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# Our Times

A FAMILY MAGAZINE FOR BETTER LIVING

THE FAMILY-GENESIS OF GREATNESS



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## Every Day is New Year's Day

Honestly now, did you ever have a New Year's resolution that survived January? It's been quite a while since I even made a New Year's resolution, so my memory isn't too clear. I may have had one once that got past January 31, but I'm certain none ever outlived February. That's why I resolved one year to quit making resolutions. (It's the only one, so far, I've been able to keep!) I recommend that you do the same. No New Year's resolutions. Not even one.

Now that doesn't mean that I'm against getting rid of bad habits, cultivating good ones, or that I don't believe change is possible. It just means that I believe New Year's resolutions, for most of us, are ineffective in making truly significant changes in our lives.

For one thing, timing is a problem. Why should we all feel a need to clean up our act just because the calendar says one year has come to a close and another is beginning? No one makes September resolutions or April resolutions. Why not? If you realize in September or April that you need to change something in your life, why not decide to do it right then? No need to wait until the New Year.

But isn't there something about the idea of a brand new year that makes us think of change and turning over new leaves? Something that keeps whispering, 'This year can be different,' in spite of the failures of the past? Yes. It's difficult for me not to make New Year's resolutions. God puts in the heart these desires for change and improvement and restoration. But let's not confine them to just one time of the year. Every day of your life has blank, unmarked pages lying ahead – as many days as you have left in life. Each one holds the potential change for infinite change.

Let's bottle that new-year feeling – the renewed hope that change is possible no matter how often it has eluded us in the past – and sprinkle a little on each day all year long.

Another reason New Year's resolutions so seldom live up to our expectations is that we load them too heavily. Think about the last resolutions you made. Didn't they go something like this:

"I'm going to quit smoking. Not another single puff!"

"I'll read the entire Bible through this year."

"I'll stop nagging the kids and spend more time with them."

What happened? You smoked your first cigarette on January 6. By the end of the month you hadn't picked up the Bible in 10 days, and you were nagging the children again before you were 48 hours into the New Year. Where did you go wrong?

You've used the wide-angle lens when you needed to use the microscope. It's good to be ambitious; it's more effective to focus narrowly and take a single day at a time. In fact, taking each day separately is probably more crucial to successful change than almost anything else.

If you promise you won't nag your children anymore, you've broken your promise the first time you nag. But if you say, "Today – just today – I'm going to be patient and understanding," you can keep that promise a lot more easily. You haven't committed yourself to months of patience – just one day. Of course, each day added to the next turns into months. When (not if) you fail, you've not lost everything. For tomorrow is another clean page. Everyday is New Year's Day, remember?

But we can't live even a single day successfully without the help of the Lord Jesus Christ. Our high hopes for the new year come crashing down around us because we don't take Jesus seriously when He warns, "Without me ye can do nothing." John 15:5. All the will power in the world is not going to change things where it really counts – not permanently, not in the heart. Only Jesus Christ can make that kind of change. And the change He makes is beyond our imagination. "If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things have passed away; behold, all things are become new." 2 Corinthians 5:17.

Make New Year's resolutions, but make it for a day at a time. Tell Jesus that you are depending on Him for success. And He will surely help you. I'll make a resolution like that, too. A Happy and Blessed New Year to you all! **Remember each day is a New Day!** *-Annie Hammond*

# WHAT'S UNIQUE ABOUT JESUS?

by Paulraj Isaiah

**N**apoleon Bonaparte and Julius Caesar founded their kingdoms by might. But Jesus Christ established his kingdom by love. A Nazi youth of Nazi heyday said, "Hitler is so big, and Jesus Christ seems so little." Yet, the name of Hitler has gone down in infamy, but the name of Jesus remains indestructible as time itself. What's unique about Jesus?

Jesus was a man born in an obscure and insignificant village to a peasant woman and a carpenter. He never had formal education. Never authored a book. He was not an administrator or statesman. He never owned a house. Never travelled more than two hundred miles from his home town. Was not popular among the political leaders of his days.

He quickly gained popularity because of His miracles and powerful sermons. However, when the time of adversity came, his friends fled away. One of them denied Him; one of them betrayed Him. He was accused of being a traitor! He was tried in the court like a

criminal. After a thorough investigation the public prosecutor declared, "I find no guilt in this man." Those who hated his pious life and feared his power to perform miracles shouted, "Crucify him."

Judas who betrayed him said before committing suicide, "I have betrayed the innocent blood." He died on a Roman cross, and was buried in a borrowed grave!. Of this unique person Jesus, Phillips Brooks said, "I am far within the mark when I say that all the armies that ever marched and all the navies that were ever built, and that all the parliaments that ever sat and all the kings that ever reigned, put together have not affected the life of man upon this earth as did that one Solitary Life."

The birth, death and resurrection of Jesus were all a fulfillment of a divine plan to save man. This plan was not only laid before the creation of the world, but was gradually revealed to man through prophets.

Jesus indeed was a unique person! He was God essentially and in the highest

sense. Space would not permit to establish his divinity. In Jesus divinity was clothed with humanity. It was a mystery! As a man he was a tridimensional being. He had a body. He was looked and recognized as a man. "Is not this Joseph's son?" Luke 4:22. He was hungry, he was thirsty. "After this, Jesus . . . said, I thirst." John 19:28. He was tired. He rested at Jacob's well because he was tired. John 4:6. He slept when the tempest tossed. He has a soul (*psuche*) that was exceedingly sorrowful even unto death." Matthew 26:38. He commanded his spirit (*pneuma*) to the Father. Luke 23:46. He was tempted to do evil even as we are, but he overcame and sinned not.

As Son of Man he suffered all human heartaches and misery. As Son of God divinity flashed through him at the Mount of Transfiguration. "The disciples awaking, behold the flood of glory that illuminates the mount. In fear and amazement they gaze upon the radiant form of their Master. As they become able to endure the wondrous light,

they see that Jesus is not alone. Beside Him are two heavenly beings, Moses and Elijah." DA p. 421

As he saw the desecration of the Jerusalem temple by money lenders and hawkers, He took the whip, while His divinity flashed through his humanity. As he stood before the Roman Governor Pilate and High Priest Caiphas, they felt that this was no common man. The resurrection of Lazarus, and Christ's disappearance from the presence of his enemies were glimpses of his divine nature.

