salvation had been accomplished, but few had chosen to accept it. And as mercy's sweet voice died away, fear and horror seized the wicked. With terrible dis-

tinctness they heard the words, 'Too late! too late!' "⁵

After these words are uttered, the plagues will be poured out on the earth where the wicked will have to drink of the wrath of God. And after the partial resurrection, the Father will reveal to the just the day of Jesus' coming. The pen of Inspiration explains: "The voice of God is heard from heaven, declaring the day and hour of Jesus' coming, and delivering everlasting covenant to His people."⁶

An unknown coming

"The judgment is now passing in the sanctuary above. For many years this work has been in progress. *Soon—none know how soon—it will pass to the cases of the living.* In the awful presence of God *our lives are to come up in review.* At this time above all others it behooves every soul to heed the Saviour's admonition: 'Watch and pray: for ye know not when the time is' (Mark 13:33). 'If therefore thou shalt not watch, I will come on thee as a thief, and thou shalt not know what hour I will come upon thee' (Revelation 3:3)."⁷

"While the man of business is absorbed in the *pursuit of gain*, while the *pleasure lover* is seeking indulgence, while the *daughter of fashion* is arranging her *adornments*—it may be in that hour the Judge of all the earth will pronounce the sentence: 'Thou art weighed in the balances, and art found wanting' (Daniel 5:27)."⁸

"When the scorner, the rejecter of truth, has become presumptuous; when the routine of work in the various money-making lines is carried on without regard to principle; when the student is eagerly seeking knowledge of everything but his Bible, Christ comes as a thief."⁹

Conclusion

"We are now living in the great day of atonement. In the typical service, while the high priest was making the atonement for Israel, all were required to afflict their souls by repentance of sin and humiliation before the Lord, lest they be cut off from among the people. In like manner, all who would have their names retained

in the book of life should now, in the few remaining days of their probation, *afflict their souls* before God by sorrow for sin and *true repentance*. There must be deep, faithful searching of heart. *The light, frivolous spirit* indulged by so many professed Christians *must be put away*. There is earnest warfare before all who would subdue the evil tendencies that strive for the mastery. The work of preparation is an individual work. We are not saved in groups. The purity and devotion of one will not offset the want of these qualities in another. Though all nations are to pass in judgment before God, yet He will examine the case of each individual with as close and searching scrutiny as if there were not another being upon the earth. Everyone must be tested and found *without spot or wrinkle* or any such thing."¹⁰

Dear brethren and sisters, let us seek the Lord while He may be found (Isaiah 55:6). Let us live a life of repentance and humility (Acts 3:19; Proverbs 28:13; James 4:10). Then, let us put our trust in the power of Christ that we may be saved at last (2 Corinthians 12:9). Because "all who have truly repented of sin, and by faith claimed the blood of Christ as their atoning sacrifice, have had pardon entered against their names in the books of heaven; as they have become partakers of the righteousness of Christ, and their characters are found to be in harmony with the law of God, their sins will be blotted out, and they themselves will be accounted worthy of eternal life."¹¹ *R*

References

¹ *The Great Controversy*, p. 421.

² *Ibid.*, p. 483. [Emphasis supplied.]

³ *Ibid.*, p. 482. [Emphasis supplied.]

⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 487, 488. [Emphasis supplied.]

⁵ *Early Writings*, pp. 280, 281.

⁶ *The Great Controversy*, p. 640.


⁷ *The Faith I Live By*, p. 211. [Emphasis supplied.]

⁸ *Sons and Daughters of God*, p. 355. [Emphasis supplied.]

⁹ *The Desire of Ages*, p. 635.

¹⁰ *The Great Controversy*, pp. 489, 490. [Emphasis supplied.]

¹¹ *Reflecting Christ*, p. 62.



Remember LOT'S WIFE

By A. Balbach

The calamity that happened in the Middle East many centuries before Christ, when the cities of the plain were destroyed, is mentioned repeatedly in the New Testament as a warning to all future generations.

"Sodom and Gomorrah, and the cities about them in like manner, giving themselves over to fornication, and going after strange flesh, are set forth for an example, suffering the vengeance of eternal fire" (Jude 7).

In the plan of God there is a law that cannot be avoided: A person must suffer the consequences of his or her choices and actions.

"Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap" (Galatians 6:7).

Incandescent ashes covered Sodom and Gomorrah and the surrounding cities, as well as Lot's wife. She was petrified like all others. Jesus said that we should take a warning, not only from what happened to the cities (and why it happened), but also from what

happened to Mrs. Lot (and why it happened). He said:

"Remember Lot's wife" (Luke 17:32).

Who was she? What was she like?

Mrs. Lot was not a spiritual lady. Her mind was not in the kingdom of God. She was not interested in obtaining the assurance which we must all have and which even atheists seek at the end of their journey in this world—the assurance of our acceptance before God. She did not take time to open her eyes and look to see light at the other end of the tunnel between life and death. In her life there was no room for serious thoughts about eternity. She was satisfied to live only for this world.

Of course, Mrs. Lot was free to choose her destiny, as freedom of choice is granted to every intelligent being. If, instead of choosing eternal life, she wanted to choose eternal death, God would honor her choice. And, consciously or unconsciously, she made the wrong choice. Therefore, her negative experience, the fruit of wrong

wisdom, contains a warning to all generations until the end of the world.

"The wife of Lot was a selfish, irreligious woman, and her influence was exerted to separate her husband from Abraham. But for her, Lot would not have remained in Sodom, deprived of the counsel of the wise, God-fearing patriarch. The influence of his wife and the associations of that wicked city would have led him to apostatize from God had it not been for the faithful instruction he had early received from Abraham. The marriage of Lot and his choice of Sodom for a home were the first links in a chain of events fraught with evil to the world for many generations.

"No one who fears God can without danger connect himself with one who fears Him not. 'Can two walk together, except they be agreed?' (Amos 3:3). The happiness and prosperity of the marriage relation depends upon the unity of the parties; but between the believer and the unbeliever there is a radical difference of tastes, inclinations, and purposes. They are serving two masters, between whom there can be

no concord. However pure and correct one's principles may be, the influence of an unbelieving companion will have a tendency to lead away from God.

"He who has entered the marriage relation while unconverted, is by his conversion placed under stronger obligation to be faithful to his companion, however widely they may differ in regard to religious faith; yet the claims of God should be placed above every earthly relationship, even though trials and persecution may be the result. With the spirit of love and meekness, this fidelity may have an influence to win the unbelieving one. But the marriage of Christians with the ungodly is forbidden in the Bible. The Lord's direction is, 'Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers' (2 Corinthians 6:14)."¹

A lesson for wives and mothers—and everyone else as well

Women who want to be saved together with their husband and children will heed the warning: "Remember Lot's wife." They will be very careful not to follow in her footsteps. Rather than exerting a wrong influence on her children, a mother will, by precept and example, do her best, with the help of God, to show them the way to the kingdom. But what about those not interested in their own salvation? They, too, should "remember Lot's wife."

Lot's wife, though indifferent concerning her future in eternity, had no right to be instrumental in the perdition of her daughters through her wrong attitude. If misery loves company, as it is known that it does, it will find plenty of fellow-travelers among its own peers on the downward road; it should not look for victims among those who are walking along the upward road.

The oft-repeated warning—"Let no man deceive you"—means that, in case of deception, both parties (the deceiver and the deceived) are responsible before God. In this sense, the procedure of Lot's wife was a deception which tended to lead the whole family into perdition. The mother was the culprit, and the daughters were the victims.

Lot's wife despised God's mercy, ignored His instructions, and pre-

sumed to disobey the Lord. She stopped, turned around, and cast a look backward to the doomed city. To her, the material things that she had left behind were worth more than her views about eternity. She did what every individual who chooses self-deception will do—she reversed values. The warning given by the heavenly messengers—"Escape for thy life; look not behind thee, neither stay thou in all the plain; escape to the mountain, lest thou be consumed" (Genesis 19:17)—was despised by her. She acted as if she knew better than God.

