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Our Times



**A
Great
Woman**

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The Gentleness Of Jesus

by George Morrison

There is an exquisite and charming instance of the gentleness of Jesus recorded in Mark 5, verse 22 and onward. It concerned what happened after Jesus raised from the dead the little daughter of Jairus, the ruler of the synagogue. The miracle itself was an emotional experience. Jairus and his wife understandably forgot

everything else in the excitement of having their daughter back again. Probably they did drop to their knees in gratitude, for God comes very close in life's great moments.

As far as the disciples were concerned, they felt such awe come into their hearts they could only be silent and adore the Master. But in that environment of awe and wonder, in that splendid moment of spiritual exaltation, when the power of God was manifestly present and the whole house vibrated with the joy of heaven, Jesus' gentleness shone forth brilliantly. He commanded that something be given the little girl to eat.

It was an exquisite and charming touch, which even genius could never have imagined. Great miracles are apt to seem remote. They are transacted in an alien atmosphere. They often carry the guise of unreality in their aloofness from our common days, and then there comes



quite unexpectedly, some little homely and familiar incident, which is wonderfully helpful to our faith.

Such is the gentleness of Jesus here. It touches that household with reality. It

clothes the Son of God with the vesture of the Son of man. It was divine power which conquered death and commanded the maiden to rise. It was the thoughtfulness of a loving human heart which

insisted that something be given a little girl to eat.


The gentleness of Jesus grows even more wonderful when we remember certain aspects of His ministry. His life was, for instance, as the gospels show us, one of constant movement and excitement. In quiet and uneventful lives there is always a margin for remembering. The slowly passing hours give ample leisure for the thoughtfulness and gentleness of loving hearts. But when the days are broken and the life unsettled by the throng and pressures of activities, it is always difficult to find a place for little thoughtful services of love.

Such thoughtfulness and gentleness in a career of movement call for a steady mastery of life. They demand a spirit that knows interior rest though every day be broken into fragments.

The beautiful thing about Jesus' life is that in a life like His, with the intensity of Heaven compressed into three

short years of public ministry, He had a heart that always was at leisure for the fragrant things that blossomed by the road. He did not miss the lilies. One who misses the lilies misses God. He did not miss the weed upon the bank, or the play of children, nor the widow's mite. And in Jairus's house, where the power of God was present, and everyone was hushed in wonder and awe, He commanded that something be given the child to eat.

He was the high priest, touched with the feelings of our infirmities.

And so many times we read in Scripture that they brought young children to Him that He should *touch* them. And He took them up in His arms, put His hands upon them, and blessed them. Jesus called His disciples unto Him and said, "Have compassion on the multitude, because they continue with me now three days, have nothing to eat; and I will not send them away fasting, lest they faint on the way." He was the high priest, touched with the feelings of our infirmities. 

Christianity's Best Kept Secret

by Kenneth J Holland

Recently I ran across a painting of Jesus laughing. I mean He was enjoying a good, old-fashioned belly laugh. I must admit the painting shocked me momentarily. Most of us see Jesus as gentle in manner, solemn in social contacts, and intensely mission-oriented. We will admit that he smiled at times but a full-blown side-splitter, well, that borders on the sacrilegious.

As I thought of the painting, I concluded that if Jesus indeed laughed (and in 30 years on earth he must have seen

something worth at least a chuckle), He must have had a sense of humour. So the subject intrigued me, and I began to ask myself some questions:

If Jesus had a sense of humour, what does that tell us about the kind of God we have? Surely He couldn't be the severe, arbitrary God some picture Him to be.

I wondered, does satan have a sense of humour?

Why have Christian ministers gained the reputation of being great tellers of funny stories?

What about 1 Timothy 6:17, which tells of the living God, "who gives us richly all things to enjoy"? Joy and humour seem closely allied. I recalled that Jesus loved Psalm 100, with its striking line, "serve the Lord with gladness."

I thought of Philippians 2:5; "Let this mind be in you that was in Christ Jesus." Most of us feel we have a reasonably good sense of humour. We like to laugh. Why not Christ?



What about the Bible as a whole? Does it contain humour? If we fail to see that Jesus bantered with His disciples and even kidded them, that there was a playful

side to Him, are we distorting scripture? Are we missing out on an aspect of Jesus' character that is very important? Are we overemphasizing the prophet Isaiah's observation that He was "despised and rejected by men, a Man of sorrows and acquainted with grief" (Isaiah 53:3).

Let us, then, explore a sampling of the evidence about our Lord and His humour. It has been an enthralling adventure for me, and when you understand it, I believe a new world will open to you. The Bible will become a new book. Jesus will become

more interesting, more real and captivating. And really it should not surprise us that Jesus had a sense of humour, for only the spiritual person can genuinely laugh; only the believer who has found freedom and joy in Christ can laugh; the rest of the world merely giggle.

We must realize that Jesus had only three and a half years of public life to make an impact on the world. Therefore He had

to say things and do things that were memorable and that made a lasting impact on people. He often had to shock men and women to get their attention. He had a revolutionary message to give, and He knew that He could not make Himself understood by speaking and acting mildly.

Jesus was always making an impact on people. In like manner we find Jesus using humour because it helped Him clarify truth. Jesus Christ was the greatest communicator who ever lived. He used all the figures of speech: simile, metaphor, paradox, hyperbole, satire, irony, etc. He used parables and He used humour with great effectiveness.