Jesus was unique in his relationship to God and man. He considered it "not robbery to be equal with God." Philippians 2:6. But when He condescended to become man He said, "I came not to fulfill my will, but the Father's."

Even at the brink of death he said, "Not my will, but Your will." As a man he was an obedient son to his parents. However when the fullness of time came, ministering was more important to him than earthly parents. yet he lost no respect for his mother. He cared for her and so transferred the responsibility to care for his mother to John.

The death of Christ was a payment of penalty for the sins of man. It was foreshadowed by the sacrificial system introduced to the Jews. He was the Lamb which would bear the sins of the world. For the remission of sins the sacrifice of the lamb was necessary. The blood of Jesus cleanses and sanctifies!

What of his death? Did he die of physical pain. *No.* To the surprise of the Roman

soldiers, he died of a broken heart. Any criminal condemned to the cross died after a prolonged time. But Jesus gave up his spirit in six hours. Yes, Jesus was unique even in his death!

What of his resurrection? The resurrection of Jesus proved Him to be the Son of God. The empty tomb, the grave clothes, Christ's personal appearance to the disciples, the witness of the disciples and the Apostle's Creed are all proofs of his resurrection.

Then comes the unique experience of His ascension into the heavens, and His promise to return. Great reformers and revolutionaries have made history and are gone. But Jesus still lives and He is coming back to earth again soon! □

**Words are cheap; acts are costly. The tongue wags; the will sags.**

**We in our own hands are a problem and a pain but we with God become a promise and a possibility.**

**A man's kneeling before his Lord improves his standing with Him.**

**The world is full of willing people; some willing to work, the rest willing to let them.**

**You can lead a boy to college but can't make him think.**

**A good character is always gained by inches, but is often lost in one chunk.**

**Church is more than another meeting place. Church is a place where you come to know Jesus who meets all your needs, loneliness included.**

# MY ENCOUNTER WITH LUCIFER

by Professor K Shanmuga Nathan, PhD

**About a year ago I had an encounter with Lucifer (Satan) and this is the dialogue I had with him:**

**Lucifer:** Mr Nathan, there is something I want to talk to you about. Do you mind?

**Nathan:** Well, I don't mind. What is it?

**Lucifer:** Let me tell you plainly. It seems you have gotten some wrong ideas about me and about the gift I have for my followers. And you are propagating these wrong ideas. In the first place, I want you to stop propagating the wrong ideas about me. In the second place, I would like you to seriously consider yourself about the gift I am offering to my followers.

**Nathan:** I agree that I should not propagate wrong ideas about anybody. But, as far as I can remember, I have not said anything wrong about you.

**Lucifer:** Well, not about me exactly, but about my gift to my followers, to be precise. You know, who ever follows me, I lead him to the second death. This is the gift I have for them.

**Nathan:** Yes, I do know.

**Lucifer:** What I am saying is, you should stop believing that this gift of mine is such a bad gift. And you should stop discouraging people from coming to me to receive this gift. You know, this gift of death which I have to offer, is better than the gift of life that Yaweh offers.

**Nathan:** But how can it be? How can death be better than life?

**Lucifer:** Well, don't pretend that you don't know. Think of the temporary life you are now living. And don't tell me you have never said, "Okay! I have had enough of this life. Death is what I need now".

**Nathan:** You are right. There were moments when I have said so.

**Lucifer:** And yet you continue to live. It is not because you are enamoured with the pleasures of this life. No, not at all. This life has nothing to attract you. The only reason you want to keep living is that you are a responsible person and you are mindful of the responsibilities you must fulfil, before you could embrace death gladly. Am I not right?

**Nathan:** I am sure you are trying to flatter me. But I will not disagree with what you say.

**Lucifer:** But please excuse me. I must tell you, I now want you to be honest and tell me the truth. If you have finished what you consider as your duties in this life, will you not welcome death?

**Nathan:** (hesitatingly) W..e..l..l. I suppose so.

**Lucifer:** Aha, there you are! But not only you, even Paul felt the same way as you do. Of course, the death we mean here is only the temporary death. But the point is this. If you consent to that this temporary death is preferable to this temporary life, what prevents you from, consenting to that eternal death is preferable to eternal life?

**Nathan:** Because, in the temporary life, there is suffering. Whereas, in the eternal life that is to come, there will be no suffering at all.

**Lucifer:** (somewhat laughingly) Please bear with me. And I want you to consider your options honestly. You have said, this temporary life is not worth living, because there is suffering. If you want to have insurance against suffering, then I have the best policy to offer to you. Once you accept my gift of eternal death, then no suffering whatever can come anywhere near you. I bet you cannot have a better insurance against suffering. Do you agree to it or not?

**Nathan:** (hesitatingly) Y..e..s. I suppose, after the second death there can be no suffering whatever.

**Lucifer:** After you have gotten eternal death you can be sure of freedom from suffering. But you can not equally be sure of freedom from suffering after you have gotten eternal life. Do you agree?

**Nathan:** I don't think I can agree with you on this. For, God has promised that there will be no suffering, and that He will wipe away all tears.

**Lucifer:** But be honest. What makes you think, Yaweh could keep the promise. Consider the facts. In the beginning, just after He finished the creation, he saw everything and pronounced it good. But the way things went afterwards,

nothing could be farther from the truth. And look at the numerous promises He made to Israel, His chosen people. Isaiah and Ezekiel are only two of the many books which contain them. But you know, most of the promises can not be fulfilled. Yes, you may say they were conditional promises, and Israel did not do their part. Whatever may be your argument, the point is: Yaweh did not or could not fulfil His promises. Indeed those promises are "What Israel might have become" and not what Israel became. Now you are talking about a promise that there will be no suffering in the eternal life. What makes you think, this will not turn out to be just another "what could be" and not what will be?

**Nathan:** I will trust my Lord and take the risk.

**Lucifer:** Okay, it is your choice! I must leave it to you. But consider what chances, what grave risks you are really taking. The sufferings came because of the freedom of choice, man has been given. Human history has proved it beyond doubt that every man has chosen wrong. Suppose, your and a billion other human beings enter into eternal life, don't you think, of the billions of beings just one person might choose wrongly just once in an eternity. Remember, the freedom of choice is still there very much intact. Once, just once the wrong choice is made, what then? As usual, Yaweh will not or can not keep His promise of wiping away all tears. Suffering then will be inevitable. And it will continue for the rest of eternity. What kind of life will that be? Can you imagine? What is worse, because you have been conferred with eternal life, you then could not even die to escape the suffering.