"While [Lot's wife] body was upon the plain, her heart clung to Sodom, and she perished with it. She rebelled against God because His judgments involved her possessions and her children in the ruin. Although so greatly favored in being called out from the wicked city, she felt that she was severely dealt with, because the wealth that it had taken years to accumulate must be left to destruction. Instead of thankfully accepting deliverance, she presumptuously looked back to desire the life of those who had rejected the divine warning. Her sin showed her to be unworthy of life, for the preservation of which she felt so little gratitude."²

A lesson for husbands and fathers—and everyone else, as well

Was Lot completely without fault in his wife's apostasy? Evidently not. The pen of Inspiration brings us still more insight on the matter:

"If Lot himself had manifested no hesitancy to obey the angels' warning, but had earnestly fled toward the mountains, without one word of pleading or remonstrance, his wife also would have made her escape. The influence of his example would have saved her from the sin that sealed her doom. But his hesitancy and delay caused her to lightly regard the divine warning."³

Thus, when we "remember Lot's wife," we need not only to view her as a culprit, but also as a victim—a victim of her husband's failure to take a firm enough, clear enough, timely enough stand for the right in leading his house-

hold. One moment's worth of influence at a key opportunity can speak volumes.

Each of us has a choice

God has endowed every human being with the power of discernment between right and wrong wisdom. Then why do many people repeat the mistake of Lot's wife in the reversal of values? And why are we—you and I—in danger of making the same mistake? If we kneel down before the Lord with this question in our heart and on our lips, we will know the answer.

As the Lord called Lot and his family to flee from Sodom in order to escape the impending destruction, He is calling His people to get out of Babylon.

"Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues" (Revelation 18:4).

It is not enough for us to leave the fallen denominations, whose "sins have reached unto heaven" (verse 5), if our hearts are still there. The call to come out of Babylon means much more than that. We are called upon to forsake the sins of Babylon. The spirit, the ideas, the ways of Babylon must be abandoned before we can be assured of the protection that we must have before the seven last plagues begin to fall. We need deliverance from the coming destruction. Therefore, let us "remember Lot's wife."

Lot's wife perished in the destruction of Sodom. It is not a great loss to die the natural death which all must die. But Mrs. Lot died without God and without salvation, as a candidate for the second death, which means extinction, at the end of the millennium. This was her greatest loss. And the impact of her materialistic influence upon her children—and of course the fruit, in turn, of their progeny which followed—makes her guilt very serious indeed.

The story of Mrs. Lot was included in the Bible for our admonition. There is a lesson in it for individuals and for families. If we want to be wise, we will heed the warning. *R*

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¹ *Patriarchs and Prophets*, pp. 174, 175.

² *Ibid.*, pp. 161, 162.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 161.

Insights on Healthy Work Habits

From the pen of Ellen G. White

It is a very bad habit to let work drag and drive one. Drive the work, and then you will not become discouraged. It is a bad plan to give way to impulse. If you see a book you would like to read, and sit down in the midst of your work and read during the precious hours of the day, when there is work that needs to be done, then the work is neglected. Make it habit not to sit up after nine o'clock. Every light should be extinguished. This turning night into day is a wretched, health-destroying habit, and this reading much by brain workers, up to the sleeping hours, is very injurious to health. It calls the blood to the brain and then there is restlessness and wakefulness, and the precious sleep, which should rest the body, does not come when desired.

It is needful to take care of the body and to study its needs and preserve it from unnecessary exposure. It is a sin to be ignorant of how to care for the wants of this habitation God has given us. Especially should brain workers begin to be soothed and not in any way excited as they draw nigh their hours for sleep. Let the blood be attracted from the brain by some kind of exercise, if need be. Let not the brain be taxed even to read, and, of course, not to put forth literary effort. You shall, Marian [Davis] and Fannie [Bolton], have one or two hours, as will best



please you, in the daytime, and you will not feel so starved for intellectual food that you will partake of it in the night hours. God designed that the night shall be given to sleep. . . .

Wake up in the mornings. Set your hour to rise early, and bring yourself to it, then retire at an early hour, and you will see that you will overcome many painful disorders which distress the mind, cause gloomy feelings, discouragement, and unhappy friction, and disqualify you for doing anything without great taxation.¹

How prevalent is the habit of turning day into night, and night into day. Many youth sleep soundly in the morning, when they should be up with the early singing birds and be stirring when all nature is awake.