There are at least 30 passages in the Gospels that reveal Jesus had a great, though subtle sense of humour. He talked about dead undertakers, blind guides, reluctant generosity, preaching but not practicing, hidden lamps, and

There are at least 30 passages in the Gospels that reveal Jesus had a great, though subtle sense of humour.

ostentatious religious officials. Jesus continually surprises us. He used deliberate exaggeration for effect when He talked about casting pearls to swine, wiping off the dust of a city that doesn't accept you, and removing a plank from your eye. He had fun with the pompous, self-righteous Pharisees. His major weapon against the Pharisaic attack was wit and humour, and He used them fully. He was always nailing them on something because they were distorting the law and the gospel. They were the dominant force in religious life, and they had to be challenged.

For instance, He said, "You Pharisees, you strain at a gnat and swallow a camel." You picture a camel going down their throats, hair and all, plus a hump and four heavily padded feet! What made it even more pointed, the Pharisees regarded camels as unclean animals--then to think of swallowing them!

Jesus also used a light-hearted play on words when He called unpredictable Simon the fisherman Peter (or

Cephas), which means "Rock." At that time Peter the impetuous one was anything but rock-solid in character. It is very interesting to note that in calling Simon Cephas, Jesus was also speaking prophetically because under the influence of the living Christ, Peter was transformed into solid rock! Peter became a tower of strength to the infant church and to all Christians down the ages.

Despite the many times Jesus indulged in His own irresistible brand of humour, this aspect of His character is, I believe, Christianity's best-kept secret. It is such because of widely held presuppositions regarding the life of Christ. The conventional picture of Jesus has Him somber and reserved. Respect for the Master, for His divinity, seems to preclude any light-heartedness and playfulness on His part. Yet we must admit that many Biblical passages are practically incomprehensible when regarded as sober, humourless literalism.

Jesus used a gentle touch of irony when He called two

fishermen, Simon and Andrew, to be His first recruits. He wittily referred to their occupation when He said, "Follow Me, and I will make you fishers of men" (Mark 1:17). The remark no doubt didn't evoke raucous laughter on the fishermen's part but who can say it didn't bring a smile to their faces!

Actually it should not be too difficult for us to accept Jesus' humour for we find humour throughout the Bible. For example, Moses once took God to task for using inconsistent pronouns in speaking of the people of Israel. In Exodus 3:10 God had said, "Come now, therefore, and I will send you to Pharaoh that you may bring my people, the children of Israel, out of Egypt." But after Israel's sin with the golden calf, God said to Moses, "Go, get down! For your people whom you brought out of the land of Egypt have corrupted themselves."

Moses then cried out in protest, saying, "wait a minute, God. You can't call them Your people when they're good and my people when they're bad.

Whether they're good or bad, they're still Your people!" Undoubtedly God broke into laughter at that moment, unable to resist the teasing of someone He loved.

I'm charmed by that exchange between God and Moses. It is a revelation of the playfulness of our maker. It makes God seem so much more approachable. We can indeed be comfortable in His presence. Perhaps the dialogue loomed large in God's mind, too, for He resurrected Moses from the grave, and they have been enjoying each other's company all these years! Matthew 17:1-3.

Although Jesus used humour and used it effectively, I do not wish to overemphasize the matter. His life, indeed, was one of sorrow and grief. He wept over Jerusalem because He had eternal life to offer them, but they wouldn't listen. His own disciples offered Him no comfort in Gethsemane and in the end He even felt forsaken of His Father. We must conclude, then, that the amazing thing is not that Jesus used humour so often, but that He used it at all.

As for satan, it is quite evident that he has no sense of humour. It is hatred that energizes him even as it is love that energizes Jesus. The devil's stock in trade are pain, disappointment, and death.

Jesus use of humour was subtle. To grasp it one must be open-minded and sensitive. Perhaps the chief difference between Christ's humour and ours is revealed in the fact that in our ordinary experiences we tell jokes to hear people laugh. When Jesus used humour, He did so because it was the best method of getting truth across.

Philippians 4:4 reads: "Rejoice in the Lord always." Trueblood says, "Any alleged Christianity which fails to express itself in gaiety, at some point, is clearly spurious. The Christian is gay not because he is blind to injustice and suffering, but because he is convinced that these, in the light of the divine sovereignty, are never ultimate. . . . If Christ laughed a great deal, as the evidence shows,

and if He is what He claimed to be, we cannot avoid the logical conclusion that there is laughter and gaiety in the heart of God"

It is vital for the Christian to serve God, to obey and trust Him with all his heart, thus glorifying our gracious Lord. Yet it seems that one advances to the highest level of Christian living when He finds God to be enjoyable.

I like to think that Moses in his dialogue with God reached that plateau and that we also can make advances in our Christian pilgrimage when we discover for ourselves that Jesus teased His disciples, that He took time for banter and playfulness with common people, and that He often used

humour to communicate His messages.

When we accept these things, we will have taken a giant step in our journey toward Christian maturity, a maturity that will attain its ultimate satisfaction in the unending stretches of eternity.

When Jesus used humour, He did so because it was the best method of getting truth across.

Walking Through Your Bible With. . .

Messianic Prophecies OF Prophet Isaiah (Part II)

by M E Cherian



Messianic Prophet

The Holy Scriptures clearly affirm that the Lord Jesus Christ was God incarnate. He became man to save mankind, to deliver us from sin and eternal death, He came to establish a world without sin and all of its consequences and to provide redeemed mankind an everlasting home. This was God's preordained plan for fallen man. Christ's life and work was prophesied by many prophets of old and these predictions are found in the Old Testament part of

the Bible. The fulfillment of these predictions is one of the main assurance to us that Jesus Christ was truly God incarnate.

Among the prophets who prophesied about Jesus Christ, Prophet Isaiah is outstanding. Based on these prophecies, made seven hundred years before Christ, Isaiah had a remarkable insight into the life of Christ as the suffering Messiah and of the salvation made available to all mankind through Him. Therefore, "Isaiah is appropriately called the Messianic prophet . . . and the king of Israel's celebrated prophets, and his writings the masterpiece of all

prophetic writings" *SDA Bible Commentary*, vol 4, p 91.