Truly then it will be fulfilled. "in those days men will seek death and will not find it; they will long to die, and death will fly from them." Rev 9:6

Just think of it and compare it with the assurance of no more suffering after accepting my gift, that is eternal death.

**Nathan:** (Unable to respond).

**Lucifer:** I suppose you can understand what I mean. I mean freedom from all pains and sufferings in life, be it temporary or eternal. Think about it and decide soon.

*I had no counter arguments for the arguments of Lucifer, though in my heart I could not agree with his claim. But because I had no words to argue with, the spirit of Lucifer was pressing in on me. For days and weeks and months, it was a great struggle. On the*

*surface, he seemed to make a point. But something was wrong, what was it? I was at a loss. Unable to stand his exertion, I began to cry to the Lord to help me. For many days, I prayed to the Lord. At last the Lord spoke to me in a soft voice.*

**Lord:** Nathan, what are you worried about?

**Nathan:** Lord, Lucifer argues with me saying that his gift of eternal death is atleast as good as Your gift of eternal life. I am not able to answer him back. I seem to know his claim is wrong. But I am not able to pin point my finger to it. Why should it be like this, Lord? Why can't I prove that my faith is not a blind faith? And why should I keep dumb, while he is taunting You and Your gifts? Help me Lord!

**Lord:** You should know better, Nathan. The gift of eternal death – whose gift is it?

Like a flash of light, it all became clear to me. Eternal life is a gift of the Lord. Eternal death is also a gift of the Lord. Eternal life is given in love to those who have accepted Him. Eternal death is given in love to those who have rejected Him. Lucifer's role consists only in leading men to reject God, violate His laws and thus lead them into trouble and into suffering. There his role ends. After that, the Lord takes over. In order to relieve them from the suffering they have wrought on themselves, God in love, confers on them the gift of eternal death. He will give this gift to Lucifer also. Lucifer, at best can destroy only the body. It is the Lord, and Lord alone who can destroy both the body and the soul. Lucifer was subtly and imperceptibly claiming that eternal death comes from him. But the claim is a false claim. Whether I want Death or Life, only God can give it to me. Because, it is the Lord alone, who is merciful, kind and good, why not I just continue to trust Him and choose what He wants me to choose? I know He wants me to choose, Life. And you know, I want Life, Eternal Life.

I waited for Lucifer to come back. Because, I knew how to turn his arguments back. But, so far he hasn't turned up. I don't think he will meet me again on this point. I know and he also knows he has been defeated.

*Note: Prof. K S Nathan is a PhD and teaches Physics in the Liberal Arts College at Madurai. He is 45 years old, married and has a son. This is an account of his true experience.*

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# Man's Predicament and God's Remedy

(Second article in a short series)

## What Went Wrong With Man?

by M E Cherian, Phd

### PERFECT MAN IN A PERFECT HOME

In our last article we noted that an infinitely loving and perfect God created man a free moral and spiritual being. He was perfect with a potential for continued growth and development and with direct contact and communion with his Creator. He was created in the image and likeness of God. He had godliness and godlikeness. He belonged in a special sense to the family of God. He was a son of God.

The world was made for man, to be his habitation, for him to rule over and to enjoy. In living a holy life, in leading a life of perfect obedience to God's will, in glorifying God in his life, man was to find real and external fulfillment and satisfaction. Only in such a life can man truly mature spiritually and reach the highest plane of living possible for a creature. With these qualities and potentials, a loving God created our first

parents Adam and Eve.

God prepared a special home for Adam and Eve on this earth, the Garden of Eden. "Everything that God had made was the perfection of beauty, and nothing seemed wanting that could contribute to the happiness of the holy pair" (*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 46). "And God saw everything that he had made, and behold, it was very good" (Genesis 1:31).

Moral freedom lies at the foundation of spirituality. There can develop no likeness to God and to godliness unless spiritual choices spring out of moral freedom. It is only when we can freely choose to love, serve and glorify God of our own volition can we be truly spiritual. When man was made in the image and likeness of God, he was made a free moral agent with individuality, with power to think and to act freely at a moral and spiritual plane.

### TEST OF ALLEGIANCE TO GOD AS CREATOR

In the garden home of our first parents God made provision for the exercise of this freedom. In all that was given to them to use and to enjoy in the garden home, God placed the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil as a symbol of His creatorship and ownership to be a test of allegiance and obedience to Him.

Ellen G White comments: "Our first parents, who were created innocent and holy, were not placed beyond the possibility of wrongdoing. God made them free moral agents, capable of appreciating the wisdom and benevolence of His character and the justice of His requirement, and with full liberty to yield or to withhold obedience. They were to enjoy communion with God and with holy angels; but before they could be rendered eternally secure, their loyalty must be tested: (*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 48). This test was the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil.

The account given in the Bible is illuminating. "And the Lord God planted a garden eastward in Eden. . . . And the Lord God commanded the man saying: "Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat; But of the tree of knowledge of good and evil thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die" (Genesis 2:8, 16, 17).

This tree was to be the test of loyalty and love of man to God as his creator and sustainer and as the only one worthy of their worship and adoration. In choosing not to eat of its fruit, man was to prove his allegiance to God as his Only God.

The creature is subject to the Creator. The law governing creation is the law of the Creator. The validity, sanctity and relevance of the law of God is that it is the law of the Creator. The Creator's will is binding on the creature. This is basic to the Creator-creature relationship. The creature cannot exist outside the purview of the law of the Creator.

The well-known religious thinker, E G White, comments: "God placed man under law, as an indispensable condition of his very existence. He was a subject of divine government and there can be no government without law. God might have created man without the power to transgress His law . . . but in that case man would not have been a free moral agent, but a mere automation without freedom of choice. His obedience would not have

been voluntary, but forced. There could have been no development of character. . . It could not have been worthy of man as an intelligent being" (*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 49).

White further states: "God made man upright; He gave him noble traits of character with no bias toward evil. He endowed him with high intellectual power, and presented before him the strongest possible inducement to be true to his allegiance. Obedience, perfect, and perpetual, was the condition of eternal happiness (*Ibid.*)

### THE SPIRITUAL FALL OF MAN

How our first parents who were created perfect, free and subject to the will of God their Creator became disobedient, sinful and subject to misery, sorrow and death is a most tragic story.

