

# Review

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# The Dynamics of Christian Living

Readings for  
THE WEEK OF PRAYER  
November 4-11

Theme of the Week—

# The Dynamics of Christian Living

THE 1972 Week of Prayer brings a new opportunity for the family of Adventist believers around the world to petition God for the spiritual power so greatly needed in order to live as Jesus has taught us to live. The sin that surrounds us is dense and foreboding, but light from Heaven dispels the darkness and illuminates our pathway to eternity.

Our thoughts will be directed this week to the "Dynamics of Christian Living." It is a theme that is most appropriate for our days, when so many counter forces are in operation, which seek to neutralize our fellowship with God. Those who have prepared these messages have endeavored to emphasize the experiences we need in order to survive spiritually in a world that is sin-oriented. In the articles that have been prepared, you will find Christ presented as our example, our inspiration, and our helper in making practical the "Dynamics of Christian Living."

These messages have been prepared specifically with you in mind. Ask God to give you the spiritual dynamics that you need to overcome weaknesses in your character. Salvation is a personal decision. Christ came to save *you*, not just your family or your church, but *you*. This is why we are inviting you to avail yourself of the advantages that this week can bring to you in helping you to live victoriously each day.

As twentieth-century Seventh-day Adventists, young and old, it is our privilege to live as vigorous Christians. This means to be dynamic in love, faith, prayer, study of the Word, witnessing, stewardship, and worship, through the dynamic influence of the Holy Spirit so that our lives can be "living sacrifice[s], holy, acceptable unto God," "not conformed to this world, but . . . transformed" (Rom. 12:1, 2).

"When the apostle appeals to his brethren to present their bodies 'a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God,' he sets forth the principles of true sanctification. It is not merely a theory, an emotion, or a form of words, but a living, active principle, entering into the everyday life. It requires that our habits of eating, drinking, and dressing be such as to secure the preservation of physical, mental, and moral health."—*The Sanctified Life*, pp. 27, 28.

Sanctified living on our part will assure us a place in the revival and the reformation that will precede our Lord's return.

We pray that that event may come soon, and that this Week of Prayer will bring to your heart an experience that will help to prepare you for it.

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## DEVOTIONAL MESSAGES FOR THE WEEK OF PRAYER

*To Be Read in All Seventh-day Adventist Churches, November 4 to 11, 1972*

# The Source of Spiritual Power

By ROBERT H. PIERSON



THE Saviour's parting words to His disciples as He was about to ascend were, "Tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem."<sup>1</sup> They were instructed to remain there until something wonderful happened—they were to receive special "power from on high."

Looking into the future, Jesus knew well the tests, the trials, the temptations that would be the lot of those who would follow Him in the dramatic days ahead. He had commissioned them as heralds of an unpopular message, but one that would offer salvation to men everywhere. The Master understood clearly the frailty of the men He had called to live His life and to preach His truth.

Christ knew that human arguments were insufficient to turn hardened sinners to a loving Saviour. He Himself had met the master foe and at first hand had experienced the cunning deceit and nagging perseverance of the evil one.

Knowing that His disciples needed help to fulfill their commission and needed it desperately, Jesus instructed them to go to Jerusalem and stay there until the needed help was received. They were to "tarry"—not to engage in intensive evangelism—until first they had received "power from on high."

In Christ's instructions to His disciples 2,000 years ago is a lesson for God's people who tarry on the threshold of the eternal world. The power of the Holy Spirit in our day is as much a requisite for effective evangelism as it was in theirs. This power is not a mere spiritual luxury; it is the divine prerequisite for success. It is not something we can take or leave and still adequately perform our task. It is an absolute necessity. With the disciples it was either Pentecost or failure. For the remnant church militant it is also Pentecost or failure, except that now we await the latter rain.

The outpouring of the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost was the former rain. The latter rain is to come with more abundant power to prepare God's people to finish the work.

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The figures of the early and latter rains apply also to personal experiences. The desire for a better life born in the human heart is the work of the Holy Spirit. The prodigal son experienced this conviction of need for something better. Far from home, amid the hogs, the husks, and the hunger, a voice whispered to his heart. It spoke of a home, a happiness, a security far removed from his present plight. A deep longing for something better flooded his soul. Then, the Word records, "He came to himself."

The voice of the Holy Spirit prompted the prodigal to take his first step toward home. "I will arise and go to my father." A decision was made, a step taken—a step that led to glorious reconciliation and full restoration.

What the Holy Spirit did for the wandering youth described in the parable He does for young men, young women, boys, girls, and adults today. He is still the agency of conviction, reconciliation, and repentance. "When he is come," Jesus promised, "he will reprove [or convict] the world of sin."<sup>2</sup>

## More Than Convict

The third member of the Godhead does more than convict the overt sinner of his transgressions and remind the halting saint of his failings. He also lifts up Jesus as their hope for pardon and restoration. "He shall glorify me," Jesus declared. "It is through the Spirit that Christ dwells in us; and the Spirit of God, received into the heart by faith, is the beginning of the life eternal."<sup>3</sup> "The Lord Jesus acts through the Holy Spirit; for it is His representative. Through it He infuses spiritual life into the soul, quickening its energies for good, cleansing it from moral defilement, and giving it a fitness for His kingdom."<sup>4</sup>

The conviction of the Holy Spirit and a revelation of the righteousness of God lead man to confess his unworthiness and ask for help. Ezra, the prophet, confessed, "O my God, I am ashamed and blush to lift up my face to thee, my God: for our iniquities are increased over our head, and our trespass is grown up unto the heavens."<sup>5</sup> Isaiah cried out, "Woe is me! for I am undone; because I am a man of unclean

lips."<sup>6</sup> On the day of Pentecost those who listened to Peter's Spirit-filled sermon asked in deep conviction, "Men and brethren, what shall we do?"

The Holy Spirit still impresses us to confess our sins to God and our "faults one to another." We must be right with God and with our fellow men. If we seem to be on better terms with the angels than with our neighbors or members of our own family, something may be amiss with our religion. Perhaps the Holy Spirit still has a work to do for us and in us.

Just as the Holy Spirit is the God-given agency to bring us to Christ, just as He is the agency that works the transformation experience of the new birth in our lives, so He supplies requisite power for us to live the life of victory over sin and the world. He enables us to grow into full spiritual maturity.

Hope and help are ours! Christ provides them for us! "He came to destroy the works of the devil, and He has made provision that the Holy Spirit shall be imparted to every repentant soul, to keep him from sinning."<sup>7</sup> "Our only security against falling into sin is to keep ourselves continually under the molding influence of the Holy Spirit."<sup>8</sup> This influence of the Holy Spirit enables us "to form characters that are a reflection of the divine character."<sup>9</sup>

When the Holy Spirit comes into our hearts, the fruits of the Spirit begin to adorn our lives. "Love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance,"<sup>10</sup> form a part of our new life-style. Those with whom we come into contact realize that a change has taken place in our lives. Even the members of our immediate families will recognize that something wonderful has happened to us.

"We need to be sanctified by the Holy Spirit every hour of the day, lest we be ensnared by the enemy, and our souls be imperiled."<sup>11</sup>

## The Spirit and Our Prayer Life

The Holy Spirit plays an important role in our prayer life. This role is of vital importance in order for us to achieve the spiritual maturity for which we long and which God desires for us. "The Holy Spirit helps us with our daily problems and in our praying. For we don't even know what we should pray for, nor how to pray as we should; but the Holy Spirit prays for us with such feeling that it cannot be expressed in words. And the Father who knows all hearts knows, of course, what the Spirit is saying as he pleads for us in harmony with God's own will."<sup>12</sup>

Probably there have been times when you were fatigued, when your spirits were low, when perhaps a trace of rebellion rankled in your heart. You didn't feel like praying. Perhaps,

through a sense of duty, you threw yourself upon your knees and tried to pray. There, prostrate before the Lord, your struggles strangely ceased. A sweet peace came over you. You found yourself at one with your Maker. This was the work of the Holy Spirit preparing you to talk with God.

Then, as the halting, stumbling words left your lips, the Holy Spirit transformed them into the language of heaven. Thus the Spirit "helps us with our daily problems and in our praying." What a precious experience—the dynamic Spirit of God at work in our lives!

### The Spirit and Faith

As a young Christian one of my greatest problems was to be certain that God truly had forgiven my sins. My lurid mistakes of yesteryear constantly infringed upon my peace of mind. Then one day my saintly Bible teacher read to me these inspired words: "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.*"<sup>13</sup>

I needed faith. I needed to believe that God would do what He promised. When I accepted His word I found peace.

How may you and I increase our faith? Paul explains: "Faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God."<sup>14</sup> As we hear God's promises in His Word and claim them as our own, as we behold the unfolding fulfillment of the prophecies of His Word, the seeds of faith are sown. It is the work of the Holy Spirit to nurture those seeds and to bring them to full fruition. "No man can create faith. The Spirit operating upon and enlightening the human mind, creates faith in God."<sup>15</sup> Faith is the fruit of the workings of the Holy Spirit.

### The Spirit and the Word

If repentance, revival, and reformation come to the church, as I believe they will, they will come largely because we will turn to the Word of God as never before. "Back to the Word" must be our slogan in this day of modernism and unbelief. We must be a people of the Book!

The Word of God is the product of the Holy Spirit's guidance. "Holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost."<sup>16</sup> Today, if we are to reap the rich benefits from the Bible's precious pages, we need the guidance of the same Spirit that indited the written Word.

"Never should the Bible be studied without prayer. Before opening its pages we should ask for the enlightenment of the Holy Spirit, and it will be given."<sup>17</sup>

The pioneers of the Advent Movement were men and women of the Word. They were men and women of prayer. When in their search for truth, they came to portions of Scripture they could not understand, they spent long periods of time on their knees crying out for guidance from the Holy Spirit. Over and over they claimed Christ's promise, "When he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth."<sup>18</sup> Today we rejoice in the harmonious truth of the Advent message because those men and women pleaded with God for the guidance of the Spirit as they searched for truth in the Word. You and I still need the same power from on high to direct our minds as we delve deeply into God's treasure chest of truth.

### Inspired by the Spirit to Witness

We receive to give. If we have found peace and joy in Christ we will feel a burden to help others enter into this same experience. What God in His love and mercy has imparted to us we are to share with those around us.

In addition to the message of salvation from sin and guilt, God has unfolded to this people the prophetic portion of His Word. Through our understanding of these prophecies we recognize in the fast-moving events about us the nearness of the end—the coming of Jesus. We dare not hoard these truths and fail to share them with those about us. But our witness will be fruitless except the Holy Spirit goes with us. "Without the Spirit and power of God it will be in vain that we labor to present the truth."<sup>19</sup>

In our witnessing the dynamics of the Holy Spirit spring into action. For this desire to share comes from Him. The same Spirit that bids us "Come" also bids us "Go"! As true Christians

we must respond to the divine imperative and go!

"Christ, in His mediatorial capacity, gives to His servants the presence of the Holy Spirit. It is the efficiency of the Spirit that enables human agencies to be representatives of the Redeemer in the work of soul saving. That we may unite with Christ in this work we should place ourselves under the molding influence of His Spirit."<sup>20</sup>

Do you want to see the work finished? Do you want to see Jesus come soon? Then, friend of mine, you must prepare yourself to receive His Spirit. Only the dynamic influence of this power from on high in your life and in the life of every professing child of God around the world will generate spiritual power sufficient to accomplish the task God has assigned us. It is, as we noted in the beginning, either Pentecost or failure!

### Not Called to Failure

The outcome will not be failure! God has not called this movement to failure. He has called it to success in our day! But it cannot be a worldwide success until it is a personal success in the individual life—in your heart and mine. Our lives must be the abiding place of the Holy Spirit. Only then can God use us as He must and as He desires.

It is my earnest longing that during this Week of Prayer God may come very close to His people by His Spirit. It is my desire that the Spirit may bring repentance to Israel, that He may stir the fires of revival into a glorious reformation that will generate the power for a finished work in the near, very near, future.

Brother, sister of mine, will you not respond to this earnest appeal? Will you not just now open your heart and invite Jesus to come in in all of His fullness and cleanse you from sin? Will you not join your brothers and sisters around the world in praying that God will flood the regenerated lives of all of us with His Holy Spirit and prepare us *now* for His Son's soon return? ♦♦

## The Dynamics of Christian Living

<sup>1</sup> Luke 24:49.

<sup>2</sup> John 16:8.

<sup>3</sup> *The Desire of Ages*, p. 388.

<sup>4</sup> *Messages to Young People*, p. 55.

<sup>5</sup> Ezra 9:6.

<sup>6</sup> Isa. 6:5.

<sup>7</sup> *The Desire of Ages*, p. 311.

<sup>8</sup> *Counsels on Health*, p. 594.

<sup>9</sup> *Testimonies*, vol. 8, p. 86.

<sup>10</sup> Gal. 5:22, 23.

<sup>11</sup> *Testimonies to Ministers*, p. 223.

<sup>12</sup> Rom. 8:26, 27, Taylor.

<sup>13</sup> *Steps to Christ*, pp. 49, 50.

<sup>14</sup> Rom. 10:17.

<sup>15</sup> *The SDA Bible Commentary*, Ellen G. White

Comments, on 1 Peter 1:22, p. 940.

<sup>16</sup> 2 Peter 1:21.

<sup>17</sup> *Steps to Christ*, p. 91.

<sup>18</sup> John 16:13.

<sup>19</sup> *Testimonies*, vol. 5, p. 158.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*, vol. 7, p. 30.

# Love, the Great Dynamic

By M. E. LIND



**W**HEN the apostle Paul said, "But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us" (Rom. 5:8), he placed before us love in action. God's commendation of Himself and of His love to poor man is not mere words. It is not eloquent oration. He commended His love toward us by an act, by a *deed*. Yes, by a surprising deed, one which in eternity itself we shall scarce understand fully. He commended His love toward us, in that "while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us."

When sinful man rebelled against his Maker it was necessary that God should punish the sin. God had stated, "In the day that thou eatest thereof [the tree of the knowledge of good and evil] thou shalt surely die" (Gen. 2:17). He could not swerve from what He had said. The only possible way man could escape the penalty was for someone to suffer and to pay the penalty for him. Who should it be?

We can imagine that there must have been a solemn silence among the angelic host as they began to realize the awfulness of sin. But it is difficult to believe that any of the angels would even have dreamed that a member of the Godhead Himself would assume flesh and die for fallen man. But such was the case. And such was the love of the Father that He was willing to let Christ leave heaven and come down to this earth to commend Himself to fallen man.

In becoming man, Christ stripped Himself of the glories of divinity to become an infant, laid in a manger in Bethlehem, for you and me. The servant of the Lord says: "God's love for the fallen race is a peculiar manifestation of love—a love born of mercy, for human beings are all undeserving. Mercy implies imperfection of the object toward which it is shown. It is because of sin that mercy was brought into active exercise."—*Testimonies*, vol. 7, p. 264. We did not deserve such love, such mercy. We can only marvel at it.

Since the time Adam hid himself in

the Garden of Eden after his fall, God has searched for sinners. It was His love that found rebellious Jonah in the depths of the sea and caused him to repent. It was God's love that found a persecuting Saul on his way to Damascus and changed him into a great ambassador for Christ. It was the same love that wrought a miracle in the lives of James and John, those turbulent youth so full of self-esteem. It was God's love that found David when he had descended into the pit of sin and brought him to full repentance, placing his feet upon the rock. This same love expressed on Calvary is God's convincing argument with sinful man. It confronted the thief on the cross and brought him eternal life and salvation. Jesus stated: "For the Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost" (Luke 19:10).

## Why Should God Love Us?

Humanly speaking, there is no logical reason why God should love you and me. Sinful man has nothing to commend him to God. Man's so-called righteousness or goodness is at best like a filthy garment. There is nothing to boast of; nothing that we might exhibit in the midst of the heavenly congregation. Why then should God love man?

We see in the story of Mephibosheth and David, as told in 2 Samuel, chapter nine, an incident that helps us to find an answer to the question.

Mephibosheth was a cripple. He had been so since he was about five years of age when, during flight at the news of his father's death in battle, he had fallen from his nurse's arms. Ever since that time Mephibosheth had been dependent upon others. He could do practically nothing for himself, for he "was lame on his feet" (verse 3). Because of his physical condition he had a low estimation of himself. One day he was summoned to the royal palace by King David, who wished to show him kindness. As he came into the royal presence his infirmities seemed more pronounced to him. He exclaimed, "What is thy servant, that thou shouldest look upon such a dead dog as I am?" But in spite of his protests David insisted that he should eat at the royal table for the rest of his life.

Mephibosheth was no great ornament to the royal table. Yet he had a continual place there. Why? Because David saw in him the features of his beloved friend Jonathan, whom he could never forget. Mephibosheth was Jonathan's son.

Like Mephibosheth, we who are Christians may cry out to God, "Who are we that Thou shouldest look upon us?" Nevertheless, God would have us sit at the heavenly table with Him because He sees in our countenances the reflection of His dearly beloved Jesus. We are dear to Him for another's sake. Such is the Father's love for His only begotten Son, that for His sake He raises us, Christ's lowly brethren, from spiritual poverty and banishment to courtly companionship, to noble rank, to royal provision. The moral deformity of God's people, due to sin, does not rob them of their privileges. Lameness is no bar to sonship. The cripple is as much the heir as if he could run like Cush. Yes, a king's table is a wonderful hiding place for lame legs. In spite of our sinful deformity and our utter unworthiness of God's love, He loves us for Christ's sake. And we accept by faith this wonderful gift of which we are so utterly undeserving.

We are not told whether David ever grew to love Mephibosheth for his own sake. But God loves us for our own sake as well as for Christ's sake. "In this was manifested the love of God toward us, because that God sent his only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through him" (1 John 4:9).

Strangely, God's love is not universally accepted. Had it been, great changes for good would have been witnessed everywhere. Even among those who bear the name of Christian are some whose attitude toward God's love seems to be that it is unreal. Instead of responding warmly to this matchless love, many show indifference that borders on boredom.