Christ –The Way To Heaven

In our last article (See January/February issue), we discussed the Messianic prophecies found in the book of Isaiah, from chapters 1 to 11. In this issue we shall take up the prophecies found from chapter 12 onwards.

In Isaiah 22:22 we read "And the key of the house of David will I lay upon his shoulder; so he shall open, and none shall shut; and he shall shut, and none shall open." In a secondary sense, this prophecy is truly applicable to Christ as our Saviour. About 800 years later John the Revelator in a prophetic passage quotes a message that came to him from Christ Himself: "These things saith he that is holy, he that is true, *he that hath the key of David, he that openeth, and no man shutteth; and shutteth, and no man openeth*" (Revelation 3:7).

The children of Israel were the chosen people of God; chosen to be God's instruments in propagating the good news of God's love for man and the way to return to God. They were made a nation for this purpose and David was the king chosen by God to establish this kingdom. God pointed out to David that eventually the Messiah would come as a descendant of him and through him His kingdom and throne would be established for ever. And the prophecy of Isaiah 22:22 and the declaration of Apostle John (Revelation 3:7) refer to Christ's power

over God's kingdom and the fact that our salvation is in and through Him.

In the context of Isaiah's prophecy referred to above, we may note a statement of the Lord Himself when He was on earth. He said of Himself, ". . . upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it" (Matthew 16:18). Then, deeply conscious of His own power and authority and the role of His disciples under the guidance and indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit, He further said, "And I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven" (Matthew 16:19). Isaiah prophesied Christ's authority as the God of heaven and earth and His power and role as the Saviour of man.

Christ–The Saviour And Healer

The purpose of incarnation was the salvation of man. This was prophesied by Isaiah over and over again. Note the one found in Isaiah 35:4-6: "Say to them that are of fearful heart, Be strong, fear not: behold, your God will come with vengeance, even God with a recompense; he will come and save you. Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened, and the ears of the deaf shall be unstopped. Then shall the lame man leap as an hart, and the tongue of the dumb sing: for in the wilderness shall waters break out, and streams in the desert."

Before the birth of Jesus an angel appeared to Joseph, the husband of Mary, the mother of Lord Jesus. He

said, "And she shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name JESUS: for he shall save his people from their sins" (Matthew 1:21). Jesus came to save us from our sins. "He will come and save you," was the prophecy of Isaiah.

When Christ was on earth, John the Baptist sent his disciples to Christ and enquired, "... Art thou he that should come, or do we look for another?" (Matthew 11:3). And the Lord Jesus told John's disciples, "... Go and shew John again those things which ye do hear and see: The blind receive their sight, and the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, and the deaf hear, the dead are raised up, and the poor have the gospel preached to them" (Matt 11:5).

About the work of Jesus Christ, the gospel writer Mark refers to a group of people as saying, "... He hath done all things well: he maketh both the deaf to hear, and the dumb to speak" (Mark 7:37). In His work, Jesus Christ fulfilled this prophecy of Isaiah.

Christ—The Caring Saviour

The prophet Isaiah describes the solicitous care of Jesus Christ for His people. This loving care is compared to that of a faithful shepherd for his flock. Isaiah says, "He shall feed his flock like a shepherd: he shall gather the lambs with his arm, and carry them in his bosom, and shall gently lead those that are with young" (Isaiah 40:11). It is significant to note that Christ Himself described His concern and care for His people as that of a shepherd.

In an extended discourse on His work using the analogy of a shepherd,

Christ said, "I am the good shepherd: the good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep" (John 10:11). Christ's care for His people, "providing for them and protecting them from harm, is often compared to the work of a gentle and faithful shepherd in caring for his flock. ... As a shepherd gathers his lambs, carrying those that are too feeble to walk, and leading the ewes gently, ... so Christ exercises every possible care for His flock" —*SDA Bible Commentary*, vol 5, p247.

Divisions Of The Book Of Isaiah

The book of Isaiah is divided into three parts. The first part, chapters 1 to 35, contains denunciations against those who disobey God and describes the judgment that awaits them. The second part, chapters 36 to 39, is largely historical. It describes the invasion of King Sennacherib of Judah, the illness and recovery of King Hezekiah of Judah, and the visit of Babylonian envoys to Judah.

The third and last part, chapters 40 to 66, contains the major prophecies regarding the life and ministry of Jesus Christ. It tells about the outpouring of the grace of God upon His righteous people. "Here in the most sublime language ever to grace the life of an inspired orator, Isaiah sets for the glorious future of Israel on God's faithful 'servant,' her deliverance from every foe, the coming of the Messiah, and the establishment of the Messianic kingdom" —*SDA Bible Commentary*, vol 5, p244

This part of the book contains

numerous prophecies concerning the Messiah to come. Here we have portrayed His life, His character, His mission and office, and finally His sacrifice on behalf of man. Further, we get a picture of the extending kingdom of grace and of the growth of the church into which people are drawn from all around the world. Finally the prophet gives us a glimpse of the universal and sinless kingdom of God where peace and righteousness shall prevail uncontested and eternally.

The Forerunner Of The Messiah

In this third part, the first definite prophecy that has a bearing on the coming Messiah is found in chapter 40, verse 3: "The voice of him that crieth in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make straight in the desert a highway for our God."

It was God's plan that the children of Israel would be His special messengers. Their mission was to prepare the world for the coming Messiah. That is one reason God gave them these prophecies through the prophets. That is also why they were placed in Palestine, the highway centre of the then-known world.

Yet God's purpose did not fail. He raised a messenger to prepare the way for the coming Messiah. This was John the Baptist.