The Holy Scriptures tell us that Satan, a morally fallen angelic being (about whose moral fall we shall deal with in the article) came to Eve in the guise of a serpent. The scriptural account says: "And he (serpent) said unto the woman, 'Yea, hath God said ye shall not eat of every tree of the garden?' And the woman said unto the serpent, 'We may eat of the fruit of the trees of the garden. But of the fruit of the tree which is in the midst of the garden, God hath said, 'Ye shall not eat of it, neither shall ye touch it, lest ye die.' And the serpent said unto the woman, 'Ye shall not surely die: For God doth know that in

the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened and ye shall be as gods knowing good and evil.' And when the woman saw that the tree was good for food and that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree to be desired to make one wise, she took of the fruit thereof, and did eat, and gave also unto her husband with her; and he did eat" (Genesis 3: 1-6).

The moment Adam ate the forbidden fruit, the symbol of God's creator-ship and man's allegiance to Him, and thus disobeyed God, he became a sinner subject to the curse of sin and death. And God said; "In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou return unto the ground, for out of it wast thou taken: for dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return" (Genesis 3:19). Paul adds: "Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned" (Romans 5:12).

### CONSEQUENCES OF ADAM'S FALL

There is not an event in the entire history of this world that has had more tragic and devastating consequences than the spiritual fall of Adam and Eve. We shall refer to some of them.

1. Man lost access to his garden home and to the Tree of Life. The Garden of Eden contained the Tree of Life also which symbolized the eternal life assured by God to those who live in conformity with His will. By their sin Adam and Eve forfeited their right to



their garden home and to the Tree of Life. The Bible tells us: "Therefore, the Lord God sent him forth from the garden of Eden" (Genesis 3:23).

2. The perfect world created for a perfect man, now became subject to the curse and ravages of sin. A sinful man cannot fit into a sinless world. A fallen man does not deserve a perfect world. Therefore, when man became sinful, the world also suffered from its consequences and effects. God said to Adam: "Because thou hast eaten of the tree . . .

cursed is the ground for thy sake . . . . Thorns also and thistles shall it bring forth to thee" (Genesis 3:17, 18). Today we live in a world that bears the curse of the sin committed by Adam and his descendants. Decay and death, drought and flood, storm and landslide, desert and wasteland, burning heat and freezing cold, earthquakes and lightning, and every conceivable problem are all the result of man's sin against his Creator God.

3. Man became subject to sickness and sorrow and all the miseries and tragedies we witness today which are a part of our existence. A sin-laden life is miserable and is doomed to die. Sin hurts, it crushes, it destroys, and it robs life of its joy and beauty. Sin takes away peace and tranquillity, it causes tension and conflict, it brings rivalry and resentment. The end of sin is destruction. The Bible tells us that the earth was cursed because of sin and "in sorrow

shalt thou eat of it all the days of thy life" (Genesis 3:17). And the woman was told: "I will greatly multiply thy sorrow" (Genesis 3:16).

4. Adam's perfect nature became sinful. When man went contrary to God's will and partook of the forbidden fruit, he became a sinner and his sinless nature became sinful. The Holy Scriptures tell us: "Sin is the transgression of the law" (1 John 3:4). John also tells us: "He that doeth righteousness is righteous, even as He (God) is righteous", and "all unrighteousness is sin" (1 John 3:7 and 5:17). Sin is setting up one's will against the will of God. When Adam did this, he became a sinner. Sin brought about a qualitative and drastic change in the nature and being of Adam. It changed his nature from that of sinless to sinful. Whereas, before he had no propensity to sin, no bias toward it, no inclination to sin, he now had the propensity to sin and possessed a sinful nature.

5. Sin brought about death and the separation of man from God. God made man for communion and fellowship with Him. That is the reason he was created in the image and likeness of God with a moral and spiritual nature. This communion was a blessed and unique privilege. This privilege makes man's life and existence meaningful. This makes all the difference to man's existence. This privilege raises his existence to a level of highest and most blessed experience. It makes life real, blessed and a bliss.

Sin brought an end to man's privilege of face-to-face communion with God. A sinful being cannot stand before an infinitely holy God. Sin separates us from God. The great prophet Isaiah tells us: "But your iniquities have separated between you and your God, and your sins have hid His face from you" (Isaiah 59:2).

6. Sin and separation from God lead to death. God had told Adam: "For in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die" (Genesis 2:17). Paul brings out this truth forcefully in these words: "For the wages of sin is death" (Romans 6:23). James tells us: "Sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death" (James 1:15). The prophet Ezekiel has warned us: "The soul that sinneth, it shall die" (Ezekiel 18:20). Death is the natural and inevitable consequence of sin. Life is a precious gift from God. We live moment by moment by His power. Life is given to the creature on condition that the creature lives in harmony with His will. The creature is subject to the law of God, and obedience to this law is the condition for existence. Life from a supremely holy and righteous God cannot flow to a creature who is sinful, a creature who has set his will against the will of God, and has disobeyed and disregarded the law of God.

7. When Adam sinned, his nature became sinful, and all his descendants naturally and inevitably inherited a sinful

*Contd. on p. 12*

# THE FAMILY



(If you want  
the best place t

**I**T WAS ONE of those call-in shows. I tuned in to hear a caller talking briefly about his religious upbringing. Then he stated flatly: "I don't believe in anything." The announcer was somewhat taken aback. "Really?" she said. "But surely you believe in *something*." "All I believe in," answered the caller, "is myself and what I can do."

Many people these days subscribe to that idea—an idea called *individualism*. They view their home, for instance, as *their* place—a place where they can retreat from a harsh world. And their expectations of family life are based upon the unrealistic pictures they get from watching television and reading magazines—pictures in which family members have closets filled with fashionable clothing, lounge about on modern furniture, and enjoy the entertainment provided by new sound systems, TV sets, and VCRs.

But this view of the family is misguided. It's self-centered. It places too much emphasis on things. It ignores love of neighbour and

contents itself with love of its own. And it makes the dangerous and false assumption that both the local and the world community can be ignored.

A biblical view of the family, on the other hand, departs radically from this scenario. It invites family members into the vacation of what biblical scholar Walter Bruegemann has called "world-making" ("The Family As World-maker," *Journal for Preachers*, 1985). The family can be a place, he suggests, in which deliberate alternatives to a materialistic and self centered lifestyle are both learned and lived out.