Some youth are much opposed to order and discipline. They do not respect the rules of the home by rising at a regular hour. They lie in bed some hours after daylight, when everyone should be astir. They burn the mid-

night oil, depending upon artificial light to supply the place of the light that nature has provided at seasonable hours. In so doing they not only waste precious opportunities, but cause additional expense. But in almost every case the plea is made, "I cannot get through my work; I have something to do; I cannot retire early." . . . The precious habits of order are broken, and the moments thus idled away in the early morning set things out of course for the whole day.

Our God is a God of order, and He desires that His children shall *will* to bring themselves into order and under His discipline. Would it not be better, therefore, to break up this habit of turning night into day, and the fresh hours of the morning into night? If the youth would form habits of regularity and order, they would improve in health, in spirits, in memory, and in disposition.

It is the duty of all to observe strict rules in their habits of life. This is for your own good, dear youth, both physically and morally. When you rise in the morning, take into consideration, as far as possible, the work you must accomplish during the day. If necessary, have a small book in which to jot down the things that need to be done, and set yourself a time in which to do your work.² ❧

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¹ *Manuscript Releases*, vol. 9, pp. 46, 47.

² *Child Guidance*, pp. 111, 112.

Miracles at KABARONDO, KIBUYE,

RWANDA

By Marline Balbach



MEDICAL MISSIONARY DREAM

As a child and teenager I loved to read. (I still do.) Our church library in Puslinch, Ontario, Canada, had a little lending library with mission books and other character-building, quality-reading materials. Sister Erika Baer was our church librarian. She would unlock the wooden cabinet with glass doors on many a Sabbath for me to return a completed book and check out a new one. I think I checked out every mission, biography, and history book there was in our little library. Here I read about people in faraway lands who risked their lives and gave their all for the spreading of the good news of salvation. I also enjoyed Brother Alex Macdonald, who would show us slides of Africa at our September conferences in Canada. I was fascinated to hear about the culture, the conditions, and needs of the people and, most of all, the incredible answers to prayers and

the miracles which God performed to honor the faith of His children.

When my husband, Charlie, founded Mission Projects International (MPI), a business-owner, and lay-members mission outreach network, I was thrilled. I had dreamed of such an organization for years. I had dreamed of projects organized by lay members to build churches, schools, and clinics which could involve young people, parents, trades (skilled and unskilled) people, but all with a burning desire to spread the glorious truth and love of Christ to so many needy. It is unbelievable how the Lord is opening doors and answering prayers.

Now, let us fast forward 3 1/2 years from MPI's simple beginnings. MPI is now supporting 60 Bible workers in Africa alone, has purchased a school in South India, and supports a radio program in the Philippines and church buildings in South and Central America. But recently there was a gath-



Sabbath School class with children.

ering in our home church with medical missionary enthusiasts at the Third Annual World Medical Missionary Congress in Moriah Heights, California. It was here that plans were laid to go to Africa for a Medical Missionary Clinic. We had a guest speaker, Dr. Liliane Stojic, who spoke about dental health, and she really encouraged us to assemble a team and go to Africa for a couple of weeks. The aim was to teach Biblical health principles and offer free medical services including dentistry. Finally, we had a team with a common interest and a plan to go to Africa with medical personnel and a support staff. Who signed on? Dr. Dragan Ivanov, Dr. Liliane Stojic, Dorothy Ilic, Charles and Marline Balbach. Interest was brewing.

Solid plans were being laid. Next stop, Korea, October 2007, GC session. Here we had the opportunity to network once again. We met our African delegates, we met Dr. Ivanov again, we met with Professor Elias Souza from Brazil, and there was much interest. Here we decided on a target date—our medical missionary venture was scheduled for July 2008! Now we had work to do.

RWANDA

Friday, June 27. We landed in Kigali, and met Brother John Bosco and a few other brethren. We immediately noticed that Rwanda is a very clean country. The streets have no trash in them, and everyone, including small children, is working. Widows clean the streets every morning. Jailed convicts, wearing orange clothes, dig

ditches, plant trees and landscape or do other community service. Children and women carry plastic containers of water, some walking for a kilometer or more to bring water to their homes. Most people have no electricity and no running water. They also have no TV. The young people and children work hard in Rwanda.

Rwandan children are very helpful and bright. When our vehicle overheated and we stopped by the road, within seconds a few children gathered around offering us water for the radiator! We felt quite safe there.