## Drawn by Love

But there are others who are drawn to their Saviour by God's love. I think of a certain woman who lived on the slopes of the mighty Ruwenzori Mountains in western Uganda. Meri Kahinju was a widow whom Christ's love had touched and transformed. After her conversion she had only one object in mind: to tell others of God's wonderful love. This she persistently did. She traveled across those mighty mountains with her Bible in her hand. She preached the gospel everywhere she went. She brought hundreds of people to Christ. I was a mission station director at the time, and one day as I was attending a local field committee in Kampala, I persuaded the brethren to engage Meri as a regular worker. They

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all knew of her dedicated life and of the many whom she had brought to a knowledge of Christ. The committee voted unanimously to take her on as a regular worker.

When I returned to the mountains, I stopped by Meri's humble home and told her the glad tidings. But Meri could not see any "glad tidings" in the news. She stood half stunned for a moment or two. Then she spoke: "What have I done that I should not serve my Saviour for nothing?"

Her reply completely dumfounded me. But in spite of my explanation of the committee's intentions, she was adamant. She would not accept any salary for preaching the gospel. She added that perhaps the committee *might* vote her a dress or two each year, so that she would not be ashamed to preach before a crowd of people in clothes that would appear unbecoming. So I had to go back and tell the committee about her reaction.

Later the committee revoked its action, and Meri continues her acts of love for her Master without salary to this day.

Ellen G. White states: "Christ's favorite theme was the paternal character and abundant love of God."—*Testimonies*, vol. 6, p. 55. It has been said, and we repeat it, that *God's last argument with the sinner is the cross*. As you ponder His manifestation of love, at this very moment in our meditation, what is your response to God's love? He wants you for His own. He wants you for time and eternity. The cross of Calvary is His last argument with you. Won't you say: "Lord, I surrender, fully"? If you do, life will take on a new meaning. Death will hold no terror. Your future will be with God.

Stronger than death, higher than the heavens, wider than the ocean, deeper than the universe, God's love is bound to affect you if you will allow it. It is the only power that can fit you for heaven. If you are striving to "be good," you are battling in vain. The enemy knows all the pitfalls. He dug

them. He is acquainted with all the hurdles. He made them.

What must we do then? What *can* we do to prepare for heaven and to meet our God? We have been members of the church for many years, perhaps—and what are our characters like? Have we overcome the weaknesses that were ours when we were baptized? Are our tempers more even, are we more lovable, now than before? Are we more honest in all our dealings now than when we first responded to God's love?

Do you remember the story of the old janitress in the little church who became converted? When asked for evidence of her change of heart she said, "I now take up the big mat at the entrance and sweep under it, whereas before I just swept around it."

#### **Pride, a Dominating Factor**

Are we permitting God's love to make us truly humble, or is pride still a dominant factor in our lives?

"It may be that much work needs to be done in your character building, that you are a rough stone, which must be squared and polished before it can fill a place in God's temple. You need not be surprised if with hammer and chisel God cuts away the sharp corners of your character until you are prepared to fill the place He has for you. No human being can accomplish this work. Only by God can it be done. And be assured that He will not strike one useless blow. *His every blow is struck in love*, for your eternal happiness. He knows your infirmities and works to restore, not to destroy."—*Testimonies*, vol. 7, p. 264. (Italics supplied.)

Only God's love can change your character and mold it for the hereafter. By accepting God's love fully in your life, the preparatory work of fitting your character for heaven will be speeded up.

With all our shortcomings, with all our weaknesses, with so little done and so short a time in which to accomplish all that needs to be done, the enemy of mankind whispers to us suggestions that

too many of us accept: "It is of no use. You can't reach the goal. It is impossible for you to be among all the perfect ones." Do not listen. In Matthew 12:20 the Saviour, quoting the prophet Isaiah, says of the Messiah: "A bruised reed shall he not break, and smoking flax shall he not quench."

What is weaker than the bruised, or crushed, reed? What is more uncertain than a barely burning, fluttering lampwick, ready to go out? Imagine a reed that grows in the marsh as crushed. It is difficult to conceive of anything more frail. It takes but a wild duck to light upon it and it fails. Consider the smoking flax: a breath of wind, a single drop of water, could end its existence.

Jesus used these illustrations to show the tender, hovering, protecting care and love of the Father for all His children. There are many of them who are weak like the bruised reed and smoking flax. True, there are a few mighty men and women of great faith and staunch courage among His flock. We marvel when we read about them. We long to copy them. But so many of us are weak and ready to faint. We forget that they too had needed God's help.

God wants all of His children to be strong in the power of His love, for love is dynamic. "Love is power."—*Testimonies*, vol. 2, p. 135. "For God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind" (2 Tim. 1:7). There is nothing that love cannot face.

As the love of God takes full possession of the heart, it brings greater faith with it. Together these give us strength to overcome our weaknesses and our fears. This love nerves us to defeat the world, the flesh, and the devil. It empowers us to do the Father's will.

Greater love for greater power is the need of the church today. This we may have. With love for God and our fellow men we will be empowered by the Holy Spirit to witness to a loveless world of God's love. And through the dynamics of that witness others will be drawn to Him. ♦♦

## **Extemporaneous**

By ANN CUNNINGHAM BURKE

"Come quietly to the window, Jerry," I called to my six-year-old son. "You can come, too, Sabrina," I said to little sister. The three of us peeked out at a yard full of birds feasting beneath the oak outside our window. There were bright red male cardinals, their near-amber mates, and little gray juncos—all busy with their hopping and pecking.

We stood and watched, each (four years, six years, and thirty plus) with his own pleasure, and one, at least, with his thoughts. It was Jerry who spoke.

"They don't care what color they are," he mused. "They're all just friends, aren't they? They don't hurt one another."

It was short, as sermons go. But I think that, on the brotherhood of man, I have yet to hear a better.



# The Channel of Divine Power

By C. E. BRADFORD



THE apostle Paul is speaking for genuine believers in Christ in all ages when he exclaims, "The life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me" (Gal. 2:20, R.S.V.).

The life of victory that Paul lived in Christ came through the channel of faith in the Son of God. Every gift of God, every blessing, every grace, spiritual life itself, depends on faith. It is saving faith that makes the power of God operative in the experience of the Christian. Faith is a conduit by which the tremendous energies of the Deity—Father, Son, and Holy Spirit—are made available to meet the individual believer's need. Without faith, the more than ample supply of grace would remain a fountain untapped.

"The grace of God comes to the soul through the channel of living faith."—*Early Writings*, p. 72. "Faith is the only condition upon which justification can be obtained."—*Selected Messages*, book 1, p. 389. "Faith . . . connects us closely with Heaven, and brings us strength for coping with the powers of darkness."—*Prophets and Kings*, p. 157.

This is the first lesson that must be learned by every member of the church. In order for the church to be the church—the true body of Christ—its members must live by faith. The church is not the church merely because it has Christ as founder, but because it has Christ as tenant. And if the members of the church are to be living Christians, they must have that vital connection with the Holy Spirit that comes only through faith. To recall another figure, it is through faith that the life of the vine becomes the life of the branches. Thus, by faith Christ takes up residence in His church.

We are instructed by the experience of ancient Israel, for whom the purposes of God were thwarted over and over again because of their lack of faith. The psalmist laments, "How oft did they provoke him in the wilderness, and grieve him in the desert! Yea, they turned back and tempted God, and limited the Holy One of Israel" (Ps. 78:40, 41).

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The writer to the Hebrews refers to this same situation and adds a note of warning: "See to it, brothers, that no one among you has the wicked, faithless heart of a deserter from the living God; but day by day, while that word 'Today' still sounds in your ears, encourage one another, so that no one of you is made stubborn by the wiles of sin. For we have become Christ's partners if only we keep our original confidence firm to the end.

"When Scripture says, 'Today if you hear his voice, do not grow stubborn as in those days of rebellion', who, I ask, were those who heard and rebelled? All those, surely, whom Moses had led out of Egypt. And with whom was God indignant for forty years? With those, surely, who had sinned, whose bodies lay where they fell in the desert. And to whom did he vow that they should not enter into his rest, if not to those who refused to believe? We perceive that it was unbelief which prevented their entering" (Heb. 3:12-19, N.E.B.).

## Lack of Faith Is Sin

Lack of faith, unbelief, is more than an unfortunate state of mind. It is sin. Unbelief nullifies the potential of the promises of God. Unbelief chokes the channel of blessing. The bleached bones of countless Israelites marked the circuitous desert wanderings of God's faithless people and bore mute testimony to the tragedy of the lack of faith. "Without faith it is impossible to please him" (Heb. 11:6).

We shall not profit from Israel's experience unless we make the application to our own present-day situation, for "these things which happened to our ancestors are illustrations of the way in which God works, and they were written down to be a warning to us who are the heirs of the ages which have gone before us" (1 Cor. 10:11, Phillips).

"Many look back to the Israelites, and marvel at their unbelief and murmuring, feeling that they themselves would not have been so ungrateful; but when their faith is tested, even by little trials, they manifest no more faith or patience than did ancient Israel."—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 293.

Seventh-day Adventists have abundant evidence, as did Israel of old, that

God is their Leader. He proposes through His church to demonstrate in an age of skepticism His marvelous power to save. "To those who wait humbly upon God . . . is the Spirit given. The power of God awaits their demand and reception."—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 672. He has placed at our disposal great and precious promises, the infinite gift of the Holy Spirit, and a flood of light so that we might measure up to His expectations.

Do we have the faith to grasp the promises and make them a reality in our lives and in the church? Or are we staggering at the promises because we are unwilling to meet the conditions that assure their fulfillment? This is an unavoidable question for the remnant church.

When Israel failed, it was because, after hearing the challenging word that summoned them to faith, they stubbornly refused to believe. "In them the message they heard did no good, because it met with no faith in those who heard it" (Heb. 4:2, N.E.B.).

The faith that pleases God, the faith that will make the people of God effective and powerful witnesses, is more than "mere intellectual assent to the truth. . . . Saving faith is a transaction by which those who receive Christ join themselves in covenant relation with God."—*Ibid.*, p. 347. It involves a complete renunciation of self and what we ourselves can do, and an absolute day by day dependence on God and what only He can do. Saving faith leads to wholehearted obedience and total commitment.

The story is told that when John G. Paton, the pioneer missionary to the South Sea Islands, was working on his translation of the New Testament into a local dialect, he was unable to find a word or phrase to describe faith. There seemed to be no such concept in the language. He had almost given up in despair when one day one of his islander assistants came in from working in the garden. As he sat down tired from his exertion, he spoke a word that meant, "I am resting my whole weight here." "That is the word I want!" exclaimed Paton. "Faith is resting our whole being on Jesus Christ and His Word."

## Know by Experience

This is the faith that we must know by experience. This is the quality of faith that characterized the early Christians, which made them "more than conquerors." Their faith was experiential, a reality and not a theory.

Ellen White speaks to us individually when she says, "A nominal faith in Christ [faith in name only] . . . can never bring healing to the soul."—*Ibid.* Failure to understand how to exercise

true faith leaves us spiritually weak and a prey to Satan's temptations. Through lack of faith, many have little peace.

But, thanks be to God, this need not be our experience. Nor do we need to be tied to our individual past, our old failures and mistakes. Even now the hand of faith may reach out and grasp the promises; precious promises of forgiveness, justification, sanctification. Through faith, overcoming power is ours to enjoy now. "The victory that defeats the world is our faith" (1 John 5:4, N.E.B.).

### How Faith Is Developed

How does a Christian develop faith? A vital part of the answer to this question is to take God at His word and to study His Word. If we are serious about revival, reformation, and victorious living we must give ourselves wholly to the study of that Word. For "faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God" (Rom. 10:17). We must be willing to spend long hours on our knees with our Bibles open, pleading for the Holy Spirit's guidance into truth and faith. As we grasp more and more of the Word's meaning, as its truth and power fill our hearts and minds, our confidence in God and His ways will increase. We shall look away from our own weak and inefficient selves to the all-sufficient Saviour whose righteousness is ours by faith.

Our times call for a strong faith in God and the Bible. As it was said of Abraham, so it must be said of each of God's children in these final days: "No distrust made him waver concerning the promise of God, but he grew strong in his faith as he gave glory to God, fully convinced that God was able to do what he had promised. That is why his faith was 'reckoned to him as righteousness'" (Rom. 4:20-22, R.S.V.).

When we consider the subject of faith, there often comes to mind the question of works. Throughout the Christian era the pendulum has swung back and forth, sometimes reaching extreme positions, between these two facets of Christian living. At times, and by some people, faith has been taught in such a manner as to downgrade the place of works. At other times, good works have been urged as the important factor, adding merit and status to the believer.

Many years ago, when one of our popular evangelists presented faith in such a manner as to cast aspersions on good works, Ellen White gave him this counsel: "You repeated several times that works amounted to nothing, that there were no conditions. . . . You state this matter too strongly. There are conditions to our receiving justification and sanctification, and the righteousness

of Christ. I know your meaning, but you leave a wrong impression upon many minds. While good works will not save even one soul, yet it is impossible for even one soul to be saved without good works. God saves us under a law, that we must ask if we would receive, seek if we would find, and knock if we would have the door opened unto us."—*Selected Messages*, book 1, p. 377. "But though Christ is everything, we are to inspire every man to unwearied diligence. We are to strive, wrestle, agonize, watch, pray, lest we shall be overcome by the wily foe. For the power and grace with which we can do this comes from God, and all the while we are to trust in Him, who is able to save to the uttermost all who come unto God by Him. Never leave the impression on the mind that there is little or nothing to do on the part of man; but rather teach man to cooperate with God, that he may be successful in overcoming. . . . Effort and labor are required on the part of the receiver of God's grace; for it is the fruit that makes manifest what is the character of the tree."—*Ibid.*, pp. 381, 382.

In the faith that we need, a faith that takes God at His word, there is a strong element of obedience. Centered in Jesus, it is more than an intellectual exercise. It is a vital, constraining force that operates through love and issues in "good works."

### Israel's Lessons Not All Negative

The lessons that the history of Israel have for us are not all negative. There is encouragement there also. We must not forget that the Lord led Israel a second time to the borders of Canaan. And the same kind of walled cities and impregnable fortresses that stood between the people of God and the Promised Land when they were near the borders the first time confronted them the second time also. The race of giants they found there the first time still lived there 40 years later. Humanly speaking, it was just as impossible for the Israelites, so ill-equipped, so unskilled in military science, to match the outwardly overwhelmingly powerful foe this time as the first. But this time faith made the difference: "They trusted all to His [God's] omnipotent arm, and He did not fail them. Not mighty giants nor walled cities, armed hosts nor rocky fortresses, could stand before the Captain of the Lord's host. The Lord led the army; the Lord discomfited the enemy; the Lord conquered in behalf of Israel."—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 436.

The remnant people of God will not

go into the heavenly Canaan until they learn this lesson thoroughly. Every believer must personally experience the breakthrough of faith that leads from the lowlands of doubt and unbelief, to the uplands of triumphant Christian living. The human agent must act his part. "Faith is the gift of God, but the power to exercise it is ours."—*Ibid.*, p. 431. As we exercise faith, it will increase. New life and vitality and power will flow into the church. "Before the demand of faith, obstacles . . . will disappear."—*Prophets and Kings*, p. 595. There will be joy and peace and a deep, abiding trust. We shall then give our witness to the world with telling effect.

Seventh-day Adventists have a strong system of truth, doctrinally and prophetically well-founded on the Bible. It can be shown to be intellectually honest and convincing to one who accepts the Bible as the Word of God. As the student in the physics or chemistry classroom accurately writes his formula on the blackboard, so we can demonstrate what we believe.

### More Than a Formula

But writing a formula is not enough. It must be taken off the board and tested in the laboratory. In a like manner the beliefs we have that are susceptible to demonstration in life must be verified in the lives of us who profess to believe them.

So it is our privilege in this, the end of the age, to demonstrate that the promises of God are for us today. The remnant church is the crucible in which God desires to prove that His formula for a people victorious over sin works.

The prophetic forecast is sharp and clear that this will be accomplished. Through a living, active faith the remnant will identify more and more with their Lord and Master until they become like Him. It is no small matter that this takes place in a time of great spiritual declension, when all the world wonders after the beast and the greatest counterfeit system of worship ever devised deceives the whole world. John the Revelator beheld this climax of the mystery of godliness; Christ glorified in His saints as they resist every assault upon their faith. Of them he writes, "In all this stands the endurance of the saints—those who keep the commandments of God and their faith in Jesus" (Rev. 14:12, Phillips).

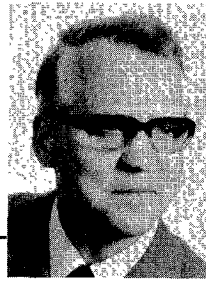
The power that makes it possible for us to enjoy that experience awaits us. We have but to use the channel of faith for it to flow into our lives. ♦♦

## Unbelief chokes the channel of blessing.



# The Dynamics of Prayer

By H. VOGEL



A CHRISTIAN'S prayer life is an index to his experience with God. Prayer is essential for spiritual life. If the connection with Heaven that prayer gives is broken, there can be no spiritual growth. Without prayer the Christian wilts and dies.

Prayer has been called "the breath of the soul." In physical breathing our lungs draw in the air that is all around us. Through the channel of prayer we receive, as it were, spiritual air—the grace, love, and power of God with which we are surrounded.

If we do not breathe, we cannot live physically. If we do not pray, we cannot live spiritually.

In spite of this well-known axiom of spiritual life, there are many professed Christians who fail to "breathe" deeply, hence do not live vigorous, healthful spiritual lives. Because they spend so little time in prayer they are weak, stunted Christians.

He who does not breathe properly physically cannot develop properly; he cannot work well; his mind does not function at its best.

So it is in the Christian life. Faith cannot become strong in the absence of prayer. Knowledge that for the Christian must be acquired in the atmosphere of faith and prayer will not be understood in its true perspective without prayer.

One cannot expect to be able to put forth strenuous physical effort if his lungs are not developed properly. Likewise, the Christian cannot expect to do significant things for God or overcome strong temptations if he has not developed his prayer life.

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

*sages to Young People*, pp. 249, 250.