In the days of Christ and before He began His ministry, there was a great revival in Israel, especially in Judea, under John the Baptist.

The gospel writer Matthew gives us this account about John the Baptist. "In

those days came John the Baptist, preaching in the wilderness of Judea, And saying, Repent ye: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand. For this is he that was spoken of by the prophet Esaias (*Isaiah*), saying, The voice of one crying in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make his paths straight" (Matt 3:1-3).

As a result of his preaching, many confessed their sins and were baptized in the river Jordan.

Interestingly enough, John himself realized that he was the forerunner of the coming Messiah and that his mission was to prepare the way for Him. His message, "Repent ye, for the kingdom of God is at hand" was the fulfillment of the prophecy of Isaiah. When he baptized people, he publicly acknowledged this.

In fact, according to St Luke, John made this declaration about Christ when people began to wonder if John himself was the Messiah to come. The Bible record says, "And as the people were in expectation, and all men mused in their hearts of John, whether he were the Christ or not" (Luke 3:15). He confessed, "... I am not the Christ" (John 1:20).

The Work Of John The Baptist

It is worth following the story and the course of events connected with this prophecy of Isaiah concerning John the Baptist, the predicted forerunner of Christ. While John was continuing his ministry in the Jordan river area, Jesus Christ came from Galilee. And when John saw Jesus, he

said to the people, "... Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world. This is he of whom I said, After me cometh a man which is preferred before me: for he was before me. And I knew him not: but that he should be made manifest to Israel, therefore am I come baptizing with water" (John 1:29-31).

Jesus asked John to baptize him also, but John strongly protested and said that instead of he baptizing Jesus, he was in need of being baptized by Jesus. Matthew records it thus, "But John forbade him, saying, I have need to be baptized of thee, and comest thou to me?" (Matthew 3:14). To this Jesus replied, "... Suffer it to be so now: for thus it becometh us to fulfill all righteousness. ..." (Matthew 3:15). Thereupon John baptized Him.

The gospel writer gives us an account of what happened when the Lord Jesus Christ was baptized. "And Jesus when he was baptized, went up straightway out of the water: and, lo the heavens were opened unto him, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove, and lighting upon him: And lo a voice from heaven, saying, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased" (Matthew 3:16-17).

This incident was witnessed by John himself. He said, "... I saw the Spirit descending from heaven like a dove, and it abode upon him" (John 1:32). John had been told by God Himself that this will be a sign that He is the Son of God.

The day after the baptism of Jesus in the river Jordan by John the Baptist

and John's witness to the fact that Jesus is the promised Messiah, he saw Jesus passing by. At that time with John were two of his disciples. One of whom was Andrew. Pointing to Jesus, John told his disciples, "... Behold the Lamb of God!" (John 1:36). Thereupon the two followed Jesus and became His disciples.

Christ Identified As Incarnated God

Let us note again some very pertinent facts highlighted in this incident.

1. John the Baptist's message was precisely the same message that Isaiah predicted would be the one that will be given before the advent of the Messiah. Isaiah said the message will be: "... Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make straight in the desert a highway for our God" (Isaiah 40:3). John the Baptist preached, "Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make his paths straight" (Matthew 3:3).

2. Isaiah predicted that this message will be primarily preached in the wilderness of Palestine. "The voice of him that crieth in the wilderness. ..." (Isaiah 40:3). The gospel account clearly states: "In those days came John the Baptist, preaching in the wilderness of Judea", (Matt 3:3).

3. John himself declared that he was the "voice" that was prophesied by Isaiah (Isaiah 40:3). The gospel clearly tells us: "... When the Jews sent priests and Levites from Jerusalem to ask him, Who art thou? And he confessed, and denied not; but confessed, I am not the Christ. ... I am the voice of one crying

in the wilderness, make straight the way of the Lord, as said the prophet Esaias" (John 1:19-23).

Further, he considered his work of preaching and baptizing also as a preparation for the coming Messiah.

4. He not only had the conviction that he was that "voice," but he was told by God Himself that this was his role. It was revealed to John that he was that voice.

5. John was convinced that he had come as the forerunner of God who would be incarnated as a man, the Messiah to save mankind, the Christ. When the priests and Levites came to him to find out who he was, he categorically stated, "... I am not the Christ. . . He said, I am the voice of one crying in the wilderness. . . ." (John 1:20, 23).

6. John recognized that Jesus Christ of Nazareth, who came to him to be baptized, was the promised Messiah, the Son of God. He confessed that He was God incarnated and one who existed before His incarnation. John confessed that Jesus Christ was God. He also announced the mission of Christ. He had come to take away the sin of the world, and this was to be by His sacrificial death.

The biblical record is very clear on this point. It says, "The next day John seeth Jesus coming unto him, and saith, Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world" (John 1:29). He is our sin bearer. As a lamb was sacrificed in the sanctuary for the sin of an individual, Christ was God's lamb to bear the sin of

mankind

Again John says, "... After me cometh a man which is preferred before me: for he was before me" (John 1:30). Jesus Christ was six months younger to John the Baptist. Yet John says, "He was before me." It shows that John believed in the pre-existence of Jesus Christ.

John referred to Christ as the Son of God. He says, "And I saw, and bare record that this is the Son of God" (John 1:34).

7. Lastly, John states that he witnessed God declaring Jesus Christ as His Son and in a singular manner recognizing Christ and His pre-eminence. The gospels tell us, "And John bare record, saying, I saw the Spirit descending from heaven like a dove, and it abode upon him" (John 1:32). "And lo a voice from heaven saying, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased" (Matthew 3:17).