One part of the Bible that speaks of the family, for instance, is Psalm 78. It declares the intention of parents to "tell to the coming generation" the deeds of the Lord. Thus the "children yet unborn" will arise and tell the story to *their* children. Why? So that they should "set their hope in God and not forget the works of God but keep his commandments."

Like parents in ancient Israel, we need, too, to tell the

story of God's acts so that our children can "set their hope in God." As people of faith, after all, we can look back to a past in which God has created, judged, and redeemed His people. And we can trust that what lies ahead is not simply an extension of the problems of the present. God is the One who makes all things new.

So how can we translate the words of the Bible into life in the 1990s? How can our families rise above the old world of "I believe only in myself and what I can do" and help create the new world that God wills for all humanity?

## Making a start

For one thing, if a family is to "keep the commandments," it must define itself over against much of its surroundings. This means teaching children how to be alert to the influences of the media, the government, and peer pressure.

For starters, our children can learn how deceptive advertising often is. The



## GENESIS OF GREATNESS

by Kenneth Gible

**better world,  
start is at home.)**

weapon of ridicule is pertinent here. By mocking the absurd promises of carmakers to deliver happiness, by exposing the lies of tobacco and liquor ads, by scoffing at the snappy slogan, "Be all that you can be in the army," we stay grounded in reality and perhaps save our children a great deal of heartache. They learn to develop healthy, clear-eyed skepticism.

But skepticism is not cynicism. And while it is true that much in the world runs counter to God's will, God still loves creation. Taking the family to places where we can meet people of different national origins, races, and ethnic backgrounds will open our eyes to the rich variety of God's world and will help us affirm and celebrate the contributions of every people and place.

Parents can interpret the world to their children in the language of faith. Someone once said that faith is "seeing a sunset and knowing whom

to thank." In the same way, family members can spend time naming events and people and places they are thankful for. . . and then express their thanks to the Maker of all.

*Giving thanks underlines the importance of prayer in the family setting.* Even such a simple thing as table grace teaches children that there is more to life than what they see in front of them. Prayer is a statement of faith that there is more to believe in than "myself and what I can do."

All this assumes, of course, that a family is spending a significant amount of time together. Studies have demonstrated that American fathers spend an average of six minutes a day relating directly to their children. That's tragic. There is no better way for family members to learn what the grace of God means than to receive positive attention—genuine interest in their day at school or work, concern about problems they are facing, celebration over their successes large or small.

Finally, a word about

participation in church life. Children who grow up attending church regularly learn that the word *family* has a much wider meaning than "people who live together under one roof." Children learn about the family of Christians who meet to worship, work, and play together. Children learn that the terms *sister* and *brother* refer to people of different ages, races, and nations. Children begin to have a sense of their heritage as part of the people of God and their story.

All this is part of what it might mean to become "world makers" in our families. We can discover together alternatives to the self-centered understanding of family in our society. Like the ancient Hebrews, we can take seriously what it means to "set our hope in God."

We learn that the family, like every-thing else in God's creation, is not intended to exist for its own sake. Rather, God placed us in families to learn what love is all about so we can reach out in love to the world God so loves.

□

*Contd. from p. 9*

born in the family of Adam possess a sinful nature and are subject to death. The Holy Scriptures affirm this clearly: "Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned" (Romans 5:12). Again we note: "Therefore, as by the offence of one judgment came upon all men to condemnation" (Romans 5:18). "For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners" (Romans 5:19). Adam was the head of the human race and its representative. When he sinned, it had a dreadful consequence on all his descendants. All those who belong to the family of Adam possess a sinful nature as he

came to possess after his spiritual fall.

Sin alienates man from God. A life separated from God is a sinful life. Thus today the whole human race and the world inhabited by this race have become subject to sin and its terrible consequences. King David acknowledged this universal truth when he cried out: "Behold, I was shapen in iniquity; and in sin did my mother conceive me" (Psalms 51:5).

Not only are we born with a sinful nature, but all of us have committed sin. We are sinners. In the words of Paul: "For all have sinned and come short of the glory of God" (Romans 3:23).

How does God see fallen mankind and his condition? "The Lord looked down from

heaven upon the children of men, to see if there were any that did understand and seek God. They are all gone aside, they are all together become filthy; there is none that doeth good, no not one" (Psalms 14:2, 3). This truth receives painful affirmation from Paul: "There is none righteous, no, not one" (Romans 3:10).

Today the human race collectively and we as individuals face this awful and tragic predicament. We are born with sinful tendencies, with a sinful nature, and we all have sinned and are subject to death.

Some questions spontaneously arise. Is this the end of man? Is there a way out? How and why did sin originate in the universe? □

## Miracles in My Life

*by P V Jesudas*

**M**an is like a bottle of medicine. He was created for the purpose of healing people. God has placed a label on this bottle that reads, "Shake well before using".

I was born into an orthodox Hindu family. My forefathers were priests at a famous Hindu Amman Temple. They practised magic and charms, a part of their priestly ministry and also taught the Vedas. Four years of deep study in Hinduism did not give me any satisfaction and in my heart I had a great longing for the

real truth. I went to a Buddhist society and also frequently visited the Islamic teachers but in vain.

Then one day I found a Bible Correspondence application card - the Voice of Prophecy. Soon I enrolled for the lessons and got deeply interested in them. Later I attended a series of evangelistic meetings in the city. The speaker was able to answer my questions which bothered me - questions on life, suffering, state of the dead, future life etc. Finally I decided to become a Christian. I was

baptised on March 5, 1953. A great shaking took place in my life when I was just 18 years old, when I wrote my final exam in the Arts College at Coimbatore, in Tamil Nadu. I did not write the exams in Mathematics because it came on the Sabbath day, (Saturday). My father who was at this time still a reformed strong Hindu did not approve my change in religion and pleaded with me to come back to the family style of worship. Failing in his attempt, I was given a choice - to remain a Hindu or to

leave the family and my inheritance. So I was shaken up well.