It was through prayer that the young Daniel lived a life that stood the test even amid the seductive influence of the courts of Babylon. He prayed "three times a day—for divine grace to resist appetite and passion" (*Medical Ministry*, p. 144).

Referring to Daniel and his three companions, Ellen G. White wrote, "Constantly praying, . . . keeping in touch with the Unseen, they walked with God as did Enoch."—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 486.

## Prayers That Can Move Heaven

True prayer is the outgoing of an impulse that comes from God. Such prayer can move Heaven. It was through prayer that the prophet Elijah was able to do noteworthy exploits for God. "A good man's prayer is powerful and effective. Elijah was a man with human frailties like our own; and when he prayed earnestly that there should be no rain, not a drop fell on the land for three years and a half; then he prayed again, and down came the rain and the land bore crops once more" (James 5: 16-18, N.E.B.).

The secret of Elijah's power in prayer is disclosed in *Prophets and Kings*, page 157. "As he prayed, his faith reached out and grasped the promises of Heaven, and he persevered in prayer until his petitions were answered. He did not wait for the full evidence that God had heard him, but was willing to venture all on the slightest token of divine favor. And yet what he was enabled to do under God, all may do in their sphere of activity in God's service."

When will we realize, as we must, that prayer is a gate that can give us access to the throne of Heaven and open to us the boundless power of Omnipotence? When will we learn to pray as Daniel and Elijah prayed? When will we have the earnestness, the intensity, the perseverance, the faith, in prayer that those men had, so that God can do for and through us great things as He did for and through them?

Some Christians pray only when they feel like praying. They feel that the way is open between God and them, that they are right with God, that their

impulses are God directed, so they pray. If they do not have these feelings, they think that a curtain has descended between them and God, so that God cannot or will not hear and answer.

Or they have slipped into some sin that makes them feel guilty and unworthy of approaching God. So they neglect to pray.

But consulting feelings or neglecting to pray because we have sinned is a dangerous practice. It is when we feel least like praying that we need to spend more time in earnest prayer, instead of less or none at all. "Without unceasing prayer and diligent watching, we are in danger of growing careless and of deviating from the right path. The adversary seeks continually to obstruct the way to the mercy-seat, that we may not by earnest supplication and faith obtain grace and power to resist temptation."—*Steps to Christ*, p. 95. "The darkness of the evil one incloses those who neglect to pray."—*Ibid.*, p. 94.

We must not, then, permit our prayer life to depend on our emotions any more than we would let our physical breathing be governed by our moods.

"Through sincere prayer we are brought into connection with the mind of the Infinite. We may have no remarkable evidence at the time that the face of our Redeemer is bending over us in compassion and love; but this is even so. We may not feel His visible touch, but His hand is upon us in love and pitying tenderness."—*Ibid.*, p. 97.

## The Supreme Example of Prayer

The supreme example of a powerful prayer life is our Saviour's prayer life. Christ's disciples came to Him one day and requested, "Lord, teach us to pray" (Luke 11:1). "The disciples had come to connect His hours of prayer with the power of His words and works."—*Thoughts From the Mount of Blessing*, pp. 102, 103.

"No other life was ever so crowded with labor and responsibility as was that of Jesus; yet how often He was found in prayer! How constant was His communion with God! Again and again in the history of His earthly life are found records such as these: 'Rising up a great while before day, he went out, and departed into a solitary place, and there prayed.' 'Great multitudes came together to hear, and to be healed by him of their infirmities. And he withdrew himself into the wilderness, and prayed.' 'And it came to pass in those days, that he went out into a mountain to pray, and continued all night in prayer to God.' (Mark 1:35; Luke 5:15, 16; 6:12.)

"In a life wholly devoted to the good of others, the Saviour found it necessary to withdraw from the thorough-

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fares of travel and from the throng that followed Him day after day. He must turn aside from a life of ceaseless activity and contact with human needs, to seek retirement and unbroken communion with His Father. As one with us, a sharer in our needs and weaknesses, He was wholly dependent upon God, and in the secret place of prayer He sought divine strength, that He might go forth braced for duty and trial."—*The Desire of Ages*, pp. 362, 363.

Christ's prayer life was a model for us and for His disciples. If they who had witnessed His example had learned from it, they would not have failed Christ and themselves when the Gethsemane and Calvary crises came. They might have stood by Jesus in His hour of greatest need instead of forsaking Him and fleeing into the night.

In the crisis ahead, whether we shall remain faithful or fail depends to a large degree upon our contact with God through prayer today. Self-sufficiency is a result of neglect of prayer.

Studying Christ's prayer habits, we discover that He spent not merely a few

moments a day communing with His Father; on occasion He "continued all night in prayer to God." We, then, cannot expect to have power in our lives if we spend only five or ten minutes in personal private prayer.

"When thou prayest," Jesus told His followers, "enter into thy closet, and when thou hast shut thy door, pray to thy Father which is in secret" (Matt. 6:6). Only under these circumstances can we truly catch our spiritual breath, as it were. Only there can we open our hearts completely and freely to God. Only there can we express ourselves as we desire. Only there as we kneel realizing that pretense is vain, that an all-knowing but loving God is listening, do we realize our needs.

It is then, as we begin to see ourselves and to understand our needs and how God can meet them, that we truly reach out for help and power from Him.

#### Grasping Prayer's Potential

Jesus' disciples finally understood the potential of prayer. After His ascension they followed His instructions to

"tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem, until ye be endued with power from on high" (Luke 24:49). During that tarrying time "they . . . met together to present their requests to the Father in the name of Jesus. They knew that they had a Representative in heaven, an Advocate at the throne of God. In solemn awe they bowed in prayer, repeating the assurance, 'Whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in My name, He will give it you.' . . . Higher and still higher they extended the hand of faith, with the mighty argument, 'It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us.' Romans 8:34."—*The Acts of the Apostles*, pp. 35, 36.

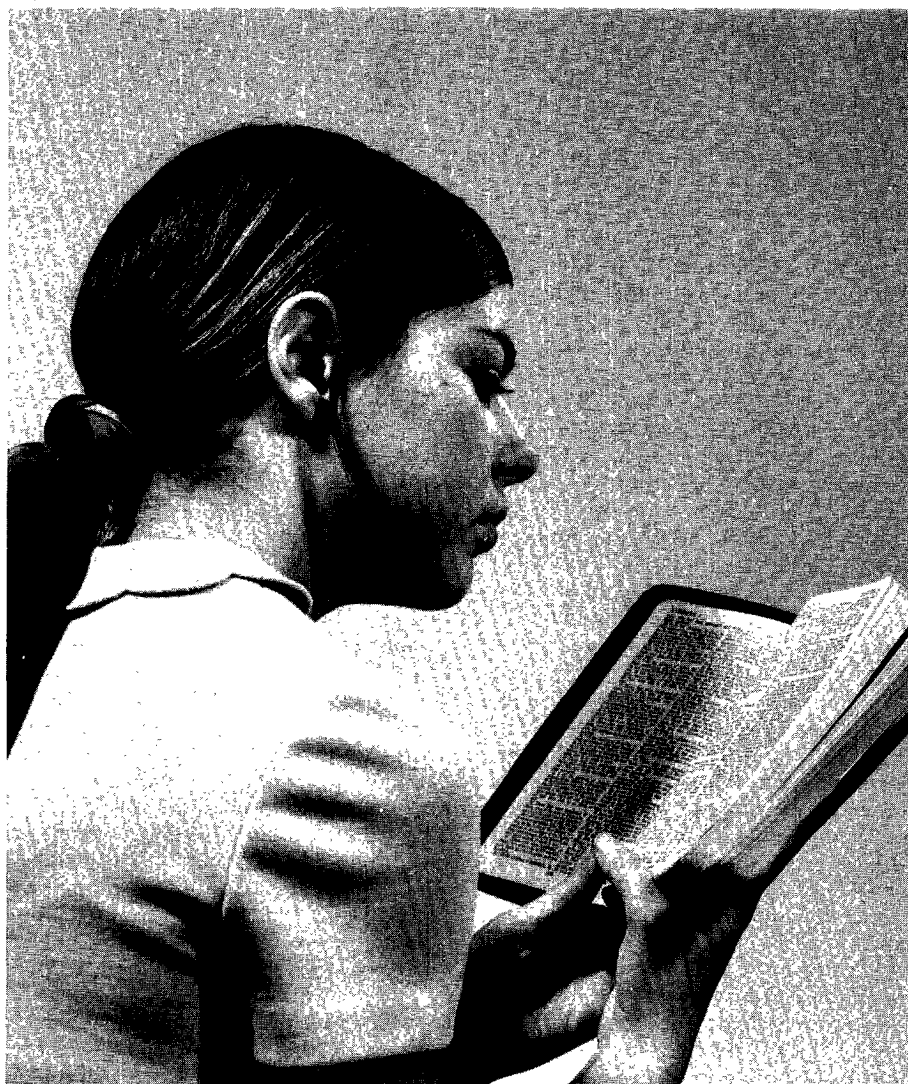
Then the power came. "The Spirit came upon the waiting, praying disciples with a fullness that reached every heart. The Infinite One revealed Himself in power to His church. It was as if for ages this influence had been held in restraint, and now Heaven rejoiced in being able to pour out upon the church the riches of the Spirit's grace. . . . The sword of the Spirit, newly edged with power and bathed in the lightnings of heaven, cut its way through unbelief. Thousands were converted in a day."—*Ibid.*, p. 38.

The remnant church has yet to learn fully the potential of prayer. When it does—living up to all the truths it possesses—the great power of Pentecost will be repeated, with an even greater manifestation of the Holy Spirit than was seen then. This manifestation in the church is our need today. Let us pray and prepare for the grace and power promised by the Holy Spirit.

"Lord, what a change within us one short hour  
Spent in Thy presence will prevail to make!  
What heavy burdens from our bosoms take,  
What parched grounds refresh as with a shower!  
We kneel, and all around us seems to lower;  
We rise, and all, the distant and the near,  
Stands forth in sunny outline brave and clear;  
We kneel, how weak! we rise, how full of power!  
Why, therefore, should we do ourselves this wrong,  
Or others, that we are not always strong,  
That we are ever overborne with care,  
That we should ever weak or heartless be,  
Anxious or troubled, when with us is prayer,  
And joy and strength and courage are with Thee!"

—RICHARD C. FRENCH ♦♦

H. M. LAMBERT



# The Power of the Word

By THOMAS A. DAVIS



CHARLES SPURGEON, the famous British preacher of the last century, was on one occasion scheduled to hold a series of night meetings in a great hall that held some 20,000 people. The afternoon before the first meeting he went to the hall alone to test the acoustics of the building.

Standing on the broad stage of the vast, empty auditorium, he cried out, "Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world."

High up in one of the galleries of the hall, concealed from Spurgeon, a solitary workman heard the words and was smitten with a conviction of sin. Laying down his tools he went home, and there, with the text burning in his heart, wrestled with God. After a period of spiritual struggle he accepted Jesus as the Lamb slain for his sins. He was converted and became a changed man.

Could a statement from Shakespeare or Milton, Plato or Emerson, or any other writer not inspired of God, as were the writers of the Bible, have brought about such a deep-rooted change in the life of that man? Of the millions of books from the pens of men that roll from the presses of our world today, are any able to bring about such a change in man? What is there about the Bible that can rechannel the whole trend of the life of a man, woman, or young person?

Consider another illustration. Suppose that somewhere in the South Pacific is an island that has never been touched by civilization as we know it. The people there are cannibals, extremely hostile to all outsiders and outside influences. The government in whose territory the island is, desires to civilize those people, to change them from hostile savages to mild, law-abiding people. But how?

Should they send in a company of soldiers to change the nature of the people? Would a party of anthropologists and sociologists succeed in the task? Would a group of psychologists or psychiatrists be able to bring about the necessary changes in those islanders?

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Could a team of salesmen, with a shipment of inventions of modern technology most enticing to those people, be able to use their wares to change their cruelty to kindness, their lust to purity, their naked savagery to civilized order?

Yet we have all heard of men and women, living deep in the darkest and vilest heathenism, who have been changed so radically as to be almost unbelievable. And it was done through the instrumentality of the Word of God.

## A Cause for Amazement

"During his travels Charles Darwin once visited Tierra del Fuego at the southern tip of South America. His impressions were recorded in *Voyage of the Beagle*. The people of Tierra del Fuego, he wrote, were one of the worst examples of humanity he had encountered. Dull, with a miserable standard of living and of morale, they were seemingly beyond help. Many years later, Darwin returned to the island. What he saw filled him with amazement. During his absence the Bible had been translated and widely circulated among the people. Their lives had been transformed. In place of mental dullness, squalor, and wickedness were joyful vitality, industry, and morality."—DALE and ELAINE RHOTON, *Can We Know?* p. 43.

What is there about the Bible that can do for men and women what no other book can do?

The writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews gives an answer. "For the word of God is a living thing and full of power; it is sharper than any two-edged sword; it cuts through the division between soul and spirit, between joints and marrow; it passes judgement upon the desires and thoughts of the heart" (Heb. 4:12, C. Kingsley Williams).

In this text we find several reasons why the Bible is a book totally different from any other.

The words of the Bible are living words.

Perhaps we do not understand all that is comprehended in this statement. But we may know that as the words that Christ Himself spoke were "spirit" and "life" (John 6:63), so are the

words of Spirit-inspired Bible writers.

They are living in that there is a truth and a morality about them that compels the sincere soul; Scripture reveals standards of ethics and holiness that men of themselves would never devise.

They are living in that they contain something of the wisdom of eternity applied in time. Someone has made an observation to the effect that the proof of a man's wisdom is whether successive generations return to his books as to an ever-fresh revelation. By this measurement no other volume can approach the Bible. For from the time its first books were written it has been a living, ever-fresh fountain for men of all generations.

Most important, Scripture is living in that the Holy Spirit gives a vitality and compulsion to its words. For He applies its truths, its exhortations, its reproofs, its promises, its commands to the heart and mind of him who reads, and convinces and convicts.

J. B. Phillips, author of a popular translation of the New Testament, gives his testimony to the aliveness of Scripture in his book, *Ring of Truth*. In this volume, in which he testifies to his own experience and discoveries during his work of translating, he states: "Although I did my utmost to preserve an emotional detachment, I found again and again that the material under my hands was strangely alive; it spoke to my condition in the most uncanny way. I say 'uncanny' for want of a better word, but it was a very strange experience to sense, not occasionally but almost continually, the living quality of those rather strangely assorted books."—Page 25.

Many stories have been told to illustrate how the Bible speaks to the hearts of all, no matter what their culture, color, or creed may be. A missionary once read the first chapter of Romans to a group of wild, uncivilized men. When he had finished the last part, in which the apostle describes the corruption of the heart of the heathen of ancient times, the missionary's listeners said, "You wrote that for us."

Many years ago a missionary to India hired an Indian to help him translate a portion of the Bible into one of the languages of that country. After he had read the New Testament for the first time the man exclaimed, "Whoever made this book made me. It knows all that is in my heart. It tells me what no one else can know about me. Whoever made me made that book."

## A Book That Understands Me

An interesting account of one man's discovery of the Bible is given by the French-born Princeton Theological Seminary professor Dr. Emile Cailliet in his book, *Journey Into Light*. There

he tells of his quest as a young man for, in his own words, "a book that would understand me." Not knowing that there was such a book, he determined to compile his own. So, over a period of time, he collected passages from various sources that seemed to speak to his condition.

Finally, his task completed, he sat under a tree one sunny day to read his book and let it help him in his needs. But as he read he began to realize that it did not speak to his condition at all.

About the time he was making this discovery his young wife returned home with a Bible that she had obtained under unusual circumstances. Dr. Cailliet describes how he literally grabbed the Book from her hands, rushed off to the privacy of his study, opened it "by chance" to the Beatitudes, began to read, and continued to read for hours. He had found the Book that did understand him.

God's living Word can also speak to your heart and mine. But in order for it to do this, it must be listened to. For just as a friend cannot communicate to us if we are busy with our own thoughts while he is speaking, so God cannot speak to us if only our eyes, but not our minds, are on His words.

Nor can He communicate anything worth while if we merely open His Word and read a few texts without real thought. God's message for us in His Word is not received through casual reading. He speaks to us only when we listen carefully to the still, small voice.

### A Word of Power

The Bible is "full of power."

The Greek term in Hebrews 4:12, translated "full of power" in the version quoted, also has the meaning of "active," "energetic," "effectual." There is that in the Bible which works actively, energetically, effectively, with power, in the lives of men and women to change them. "By implanting in their hearts the principles of His word, the Holy Spirit develops in men the attributes of God."—*Christ's Object Lessons*, p. 414. The "word . . . has a power upon the human heart to make man right and keep him so."—*Testimonies to Ministers*, pp. 80, 81.

A man may live a hundred yards from a great hydroelectric station, but he will be without electric power in his home unless he is connected up. And you and I may have a dozen translations of God's Holy Word in our homes, but we will receive no transforming power from them unless we receive their words into our minds and permit them to work upon our hearts.

The Word of God, accepted in the mind and heart, transforms the character. Said Jesus, "Make them holy by the truth for your word is the truth"

(John 17:17, Phillips). "Received into the heart, the leaven of truth will regulate the desires, purify the thoughts, and sweeten the disposition. It quickens the faculties of the mind and the energies of the soul. It enlarges the capacity for feeling, for loving."—*Christ's Object Lessons*, p. 101.

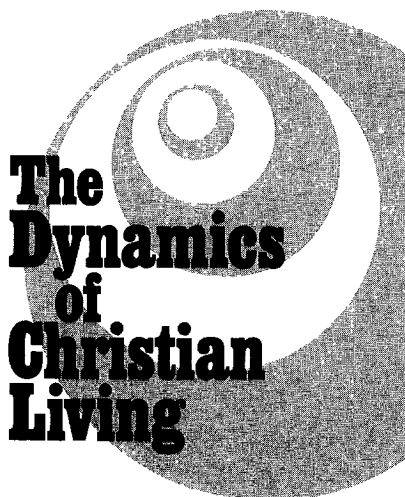
The writer of our text goes on to explain how the Bible operates, wielded by the Holy Spirit. Being an instrument "sharper than any two-edged sword . . . [the Word] cuts through to the division between soul and spirit, between joints and marrow; it passes judgement upon the desires and thoughts of the heart." The last phrase is perhaps an explanation of the preceding one.