God's hand and leading were very obvious in our work in Rwanda. The fact that Branko Ilic was able to come to Africa with Dorothy was a great blessing which was God's doing. Branko was always there to help those



in need and also to jump and run and do for everyone. He was also loved by the children.

Dr. Dragan Ivanov, well, we were preparing to go to the Kigali airport on Wednesday, July 2, when we received a phone call from Serbia that he was not allowed on the airplane because he did not have a visa for Rwanda. Brother Stoyko went to work. He went online to get a visa for Dr. Dragan. We felt it was critical for the success of our outreach program for him to be here. The Lord was merciful, and he arrived on Friday afternoon. He was such a blessing to the people. His teaching and consultations were much appreciated by the people.

Another miracle: one evening we left Kabarondo for our hotel in Kigali. When we were about 45 minutes away



Health lecture.

from the village, we met a tropical downpour. The rain was very heavy. It was dark and it was late. Immediately I thought about our brethren and sisters sleeping outside. "Let us pray for God to stop the rain from getting to Kabarondo." We were only a short distance away. We prayed, knowing we have a powerful Father in heaven and stopping the rain was nothing for Him. When we got to the city the rain continued to come down in torrents. We

in Rwanda, and what we would have to ship or carry in. Bro. Bosco gave us the phone number of a very kind Christian dentist, Dr. Immaculate. She told us that there were only 11 dentists in Rwanda for 11 million people! She also informed us that dental supplies were hard to obtain, and that she orders from Uganda the dental supplies for her private practice. It is a process which takes 3 months. We were now faced with taking all the dental

used Dr. Liliane. She would not "drop the ball." She contacted the first lady of Rwanda and expressed her desire, as a dentist, to relieve suffering Rwandans. The first lady's assistant directed Liliane to the Ministry of Health, and the ball started to roll. Now we needed all the certificates of the doctors and professionals on our team to be e-mailed to the Ministry of Health.

Along with our certificates, we wrote a letter to the Ministry of Health expressing our desire to work with the Kabarondo Clinic to help the people of the village. By faith the believers of Rwanda went forward. They had six weeks to find a piece of land, buy it, build a meeting hall or church, and a small clinic. I also insisted that it should have running water and electricity and flushing toilets. Am I ever glad I insisted on a real toilet! Do you know when we received our official letter of invitation from the Ministry of Health? We were to fly out of San Francisco on Monday, June 23, and our letter came on Friday, 2 days before the flight! Is our God wonderful! Blessed be His holy name! But we had another big blow just five days before our trip. I called Dr. Liliane to find out when her flight would arrive in Rwanda and got a shocking surprise. "Marline, I am so sorry I don't know how to tell you, but I am unable to go to Africa, can you believe it?" Well, I swallowed hard and thought "Lord, help us, it seems to me that we need a dentist but you know what is best."

We kept praying and pressed forward with preparations.

were soaked, and the streets were full of water. It rained a few more hours. In the morning we headed back to our village, wondering what had happened through the night. As we drove into the village, the streets were damp. It had rained. I wondered, did it rain this morning or last night? I asked the brethren as soon as we arrived—God had heard our prayers! It had rained only this morning. Everyone was able to sleep with no rain to contend with. Praise God! He kept the rain for about ten hours; He held it back!

Other miracles included the contacts made with the government, the First Lady, the Minister of Health, the way God softened hearts to allow us to work without registration, and with our dentist friend in Kigali. Let me elaborate on this. Dr. Liliane Stojic is a friend of ours in Sacramento, California. She loves to help people. Dr. Liliane was present at the World Missionary Congress held in Sacramento, 2007, and presented a lecture on oral health. While present she heard us speaking about a desire to go to Africa with doctors, dentists, nurses, a nutrition/health education team, and other professionals—builders, electricians, and so on. Immediately, Dr. Liliane got enthusiastic and she became a driving force in pushing forward the Team MPI effort to land in Africa. She asked us to get a dentist contact in Rwanda, to find out which supplies are available

supplies to Rwanda, but Dr. Liliane said she was willing to do oral exams, extractions, and some fillings even if she had to work under a tree with folding lawn chairs. Now we needed permission to bring in all our supplies without paying duty and taxes. David Zic and I had no response or interest in the Rwanda embassy. We needed information and assistance with procedures to have the opportunity to help the Rwandan people. We were getting nowhere by April. Now it was too late to ship a container with supplies. We would have to downscale our operation. The whole mission was up in the air, but we pressed forward with preparation and kept our prayers ascending before the Lord. And, the Lord





Church and adjacent clinic just completed, June 2008, by the help of MPI.