We have in this narration not only an accurate fulfillment of a prophecy about Jesus Christ made by Isaiah 700 years before the incident, but also that the one who was the instrument to fulfill the prophecy, John the Baptist, was conscious that he was fulfilling the prophecy about Jesus Christ and further recognized in Jesus Christ the Messiah to come. □

It was a long dusty ride. The ass was trotting at a fast pace and the ride was getting very uncomfortable. "Slack not thy riding," she tells her servant. Time was important. She had to meet the man of God and come back. The man of God sees her coming and sends his servant to inquire: "Is it well with thee? Is it well with thy husband? Is it well with the child? And she answered, it is well." The man of God knew that she would not ride 25 miles unless she really was in need of his help. Then she fell down and caught him by the feet and said, "Did I desire a son of my Lord? Did I not say, Do not deceive me?"

Her son was dead and she would not leave the prophet's feet unless he came back to Shunam with her.

She had been good to the Prophet Elisha and fed him whenever he passed by her

"A Great Woman"

by Edwin Charles



Mother and Dad

*God bless you both for
giving so freely your faith
and your love day by day,
your warm understanding
and words of
encouragement, things I
could never repay*

home. She enjoyed his visits and made him feel at home. One day she said to her husband, "I perceive that this is a holy man of God, which passeth by us continually. Let us make a little chamber, and it shall be, when he cometh to us, that he shall turn in thither."

Elisha was pleased with his comfortable room. He wanted to repay her kindness and hospitality. She didn't need any of the favours that Elisha suggested. "She hath no child

and her husband is old," Gehazi, the prophet's servant suggested.

A son was born as Elisha had prophesied. Years passed. One day he was in the field with his father when he came down with a sunstroke. The servant brought him home to his mother, but at noon he died in her arms. She laid her son on Elisha's bed and hurried to the prophet.

Elisha reached the house and went in and looked at the child. Then he closed the door and prayed. Suddenly the little boy sneezed seven times and opened his eyes.

"Take up thy son," Elisha told her. But she first "fell at his feet, and bowed herself to the ground, and then took up her son, and went out."

The 'great Shunammite woman' (her name is not mentioned) had nothing extraordinary about her, nothing out of the common. But she was not selfish or worldly minded. When she saw Elisha she recognized him as the "man of God." She did not just stop at serving, but provided him with a furnished room. The

spontaneous kindness shown to the 'man of God' was repaid in the blessings that he brought with him to the household. The son born was an unexpected gift of God to the mother. His mother had not sought for him, but God sent her a son as a reward for her kindness to His servant, and in answer to the prophet's prayer.

We don't know why the Lord tested the faith of this mother. Maybe she was beginning to make an idol of her son. Perhaps the Lord also wanted to teach her that the child was his and it was only the Lord that she should worship.

We see her strong faith unmoved by this experience. Instead of falling into despair she acts; she puts her faith to work. She believes in the power of God to rescue her son. It was a mother's prayer and faith that kept men like St. Augustine, John Newton and Robert Moffatt from departing from the faith and rescuing them from a life of wild abandon.

"It is impossible to estimate

the power of a praying mother's influence. She acknowledges God in all her ways. She takes her children before the throne of grace and presents them to Jesus, pleading for His blessing upon them," *The Adventist Home*, p 266.

It was the Shunammite woman's kindness, good will, sympathy and faith that drew the Man of God to her home. It was for these same qualities that the Lord rewarded her with a son. These are the very same qualities that will draw mothers and their children to the throne of God.

Mother's Day is celebrated around the world to thank our mothers for all they have done for us throughout the past year. But this day should also be a day in which mothers should "surrender herself and her children to the care of the compassionate Redeemer. . .so that she will receive power to perform her part earnestly, patiently and courageously." □

**Mother's Day
is celebrated
around the
world to
thank our
mothers for
all they have
done for us
throughout
the past year.**

A Day Of Rest

by Kenneth J Holland

"There are some things we do not believe unless we understand them. There are other things we do not understand unless we believe them."

Augustine, the great churchman, may not have had the sabbath in mind when he penned this truth, but the mysterious beauty of God's holy day is understandable only to those who believe what God has said about the sabbath and have put Him to the test. There are joys unspeakable for those who come to worship Him on His day. Here is God's clear statement:

"Remember the sabbath day, to keep it holy. Six days shalt thou labour, and do all thy work: but the seventh day is the sabbath of the Lord thy God" in it thou shalt not do any work, thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, nor thy man servant, nor thy maid servant, nor thy cattle, nor thy stranger that is within thy gates: for in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day: Wherefore the Lord blessed the sabbath day, and hallowed it." Exodus 20:8-11.

Even since I first kept the seventh-day sabbath several



years ago, I have sensed its awesome, heavenly qualities. I have a keen sense of anticipation as the Sabbath begins at sundown Friday. The holy atmosphere continues throughout the Sabbath hours. And then understandable an aura of sadness descends upon me like a blanket as the spirit of the work week begins to crowd out the Sabbath joys after sundown on Saturday night.

It is said that religion is an art, not a science. The Sabbath affords an entire day to explore the wonders of God, to be an artist of sorts in spiritual things. Imagine an entire day each week given to oneness with the Person Jesus Christ! It is a day for the young and the old people, for the poor and the wealthy, for the unschooled and the educated, for the weak and the strong. A single

Sabbath can bring man to spiritual heights never thought possible. It is always gratifying, restful, inspiring, and exciting. It satisfies the soul with seemingly inexhaustible supplies of grace. And during the weekdays there is always that same anticipation of the Sabbath. The poet **Samuel Taylor Coleridge** puts it, "I feel as if God had, by giving the Sabbath, given fifty-two Springs every year."