### Words That Penetrate

The words of the Bible penetrate to the most secret depths of the heart and life and judge the thoughts and motives. They show complete acquaintance with the whole heart and mind of universal man. They awaken the conscience and brings a person to the place of decision.

The Greek term translated "sword" is sometimes also rendered "knife."

The Holy Spirit does not utilize the Word carelessly, haphazardly. With infinite skill and precision, the Word is used by the Spirit with compassionate regard for the well-being of the patient. As a keen surgical instrument it is used to penetrate into every area of the character and personality. Here it uncovers a cyst of covetousness; there, a weak tendon of commitment. Here it discloses a dangerous obstruction caused by pride; there, a temper aneurysm, a critical character weakness that could sometime erupt and destroy the spiritual life.



The Word may not only be thought of as a surgeon's scalpel to expose and cut sin out of our lives. It is also the sword by which we may put to flight the enemy. In this connection we do not realize the power of the "sword of the Spirit" nearly as much as we should. We need to recognize the efficacy of that weapon as Christ did, for how notably He used it to conquer the evil one! Writing of the temptation Satan brought to Jesus in the wilderness to gain the world simply by worshiping the evil one, Ellen G. White says that Jesus "felt the strength of this temptation; but He met it in our behalf, and conquered. And He used only the weapons justifiable for human beings to use."—*Selected Messages*, book 1, p. 255. What was that weapon? The Word of God; "It is written." With that weapon alone He defeated the enemy. Each time He met temptation with Scriptures, as He always did, Satan acknowledged defeat.

Here is a fact we ought not let slip from our minds. Christ conquered Satan by the power of the Word. If He who is our Captain and Exemplar quoted the Bible successfully in overcoming Satan, we ought to become far more efficient than we are in using the same weapon. And we ought to use it much more frequently than we do in our battle with sin, both within and without.

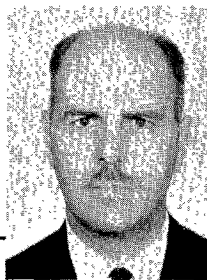
### A Desire for Power

As individuals, and as a church, we sense the need for greater spiritual power. We desire it in our lives and in the church, to vanquish sin, to witness to others, and to complete the gospel commission. The Word of God is the medium through which this power can come to us. "The word of God—the truth—is the channel through which the Lord manifests His Spirit and power."—*The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 520. "The word of the Lord is a word of infinite power, upon which you may rely."—*Selected Messages*, book 1, p. 328. "God can and will do a great work for every human being who will open the heart to the word of God, and let it enter the soul-temple and expel every idol. . . . The Word is made flesh, and dwells among us, in those who receive the holy precepts of the word of God."—*Fundamentals of Christian Education*, p. 378.

The Bible, the channel through which spiritual power may come to us, is near at hand. Let us go to it far more often than we do, with open mind and heart, sincerely, prayerfully, receptively. Let us give God the opportunity to pour into our lives the power we need so much. Let us find, through His Word, the true dynamics for Christian living. ♦♦

# Power Outflowing

By ELBIO PEREYRA



**J**ESUS CHRIST entrusted to His church the great responsibility of taking the good news of His kingdom to the world. But He Himself assumed the responsibility for its final success. In order that the church might be successful, our Lord gave to His disciples the program it was to follow. We find His instruction in embryo recorded in the Gospels and in the Acts of the Apostles. We call it the gospel commission.

The New Testament contains practical demonstrations of how Christ's program was to be developed. We observe His own example as an evangelist. His methods cannot be surpassed. Then we read of the way that His disciples worked. Because they received of His power and faithfully followed the directions given by the Lord, they experienced an astounding sequence of successes. Three thousand were baptized in one day as the disciples began to carry out their commission, and "many wonders and signs were done by the apostles" (Acts 2:41, 43).

Another 5,000 men were soon added (chap. 4:4). Jerusalem was filled with the doctrine of Christ (chap. 5:28). "A great company of the priests were obedient to the faith" (chap. 6:7). As time went on, the churches increased in number daily (chap. 16:5), and thousands of Jews believed the gospel (chap. 21:20).

As the early disciples witnessed in the power of the Holy Spirit, so we are to witness in our time. This witness is not to be in words only but also by our lives.

## A Witness, Quiet but Dynamic

An Adventist couple invited a young husband and wife belonging to another church to attend a meeting at which E. L. Minchin was the speaker. They were greatly impressed. In response to the invitation to dedicate their lives to the Lord, they could not resist the impulse to go forward with others. It was my privilege to visit this couple a few days later. After the customary greeting, the wife expressed her feelings in

these words: "Pastor, if you have come to visit us with the purpose of making us change our religion, you are wasting your time. We have no intention of ever changing our present religion." Then, after a few moments, she continued reflectively, "But if the religion of our neighbors who took us to that meeting the other day is the reason for the lives they live, I must admit that there is something in Adventism that we do not have in our church." This woman and her husband were later baptized, largely because of the quiet but dynamic witness of their loving, thoughtful, kind, true Christian neighbors.

Many new and popular versions of the Bible have been produced in recent years. The Biblical ideas have been expressed in modern language, and some versions have been illustrated with pictures to appeal to youth. But the truths of the Book are best illustrated, not by the pen of the artist, but in the lives of its believers. The servant of the Lord says, "The gospel is to be presented, not as a lifeless theory, but as a living force to change the life. God desires that the receivers of His grace shall be witnesses to its power."—*The Desire of Ages*, pp. 826, 827.

The world is watching you and me, perhaps to criticize. But, in any case, it is looking to see whether we are living up to the teachings of the Bible, which we profess to accept as our standard. Here is one reason why we must not fail, even in the smallest detail. Grave faults of those who live according to a worldly philosophy may easily be forgiven. But an accusing finger will be pointed at us if we live below the norms that should direct our lives. On the other hand, if you and I are consistent in living our message, we may, through our example, interest others in our Saviour. "The piety of the Christian constitutes the standard by which worldlings judge the gospel."—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 134.

"The children of God are called to be representatives of Christ, showing forth the goodness and mercy of the Lord. As Jesus has revealed to us the true character of the Father, so we are to reveal Christ to a world that does not know His tender, pitying love. . . .

In every one of His children, Jesus sends a letter to the world. If you are Christ's follower, He sends in you a letter to the family, the village, the street, where you live. Jesus, dwelling in you, desires to speak to the hearts of those who are not acquainted with Him. Perhaps they do not read the Bible, or do not hear the voice that speaks to them in its pages; they do not see the love of God through His works. But if you are a true representative of Jesus, it may be that through you they will be led to understand something of His goodness, and be won to love and serve Him."—*Steps to Christ*, p. 115.

What a responsibility and challenge Christ has given us! He has called us to be His witnesses, and He has put at our disposal all of the facilities needed to represent Him. He has given us the Holy Spirit, the help of angels, the truths of the Word, and other facilities that we might truly reflect His character.

The idea of giving personal testimony is fittingly exemplified in the manner in which the apostles proclaimed the gospel. They knew Jesus and His gospel personally. In their preaching were no speculative theories. They did not merely present the idea of God. They showed God in operation in their own lives. They did not merely speak of a doctrine of salvation; they presented themselves transformed and saved. Of Peter, John, and Paul, Nietzsche would not have needed to say, "What these Christians must demonstrate is that they are redeemed in order for me to believe in their Redeemer."

## A Saving Energy Present

A saving energy was present in the preaching and personal witness of these men because they were filled with the Holy Spirit. The world in which they lived and labored was a witness to their deeds that were a result of the operation of Christ through them.

In Mark 5 is the story of Jesus' confrontation with a legion of devils that had taken possession of a man. The man had just come from the tombs. There were pieces of chain, with which he had been bound but which he had burst, hanging from his hands and feet. His flesh was covered with scars caused by cuts he had made on himself with stones. He seemed as fierce as any wild beast. Foaming at the mouth, he approached the Saviour.

Dimly, it seems, this man realized that Jesus could save him from the devils that possessed him. He fell at the feet of Christ. But when he opened his mouth it was the devils that spoke, not he. Then Christ commanded the demons to leave him, and suddenly the demon-possessed man was in his right

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mind. The eyes that had revealed madness a few moments before, shone with intelligence. The raging turned to utterances of praise.

Full of gratitude to Jesus for his liberation, he begged that he might remain with the Lord. But Jesus said, "Go home to thy friends, and tell them how great things the Lord hath done for thee" (Mark 5:19). "And he departed, and began to publish in Decapolis how great things Jesus had done for him" (verse 20). He had a dynamic message, flowing from his own experience. "And all men did marvel." As a result, when Jesus later returned to the area "the people flocked about Him, and for three days, not merely the inhabitants of one town, but thousands from all the surrounding region, heard the message of salvation."—*The Desire of Ages*, pp. 340, 341.

The high light of this man's life was his encounter with Christ. It was decisive for him. This is what you and I must have—a decisive encounter with Jesus that will result in a transformation of our lives. For while we are not in the fearful condition that that man was in, yet, all too often, sins of one

kind or another hinder us so that we are not able to witness as efficiently and convincingly as we need to. For it is not a matter of communicating information only. *We must communicate an experience* with a conviction and a power that is ours through the Lord Jesus Christ.

The church today needs for dynamic witness more youth who have this experience to communicate. The church needs loyal young people who will produce true reform and a genuine revival both in the church and outside the church. It is in need of active young people who are not content with mediocrity, who are not satisfied merely to analyze symptoms. The church needs youth who recognize that the root of the great problems of the present time is sin, and who have themselves met with Jesus and are filled with the Holy Spirit.

Satan is gathering a great army of youth under his banner to war against God. He knows only too well the strength, vigor, and influence of the youth. Jesus is also calling for volunteers to enlist under the standard that is stained with the redeeming blood of

His own great sacrifice of love. "The church is languishing for the help of young men who will bear a courageous testimony, who will with their ardent zeal stir up the sluggish energies of God's people, and so increase the power of the church in the world. Young men are wanted who will resist the tide of worldliness, and lift a voice of warning against taking the first steps in immorality and vice."—*Messages to Young People*, p. 25.

The youth the church needs are not only those that have a deep, dynamic, personal experience with Jesus; it also needs young people who have a solid knowledge of the truths we believe. I write this from personal experience.

I cast my lot with the Adventist Church when I was a young man, after a great personal crisis. I was only 18 at the time. Although I loved my church I had no real, personal relationship with Christ. I understood something of its doctrines, but I did not have a solid foundation. Then I became involved in a discussion with a young seminary student and my arguments were completely overthrown because they were not sufficiently supported by the Word. As a result my beliefs were severely shaken.

#### Understanding Through Experience

I went from that experience to look to my Lord. Alone with Him, with tears and prayers, I studied the Scriptures, and the Lord guided me to a firm conviction of truth. It was then that I understood the work of grace, justification by faith, and the many other precious truths. In this way I became firm in the faith.

Before that time I could not witness to the truth because I had not personally experienced it. A Christian witness declares what he knows experimentally. How necessary, then, is a personal encounter with the Lord! How very necessary it is that we have an experience with our Lord, a knowledge of His truth and His power in our lives to do the work He has given to us. The world needs authentic Christians with an authentic Christian witness. Do not we, both young and older ones who hear or read these words, desire to give this witness? How the Father, Jesus our Lord, the Holy Spirit, angels, and the inhabitants of unfallen worlds must yearn for us to demonstrate God's redeeming power to this rebellious and sinful world! How they must long to see us reveal the love of Him who came to our world and lived to elevate our race!

May the Lord transform us into powerful witnesses so that through the inspiring and dynamic message of our lives the world may see the beauty of salvation. ♦♦

## HEART CRY

By JOYCE ST. CLAIR

EWING GALLOWAY

Why hast Thou forsaken me? Why turnest Thou away?

Why is there only darkness when it should be brightest day?

I've searched for Thee at twilight on bended knee, in vain.

I've cried out in the shadows as the day begins to wane.

I've searched, O God, for answers; I've wanted just to hear

The answers to my questions that only please the ear.

I've wanted, Lord, to know that approval would be mine

To do what is *my* will, Lord, and not care ought for Thine.

I therefore have not heard Thee, e'en though You've answered clear.

My ears were sealed against Thee; my idol was too dear.

O Father, send Thy Spirit to help me choose aright.

Remove me from the darkness, and help me find the light.

My God, please give me courage to follow in Thy way;

To want *Thy* will, not *mine*, Lord; to serve Thee day by day!



# The Power of Worship

By R. R. BIETZ



THE service having ended, Tommy's parents were eager to be on their way home. Tommy, however, lagging behind anxiously looked about the church sanctuary. Trying to rush him along, they were astonished when he responded, "I haven't seen God yet." Even though surprised at his reply, they also felt rewarded. More than once they had told him that people go to church to see God. He took them at their word. We worship in order to see God.

Of course we do not commune with God only in the church sanctuary. Whether we worship in the house of the Lord, at the family altar, in the secret place, as we walk on the streets, while riding in a car, or wherever we may be, it should always be with a desire to see God. "Happy are those who have a sanctuary, be it high or low, in the city or among the rugged mountain caves, in the lowly cabin or in the wilderness. If it is the best they can secure for the Master, He will hallow the place with His presence, and it will be holy unto the Lord of hosts."—*Testimonies*, vol. 5, pp. 491, 492.

The woman of Samaria who met Jesus by Jacob's well asked Him, "But say, tell me, why is it that you Jews insist that Jerusalem is the only place of worship while we Samaritans claim it is here [at Mount Gerizim], where our ancestors worshipped?" Jesus replied, "The time is coming, ma'am, when we will no longer be concerned about whether we worship the Father here or in Jerusalem. For it is not *where* we worship that counts, but *how* we worship—is our worship spiritual and real? Do we have the Holy Spirit's help? For God is Spirit, and we must have his help to worship as we should" (John 4:20, 23, Taylor).

During this Week of Prayer it is especially fitting that we emphasize the blessings to be experienced by Christians as they participate in corporate worship. This season of communion presents opportunities to all of us to know the power that is available to believers united in prayer. Although we can worship God anywhere and at any time, the house of the Lord is dedicated as a special place of worship and intercessory

prayer. There is power in a praying church.

Many a person has been set free from the prison house of sin because Christians assembled and united in prayer to free the captive. The Word of God gives convincing evidence that when God's people are united in prayer great things are accomplished. We do well to spend much time in secret prayer, but this is not sufficient, for "no man is an island," no man stands alone. We need one another.

Music is an integral part of worship and should be a great spiritual blessing to every member. "Music forms a part of God's worship in the courts above, and we should endeavor, in our songs of praise, to approach as nearly as possible to the harmony of the heavenly choirs."—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 594. As we sincerely join the congregation in singing, "O worship the King, all glorious above, O gratefully sing, His wonderful love," our soul is awakened and lifted into the very presence of God.

The Christian not only finds spiritual strength as he worships in prayer and in song but more especially as he listens to the proclamation of the Word of the living God. Every feature of the worship service should prepare the heart to receive the blessings promised by the Holy Spirit. "When Christ speaks through the minister, the Holy Spirit prepares the hearts of the listeners to receive the word."—*Gospel Workers*, p. 155. Many a person has entered the house of the Lord discouraged and heavyhearted. After listening to the Word of God and being enveloped by the Holy Spirit he has found new hope and faith. The worshiper accepted the invitation "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest" (Matt. 11:28), and his troubled soul found peace.

## The Preacher's Light

"The word is the preacher's light, and as the golden oil flows from the heavenly olive tree into the bowl, it makes the lamp of life flash with a clearness and power that all will discern. Those who have the privilege of sitting under such a ministry, if their hearts are susceptible to the Holy Spirit's influence, will feel an inner life. The fire of God's love

will be kindled within them."—*Testimonies to Ministers*, p. 340.

In corporate worship there is ceremony, order, and decorum. God is not honored by confusion. However, our well-organized and systematized services should leave room for spontaneity. If a member is moved by the Spirit to say Amen it is disturbing to see some in the congregation turn around with raised eyebrows, giving evidence of being annoyed.

At the dedication worship of Solomon's temple there was order but also room for spontaneous outbursts of praise. "It came to pass, when the priests were come out of the holy place . . . also the Levites which were the singers, . . . being arrayed in white linen, having cymbals and psalteries and harps, stood at the east end of the altar, and with them an hundred and twenty priests sounding with trumpets . . . ; and when they lifted up their voice with the trumpets and cymbals and instruments of musick, and praised the Lord, saying, For he is good; for his mercy endureth for ever: that then the house was filled with a cloud, even the house of the Lord" (2 Chron. 5:11-13). After Solomon's prayer the glory of the Lord filled the Temple and there was a spontaneous outburst of praise from the people, and "they bowed themselves with their faces to the ground upon the pavement, and worshipped, and praised the Lord, saying, For he is good; for his mercy endureth for ever" (chap. 7:3).

## Spontaneous Singing

I believe that on the new earth there will be much spontaneous singing. Order and forms are necessary, but they do not determine the quality of our praise to God. Whether worship will be a great blessing depends more on the individual worshiper than on the forms that the worship might take. Someone has said, "No matter how elaborate the planning for worship, no matter how beautiful the music, no matter how familiar and loved the hymns, no matter how many 'good people' are present, no matter how great the preaching, if the individual worshiper does not bring something of a desire to praise God, or if he is not stimulated by memory and reminder to praise God, worship is impossible. What we do may look good, but inwardly it will be empty and meaningless."—*Pulpit Digest*, January, 1972.

Another great blessing of worship is meditation. Many of us have yet to learn to worship silently. One could wish that all had the habit of bowing their heads when they enter the sanctuary, offering a silent prayer and reading the Word until the service starts. But we are a hustling, bustling people, rushing about to "finish the work," and we don't stop long enough to gain spiritual enlighten-

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ment through meditation. We still have to learn how to be still and know God. We do well to remember the experience of Elijah on Mount Horeb (1 Kings 19:8-11). A strong wind rent the mountain. It broke the rocks in pieces. The Lord was not in the wind. After that the earth was made to tremble by an earthquake, but the Lord was not in the earthquake. Then came a flash of fire, but neither was the Lord in it. After all this noise and confusion, a still small voice was heard. Now the Lord was speaking, and Elijah eagerly listened.