I had read from Bonhoeffer "Men need a fixed pole they can look to for direction, and the Christian has one—he has the fixed pole that gives not only orientation and direction to his life but it also gives life itself" Now I had secured this fixed pole—the Lord Jesus, I never wanted to go back. So I took my direction towards that "Fixed Pole". I lost everything in the world. I was left without anything. No money, nothing I could depend upon. I did not know even where I would get my next meal. I just walked and walked for miles until I was exhausted. I sat under a tree and wept bitterly, lifting my heart to Jesus Christ. Deliverance came through one of my class-mates. He saw me in distress and took me to his farm. His parents showed great love and kindness and cared for me. I stayed there in that friendly home for three months. I worked on their farm even though they didn't want me to do so. All I owned at that time was only one set of clothes. Then the Lord opened a great avenue for me to walk in—an avenue of unbelievable miracles. The train of miracles started there has continued all through my life. I can only say, "The poor man cried and the Lord heard him, and saved him out of all his troubles" (Ps 34:6).

A missionary, A G Rawson, learned of my difficulties and sent some money to me to attend Spicer Memorial College, in Pune, assuring me of financial support for the rest of my studies at the college. I took the money Rupees 30 and got into the train and took a window seat. The ticket cost me Rs 29.50, leaving me with only 50 paise in my hand and the clothes I was wearing. As the signal was given for the train

to move there was commotion on the platform, a man with a suitcase had hit a lady accidentally. So there was some fighting and shouting. I looked at the crowd, the man in trouble was trying to pacify the crowd. He looked up, saw me and ran up to my window and asked me, "Are you Mr Elangovan?" that was my Hindu name, I said, "Yes". "I was looking for you all this time and I almost missed you. Thank God, I found you". While speaking the train started to move, the man hurriedly threw a suitcase onto my lap. "What is this?", I asked. "That is for you" he said. "But "who are you, I do not know you? Why have you brought this suitcase?" I asked him. The train was now moving quite fast. "Do not worry about anything. God bless you", shouted the man waving both of his hands vigorously. I looked at the suitcase and opened it. There was a beautiful new Bible, four new shirts, and four new pants. I tried these clothes when I reached the college and they fitted me exactly! How did the man whom I had never met before, know my measurements? He did not know, but the Lord of heaven who "hath measured the waters in the hollow of His hand. . . (Isaiah 40:12) He had measured me already!

The train sped all through the night and came to Bangalore in the morning. I got some bread with the money I had (50 p) and had my breakfast. Two young people, a boy and a girl boarded the train and took the opposite seats. From their conversation I understood that they too were going to Spicer College. The signal for the train was given. The boy who was searching for something in his box cried to his sister, "I forgot to take my school certificate. I will get down here and take the next train". So saying

he got down leaving the young lady alone. The young lady looked up at me and said, "I suppose you do not have any food or any money to buy food. I was watching you. Here is some food for you. Please eat". After saying this, she opened the packets and thrust some bread into my hands. I could not refuse the kindness and so I ate the food. I always remember this experience with tears. Oh! how marvellous are His ways and how much the Lord cares! Surely, "The young lions do lack, and suffer hunger: But they that seek the Lord shall not want any good thing". Ps 34:10.

The young lady Lily by name took care of my expenses till I reached the college. Mr Rawson came and met me. He paid the fees and purchased my bedding, books etc. and comforted me, promising me that he would take care of my needs as I studied. The year went on, I worked hard on the college farm to earn as much money as possible so that I might not trouble my sponsor too much. I worked in the hot sun for many hours a day and ate very little. Because of this boils broke out on my body all over from head to foot. We had a very kind nurse, Mrs Williams—a missionary lady who treated me with much love and kindness. The boils all over my body disappeared except two big ones remained—one on my right cheek and the other on the left cheek. They remained there in spite of all treatment, and I had a plaster on both my cheeks throughout that year.

The year ended and the annual holidays began. Many students from the college were going to various parts of India to canvass for health books and health magazines published by the OWPH in Salisbury Park, Pune. The students get commission on their sales and

scholarship bonus for the next year's study. I decided that I would try this. So I approached the principal Mr Higgins. The principal looked at me and said, "You can't go with these bandages on your face to sell books and further you have a stammering tongue (which I had at that time) you just can't canvass so please do not go". He tried to stop me. But I said, "I worship a God of miracles. He who lead me so wonderfully so long will take away my difficulties and aid me in my work". Seeing my determination, he gave me a note asking the business manager to grant me permission to go and canvass. There was a footnote "If he comes with a debt, please charge that to my account." Unbelievable, yet the ways of the Lord are mysterious and wonderful.

I went to the Hubli and

Dharwar, districts in Karnataka state and Goa territory to canvass. The night before, I prayed earnestly and pleaded with the Lord to remove my boils from the face and touch my stammering tongue adding in a hurry that I do not mind having the boils come again once I am out of the canvassing field. The next morning I cleaned my broken boils and washed my face. The boils were healed and I canvassed for three months with a clean bandageless face. The Lord gave me success and I earned a scholarship to the amazement of the Principal. I came back to the college and prepared to go to class, when I felt some pain on both my cheeks. In the evening the boils came up as before and the difficulty in my speech returned and remained till I went back the next vacation again for canvassing. Three years

the miracle was repeated until I finished my course and began my work as an evangelist. Then I prayed for complete deliverance from these two difficulties since I was an evangelist and constantly had to work with people. The Lord in His wonderful way removed these difficulties and I began to preach without stammering. The boils never came again! But the scars on my cheeks remained. When I went to do graduate study in Manila years later, the doctors advised me to have plastic surgery to remove my scars from my cheeks, but I refused and the scars remain on my face proclaiming the great truth written by William Cooper: "Ye fearful saints, take fresh courage: The clouds you so much dread; Are big with mercy, and shall break, In blessings on your head." □

# THE AMAZING POWER OF BELIEF

*by Carlton Johnson*

**When trouble strikes, the difference between "If" thinking and "How" thinking is the difference between failure and victory.**

**L**et me tell you about Fred Haas. Fred is one of those rare individuals who has allout faith. He believed his

way gloriously through a mass of problems.

After 30 years of hard work Fred lost his business

because of a crooked partner. Friends expected him to be full of bitterness. But Fred didn't "cry over spilled milk."

Instead, he told everyone that he had found his assets to be much greater than his liabilities.

"All I had when I began 30 years ago was 50 dollars. Now I have 500. So, you see, I'm 450 dollars ahead. I started with a wonderful wife, and I still have her, thank God for that. And when it comes to experience, I'm way ahead on that.

Within a year Fred had started another business and was doing well. He explained, "I decided I would not be an 'if thinker' but a 'how thinker'."