We can hardly exalt the Sabbath enough. It is the climax, not only of the week, but of living itself! Abraham Heschel, a great Jewish philosopher, says, "To the biblical mind . . . labour is the means toward an end, and the Sabbath as a day of rest, as a day of abstaining from toil, is not for the purpose of recovering one's lost strength and becoming fit for the forthcoming labour. The Sabbath is a day for the sake of life. Man is not a beast of burden, and the Sabbath is not for the purpose of enhancing the efficiency of work. 'Last in

creation, first in intention,' the Sabbath is 'the end of the creation of heaven and earth,'"
"--From *The Sabbath, Its Meaning for Modern Man*, p.14.

Some sabbaths, of course, are more memorable than others. But always during the week there is the intriguing question, what treasure will God have for me this time? It may turn out to be a gem from the sermon, a blessed conversation with a fellow believer, a heightened realization of His presence. But none of this is possible or understandable unless we believe what God says about His sabbath, unless we take Him at His word.

Why do men not believe the Sabbath promises? Has God spoken for naught. But then, God has chosen the simple things to confound the might. Herman Wouk, in his Book *This Is My God*, has this to say about the Sabbath:

"I have come home. It has been a startling change, very like a brief return from the wars. My wife and my boys,

**"I feel as if
God had, by
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Springs"**

whose existence I have almost forgotten . . . are waiting for me, gay, dressed in holiday clothes, and looking to me marvelously attractive. . . . The boys are at home . . . and they like it. They like even more the assured presence of their parents. . . . It is their day.

"It is my day, too. The telephone is silent. I can think, read, study, walk, or do nothing. It is an oasis of quiet. . . . My producer one Saturday night said to me, "I don't envy you your religion, but I envy you your Sabbath."

Think of it! Here is a day dedicated wholly to communion with God. He it is who can teach you more in one moment by His Holy Spirit than you could learn in years from the great men of the earth. Heschel puts it: "Six days a week we wrestle with the world, wringing profit from the earth; on the Sabbath we especially care for the seed of eternity planted in the soul.

Here is a day with no television, no radio, no newspapers, no business with the stores. All secular pursuits are put aside. The mind is at

peace. The whole being seeks oneness with Christ. Gone are the tensions, forgotten the pressures of everyday life. The world is shut out, and for twenty-four hours a bit of heaven descends. This is what God has intended for all men.

"How should we weigh the difference between the Sabbath and the other days of the week?" asks Heschel. "When a day like Wednesday arrives the hours are blank, and unless we lend significance to them, they remain without character. The hours of the seventh day are significant in themselves; their significance and beauty do not depend on any work, profit or progress we may achieve. They have the beauty of grandeur.

The Sabbath is Jesus' master work. The hand that sustains the world is space, the hand that holds in their orderly arrangement and tireless activity all things throughout the universe of God, the hand that gave all mankind the holy Sabbath, is the hand that was nailed to the cross for us. The Sabbath is Christ's day, His beautiful day.



Wings Of Faith

Soar Above Fear

by Edwin Dass

contact with him. People come to life when touched by his faith. The man of God is an eternal optimist whose faith soars above fear and negative thinking.

Faith is more than a blind "head in the sand" hope that things will turn out all right, that God will somehow save us. Through faith our experience is transformed and heightened to levels unthought of.

Faith is a force that sets us free from life's bondage. It is a miraculous ingredient that insures success and pushes aside failure in our lives. Either live in faith or go down in dismay.

If you fill your mind with pessimistic thoughts, your life will unfold according to them. You think yourself out, so to speak, but only your faith can tell you in which direction to go. Too often we establish our life patterns by creating and

How does one measure the success of spiritual living? Is it through the reaction of those who come in contact with us or is there another criterion? How can one be sure that the spiritual image one perceives to be projecting is the image seen by fellow human being? How does one's self-esteem tie into life's complexities? I think answers to many of these questions lie in ones personal faith in God which influences our attitude towards life.

If by their deeds ye shall know them, then by your faith you shall lead them. The man of faith uplifts those who come in

developing an intricate system of negative thinking, and in order to become a mentally "born again" person, we will have to abandon the "old man" that is within us. To seize the new, you must let go of the old. Walk away from negative living and begin to live by faith.

No force, no emotion, and no desperation is more paralyzing than fear or anxiety and none is more destructive than the fear of failure. Some of us have lived all our lives with it. We have bound our minds with the habits of skepticism and suspicion. We believe that it is prudent to be cautious, but by the same token we addict ourselves to a deeply rooted and pessimistic mental attitude.

Dr Stanely Jones once said "I see that I am inwardly fashioned for faith and not for fear. I am so made that worry and anxiety are sand in the machine of life; faith is oil."

Throw out the "old man" by throwing off fear. Compulsive fear is according to habit, and not accorded by God. We plant and nurture the seeds of fear

and pessimism by our own volition.

With God's help, we can gradually evolve a positive attitude in life. A life of skepticism, cynicism, and trepidation can be made to vanish through cultivating an implicit faith in God. Fear of living must be replaced by faith and faithful living. Faith then becomes a means of union with the Lord of life and enables us to turn negative existence into positive living.

When Jesus is taken into confidence for every experience of life, powerful channels of communication are opened up, and faith replaces fear with a refurbished approach to life.

Paul says: "For God did not give us a spirit of timidity but a spirit of power, of love and of self-discipline" (2 Tim. 11:7). The Lord of Life confirms the promise: "Have not I commanded thee? Be strong and of good courage; be not affrighted, neither be thou dismayed; for Jehovah thy God is with thee whither soever thou go" (Joshua 1:9).



Atmosphere Of The Home

by *Ellen G White*

Home Is the Heart of all Activity

Society is composed of families, and is what the heads of families make it. Out of the heart are "the issues of life"; and the heart of the community, of the church, and of the nation is the household. The well-being of society, the success of the church, the prosperity of the nation, depend upon home influences.