Many times we fail to hear that still small voice in church because there are too many noises.

In corporate worship there should be individual participation not only in singing, praying, and meditation but also in testifying to God's goodness. I grew up in a church where worship included active participation of the congregation in praise and prayer services. These were conducted regularly each week. The earnest prayers and testimonies made a lasting impression on my mind. I heard members, including my parents, consecrating their lives in the presence of the entire church body. This seeking for help from God and fellow members many times opened the floodgates of heaven. Hearts were united through the outpouring of the Holy Spirit. There is no question but that the members present found great strength and comfort in presenting their needs to the Lord.

Writing of such meetings, the messenger of the Lord tells us, "We meet together to edify one another by an interchange of thoughts and feelings, to gather strength, and light, and courage by becoming acquainted with one another's hopes and aspirations; and by our earnest, heartfelt prayers, offered up in faith, we receive refreshment and vigor from the Source of our strength. These meetings should be most precious seasons and should be made interesting to all who have any relish for religious things."—*Testimonies*, vol. 2, p. 578.

If we can no longer have testimony and prayer services at the 11 o'clock hour on Sabbaths, why not attend the midweek prayer meeting and make it the great spiritual feast of the week? Perhaps we no longer have time because we are so busy with things material. Wouldn't it please God if right here and now we pledge to attend prayer meeting from now onward?

Of course, without proper planning and execution, the midweek meeting can be as irrelevant as an old Sears, Roebuck catalog or as out of date as a Christmas card list. However, it need not be so. It can be the greatest and most powerful force to keep the church members marching toward the heavenly Canaan. In these days of stress and strain

why don't we find more joy in assembling to praise the Lord for His goodness?

We are told by the messenger of the Lord, "Every heavenly intelligence is interested in the assemblies of the saints who on earth meet to worship God. In the inner court of heaven they listen to the testimony of the witnesses for Christ in the outer court on earth, and the praise and thanksgiving from the worshipers below is taken up in the heavenly anthem, and praise and rejoicing sound through the heavenly courts because Christ has not died in vain for the fallen sons of Adam."—*Ibid.*, vol. 6, p. 366.

Although worship is of great importance and should not be neglected, it never can be confined to the temple. We should always live in the atmosphere of prayer. The Christian life is worship. Years ago, when I first came to the city of Los Angeles, I found myself experiencing frustration having to drive in city traffic. The stop lights bothered me. It was a great change from the experience of driving in rural South Lancaster, Massachusetts. More often than not the accelerator would be pushed down in the hope of making the intersection before the caution light would slow me down.

The solution to my problem was found in relaxing and offering a short prayer every time the red light said Stop. It was surprising how quickly my frustration vanished. I could even thank God for the stop signal. Even in a few seconds on a busy street one can lift his heart to God in praise and thanksgiving. I found that some red lights stay on long enough to allow time to repeat a text or two, such as "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest."

#### Worship at the Family Altar

One of the greatest blessings of worship is experienced in the home, around the family altar. There are many sacred memories in my life, but the one most cherished is of the family kneeling at the altar. Those of us who have heard our names in mother's prayer have a strange and good feeling come over us when we hear someone sing "My Name in Mother's Prayer."

"That pleading heart, that soul so tried,  
has gone into her rest,  
But still with me for aye shall be the  
memory of her trust,  
And when I cross the Jordan tide,  
and meet her over there  
We'll praise the Lord, who blessed  
that word, my name in mother's  
prayer."

One wonders why the healing experience of family worship is neglected so much in a day when we need it so much. It is a spiritual uplift to start the day

in the atmosphere of a praying family. "Love to God is learned at the family altar, of the father and mother in very babyhood."—*Ibid.*, vol. 5, p. 416. During this Week of Prayer let us re-establish the broken-down family altars. Family worship opens the floodgates for the sunshine of God's love to flow into the home circle.

No matter when or where we worship it should always be with the desire to get a clearer vision of God. When the prophet Isaiah stood under the portico of the Temple he said, "I saw also the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up, and his train filled the temple" (Isa. 6:1). "Suddenly the gate and the inner veil of the temple seemed to be uplifted or withdrawn. . . . There rose before him a vision of Jehovah."—*Prophets and Kings*, p. 307. And he cried, "Woe is me! for I am undone."

The prophet watched "the play and movement of the ancient ceremony, so rich in symbolism, in color, and in music. To the worshipers it was a drama, familiar but still enthralling, that and nothing more. But to Isaiah, who had walked with God and grown ever more sensitive to spiritual and eternal values, suddenly there came an awareness of the divine reality behind the symbolism. . . . *There is an ultimate solitude about all great spiritual experiences. In that supreme moment Isaiah was alone with God.*"—*Interpreters Bible*, on Isa. 6:1-13, p. 205. (Italics supplied.)

Seeing God we realize the depth of our own unworthiness and sense anew the love of God. It is the greatness of God that calls us to worship. When the whole church is united in prayer, motives are purified and petty jealousies are forgiven and forgotten. The Holy Spirit takes complete control, and hearts are subdued. In Christian fellowship, those who are discouraged find courage and hope, those who are lonely find strength. In confession, individual and corporate, we are uniting with the heavenly hosts. In united prayer our judgment is sharpened, our consecration is renewed. The wall erected by sin is broken down and man is reconciled to God in Christ.

Corporate worship is vital and important. But let us never forget that without members praying at home around the family altar, in the office, in the field, in the closet, or wherever, corporate worship in the church may be an empty and hollow ceremony. Our prayer should be: "Teach me the ritual that runs beyond

The rote of words the flexing of  
the knee:

Let me be always, Lord of Life,  
with Thee!"

—ROBERT WHITAKER, in *Treasury of Poems for Worship*, p. 256 ♦♦

# The Dynamic of Hope

By ELLEN G. WHITE

**B**LESSED be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead." Is there any reason why this lively hope should not give us as much confidence and joy at this time, as it gave the disciples in the early church? Christ is not inclosed in Joseph's new tomb. He is risen, and has ascended up on high, and we are to act out our faith, that the world may see that we have a lively hope, and may know that we have a Friend at the heavenly court.

We are begotten again unto a lively hope, and to an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for us. Our hope is not without foundation; our inheritance is not corruptible. It is not the subject of imagination, but it is reserved in heaven for us "who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last time."<sup>1</sup>

The apostle Paul exhorts us to lay hold on the hope set before us in the gospel. By faith we are to appropriate the promises of God, and to provide ourselves with the abundant blessings which have been secured for us through Christ Jesus. Hope has been set before us, even the hope of eternal life.

Nothing short of this blessing for us will satisfy our Redeemer; but it is our part to lay hold upon this hope by faith in Him who has promised. We may expect to suffer; for it is those who are partakers with Him in His sufferings, who shall be partakers with Him in His glory. He has purchased forgiveness and immortality for the sinful, perishing souls of men; but it is our part to receive these gifts by faith. . . .

We are to understand that we may confidently expect God's favor not only in this world, but in the heavenly world, since He paid such a price for our salvation. Faith in the atonement and intercession of Christ will keep us steadfast and immovable amid the temptations that press upon us in the church militant. Let us contemplate the glorious hope that is set before us, and by faith lay hold upon it.

We must not permit Satan to cast

his hellish shadow athwart our pathway, and accomplish his purpose of eclipsing the bright views of our future reward. Let us not look upon his shadow of darkness. We gain heaven not through our own merits, but through the merits of Jesus Christ. We cannot find salvation in our own individual selves; we are to look unto Jesus, who is the author and finisher of our faith, and as we look, we live.

Satan would point us to ourselves, and seek to make us feel that we must bear our own sins. How hard poor mortals strive to be sin-bearers for themselves and for others! but the only sin-bearer is Jesus Christ. He alone can be my substitute and sin-bearer. The forerunner of Christ exclaimed, "Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world." Shall we not give up our sins, and let them go? Shall we not turn from them and hate them, and still remember that Christ regards His human agents as of great value? We cannot calculate the estimate placed upon the soul.

Then take your eyes off yourself, and encourage hope and confidence in Christ. Let your hope not be centered in yourself, but in Him who has entered within the veil. Talk of the blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ.

It is true that we are exposed to great moral peril; it is true that we are in danger of being corrupted. But this danger threatens us only as we trust in self, and look no higher than our own human efforts. In doing this we shall make shipwreck of faith.

## Our Hope a Firm Anchor

Our hope of salvation is an anchor to the soul, both sure and steadfast, when it entereth into that which is within the veil. Anchored in Christ, the soul, like a ship amid the raging elements, tempest-tossed and driven, is immovable. It is not driven on the rocks or drawn into the whirlpool.

"Wherefore didst thou doubt?" said Christ to the sinking Peter. The same question may be addressed to us. Why do we dishonor God with our shameful unbelief? The Lord has pledged Himself to give us strength to enable us to stand. As we search the Scriptures, we

find ground for confidence, provision for sufficiency. It is our privilege to say boldly, yet humbly, The Lord is my helper, therefore I shall not be moved from my steadfastness. My life is hid with Christ in God. Because He lives, I shall live also.

Let us pledge ourselves before God and the angels of heaven that we will not dishonor God by speaking words of discouragement or unbelief. If we talk faith, we shall have faith; we shall be confirmed in faith. Close the door to distrust, and open the door wide to faith. Invite into the soul temple the heavenly Guest. Let every word we utter, every line we trace with the pen, give evidence of unwavering faith.

## Our Personal Friend

Let us not think that Jesus is the Saviour of someone else, but that He is our personal friend. Entertain the precious thought that Jesus loves me. In this way the cloud of despondency and gloom will be rolled back from the soul, and we shall be enabled to make melody in our hearts unto God. We may triumph in the Lord, every day acknowledging the fact that our heavenly treasure, our everlasting portion, is sure to us through the atonement and righteousness of Jesus Christ. Believing this ourselves, we shall be able to aid others to see that their only help is in God, and encourage them to flee for refuge to Christ, laying hold on the hope set before us in the gospel.

You need never feel that you are alone. Angels are your companions. The Comforter that Jesus Christ promised to send in His name, abides with you. Christ said of His followers, "Ye are the light of the world." It is your part to let the light shine forth in clear, steady rays.<sup>2</sup>

In the darkest hours, under circumstances the most forbidding, the Christian believer may keep his soul stayed upon the source of all light and power. Day by day, through faith in God, his hope and courage may be renewed. "The just shall live by his faith." In the service of God there need be no despondency, no wavering, no fear. The Lord will more than fulfill the highest expectations of those who put their trust in Him. He will give them the wisdom their varied necessities demand. . . .

We must cherish and cultivate the faith of which prophets and apostles have testified—the faith that lays hold on the promises of God, and waits for deliverance in His appointed time and way. The sure word of prophecy will meet its final fulfillment in the glorious advent of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, as King of kings and Lord of lords.<sup>3</sup>

There is a heaven before us, a crown

of life to win. But to the overcomer only is the reward given. He who gains heaven must be clothed with the robe of righteousness. "Every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure." In the character of Christ there was no discord of any kind. And this must be our experience. Our lives must be controlled by the principles that controlled His life.

### Christ in Our Homes

Are we keeping our eyes fixed upon the perfect pattern, or are we lowering the standard? We need the faith that works by love and purifies the heart. We need to bring Christ into our homes. We cannot afford to be without His help. He says, "Ye are the light of the world." He has brought His people together in church capacity in order that He may teach them to put off the world and prepare for heaven. He came to this world to raise men and women from the degradation of sin, and fit them for heaven. What more could God have done for us than He has done? And how shall we escape if we neglect so great salvation. . . .

All who will can be overcomers. Let us strive earnestly to reach the standard set before us. Christ knows our weakness, and to Him we can go daily for help. It is not necessary for us to gain strength a month ahead. We are to conquer from day to day.

This earth is the place of preparation for heaven. The time spent here is the Christian's winter. Here the chilly winds of affliction blow upon us, and the waves of trouble roll against us. But in the near future, when Christ comes, sorrow and sighing will be forever ended. Then will be the Christian's summer. All trials will be over, and there will be no more sickness or death. "God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes, and there shall be no more death, neither shall there be any more pain; for the former things have passed away."<sup>4</sup>

### We Shall Soon Be There

In our love for Christ we long to see Him as He is. And the time is soon coming, when we shall see Him. Concerning this time John the Revelator says, "And he showed me a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb. In the midst of the street of it, and on either side of the river, was there the tree of life, which bear twelve manner of fruits, and yielded her fruit every month: and the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations." . . . Let us praise God for the tree of life, the leaves of which are for the healing of the nations.

"And there shall be no more curse." Everywhere the effects of the curse are

seen. Let us praise God that in the earth made new "there shall be no more curse: but the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it; and his servants shall serve him." . . .

Notice particularly the next verse: "And they shall see his face; and his name shall be in their foreheads." When the glory of God rests upon the Redeemed, they recognize Christ, for they see Him as He is. And the happiness revealed in their countenances is indescribable.

"And there shall be no night there; and they need no candle, neither light of the sun; for the Lord God giveth them light: and they shall reign forever and ever." They will reign on His throne, because they have obediently served Him in this world, forming characters for the future immortal life.<sup>5</sup>

### Happy Rewards of the Earth Made New

In the earth made new, the redeemed will engage in the occupations and pleasures that brought happiness to Adam and Eve in the beginning. The Eden life will be lived, the life in garden and field. "They shall build houses, and inhabit them; and they shall plant vineyards, and eat the fruit of them. They shall not build, and another inhabit; they shall not plant, and another eat: for as the days of a tree are the days of my people, and mine elect shall long enjoy the work of their hands" (Isa. 65:21, 22).

There every power will be developed, every capability increased. The grandest enterprises will be carried forward, the loftiest aspirations will be reached, the highest ambitions realized. And still there will appear new heights to surmount, new wonders to admire, new truths to comprehend, fresh objects of study to call forth the powers of body and mind and soul.

The prophets to whom these great scenes were revealed longed to understand their full import. They "inquired and searched diligently: . . . searching what, or what manner of time the Spirit of Christ which was in them did signify. . . . Unto whom it was revealed, that not unto themselves, but unto us they did minister the things, which are now reported unto you" (1 Peter 1:10-12).

To us who are standing on the very verge of their fulfillment, of what deep moment, what living interest, are these delineations of the things to come—events for which, since our first parents

turned their steps from Eden, God's children have watched and waited, longed and prayed!

Fellow pilgrim, we are still amid the shadows and turmoil of earthly activities; but soon our Saviour is to appear to bring deliverance and rest. Let us by faith behold the blessed hereafter, as pictured by the hand of God. He who died for the sins of the world is opening wide the gates of Paradise to all who believe on Him. Soon the battle will have been fought, the victory won. Soon we shall see Him in whom our hopes of eternal life are centered. And in His presence the trials and sufferings of this life will seem as nothingness. The former things "shall not be remembered, nor come into mind."

### Cast Not Away Your Confidence

"Cast not away therefore your confidence, which hath great recompense of reward. For ye have need of patience, that, after ye have done the will of God, ye might receive the promise. For yet a little while, and he that shall come will come, and will not tarry." "Israel shall be saved . . . with an everlasting salvation: ye shall not be ashamed nor confounded world without end." (Isa. 65:17; Heb. 10:35-37; Isa. 45:17.)

Look up, look up, and let your faith continually increase. Let this faith guide you along the narrow path that leads through the gates of the city into the great beyond, the wide, unbounded future of glory that is for the redeemed. "Be patient therefore, brethren, unto the coming of the Lord. Behold, the husbandman waiteth for the precious fruit of the earth, and hath long patience for it, until he receive the early and latter rain. Be ye also patient; stablish your hearts: for the coming of the Lord draweth nigh" (James 5:7, 8).<sup>6</sup>

In His own time God will fulfill His word.

Shall any become weary now? Shall we lose our hold on faith when we are so near the eternal world? Shall any say, The city is a great way off?—No, no. A little longer, and we shall see the King in His beauty. A little longer, and He will wipe all tears from our eyes. A little longer, and He will present us "faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy."<sup>7</sup> ♦♦

<sup>1</sup> *Review and Herald*, Aug. 6, 1889.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, June 9, 1896.

<sup>3</sup> *Prophets and Kings*, p. 386.

<sup>4</sup> Manuscript 28, 1886.

<sup>5</sup> Manuscript 110, 1901.

<sup>6</sup> *Prophets and Kings*, pp. 730-732.

<sup>7</sup> *Review and Herald*, Nov. 13, 1913.