Come to think about it, that's quite a thought-provoking distinction. The "if thinker" broods over a difficulty or a setback, saying bitterly to himself, "If only I had done thus and so . . . . If others had not treated me so unfairly . . . . If only this or that circumstance had been different . . ." so he goes from explanation to explanation, round and round, while the situation gets worse and worse.

The "how thinker," on the other hand, wastes no energy on post-mortems, even when trouble or disaster strikes close to home. He immediately begins looking for the best solution, for he knows that with God's help there is a solution—always. He asks himself, "How can God bring something good out of this situation?"

The "how thinker" successfully solves his problems, because he knows that values are always inherent in difficulties. He

wastes no time with futile ifs but goes right to work on the creative how.

The next time trouble strikes you, avoid the word *if*. Focus on the dynamic word *how*. Ask God to put "know-how" into the how. You will be amazed at how quickly your problems will be resolved.

One reason the positive thinker successfully believes his way through the problems is that he never runs away from them. He is not so superficial and foolish as to think that, if he can just run out on his present difficulties, things will be easier later or someplace else.

He knows that the same or similar difficulties will follow him wherever he goes and that the only sure way to stop running is to stand up to those problems right where he is and fight the battle—and this applies to all of us. If you do not defeat problems right here and now, they will chase you and hound you for the rest of your life. Don't run; fight it out in faith; believe it through, now, right where you are.

A young man who exuded positive, dynamic confidence gave the following testimony. He said, "I love to sell; I just live it. There is nothing like the excitement of selling." He was impressive and inspiring.

But in a private conversation he admitted to me that he had not always had this positive mental outlook. At one time he had been afraid to call upon a potential customer.

It made him literally sick. He would lie on a couch at home, afraid to go out and do

his job. But then, one day, he began to pray and think—positively. Before long he got an idea that saved him.

But before that he was offered a job by another company. The job was much easier than selling. It seemed like an answer to prayer. He was delighted and gratefully relieved. The new job promised to net him twice the amount he was currently making. In some ways the new job offered seemed providential to him, but the fact that he would be running away from a problem raised doubts in his mind.

As he continued to pray, the thought struck him: Running away from a problem never got a person anywhere, except more running. If he did not conquer his fears right where he was, they would dog him wherever he went, even in his new job.

So he asked the Lord to help him, and He did. He was given courage to face up to his fears. He turned down the attractive work opportunity and held onto his salesman's job. God gave him the strength that He always gives to one who believes. In time the salesman overcame his fears. He not only learned how to meet customers; he also learned to love his job.

It never pays to run from difficulties. Face them in faith, knowing that God has a solution, even though you may not see it at the moment. Following the light you already have, move forward with God in faith. □

# You Can Have Peace Of Mind

By Ellen White

We all have times when we're feeling down. Here are the five steps needed to get you back on top of things.

**The** relation that exists between the mind and the body is very intimate. When one is affected, the other sympathizes. The condition of the mind affects the health to a far greater degree than many realize. Many of the diseases from which men suffer are the result of mental depression. Grief, anxiety, discontent, remorse, guilt, distrust—all tend to break down the life forces and to invite decay and death.

Courage, hope, faith, sympathy, love, promote health and prolong life. A contented mind, a cheerful spirit, is health to the body and strength to the soul. "A merry [rejoicing] heart doeth good like a medicine" (Proverbs 17:22).

## 1. Trust God

We are not to let the future,

with its hard problems, its unsatisfying prospects, make our hearts faint, our knees tremble, our hands hang down. "Let him take hold of my strength," says the Mighty one, "that he may make peace with me; and he shall make peace with me" (Isaiah 27:5).

Those who surrender their lives to His guidance and to His service will never be placed in a position for which He has not made provision. Whatever our situation, if we are doers of His Word, we have a guide to direct our way; whatever our perplexity, we have a sure Counsellor; whatever our sorrow, bereavement, or loneliness, we have a sympathizing Friend.

If in our ignorance we make missteps, the Saviour does not forsake us. We need never feel that we are alone. Angels are our companions. The Comforter that Christ

promised to send in His name abides with us.

In the way that leads to the City of God there are no difficulties which those who trust in Him may not overcome. There are no dangers which they may not escape. There is not a sorrow, not a grievance, not a human weakness, for which He has not provided a remedy.

## 2. Remember His Care

None need abandon themselves to discouragement and despair. Satan may come to you with the cruel suggestion, "Yours is a hopeless case; you are irredeemable." But there is hope for you in Christ. God does not bid us overcome in our own strength. He asks us to come close to His side. Whatever difficulties we labour under, which weigh down soul and body, He waits



to make us free.

He who took humanity upon Himself knows how to sympathize with the sufferings of humanity. Not only does Christ know every soul, and the peculiar needs and trials of that soul, but He knows all the circumstances that chafe and perplex the spirit. His hand is outstretched in pitying tenderness to every suffering child.

Those who suffer most have most of His sympathy and pity. He is touched with the feeling of our infirmities, and He desires us to lay our perplexities and troubles at His feet, and leave them there.

When temptations assail you, when care, perplexity, and darkness seem to surround your soul, look to the place where you last saw the light. Rest in Christ's love and under His protecting care.

When sin struggles for the mastery in the heart, when guilt oppresses the soul and burdens the conscience, when unbelief clouds the mind, remember that Christ's grace is sufficient to subdue sin and banish the darkness. Entering into communion with the Saviour, we enter the region of peace.

### 3. Be grateful

Nothing tends more to promote health of body and of soul than does a spirit of gratitude and praise. It is a positive duty to resist melancholy, discontented thoughts and feelings as much a duty as it is to pray. If we are heaven bound, how can we go

as a band of mourners, groaning and complaining all along the way to our Father's house?

Those professed Christians who are constantly complaining, and who seem to think cheerfulness and happiness a sin, have not genuine religion . . . They are gathering to themselves gloom and darkness, when they might have brightness, even the Sun of Righteousness arising in their hearts with healing in His beams.

Often your mind may be clouded because of pain. Then do not try to think. You know that Jesus loves you. He understands your weakness. You may do His will by simply resting in His arms.

It is a law of nature that our thoughts and feelings are encouraged and strengthened as we give them utterance. While words express thoughts, it is also true that thoughts follow words.

If we would give more expression to our faith, rejoice in the blessings that we know

God.

Then let us educate our hearts and lips to speak the praise of God for His matchless love. Let us educate our souls to be hopeful and to abide in the light shining from the cross of Calvary. Never should we forget that we are children of the heavenly King, sons and daughters of the Lord of hosts. It is our privilege to maintain a calm repose in God.