The elevation or deterioration of the future of

society will be determined by the manners and morals of the youth growing up around us. As the youth are educated, and as their characters are molded in their childhood to virtuous habits, self-control, and temperance, so will their influence be upon society. If they are left unenlightened and uncontrolled, and as a result become self-willed, intemperate in appetite and passion, so will their future influence be in molding society. The company which the young now keep, the habits they now form, and the principles they now adopt are the index to the state of society for years to come.

The Sweetest Type of Heaven

Home should be made all that the word implies. It should be a little haven upon earth, a place where the affections are cultivated instead of being



studiously repressed. Our happiness depend upon this cultivation of love, sympathy, and true courtesy to one another.

The sweetest type of heaven is a home where the Spirit of the Lord resides. If the will of God is fulfilled, the husband and wife will respect each other and cultivate love and confidence.

Importance of the Home Atmosphere

The atmosphere surrounding the souls of fathers and mothers fills the whole house, and is felt in every department of the home.

To a large extent parents create the atmosphere of the home circle, and when there is disagreement between father and mother, the children partake of the same spirit. Make your home atmosphere fragrant with tender thoughtfulness. If you would be saint in heaven, you first be a saint on earth. The traits of character you cherish in life will not be changed by death or by the resurrection. You will come up from the grave with the same disposition you manifested in your home and in the society. The work of transformation must be done now. Our daily lives are determining our destiny.

Creating a Pure Atmosphere

Every home should have rules; and parents should, in their words and deportment toward each other, give to the children a precious, living example of what they desire them to be. Purity in speech and true courtesy should be constantly practiced. Teach the children and youth to respect themselves, to be true to God, true to principle; teach them to respect and obey the laws of God. These principles will control their lives and will be carried out in their associations with others.

Children who receive this kind of instruction will . . . be prepared to fill places of responsibility and, by precept and example, will be constantly aiding others to do right. Those whose moral sensibilities have not been glunted will appreciate right principles; they will put a just estimate upon their natural endowments and will make the

best use of their physical, mental, and moral powers.

Much depends on the father and mother. They are to be firm and kind in their discipline, and they are to work most earnestly to have an orderly, correct household, that the heavenly angels may be attracted to it to impart peace and a fragrant influence.

The family tie is the closest, the most tender and sacred, of any on earth.

Make Home Bright and Happy

Never forget that you are to make the home bright and happy for yourselves and your children.

Troubles may invade, but these are the lot of humanity. Let patience, gratitude, and love keep sunshine in the heart though the day may be ever so cloudy.

The home may be plain, but it can always be a place where cheerful words are spoken and kindly deeds are done, where courtesy and love are abiding guests.

Administer the rules of the home in wisdom and love not

with a rod of iron. Children will respond with willing obedience to the rule of love. Commend your children whenever you can. Make their lives as happy as possible. . . . Keep the soil of the heart mellow by the manifestation of love and affection.

You must not have strife in your household. "But the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, and easy to be intreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality, and without hypocrisy. And the fruit of righteousness is sown in peace of them that make peace." It is gentleness and peace that we want in our homes.

Tender Ties That Bind

The family tie is the closest, the most tender and sacred, of any on earth. It was designed to be a blessing to mankind. And it is a blessing wherever the marriage covenant is entered into intelligently, in the fear of God, and with due consideration for its responsibilities.

Every home should be a

place of love, a place where the angels of God abide, working with softening, subduing influence upon the hearts of parents and children.

God's Presence Makes a Home

The home that is beautified by love, sympathy, and tenderness, and where God is glorified. The influence of a carefully guarded home in the years of childhood and youth is the surest safeguard against the corruptions of the world. In the atmosphere of such a home the children will learn to love both their earthly parents and their heavenly Father.

Every family should illustrate to the world the power and excellence of their influence. . . . Parents should realize their accountability to keep their homes free from every taint of moral evil.

The family relationship should be sanctifying in its influence. Parents and children should unite in offering loving service to Him who alone can keep human love pure and noble.



The Man With A Warm Heart



When *World War II* ended, Henry Gerecke, a middle-aged US Army Chaplain, was appointed spiritual advisor to 15 of Adolf Hitler's top men—the Nazi criminals of the

famed Nuremberg, Germany, War Trials.

Chaplain Gerecke was asked to sacrifice his personal considerations to minister to some of the most hated and feared men in the world, men responsible for the murder of 6 million Jews in concentration camps, men like Hermann Goering, Joachim von Ribbentrop, Wilhelm Keitel, Rudolf Hess, and Karl Doenitz.

When the proposition first came to him that he become the chaplain to the indicted Nazis, Gerecke was shaken and perplexed. *Searching his heart and mind, he wrestled within himself for an answer.* "How can a humble preacher, a one-time farm boy, make any impression on the disciples of Adolph Hitler? he asked himself.

Now that the war was over, he looked forward to returning to America after years of separation from his wife and family. "I had plenty of reason for bitterness toward these men," Gerecke reflected later. "I had been at the concentration camp in Daccau, where my hand had been smeared with human blood seeping through a wall. My

oldest son, although he survived the fighting, had been literally ripped apart.

"But slowly the men in prison at Nuremberg came to me—not war criminals—but simply lost souls whom I was being asked to help. I determined as never before to hate the sin, but love the sinner."