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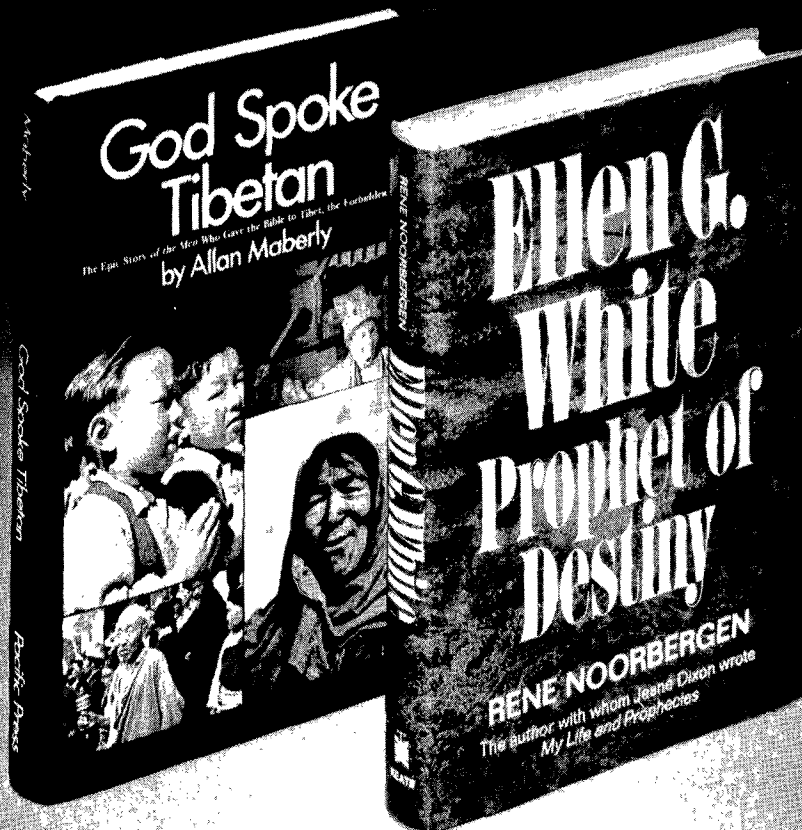
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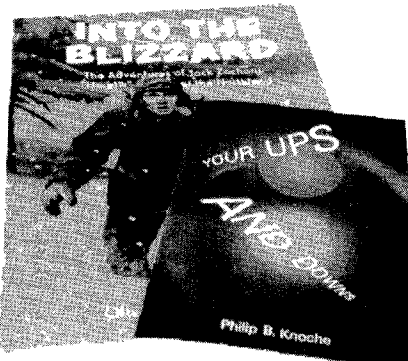
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# God Wants Only the Best for You

By **CONNIE FRENCH**



## GENERAL INTRODUCTION

A NINE-YEAR-OLD girl remained seated during the final appeal to "give your heart to Jesus" at the close of one Week of Prayer. It was not that she did not love Jesus or that she did not want to do what was right. It was just that she thought it improper to stand when she didn't understand what for. The fact is, few people can adequately define to a child what "give your heart to Jesus" means.

The lesson in this incident is that, as adults, we must learn to communicate with the child in words and ideas that have meaning for him. We must start with the simple, known, everyday things and proceed to the spiritual realities as did Jesus. What we say must be logically and Biblically sound in presentation and warm with sincere faith. Further, we need to remind ourselves that when we are speaking to an audience of children we must be evangelical. We are there to proclaim the good news of salvation through the Lord Jesus Christ.

Also, it would be well to remember Paul's

words in 1 Corinthians 1:18, R.S.V. The power of the gospel is not in our eloquence or emotive language. It is in the "word of the cross"—the message, the facts. We are trying to convey those facts. To clarify the "word of the cross" within the scope of the set topics is the aim of this week's lessons.

The specific story illustrations are suggestive. Personal or local ones are often more relevant. There may sometimes be deliberate repetition of concepts, approached from different angles. It is better to teach one point than to fail to teach ten. Children usually have a very vague understanding of religious terms. They have to be defined.

Activity work provided at the end of each lesson can be a means of fixing a vital point in mind.

If we sow the seed, which is the Word of God, God's own life is there in it, and it will spring up of itself we know not how. We can but plant, but *He* will give the increase.

kind or good. The introductory point can be established by questioning the children and allowing them to respond.)

In both of these pictures there must have been some trouble. What are the children in this picture doing about it? Will this make them happy? What is the boy in this other picture doing? Is doing this a good thing or a bad thing? Which picture would be the best one to be in as part of it?

The trouble is that sometimes we seem to be in the wrong picture. We'd like to be in this one, but we are in the other one. If we are in the one full of fighting, we do not feel happy. We need a power to help us decide the right way to act so that we will be in the right picture. God has power like that.

### *A. The Name of God's Power*

The name of something often tells us about the power of that thing. The name, motorcycle tells us that the motor has something to do with the cycle. The name sailboat tells us that the sail has something to do with the power of the boat. The name steam engine suggests that steam has something to do with power. So the names of God tell us something of His power. When we call Him Creator, we mean that He has power to make things that were not there before. When we call Him "The Lord Our Righteousness," we

may think of Him as having power to give us to live right. When the children of Israel talked of God as their deliverer, they meant that He had the power to get them out of trouble, such as the slavery of Egypt. When we speak of Jesus as Saviour, we mean that He has power to help us get out of some kind of trouble too. I wonder what name of God we would use when we talk of Him as having power to help us make up our minds to do the right thing.

Let us think about the power of some other things. [Use a toy car, ship, and picture of a child eating to illustrate the different types of power. Refer to experiences or stories such as the following.] The other day I saw a man trying to push his car along the road. Why do you think he was pushing it? Why didn't he sit inside and drive it? Because something was wrong with it so that it had no power. It was useless without motor power. [Place the car in a position where it can be seen and referred to as the lesson progresses. Write *Motor-Power* on a chalkboard if the children are old enough to appreciate a verbal summary.]

Now notice the difference in the power of the sailboat [show model or picture]. You know, of course, what makes these go. It is the power of wind blowing. We could call this wind-power. [Add to summary.]

We need power to make our bodies act too. What kind of power is that? Where do we get muscle power and brain power? Food is the fuel for the body. We could call it food-power. Food is often called by the word bread. We could call our body-power, bread-power. [Add to summary.]

[Illustrate with a child from the audience.] Robert, here, has body-power. He can use his body-power to act. But perhaps he has a problem like the rest of us. His hand can hit his brother or dry the dishes for mother. His mind must choose. What power will help his mind to choose to do what will make him do right and be happy?

We know what happens if we put the wrong kind of fuel into an engine. It will not go properly. If there is no wind for a sailing ship, it cannot get to shore. If we do not eat foods that make our bodies well and strong, they will not go properly either. The right fuel is important.

Now here is some good news. Jesus told the people who followed Him to hear what He had to say, that there is truly a power for our minds and lives just as there is power for our bodies. He referred to names like "the bread of life," "the water of life." And the Bible talks about the spirit of power. Jesus also calls that power the "Spirit of truth." [Add to the outline a

## FIRST DAY

### HOW CAN I HAVE A HAPPY LIFE?

KEY TEXT: Romans 1:16: "I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation."

AIM: To give children the assurance that God gives the power for them to be happy.

AIMS: Two contrasting pictures of children, one showing children behaving in a way that can quickly be identified as bad, and the other as good. Toy car, picture of a sailing ship, and a picture of a child eating. *Today's English Version* of the New Testament. Individual sheets with outline dotted sailing boat and key text printed in sail.

INTRODUCTION: The things we see that move or act need a power to move them. We ourselves have such power. But one of our problems is that we sometimes move in the wrong way. We do things that are bad and make us unhappy. We need a power to do what is right and good. God can give us this power.

(Show the two pictures: (a) of children fighting or being bad; (b) of children being

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sketch of a head with "truth" written in the mind.] If I put the right fuel into my car, it will give me the things that I want from a car—a comfortable ride, the ability to go fast or to stop at the traffic lights, and so forth. If I have a good wind behind my sailboat, I will be able to go where I wish to in it. If I eat the best foods, I will have the pleasure of being able to play with my friends, read, work, and do many things. The same with our minds. If we have in them the Spirit of power, God's Spirit of truth, the Bible tells us that He will put into our lives the things we want there—love and joy, happiness, patience, self-control, and contentment. I certainly would like to know more about how it works. I would like to see how it worked in another person, wouldn't you? We have often seen how a life works without it.

#### B. The Source of God's Power

Once there was a boy who believed that the only thing he could do in meeting his problems was to fight. He lived a lot of his life fighting the other boys where he lived. One day his best friend was killed in a fight. He knew that he too could be killed at any time. He became frightened. He had no peace in his mind; he had no joy. He lived in fear and restlessness. He spent his days fighting and his nights wishing he could die. He was completely miserable. He hated everyone, and it seemed that everyone hated him. I am glad to say that one day someone did start caring for him, and he gradually learned about the power of God. But in the first part of his life he knew only what it was like to be without any power to make him happy.

There was another boy once who grew to be a man. But He thought in quite a different way. He did not believe in fighting as a way of solving His problems, even though He had lots of problems. One of His friends suggested that He should fight to get Himself out of trouble. But He said that that was not the way. This man believed in loving His enemies. He believed in dying to help them. He believed in praying for the people who treated Him badly, who did horrible things to Him. He believed in doing good things to those who hated Him. He believed in forgiving people who were acting in a bad way because they didn't know any better.

All these things He did in His life. He was kind even to the man He knew was going to sell Him to be killed. He was kind and prayed for the man He knew was going to pretend he never knew Him. Even when He was tired and hungry He thought of helping other people who were in need and of making them comfortable. He never paid back a bad deed with a bad deed. Oh, no. He didn't react in anger to bad things that people did to Him. He treated them in God's way.

Now you might think that He would feel miserable. You might think that if you acted in that way you wouldn't be a bit happy. On the other hand, we know we would like to be treated the way He treated people. We like people to understand when we make a mistake and forgive us. We like them to be kind to us. We like them to stand by us when we are in trouble. We know that Jesus acted in the way that would make us feel comfortable with Him

if we went to Him for help, or even if we made mistakes.

Now, I will tell you something that I think is most interesting. Jesus talked as though He was the happiest man on earth. He talked about wanting people to have His joy in them. He talked about leaving His peace with people. He talked about living in love. He spoke the rules of happiness in His sermon because He knew all about them. What a wonderful thought—that doing the right things and being happy go together. Jesus seems to be telling us that if we only follow Him we will know what it is like to have a happy life—doing what is right and feeling happy.

We might ask, What was the power that so filled His life that He could be like that? You will remember the record of His baptism. At the beginning of His work as the Messiah—the One God anointed—the power of God came to Him in a special way. The power of God was the Spirit of truth and of power. Jesus was the truth in person. He spoke the truth in His life by word and deed and showed us how God's truth-power works to make a life both good and happy.

#### C. Finding the Power to Help

A question that comes to our mind when we hear about Jesus is, How can I be more like He was? How can I find that Spirit of truth and power? How can He work in my life?

Let us think for a moment about our other kinds of power. If I want gas to make my car go and I don't know where the gas station is, what do I do? Yes, I ask someone who has filled up his car at a gas station and follow his directions. If I want some bread and don't know where the store is, I ask someone who has bought some already. If I want my sailboat to go, I must find out where the wind is blowing and in which way. Also, if I want the Spirit of truth and power in my mind and life, I would ask the One who has shown His life to be full of it. If He tells me how that Spirit works or where He may be found or in what way He comes, then I would listen most carefully, for He would know the answers.

I wonder what Jesus said we could do to invite into our lives the presence of the Spirit of God, which is called the Holy Spirit. That is the name by which we know that power that comes into our hearts and helps us to live and act right.

Jesus told us that His Father would send the Holy Spirit to us. And Paul tells us what the Spirit will do. Listen to what Paul says (Eph. 3:16; T.E.V.).\* "I ask God, from the wealth of his glory, to give you power through his Spirit to be strong in your inner selves."

You see, then, how we get the power to do right. God sends the Holy Spirit right into our inner selves, our hearts. The Holy Spirit will make us strong to do right. He will give us a new and happy life. We will begin to share the kind of life Jesus lived, to do what is right, and feel happy.

Remember that once you put the gas in the car you do not have to push it to get it to go. Of course, you still have to do something. You have to steer the car. If we depend wholly on what Jesus said and in His power to help us, He will give us the power to make us go right. Our big job is to choose to trust Jesus. We are to receive Him, the Bible tells us, and He will give us the power to become truly God's children.

Whatever God asks us to do, He will give us the power to do. When God chose Moses to lead His people out of Egypt, He gave him power to do it. When Jesus asked His disciples to go out and preach the good news He gave them power to do it. When He asks us to obey His words He will give us the power to do that, too.

If you keep wanting to do wrong things God doesn't say that you are too bad to help. He doesn't say you must try harder. No, He reminds us that He won the battle for us. In Jesus, God died to take away the power of sin. He wants to take that power from our lives.

Once there was a boy going to a new school. He was frightened because he knew there was a big bully at the school who would beat up on him. As he was going down the street one day he saw the bully coming toward him. He was scared. As the bully bared his fists to fight, the boy remembered what God had said to a man called Zerubbabel a long time ago. He too had something hard to do. God's message to him was, "Not by might, nor by power, but by my spirit, saith the Lord of hosts." The boy said the words over and over in his mind as he trusted God for power. He did not fight. Suddenly the bully put down his fists and stalked off, warning the other boys not to fight with the new boy.

Jesus has the power we need. Let us trust Him. He said He would never leave us.

**APPLICATION WORK:** The children can be given a piece of paper with a sea drawn on it and a boat and a dot-to-dot sail on the boat. Have them fill in the dots to make the sail, then print the key text on the sail. They will be reminded of the wind-power of the sailing ship as an illustration of the power of God's Spirit to bring lives into harmony with Him.

\* From the *Today's English Version of the New Testament*. Copyright © American Bible Society 1966.

H. A. ROBERTS



## SECOND DAY

### WHO CARES ABOUT ME?

**KEY TEXT:** 1 John 4:9: "In this was manifested the love of God toward us, because that God sent his only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through him."

**AIM:** To show children that God's act in Jesus reveals His deepest love for us—a love we may seek to share.

**AIDS:** Picture Roll pictures of the Bible stories mentioned below. Picture of a riot. Pictures to illustrate the story of Barabbas and the crucifixion.

**INTRODUCTION:** If at school we saw a boy hitting another boy, what do you think the boy doing the hitting would be thinking? If on the way home we saw a boy stop talking with his friends to go and help an old lady lift her bags into a car, what kind of thoughts would he be thinking? Can we see what people are thinking? How do we know what they are thinking? What we do shows what we think.

Can you give me some more illustrations of the way people's thinking is shown by their acting or doing? Of course, we can't be sure that we are always seeing the things other people are doing in the same way they see them themselves. We only make a guess about other people. We can be more sure of finding out how we think ourselves if we ask ourselves why we do certain things.

For instance, suppose a schoolmate takes my notebook and puts his name on it, and I punch him in the nose. I might ask myself, Why did I punch him in the nose? Was it because I thought he should be punished? Did I think it would make him give it back? Was it because I was mad at him? Was punching him in the nose a good thing to do? Would there have been a better way to act?

If the next time I see him I speak politely to him or offer to buy him a notebook with my pocket money, I am showing that I have changed my thinking. [If the children indicate that they wouldn't do that, it could be mentioned that that was the kind of thing Jesus said was a good way to act—take people by surprise in doing more than was required, such as going two miles, et cetera.] Jesus often mentioned the need to change our thinking, and we can see why. Our wrong thinking is what leads to wrong acting. However, right acting also shows us that there is some right thinking going on. Yes, what we do reveals what we think.

#### *A. Lives That Tell of Love*

Now I am going to start telling you some stories from the Bible. When you think you know the name of the person I am talking about, put up your hand. Don't put up your hand until you are sure. [When a child is chosen you or he may briefly conclude the story.]

1. Once there was a young prince whose father, the king, was tall and handsome. The king had won many battles. The prince would be king after his father, and I guess he wanted that very much. The prince had a very dear friend who was not rich or important. One day the prince found out that a prophet had said that God wanted this friend of his to be the next king.

Usually, that would ruin the friendship. But these young men had given their lives to God. They pledged to trust each other completely, to be friends forever, and to do what God wanted. Who were they? (1 Sam. 18:1, 2; 2 Sam. 1:26.)

2. Once there was a woman who decided to go to live with her dead husband's mother in a country that she had never seen before. It was hard for her to make the decision, for she would be leaving all of her family and would know no one but her mother-in-law in the new country. She knew that many things would be strange and different, but she went anyway. Who was she? (Ruth 1.)

3. Once there was a king who had a rebellious son. The son wanted to be king instead of his father or brothers. He tried to get all the people to choose him as king by making promises to them. He said he would do a lot of good things for them. Then he led an army to fight against his own father and his soldiers. The king had to leave the palace quickly. Later the king's army went to capture the prince. As they were going the king asked them to please treat the prince gently. However, the soldiers killed him, and the king said, "O my son, my son, if only I could have died for you, my son, my son." Who was the king? The prince? (2 Sam. 19.)

Let us ask ourselves some questions about what these people did. What does it tell us about their thinking? [Show appropriate Picture Roll picture as each is discussed. Picture Rolls are suitable even for older children.]

Why did the prince who found out his friend was going to be king instead of him act as he did? What made the girl go away to a strange, unfriendly country? What made the king want to die instead of his son?

These people all had something in common in their thinking. They were thinking of what was best for someone else, not just themselves. Because they were caring for someone else in their thinking, they could care about someone else in their acting too. They couldn't act in a kind way if they didn't think that way first. This way of thinking is called love. Love is a way of thinking that makes us decide to do what is right and good for someone else even if it means something unpleasant for us.

One day a little girl was having her breakfast before going to school for the first time. She was going with her big sisters. She had heard that sometimes children get punished at school. "What if I have to get the strap?" she asked.

"Don't you worry," her big sister said. "I'll have it for you." In that moment big sister was thinking of making someone else happy and unafraid more than she was thinking of her own comfort. That is love.

#### *B. Love Stronger Than Death*

[Show some pictures of riots as an introduction to the story of Barabbas and of Christ's death in his place—and ours.]

Notice what these people are doing. How would you describe it? Why do you think they are acting like that? They are making a fuss. Certainly they think something is wrong. They are angry. They are acting in a way that they think might help whatever is wrong to be made right again. They are

likely to pick on the wrong people. They may cause people harm. Maybe they want to get rid of the cause of some trouble. But they are likely to make a big mistake about who or what is the real cause and also in what to do about it.

Once, long ago, there was a man who got into trouble in a riot like this. He and a group of people with him were angry with the people who governed the land. They wanted to be free from them, so they decided to rebel. They even decided to fight and to kill. In the war, this man, called Barabbas, killed someone, and he was arrested and put in prison.

His punishment for killing someone was that he had to be killed himself. He lay in prison waiting for soldiers to come and take him out to be killed. They would make him carry a big cross out of the city, and on it they would hang him up to die.

One day the soldiers came. They took off the prisoner's chains. They led him out of the prison. Then one of them said something amazing. It went something like this. "You are free. You don't have to die. The people have chosen someone else to die instead of you." That someone was Jesus. Jesus chose to die for Barabbas and everyone else. The soldiers had no power over Him but what God had given them, and Jesus had chosen to accept death. Jesus wanted Barabbas to live. He loved that man more than He loved His own life. How wonderful to be loved like that!