"Let the peace of God rule in your hearts . . . and be ye thankful" (Colossians 3:15). Forgetting our own difficulties and troubles, let us praise God for an opportunity to live for the glory of His name. Let the fresh blessings of each new day awaken praise in our hearts for these tokens of His loving care.

When you open your eyes in the morning, thank God that He has kept you through the night. Thank Him for His peace in your heart. Morning, noon, and night, let gratitude as a sweet perfume ascend to heaven.

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**The consciousness of right-doing is one of the best medicines for diseased bodies and minds.**

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we have—we should have more faith and greater joy. No tongue can express, no finite mind can conceive, the blessing that results from appreciating the goodness and love of God. Even on earth we have joy as a wellspring—never failing, because fed by the streams that flow from the throne of

When someone asks how you are feeling, do not try to think of something mournful to tell in order to gain sympathy. Do not talk of your lack of faith and your sorrows and sufferings. The tempter delights to hear such words. When talking of gloomy subjects, you are glorifying him.

We are not to dwell on the great power of Satan to overcome us. Often we give ourselves into his hands by talking of his power. Let us talk instead of the great power of God to bind up all our interests with His own. Tell of the matchless power of Christ and speak of His glory.

#### **4. Lift up a song**

Let praise and thanksgiving be expressed in song. When tempted, instead of giving utterance to our feelings, let us by faith lift up a song of thanksgiving to God.

Song is a weapon that we can always use against discouragement. As we thus open the heart to the sunlight of the Saviour's presence, we shall have health and His blessing.

"O give thanks unto the Lord, for he is good:

For his mercy endureth for ever.

Let the redeemed of the Lord say so,

whom he hath redeemed from the hand of the enemy." Psalm 107:1, 2.

"In everything give thanks: for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you" (1 Thessalonians 5:18). This command is an assurance that even the things which appear to be against us will work for our good. God would not bid us be thankful for that which would do us harm.

One of the surest hindrances to the recovery of the sick is the centering of attention upon themselves.

Many invalids feel that everyone should give them sympathy and help, when what they need is to have their attention turned away from themselves, to think of and care for others.

Often prayer is solicited for the afflicted, the sorrowful, the discouraged; and this is right. We should pray that God will shed light into the darkened mind, and comfort the sorrowful heart. But God answers prayer for those who place themselves in the channel of His blessings.

#### **5. Answer someone's prayer**

While we offer prayer for these sorrowful ones, we should encourage them to try to help those more needy than themselves. The darkness will be dispelled from their own hearts as they try to help others. As we seek to comfort others with the comfort

to the hungry,

And that thou bring the poor that are cast out to thy house?

When thou seest the naked, that thou cover him;

And that thou hide not thyself from thine own flesh?

Then shall thy light break forth as the morning,

And thine health shall spring forth speedily:

And thy righteousness shall go before thee;

The glory of the Lord shall be thy reward." Isaiah 58:7, 8.

Good deeds are twice a blessing, benefiting both the giver and the receiver of the kindness. The consciousness of right-doing is one of the best medicines for diseased bodies and minds. When the mind is free and happy from a sense of duty well done and the satisfaction of giving happiness to others, the cheering, uplifting influence brings new life to the whole

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**Good deeds are twice a blessing,  
benefiting both the giver and the receiver  
of kindness.**

---

wherewith we are comforted, the blessing comes back to us.

The fifty-eighth chapter of Isaiah is a prescription for maladies of the body and of the soul. If we desire health and the true joy of life, we must put into practice the rules given in this scripture. Of the service acceptable to Him, and its blessings, the Lord says:

"Is it not to deal thy bread

being.

If those who are suffering from ill health would forget self in their interest for others, if they would fulfil the Lord's command to minister to those more needy than themselves, they would realize the truthfulness of the prophetic promise, "Then shall thy light break forth as the morning, and thine health shall spring forth speedily." □

# TROUBLED?

Ellen White

## Life getting you down? Here's help:

**I**T IS PEACE that you need—Heaven's forgiveness and peace and love in the soul. Money cannot but it, intellect cannot procure it, wisdom cannot attain to it; you can never hope, by your own efforts, to secure it. But God offers it to you as a gift, "without money and without price" (Isaiah 55:1). It is yours if you will but reach out your hand and grasp it.

The Lord says, "Though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be as red like crimson, they shall be as wool" (Isaiah 1:18). "A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you" (Ezekiel 36:26).

You have confessed your sins, and in heart put them away. You have resolved to give yourself to God. Now go to Him, and ask that He will wash away your sins and give you a new heart. Then believe that He does this because He has promised. This is the lesson which Jesus taught while He was on earth, that the gift which God promises us, we must believe we do receive, and it is ours.

Jesus healed the people of their disease when they had faith in His power; He helped them in the things which they could see, thus inspiring them with confidence in Him concerning things which they could not see—leading them to believe in His power to forgive sins. This He plainly stated in the healing of the man sick with palsy: "That ye may know that the Son of man hath power on earth to forgive sins, (then saith He to the sick of the palsy,) Arise, take up thy bed, and go unto thine house" (Matthew 9:6).

So also John the evangelist says, speaking of the miracles of Christ, "These are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through His name" (John 20:31).

From the simple Bible account of how Jesus healed the sick, we may learn something about how to believe in Him for the forgiveness of sins. Let us turn to the story of the paralytic at Bethesda. The poor sufferer was helpless; he had not used his limbs for thirty-eight years. Yet Jesus bade him, "Rise, take up thy bed, and walk." The sick man might have said, "Lord, if thou wilt make me whole, I will obey thy word."

But no, he believed Christ's word, believed that he was made whole, and he made the effort at once; he willed to walk, and he did walk. He acted on the word of Christ, and God gave the power. He was made whole.

In like manner, you are a sinner. You cannot atone for your past sins; you cannot change your heart and make yourself holy. But God promises to do all this for you through Christ. You believe that promise. You confess your sins and give yourself to God. Your will to serve Him. Just as surely as you do this, God will fulfill His word to you.

If you believe the promise—believe that you are forgiven and cleansed—God supplies the fact; you are made whole, just as Christ gave the paralytic power to walk when the man believed that he was healed. It is so if you believe it.

Do not wait to feel that you are made whole, but say, "I believe it; it is so, not because I feel it, but because God has promised."

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