Dr. Liliane was quite discouraged about not going. She had worked so hard to coordinate much of this trip, and I tried my best through the blow not to make it worse for her. Okay, so we will go anyway. We still have two doctors. I am a nutritionist/herbalist and can share what Jesus has taught me, and Charlie loves to share about Jesus too, so we will just leave it in God's hands.

Two days later, Friday, I got another very excited call from Dr. Liliane: "we got our letter of invitation to Rwanda from the Ministry of Health and no import taxes/duty on our supplies! I am so happy we got it in time." Now I noticed there was still a note of hope in her voice, . . . but all last-minute efforts failed and, sadly, we had to

leave for Rwanda without her.

When we arrived in Rwanda, Charlie had an idea which we believe was from the Lord. He asked me to get in touch with Dr. Immaculate from Kigali. Maybe she could work for us for 1 or 2 days. We called her

when we arrived. She was so kind and willing. There was only one

problem: Could we write a letter to her director at the hospital where she works, making a formal request for her services, explaining what we were doing in Kabarondo, and why it was important to have her help. This was easy, and she received time off. Dr. Immaculate even brought a technician to help her on the second day. It was such a blessing to the villagers and to some of our brethren and sisters. There is so much suffering due to abscessed, decaying teeth, and gum disease. Dr. Immaculate was so happy to help, and when we paid her in the end, she said, "How could I accept anything when you've come from America to help my people?" but we were happy to insist because she was a blessing. We look



forward to working with her again. It was so nice because she could speak the language of the people. You see, just when we thought we had no dentist, God had one!

Now, are you ready for another miracle? Well, we had planned this whole medical clinic in another town where there is a church—Gitarama. MPI bought an adjoining piece of land to accommodate the believers who would come and to have room for a clinic building and to enlarge the church. The small church there was in the city, and we were so thankful that the adjoining property was available to buy. So MPI started building the bigger church in the spring of 2008. But in



May we got news that another church complained about our activities, and we were stopped because our registration was not complete. So, what to do? Six weeks and we have tickets to fly to Rwanda but no permission to work or build. Bro. Bosco assured us that God would provide another place and that everything would be built, including a bathroom with a flushing toilet and running water in a new location. But where? After consulting with some brethren, he informed us that the new location was Kabarondo in Kibuye province, where some of the believers have a small herbal and nutrition shop. Now there were five weeks to buy land, build, and be ready for the people to arrive. And do you know what? We arrived in Kabarondo to view the facility, and the workmen were very busy finishing the walls. The church floor had fresh concrete, the clinic was complete and being washed. It was even painted! We were so impressed. The best thing was that we were now on the edge of town, with a beautiful view of the valley, with plenty of shade trees, a sitting room, and an open-air kitchen. We would be out of the village and would not be a disturbance. This was very important because we did not know that 527 people would come to the medical missionary clinic/seminar, plus many other villagers came daily to see the doctors.

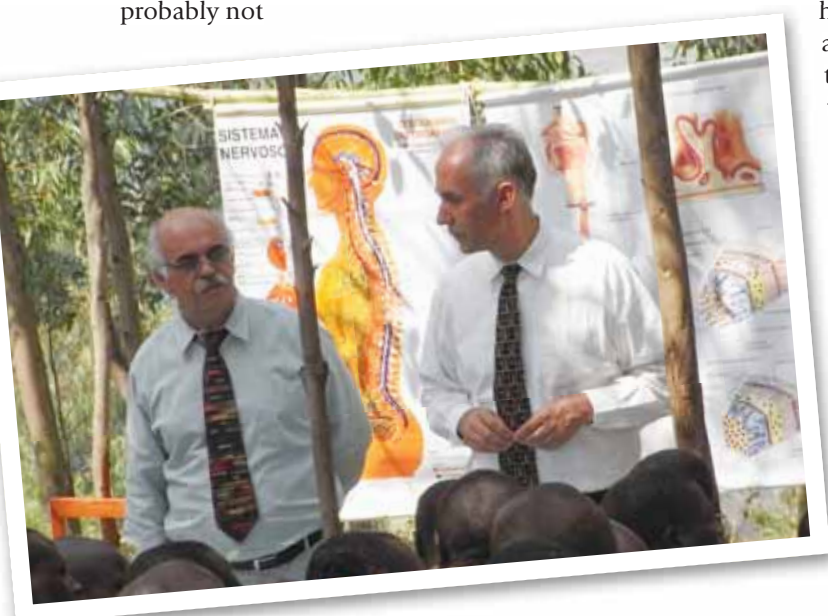
You see, God knew that Gitarama was too small to accommodate over 500 persons, and the authorities would probably not