#### *C. Saved by Love*

Yet we are loved like that. That is another part of the good news Jesus came to show us. We have all done wrong things. We have all done things and thought things that are wrong. We are sinners. We are not full of goodness. We are more like being full of badness.

An apple that has gone bad in the middle can't stay good-looking on the outside for long, can it? We are much like that. The badness that is in us, whether little or much, would soon make us too bad to be of any more use. However, Jesus did not have any badness in Him—not the smallest bit. However, He chose to take the results of our badness on Himself and to die in our place so that He might be able to give us the life that belongs to Him.

It is as though we have all jumped off a cliff, and we cannot go back. We have put our feet in the fire, and we cannot help getting burned. We have worried the bees and gotten stung. We have upset the canoe in the middle of the river, and we cannot get back to the bank. We have walked off the path in the woods and gotten lost. We have broken the rules and can only expect punishment. We have done all the wrong things that make us feel bad and lead to death.

But God made us. Do you think He wants to see us die forever? If I paint a picture, am I happy when my sister spills ink all over it? If I make a soapbox racer, am I happy if a truck backs into it and smashes it? If I have a little baby brother, am I happy if he grabs an electric wire and kills himself? Of course not. Well, we are God's children. He doesn't want to see us die either. So He made a way out. It was not an easy way out. Yet He knew that if He died in our place, then we would not have

to die forever. That is why God sent His own Son Jesus to die for us. It was as though we jumped off the cliff, but God fell on the rocks. We put our feet in the fire, but God was burned. We swatted the bees, but God was stung. We upset the canoe, but God drowned. We walked off the path, but God got lost. We broke the rules of life, but God took the punishment of death.

In Jesus, God died for us. God was telling us the day Jesus died that He would rather die Himself than let us die. He loves us as much as that. He also loves other people as much as that. Since we are so loved of God, let us share His love with others.

**APPLICATION WORK:** Because the cross reminds us that God so loved us as to send His Son to die for us, let us make a cross. [The children can mark a paper cross with lead pencil using plenty of lead. This can then be cut out and placed on another piece of paper and held in position while the lead is wiped off onto the under sheet. The words of the key text or a shorter one, such as "God Is Love," can be written above it.]

### THIRD DAY

## WHOM CAN I TRUST?

**KEY TEXT:** John 10:27, 28: "My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me: . . . neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand."

**AIM:** To show children that it is reasonable, practical, and satisfying to trust God's authority in both His law and His promises.

**Ans:** Box in which are easily identifiable seeds or seedlings, an egg, a ball, and a ticket.

[Take a seed, perhaps a pumpkin seed, out of the box.] I took this seed out of a pumpkin. If I plant it in the springtime, what will grow? How do you know? [Someone might indicate that he thinks this a silly question. This is good. Ask, Why do you think it is a silly question? Bring out the fact that he thinks it a silly question because he's so sure of the answer. He is so sure of the causal laws of nature.] If I plant this seedling [another from the box], what will grow? If a mother hen sits on this egg, what will hatch? Do you think so? Not an elephant? Of course not.

You see, by looking at the kind of seed or egg, we can tell what is going to grow from it in a few weeks or months. That is, if we recognize the seed and the egg. We believe that there are rules for growing things. We believe that these things keep to the rules. If we couldn't trust these rules, we might put in a crop of tomato seedlings and get thistles. We know that seeds from plants do not grow up into different kinds of plants. I trust that when I plant this seed, I will get this fruit. If I have this egg hatched, it will give me a chicken.

Let's think of some other laws. I have a ball here. Jim, will you catch it? Throw it back, please. You notice Jim was quite sure that the ball would go the way he threw it. He was not afraid it would go backwards and hit him in the nose. There must be laws about how things move too. Every time I throw a ball or turn a skipping rope I am trusting the laws of movement.

[Produce a bus ticket and illustrate the point of trusting people.] I wanted to go the most direct way to [name a distant city] the other day, so I decided to catch a bus. I went to the station and paid for a little piece of paper this size. This is all I got. But with it I could travel to the city—if I believed what the man told me. Look how much I trusted. I trusted that the bus would come, that the people who made the timetable did not lie, and that the people who ran the busses would keep their word to arrive. I trusted that the bus would go where the man told me it would. I trusted the man to give me the right change and the right ticket, et cetera. We have to trust people to be able to carry on with our work.

Someone I trusted a lot when I was a little girl was my daddy. He would take me down to the creek for a swim. I could not swim. He would stand in the water and say, "Jump." Only if he caught me would I be saved from drowning. I didn't worry. I knew he would catch me.

How else do we trust people? Is trusting a person the same as trusting the law of a growing seed? Why not?

#### *A. Faith in People Involves Risk*

Right here we have a problem. It is possible for people to tell lies while seeds do not. It is possible for people to go against the laws that should rule them.

One day a very small girl came to her mother and said she wanted to catch a bird. Another person who was talking to her mother said, "Oh, you know how you can catch a bird? Well, you get a salt shaker. Then you creep up behind the bird and put salt on his tail. Then you can catch him."

The child was very happy. She was only very little, remember. She thought she now knew how to catch a bird for a pet. She ran off with a salt shaker.

You know, of course, that she couldn't catch a bird that way. She didn't even get near one. She was most upset. When her mother told her that she couldn't catch a bird like that, she said, "Well, why did that man tell me that? How did I know? I'm too little to know that. Big people shouldn't tell little people things that aren't true!"

Some people do try to give us wrong rules about life. People in television advertisements often do. They try to make us think that if we buy some particular thing it will give us a great deal of happiness. They promise a happiness that really can't come by buying things. Real happiness can come only as a gift from God. We have to be careful about whose words we trust.

This means we have to make decisions about things. We have to decide whether we can trust certain things and people, or not.

#### *B. We Can Trust the Creator*

I read a story about a man who was driving his car down a road one day many years ago. He was rolling along enjoying the ride, when all at once the motor just quit. He got out and looked under the hood. He moved this thing and pushed that thing, but he wasn't much of a mechanic. Everything looked all right to him, but his car wouldn't go.

There was no garage for several miles,

and the man didn't know what he was going to do.

Just then he saw another car coming down the road. That car stopped, and a man got out and asked whether he could help. The stranger looked under the hood for a minute, then he did something with the motor. The owner of the car couldn't see what it was. Then the man who had just come said, "Start it. It will go now." And sure enough, the car started right away.

The man who owned the car was very thankful. He wanted to pay the other man for helping him, but he would take nothing.

Then he said, "Perhaps you will tell me who you are."

And the man who had helped him said, "My name is Henry Ford."

The car that had been fixed was a Ford car. So of course Henry Ford knew how to fix it. You see, he had made it, so he could be trusted to fix it.

You know, don't you, that God designed us and made us. We call Him the Creator. He knows all about life, and all about us. There isn't anything about us that He doesn't know. And no matter what goes wrong with us, He can fix it. If we get sick, He can heal us. If we do wrong, He can forgive us, and give us strength not to do wrong.

Let me tell you something else. We not only call the One who created us and all the world and everything, Creator, but He has another name by which we call Him, too. That name is Jesus.

You see, Jesus is God. He came down from heaven to become like us. And down here people called Him Jesus. And we call Him Jesus.

So Jesus, who created us, knows all the laws of living. So, just as I can ask the man who made my car to fix it, so I can go to Jesus who made me. I can trust in Him because He knows all about me.

#### *C. Putting Our Trust in God*

[Use illustrations from the Gospels to encourage children to join you in putting trust in the God who was revealed in Christ. The following are some of the many examples.]

1. Remember the story Jesus told about the boy who wanted to be his own boss and leave home? He got into all kinds of trouble. What did his father do when he arrived home? Yes, Jesus wants us to understand that He also wants to accept us and help us. We can trust Him.

2. What about the storm on Galilee? Jesus calmed it with His word. He was showing us that God is in charge of everything. He has everything in control and will make everything new again one day. We may trust the Maker of earth and sea and sky.

3. You remember Zacchaeus? Was Zacchaeus a good person? What did he need? How did Jesus meet that need? Jesus likes to help people. If you feel that your life is all messed up you can ask Jesus to show you what you need to do, to meet your special need. God loves to help people who want His help.

Jesus said that God our Father is more willing to give us good presents than our parents are willing to give us presents. Let us trust Him. When we were very small

we were always braver when we could hold our father's hand in the dark or when walking in a dangerous place. Jesus said we could put our hand into His hand by trusting Him. If we do this, no one can snatch us out of His hand.

**APPLICATION WORK:** Supply each child with a picture of a large hand. In it he can paste a picture of a boy or girl representing himself, and write underneath, "I am safe in the hand of Jesus." If the children are older have them write the key text.

## FOURTH DAY

### HOW CAN I KNOW?

**KEY TEXT:** John 1:14: "And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us."

**AIM:** To indicate to children that God wishes to give us eternal life, and this life is in His Son—the living Word manifest to us through the written Word.

**AIMS:** Birthday party hat and balloon (if young children), small, wrapped gift, cartoon of things to illustrate the material gifts of God, gift-wrapped Bible.

**INTRODUCTION:** Let's pretend it's Gayleen's birthday. [Use hat and balloon.] Here you are, would you like to open this small present? Now, pretend you have been invited to the party. What kind of a present would you like to give?

Jesus was interested in parties and in giving people presents. Can you think of a few stories about Jesus' being invited to feasts or telling stories about them? [Let children supply examples.] Jesus was always trying to give people things. He said God is like that. He is our God. He wants to belong to us as our God. Imagine that. We talk about our mother and our house and our car, and God says He wants to be our God. He wants us to belong to Him in a special way. He wants to give us presents—the best kind of presents as well as the lesser kind.

Some presents are easy to give. These are the presents you have mentioned. We can buy them in a store, see them, wrap them, and hold them in our hands and give them away. Some presents are hard to give. Your mother and father are trying to give you presents that are hard to give. They are ones you can't see with your eyes. They have to be understood with the mind. They can't be taken with the hands. They have to be taken with the will—the choosing power.

I think one of these presents would be honesty. What does it mean to be honest? How are we honest in a school test? How can we be honest if we've done the wrong thing and mother asks us about it? How can we be honest if we find something that belongs to someone else? How can we be honest in playing games?

We like people to be honest with us, don't we? Honesty is a good thing to have. Now how can your parents give you honesty? They can't wrap it up in a parcel and give it to you for your birthday. Tell me, how can they give it to you? [Suggestions could include that parents can be honest themselves as an example, parents can tell their children that honesty is a good thing

or a law of God or that it pays. They can trust us with money.] All these things are good, but have you noticed that a child can still refuse the gift of honesty? Before he can have it he must understand with his mind that it is good, and choose to take it with his will. Parents can only show him what honesty is and try to make him honest. [Other presents that are hard to give can be treated in a similar way, e.g., respect, thoughtfulness, industry, kindness, reliability, obedience.]

#### *A. What Presents Does God Give to Us?*

In this box I have some things that will help us remember some of the presents we can see and touch. [Choose children to take things out of the box; e.g., bread, flowers, fruit, wool, et cetera.]

Some presents are hard for God to give us, not because He doesn't want to give them or because He is short of them, but because we are not sure that we want them. These are the presents that have to be understood with the mind and accepted with the will or choosing power. Sometimes we might think that someone else has better presents or ones that are easier to get.

Now God wants to give us a very big gift—eternal life. Jesus said, "For this is the will of my Father, that every one who sees the Son and believes in him should have eternal life; and I will raise him up at the last day" (John 6:40, R.S.V.). Now this eternal life is not just a selfish life that will go on existing forever. It is a life that is given to one who has put his trust in Jesus. This present of life is one that we start to receive now if we love Jesus.

You remember we said that our parents cannot give us honesty in a parcel but have to show us ways of living that will help us to choose it. God too has to show us something of His eternal life so we will want to choose it. When I call my children to come to dinner when they are hungry, they want to come and get the food because they know it will satisfy them. If they had always felt hungry and I had called them to get things that never satisfied their hunger, they wouldn't know what real food was like. It is a bit like that with life.

When I see a little girl clap her hands and say, "Oh, goody!" I know that she must have discovered something that she thinks is good. Before we can clap our hands and say, "Oh, goody!" about life, God has to show us something. When we have seen this, we will be able to say, "How wonderful! You are a great God."

#### *B. The Living Word—Christ*

What does God want to show us? He wants to show us who He is. When He had shown the Israelites that He was a great and powerful Deliverer from slavery in Egypt, then He was able to invite them to trust His laws and His power to lead them into the Promised Land. When God helps us to know that He is a great Saviour from sin, who loves us and helps us in our trouble, who has power and authority over the author of evil, then we have the understanding that lets us trust Him as our God.

We must learn who God is and who we are. When I grew up enough to find out that a particular man was my father, I began to think about that man in a different

way from other men. I could ask him things that I wouldn't ask other people—like asking permission to go out with a friend. I didn't have to ask the man next door for permission. He was not in charge of me. He didn't keep me in food and clothes. I didn't ask him for a new pair of shoes. You see, if we belong to each other in a certain way, then we know what to say and do. It is much the same with life. When we find out who is the Father of Life, and in what way we belong to Him, then we know what to say and do about life.

When I started to love God, then I really started to live. It wasn't a very big kind of love—just like a little tiny flicker of a candle flame. But that little candle flame of love started to make me feel warm. I began to understand that love as big as a campfire would be much warmer. However, I didn't try to love God more to feel better. Oh, no. Feeling happy was a result of finding out about God, how much He loved me, and then wanting to love Him.

So God wants to show us who He is. And to do that He sent Jesus to this world. So Jesus came to show us who God is in a way we could understand—that is, as a man. I guess a dog can understand another dog better than it can understand an ant. So we can understand another person better than we can understand an ant or an angel. So God became a man and lived among men. He was God's message to us. He was God's word to us. He told us what God wanted to show us. It was told in His life, His acts, His words.

#### *C. The Written Word*

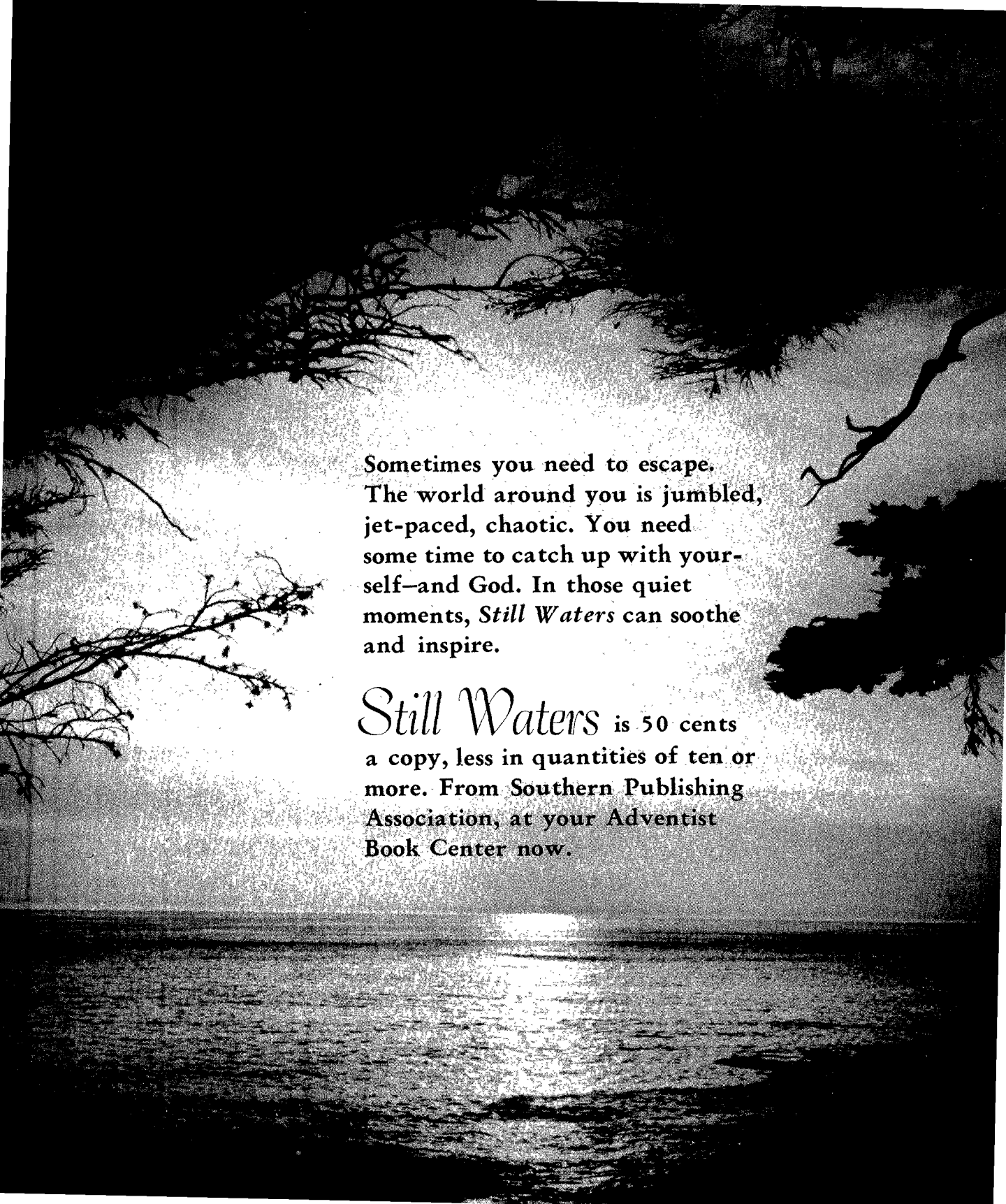
Today we do not see Jesus with our eyes, as the disciples did. However, even some of the people who saw Him with their eyes saw only a man and didn't realize who He was. When I see a dog trotting behind a boy, I do not know if that dog is following the boy because he belongs to him, or whether he is a strange dog who has smelled food in the boy's pocket. I see only with my eyes. I cannot be sure of the meaning of what I see. Many people saw Jesus with their eyes. Only some of them saw the meaning in what He was saying and doing. Then, when Jesus rose from the dead, they saw the whole meaning of His life. They saw that God was showing them His power to fulfill the promises He made through His people in past ages. They saw God's message in Christ. They saw God Himself, fulfilling His Word and revealing His love in an act of salvation. His life was like seeing the main piece of the jigsaw puzzle that made the whole picture fit together and have meaning.