Gerecke made up his mind that by the grace of God he would bring the gospel of Jesus Christ to these hated and feared men. *In the aftermath of the war, the world might have written off these Nazi leaders as hopeless, but he knew that through the cross forgiveness is possible for anyone.*

One by one, those of Gerecke's men who were sentenced to death were led to the gallows. Some remained hard to the end. *But seven had received Christ as their personal Saviour.*

Henry Gerecke died in 1961. He was a man who simply and boldly put into practice the love of God for sinners. Perhaps Nazi Albert Speer described him best when he said, *"Chaplain Gerecke was a man with a warm heart. He cared!"*



Better Health

Stroke

by Allan R Magie, PhD, MPH

The brain is a glutton. It demands one-fifth of the blood the heart pumps. But it also starves quickly. If its supply of blood is reduced for any reason, permanent damage can occur within five minutes. That's what happens when a stroke occurs—a sudden interruption in the blood flow to the brain and subsequent brain damage. Four out of five victims will survive the first stroke with only partial brain damage and handicaps of varying degrees. But strokes account for one of every five deaths from cardiovascular disease. About 80 per cent of these occur in people over 65 years of age.

The symptoms of stroke can develop within minutes. The victim usually loses consciousness and collapses. The face may be flushed. Vomiting or convulsions may follow. Often the damage is on one side of the brain, so it affects only one side of the body. The pupil in one eye may appear larger than the other. The muscles may be weakened on one side of the body. The mouth may be pulled to one

side. Immediate medical attention is important.

Recovery is slow and tedious and often involves a programme of muscle therapy. Exercise may help a person regain some of the functions that were affected by the stroke. Many have to learn how to walk again. Though it takes time and patience, the effort often means being able to resume former responsibilities.

The tragedy of stroke is that though it strikes suddenly, the weakened health condition which leads to it is one that develops slowly and usually preventable. The cause of stroke is often traceable to lifestyle—lack of exercise, high stress, or a diet high in fats, particularly hard or animal fats.

If a person has arteriosclerosis, a floating piece of blood clot can lodge in one of the narrow arteries in the brain. Sometimes, because of high blood pressure, a brain artery may rupture at a weak point, causing blood to flow into the brain tissue and cutting off the supply of blood to other areas of the brain.

Developing a lifestyle that includes attention to health habits will pay off in the long run. Reducing the chances of becoming a stroke victim is just one of the benefits you'll receive. □

FAIR PLAY

Turn to the sports page of any newspaper and inevitably you find the news of a tennis player suspended for abusing the referee ("Patrick McEnroe abuses umpire"); a footballer reprimanded for fisting an opponent; or an athlete barred for life from competitive sports for having taken drugs. Fair play is so much at a premium that in tournaments it is common to award a trophy for 'fair play.'

Fair play and rules are not confined to sports alone. In industry, business and marriage, the game must be played according to the rules, with no exception. The professional sportsman who breaks the rules is disqualified.

Tell a little child not to do a certain thing and his first impulse is to do it. This is not confined to children alone but also to grown-ups. Some people just hate to submit to rules or regulations. "Why should I do it?" or "I will do it if I please!"

"None of us liveth to himself" (Romans 14:7), said Paul. Yet, some of us get lost in our own desires and pleasures that we forget the existence of the person next to us. Rules in the society have been made for us to live as good neighbours. We have to recognise the existence of our neighbour and his right to a happy and peaceful life as we have. When he lives by the laws of the country and you also abide by them, you will have a happy neighbourhood.

Black marketing and hoarding are so common in business that people have come to accept it; disloyalty in

marriage is not only accepted but also a way of life in many countries; sexual promiscuity is so prevalent among the youth that it is accepted as the 'in thing'. But wherever rules are violated or laws broken the penalty has to be paid. And very often it is very severe. Disloyalty in marriage ends up in broken homes and divorces. Often it is the destitute children who suffer the most. Venereal diseases have now reached epidemic proportions. Here again it is the innocent, unborn child who pays the price.

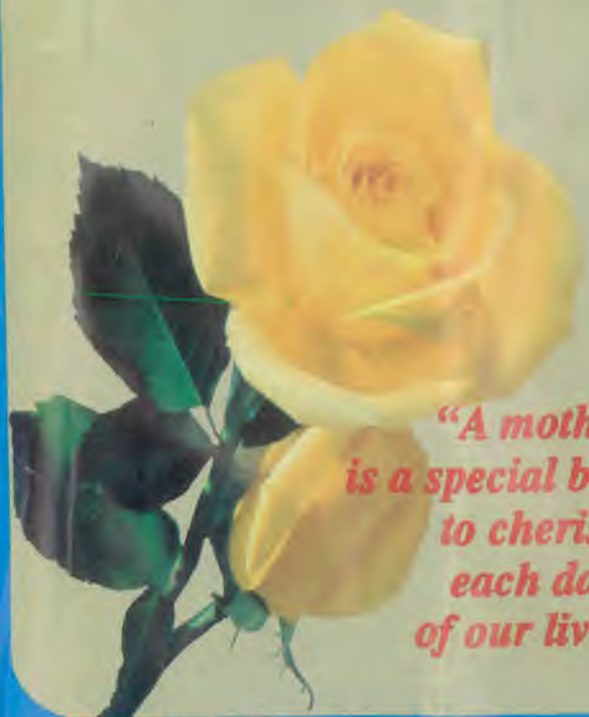
God has given us His Ten Commandments in which He has spelled out all the rules for a clean and pure life. It would do us good if we heed these rules, especially those pertaining to purity as indicated in the seventh and tenth commandments.

Our life on this earth is hazardous, and it requires a lot of courage, self-discipline and hard work to make it successful. But with the help of God we can have victory over sin and enjoy the fruits of our labour. We should form the habit of letting God rule our lives and allow His purposes to be fulfilled in our lives.

It may be difficult to play the game according to the rules, but in the Christian life, true freedom only comes in submitting our will to the will of our Heavenly Father. "No athlete can win a prize unless he has kept the rules," (2 Timothy 2:5, NEB). Let us find God's rules for our lives and live and play according to them.

—Edwin Charles

**God
Bless you,
Mother**



***“A mother
is a special blessing
to cherish
each day
of our lives.”***