Another health lecture.



Baptism.



have allowed such a big gathering in the city. I am so thankful that God chose the right location. I have learned through this experience that God is in our trials, working out something better, or working something out of our character which we can't take to heaven. Why do I

worry so much? God has always proved faithful!

There were so many blessings, I can't begin to count them. All I can say is that it was a huge privilege to be at the clinic and to meet our brethren and sisters in Africa.

May God help us restore the years the locusts have eaten. Let us work while it is day. The shadows are falling very quickly as the night hastens when no one can work. So it is our plan to go again, if we can still travel, as the Lord opens the way.

If you are interested in participating, contact Marline at e-mail: hopeandhealth@yahoo.com. *R*



Moldova

Annual summer camp meeting in Radeni, August 16–22, 2010.



U.S.A.

Annual General Conference Council, September 21–October 3 (left); Doctrinal Council and GC Council joint meeting, September 14–21, 2010 (below).



Fiji

*Australasian
Youth Congress,
"100% for Jesus,"
September 28–
October 5, 2010.*



Rwanda

*Brethren and
sisters in the
Rwandan Field.*



Zimbabwe

*Brethren from
Zimbabwe Field.*



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MOVING? Please let us know.

Children's
Corner

How Does the Story End?

One of the best qualities the Bible teaches is patience. When we like something, most of us naturally want it NOW. Sometimes it is hard to wait, but God says it is often good to do so. He has wise reasons for making us wait for something. It is usually so that He can give us something else, something which is even better. So, even if life appears to be sad sometimes, the ending can be happy—and that is what matters the most.

The Bible uses pictures made of words to teach useful lessons about things like this. There are many word pictures about patience. Let's look at some examples:

1 "Wait on the Lord, and keep his way, and he shall exalt thee to inherit the land: when the wicked are cut off, thou shalt see it. I have seen the wicked in great power, and spreading himself like a green bay tree. Yet he passed away, and, lo, he was not: yea, I sought him, but he could not be found" (Psalm 37:34–36). Here we can picture a wide, flourishing tree spread out in splendor. One would never think that it could ever die! But like the wicked person, that tree will not last forever. We know how fragile plants really are. The only thing that will last forever is the Word of God and those who cling to its teaching in their lives. "The grass withereth, the flower fadeth: because the spirit of the Lord bloweth upon it: surely the people is grass. The grass withereth, the flower fadeth: but the word of our God shall stand for ever" (Isaiah 40:7, 8).

2 Here is another lesson about patience: "A faithful man shall abound with blessings: but he that maketh haste to be rich shall not be innocent" (Proverbs 28:20). When a person is in a great hurry to make lots of money, the temptation often comes to try to get it without being honest. The Bible gives a word picture about this: "As the partridge sitteth on eggs, and hatcheth them not; so he that getteth riches, and not by right, shall leave them in the midst of his days, and at his end shall be a fool" (Jeremiah 17:11). Here we picture a certain kind of bird that sits on eggs, but not long enough for them to hatch. How silly!

The poor would-be mother bird does not get the joy of seeing any babies come. This word picture is given to show the disappointment that will come to the one who gets rich by cheating. It may be hard to believe, but that person will finally lose those riches. God's word is clear.

"Better is the end of a thing than the beginning thereof: and the patient in spirit is better than the proud in spirit" (Ecclesiastes 7:8). It's the end of the story that really matters in life. Let us be patient and aim for that happy ending in the kingdom of God! *R*