Some of those people who saw what Jesus' life was all about wrote about it. They gave us a record of His life. There we have the story of God in a way we can understand. When people read this story and see its meaning, they are able to say of God, "He is my Father." God is more to us than our fathers here are. That way of thinking helps us to understand something of Him.

The present God gives us today is found here. [Unwrap gift-wrapped Bible.] No, it is not the paper and ink or the good binding or even the words. It is the person it tells us about.

Now tell me this. If God has shown us





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His message in Jesus, and this message will give us life, can we expect to find real life if we don't read the records of Jesus and try to understand what the Bible writers are trying to tell us? No. Let us study the life and teachings of Jesus so that we may know the truth about who God is. Then we will find out what life is all about and will know what to do and say.

Suppose we have read some of the Bible, and we do not find it interesting. What should we do? We don't have to pretend we like it when we don't, of course. Jesus can't help those who pretend to be or to know when they don't.

On the other hand, if we do not study the Bible, we are cutting ourselves off from the chief way God talks to man. We can ask God to show us the truth about Him that we need to know, that our minds may be led to see. We can keep studying the Bible, trying to understand what the meaning of the story is. We can use a modern translation and read a whole book of the Bible through.

An 11-year-old girl I know kept a list on the back of her bedroom door on which she wrote the name of the books of the Bible as she read them. Remember, God wants to teach us and to give us love and joy and happiness. He knows our needs and will answer our quest for truth as we read His Word.

**APPLICATION WORK:** Write in large letters for the children to copy, "Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path." Invite the children to illustrate this text with a picture of their own creation. Pictures could include a large Bible drawn with light rays coming from it, shining into storm clouds, a child lost in the woods with light coming from a Bible, a Bible and candle, the Bible in a pile of other books. The emphasis is on the Bible as revealing the light of truth.

## FIFTH DAY

### WHAT CAN I DO FOR JESUS AND OTHERS?

**KEY TEXT:** Matthew 7:12: "Therefore all things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them: for this is the law and the prophets."

**AIM:** To encourage children to accept Christ's law of love as the basis of human relationships and witness, and to depend on Him to give them the ability to keep it.

**Aims:** Blackboard and chalk, pictures of friends, Picture Roll pictures of incidents in the life of Christ, involving relationships with people, two empty glasses, and a jug of water.

**INTRODUCTION:** We all like to have friends. There are things that we see in some people that make us like them as friends. I once had a holiday with a good friend. We shared a tent at the beach. Between our beds we had an old record player. We had books to read and games to play and a diary in which to write. I enjoyed sharing this part of my life with my friend. Of course, my friend shared some of her life with me also.

Sharing is one of the things that makes

good friends. You tell me some other things. [List these on the board, e.g., a friend is kind, generous, helpful, patient, loyal, fair, loving, et cetera. How is a friend fair? How is a friend loyal? et cetera.]

Now here's a problem. We can see that life would be full of happiness if people were all friends. If other people were kind, helpful, patient, and loving to us, we would feel loved and wanted and enjoyed. If we enjoy other people being like that to us, we know that they also would like us to be that way to them. This tells us that the things we want to see in other people are the things that should be in us. We can understand that only in this way could everyone be happy.

We know that if someone cheats us or tells us lies, we don't feel very happy. This tells us that we should not do these things to other people either. I can't expect other people to like me if I act impolitely. We know we should act toward other people as we want them to act toward us. Jesus said the same thing in these words, "Whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them: for this is the law and the prophets."

Yesterday we found out that God's first rule of life was to love Him and to receive His present of true life. Now we can see that God's second rule of life is a rule of loving others. He also wants us to help them to love Him.

#### A. Knowing the Rules of Loving

Have you often seen a crowd of people trying to get on a bus or train? Do they all stand back politely to let other people in first to get the seats? I know a few people who do. Most of them are Christians. I wonder what makes them different.

If we are at a picnic and free ice cream is being given out, do we see many children standing back to let others get ice cream in case there is not enough to go around? Not usually. Usually we see everyone crowding in to get one for himself first. We tend to think of getting things for ourselves first. We seem to be mostly selfish. What does selfishness do?

How do you feel about a person who is always wanting the biggest cakes at a party and the first turns at games, and things like that? You don't usually think he is the best friend you have. You tend to separate yourself from a person like that. He is thinking of himself, not you or anyone else. Doing that will put a space between him and other people.

If we act like that, we can feel the space too. We realize that there is something wrong with the way we get along with other people. We tend to blame other people so we won't feel so guilty for breaking the rules. We know that the space is closed up by thinking of other people first—offering them the last cake on the plate or asking them whether they would like to go first in the game. Then they feel that someone cares about them, and they will act in the same way to us. They will be as friendly to us as we are to them. Why do you think we usually do things to benefit ourselves first?

I think you can see that what we do comes from how we think. If I think that I am the most important person in the whole world, I will always care about myself first;

I will act as though I am the most important person in the world. But if I think only of myself, I will be lonely and separated and unhappy.

Perhaps we may have thought only of ourselves, but are now trying to think of and love others. But we may have trouble making friends, and we want to be friendly.

#### B. Our Constant Friend

There is one who is happy to be our friend. He wants to help us be friendly and to help us show others how to be His friends too. He is the kind of friend who doesn't turn from us when we make a mistake. He comes to help. He is always unselfish, always fair, kind, loyal, and helpful. We need never feel separated or lonely.

Jesus is that Friend. He is the source of friendship. He knows the rules of friendship and keeps them. All our friendships are dependent on Him. That is why it is the first rule of life to be His friend.

Look at these two empty glasses. Let us use them to represent people. Imagine that this glass needs water, and this other one wants to give it water. But can this glass give this other glass water? No, for it is empty, too. So I cannot pour love out to someone else if I have only selfishness.

But look, I have a jug of water. If I fill up this glass from the jug I will be able to pour some into the other glass. Jesus said, "If anyone is thirsty, let him come to Me and drink. If he believes in Me, living water will flow out of his heart."

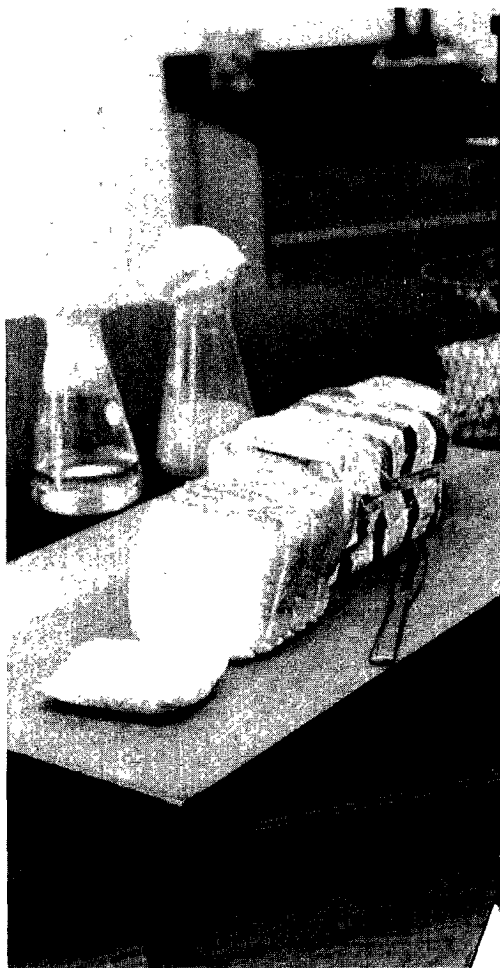
We can understand that this means that if we take Jesus into our hearts, He will make us kind, considerate, friendly, loving, and so on. Kindness and friendliness and love will flow from our hearts and help other people be the same way. When we take Jesus into our lives He brings lots of wonderful things with Him. Let's see what some of those things are. Look in Galatians 5:22, 23. [Read the passage with the children.] This looks like a list of things that will make good friends, doesn't it? The thing that will make us good friends comes from God.

Yesterday we saw that it is so important to study the Bible so that God can share His love with us and give us His life. It is just as important to study the Bible to see the ways God loves us so that these ways of loving will come into our thinking and acting, and we will enjoy His gift of friendship.

#### C. Sharing His Love

Jesus showed us ways of loving people. The one word that tells us about He did for people is *love*. He loved them. Paul, the great missionary, wrote a letter about love. He said that even if I can speak clever words and know everything or even die for something I think important, if I do not love people, I am just a big noise without meaning. Love is the most important thing in the whole world.

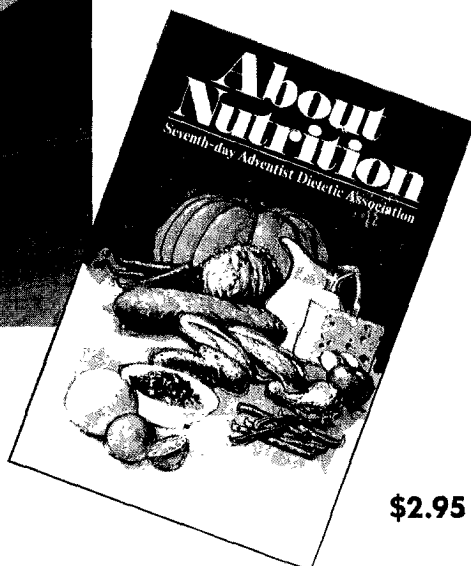
Our first work as Christians is to love people. One big job is to find out how. How did Jesus love people? [Use large picture of Christ's life to illustrate the point.] You tell me what story the picture is telling, and we will see what it teaches us. Luke 19:1-10. Zacchaeus loved Jesus because He noticed him and wanted to come to his house and eat with him. Jesus gave him



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friendship and his life was changed. John 4: sinner-woman. Jesus made people feel forgiven and at ease. Matthew 17: tax. Jesus helped people when they had money problems. Matthew 5: Sermon on the Mount. Jesus taught people the true laws of life. John 9: blind man. Jesus helped people to see—physically and spiritually. Always Jesus told people that God cared about them, and they were encouraged and made glad.

Jesus liked to heal people. If you are going to be a doctor or nurse for God, you will love people as Jesus did. If a teacher, you can help children to learn the truth Jesus taught. If a minister, you can help people to feel happy again in knowing what God has done to help them and what He is planning in the future.

We may all start right now to love people. Ask God to help you to care for your

school friends more. When you leave today, hold the door open for someone else to go through first. Start doing the little things you can think of. Jesus didn't just tell people that God loved them. They couldn't understand that very well. He loved them Himself so that they could see what He meant. Then they could understand that God loved them too. So too, by loving people, we can tell them that God loves them.

**APPLICATION WORK:** Today you may paste pictures of children being kind and helpful, thinking of other people instead of themselves, on large sheets of paper or cardboard. Write on the line at the bottom, "Let us love one another." "Jesus loves us and died for us." "If I do not love people I am just a big noise. I really amount to nothing at all."

## SIXTH DAY

### HOPING AND PREPARING FOR HEAVEN

**KEY TEXT:** Colossians 1:12, 13: "Giving thanks unto the Father, . . . who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son."

**AIM:** To give children a reason for confident hope in God and to lead them into an understanding of worship of Him who "made heaven and earth."

**AIDS:** Two large pictures or flannelgraph scenes—one of the resurrection of Christ, one of the second coming of Christ and the general resurrection. A large envelope with enclosed letter from Paul, loosely paraphrased as here under 1 Corinthians 15.

**INTRODUCTION** [to lead up to Paul's letter, from the present situation, the globe can be used]: Who can find the place where Jesus lived on earth? Now show me where we live. Yes, we could go to where Jesus lived by plane. Let us make a bigger map of the countries near where Jesus lived. [Quickly sketch a diagrammatic map of the Mediterranean Sea. Point out Palestine as the place where Jesus lived, and draw in the Sea of Galilee and the Dead Sea, Jerusalem, Antioch from where Paul went as a missionary or any other places that could be related to familiar stories. Mark in Corinth and Ephesus from where Paul wrote his letter to the believers at Corinth. Explain.]

Here is where Corinth was. At the time we want to talk about now some of the Christians in Corinth were very worried. Even though they believed in Jesus, some of them were dying. And they had thought Jesus would come back before they died. Then Paul wrote them a long letter. Part of it went like this. [Remove letter from envelope. As it is read have someone put up the flannelgraph picture of the resurrection of Christ.]

"Don't you remember what I told you? Christ died for us, as the Bible says. He was buried and He came to life again three days later. Five hundred people saw Him as well as the disciples. I saw him too.

"Now if Jesus came alive again, how can some of you say that it is impossible for people to come alive again? Jesus did. If people couldn't come to life again, then Jesus couldn't. But He did. So it must be possible for people to come back to life again after they have died. Christ came back to life first. After that, when He comes again, the people who belong to Christ will come to life again too." [Another illustration may be used to show that if something has happened once it can happen again.]

You young people may not remember this, but I can remember when some people said, "Of course no one will ever get to the moon." No one had gone to the moon up to that time. But then someone did go to the moon and walked on it and came back again. It has happened more than once. Now we know that it can happen again.

This illustrates what Paul was saying. The Corinthian Christians knew that people died. What they wanted to know was whether they could come to life again. Paul



said Yes. Jesus had died and come to life again, and since a resurrection has happened once, we know that it can happen again. That is why the early Christians talked so much about Christ's resurrection and His second coming. Christians believe in facts. That is why they can say they have a sure hope. They know that God wants to give them life, and that He has power to give them life. That is shown by the resurrection of Christ.

There are different kinds of hope. If you say, "I hope it doesn't rain tomorrow," you mean that you are not at all sure whether it will or not.

The Christian's hope is not like that. The Christian hope is an expectation. It is the result of knowing facts. Christ's disciples saw that in Jesus God was fulfilling His plan. Part of the plan was Christ's coming again.

Jesus said that when He comes again He will say to some people, "Enter . . . into the joy of thy Lord." That is, "Enjoy all the wonderful things God has for you."

When we do enter into all the marvelous things that Jesus has for us in heaven, it will be more wonderful than we can ever imagine. But let us use our imagination a little to help us understand.

It will be nicer than sleeping on a foam rubber mattress after we've had to sleep on a hard floor. It will be nicer than hearing the most beautiful music after having to listen to only rattles and bangs. It will be nicer than finding a party of friends waiting for us after we have been away to a lonely place for a long time.

#### Joy Here and Now

But we don't have to wait to go to heaven to enjoy all of the wonderful things God has for us, of course. We can enjoy some now.

I heard once about a young man who hoped to visit the Holy Land where Jesus had lived. So he prepared to go. He read all the books he could find about it. He looked at all the pictures he could find showing it. He talked to as many people as he could who had been there. I suppose he learned the language spoken there.

After a time, people with whom he talked who had been there learned that he knew more about the Holy Land than they

did. They were very surprised to learn he had not been there yet. But he hoped and planned so strongly, and studied about it so much, that he enjoyed it almost as much as if he had been there.

We hope to go to Jesus' new country. But in the meantime He has told us we may share some of the joy of it now.

We can do this by learning all we can about it from the Bible. We can, of course, learn only a little. You see, it will be so wonderful, so very beautiful, that we can understand only a little about the place we are going to, and what living there will be like.

We are told some things by the prophet Isaiah, and more things by John in the Revelation. [Read some of the descriptions of the new earth and the New Jerusalem from a modern version of the Bible.] As we think of these wonderful things God has prepared for us, and look forward to them, we feel something of the joy that we will have when we really get there.

#### Heaven a Place of Activity

When we get to heaven we are going to do some very, very interesting things. Ellen G. White tells us a little of what we are going to do.

In the book *The Great Controversy* she tells us that all the wonderful things we could ever dream of doing, but can't possibly do in this world, we will be able to do there. And there are going to be so many thrilling things to learn about that we will never, never be able to learn them all.

Another thing we will be able to do is travel. And not just to the Holy Land, either, as we mentioned before. In fact, not just to places on the earth at all. We will be able to go any place we like in the whole, great universe. Mars, Jupiter with its 12 moons, Saturn with its glowing ring, the North Star, the Milky Way. Just any place. [Ask children where they would like to go.]

There is something else we are going to do in heaven, something we must do here also. That is worship God.

What does worship mean to you?

Some of you may think of worship as sitting at home when the sun goes down Friday evening as the Sabbath comes in, singing, reading, and praying together.

Some of you may think of worship as going to church, sitting in the pew by mother and father, listening very carefully and quietly to what is being said, singing the hymns with all the other people, and kneeling with everyone else for prayer.

Perhaps you may think of worship as kneeling down by your very own bed each evening and morning, and talking to Jesus.

And all of those things are truly worship. But worship is not just doing something. It isn't just singing, or listening, or being quiet and not wriggling around. That is certainly part of worship. But real worship is something that you do inside while you sing, or pray, or sit still and listen. In worship you feel all warm and loving inside because you love Jesus and you know He loves you. In worship you know that Jesus is a great, strong person. He is so great that He made the world, the moon, and all the stars that are in the sky. And He made everything on them. He is so strong that He keeps the world, the moon, and all the stars in the sky just where they are supposed to be.

But the biggest reason why we worship Him in our hearts is because He loves us, and lets us know that He does. He lets us know in the Bible. And most of all He lets us know that He loves us by coming right down here to this earth, and becoming a child just like you are. And then, when He grew up, He let wicked men nail Him to a cross. He did all that because He loves us, and because He wants us to go to heaven.

When we worship Jesus here we cannot see Him, but when we get to heaven we will see Him. He will smile at us, He will talk with us, He will do lots of wonderful things for us. And then we will know, much better than we can ever know here, how truly wonderful He is. And then we will worship Him forever and ever, because we love Him so much.

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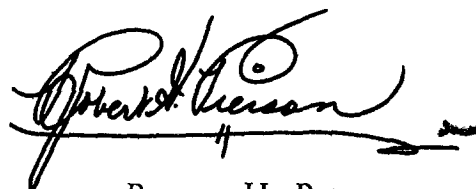
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