

All of this happened within a three week period, and the Lord was given credit for all of it. Without His help, and without first claiming His promises, the frail human being could have done nothing.

Needless to say, this experience has strengthened the faith of the pastor and his wife, and they count their many blessings as they labor for Him in their new district.

13: Foolish prayer expecting God to slow down her rapid heartbeat without Medication

Not really foolish, for God promises, "I will cure." Jer. 33:6.

YES, I'LL try it," Edna announced, much to the amazement of her family.

Edna has always been afraid of air travel. She says it is OK for someone else, but it is definitely not for her. But Edna had a problem. A granddaughter was graduating from an academy in the state of Washington. Edna lives in California. She is employed. So how was she going to be able to go to the graduation, and still keep her job? The family suggested that she fly, knowing full well that she wouldn't. But Edna surprised them all.

She had recently been studying the ABC's of Bible Prayer, and had confidence that God would help her not to be afraid. She turned to Isaiah 7:4: "Fear not, neither be fainthearted for the two tails of these smoking firebrands." Edna told God that she knew this promise was made for fears on earth, but somehow it fit flying in a jet so well, that she just had to claim this particular promise for her anticipated flight. She knew He cared for her as well in the air as on the ground. Thanking her Heavenly Father for His protection during the flight, she left herself completely in His hands and took off.

The trip to Seattle was uneventful, and even pleasant. But the night of the graduation, with all the excitement of getting ready, caused Edna to begin to feel ill. She has a heart condition of the paroxysmal type, and at times her heart beats abnormally fast. Then, usually, in a few minutes her heartbeat calms down, and she feels like herself again. However, occasionally it does not slow down. When this happens, she must get professional help. She is given shots which slow down the rapid beat.

Graduation night, of all nights, she was stricken. She knew that she should never take the chance of attending the event. She had to remain at her daughter's home, even though she had flown there for that specific purpose. Edna prayed fervently that the rapid beating of her heart would subside. But she did not get better. She was taken to the hospital and given the medication. In due time she felt her usual self again.

Upon her return flight home, about one-half hour out of San Francisco, she was stricken again. Fear gripped her, because she knew she was far from medical help. Fortunately, her granddaughter, Becky, was with her. As soon as the plane landed, Becky ran to a telephone booth, called Edna's home, and asked her son what to do. He advised Becky to have the airport workers secure a wheelchair, call a taxi, and get her to the nearest hospital immediately. Seventeen-year-old Becky did as she was told, and soon Edna was resting as comfortably as possible in the emergency room of a peninsula hospital.

Waiting for the doctor, Edna began thinking back on the events of the past few days. She had prayed. But it seemed that God had not answered. Then, light dawned! "Oh," she said to herself, "I have been studying God's promises, and learning how to claim them by using the ABC method. And then I forgot to do this when I needed to most."

Lying there on the table in the emergency room, Edna lifted her heart to God in a different type of prayer than she had used previously. She told God how much she needed His help in this strange place, away from her family and her own doctor. Matthew 21:22 came vividly to her mind: "And all things,

whatsoever ye shall ask in prayer, believing, ye shall receive." Edna had, to the best of her knowledge, fulfilled the conditions to answered prayer, and she believed that God wanted to help her out of this situation.

"Dear Lord," she prayed, "I believe You want to stop the rapid beating of my heart. And I thank You for doing it." Immediately the rapid beat stopped, and the normal rhythm returned. Chancing to glance at the clock on the emergency room wall, she noticed it was 2:10 in the afternoon.

When the doctor came in, Edna was able to tell him that she did not now need the shots. She told him of her experience, and how she had asked her Heavenly Father for help. The doctor had to admit that she certainly had received help. Usually a paroxysmal situation does not right itself alone after it has gone on for an hour-and-a-half! Never before in Edna's experience had she gone for so long a time without medical aid, and then had her heart return to its normal beating, without medication.

From the hospital, Becky called Edna's son again, and told him the wonderful thing that had just taken place.

Bill asked, "Becky, do you remember what time Mom was praying?"

"Ten minutes after two, Uncle Bill."

Bill realized then that he and his wife had been kneeling in prayer at that exact time, claiming the promise of Isaiah 41:10: "Fear thou not; for I am with thee: be not dismayed; for I am thy God: I will strengthen thee; yea, I will help thee; yea, I will uphold thee with the right hand of my righteousness."

Bill was so excited that he went right over to his brother Bob's home to tell him that their mother was alright. When Bob answered the door, he said to Bill, "Mom is OK, isn't she? It was at ten minutes after two, wasn't it?" Bill then related to his brother how their mother had prayed at 2:10 also. In fact, in the three different locations, members of the family had been praying at exactly the same time! God heard those prayers, and Edna does not live in fear anymore. She knows that God in His promises means exactly what He says.

We are not suggesting that taking medication in time of illness is a denial of faith in God's power and willingness to heal, for true medical science is one of God's chosen methods of conformity to nature's laws. But our God wants it to be known that all true healing comes from Him.

14: Foolish prayer of a six-year-old for an Unconscious Sister

Not really foolish, for "Out of the mouth of babes . . . thou hast perfected praise." Matt. 21:16.

JESUS DOES not want Mary to die. So, Mother, Jesus is going to save Mary's life," Jane spoke emphatically, with earnestness and great assurance.

Jane was six years old. Her sister, Mary, was sixteen. From childhood, Mary had been a rather sickly girl. At the time of this incident, a tooth had been extracted. Her jaw had become infected, and blood poisoning had set in. Mary was in a coma.

"Mrs. Black," the good doctor at the hospital said, "I am sorry to have to inform you that we find it impossible to save Mary's life. We fear she will pass away before morning."

"Jane," Mother Black explained on the way home from the hospital, "Jesus knows what is best--whether life or death. Our part is to submit to His will."

Jane's Determined, Believing Faith

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But little Jane seemed to hear nothing Mother was saying. As they arrived home, they entered the living-room, and found other members of the family--some young, some older--seated in a circle, thinking of Mary, and wondering what the outcome would be. They knew her condition was very serious.

"Mary's case is hopeless. The doctor told me she cannot live till morning," Mother Black told the group.

Little Jane apparently heard none of this. She was thinking thoughts of her own. Neither the words of doubt nor the dejected looks on the faces of her relatives daunted the faith and courage of that little girl.

"Jesus does not want Mary to die, Mother. Jesus is going to make Mary well." And immediately six-year-old Jane proceeded to take over the situation.

Addressing each member of the family separately, Jane, in all seriousness, asked, "Do you believe Jesus will heal Mary, as we pray? If you can say 'Yes,' fine. If you do not believe, then you will have to leave the room, because as we pray, we cannot have anyone in here who doubts that Jesus will heal Mary." So as Jane pointed to each one in the circle with her direct question, "Do you believe Jesus will heal Mary?" each one could say nothing less than, "Yes, I believe God will heal Mary."

Then Jane continued with, "Now everybody get down on your knees. You ask Jesus to heal Mary, and believe that He is doing it."

So all fell to their knees, and poured out their believing requests to our loving Father above—each one uniting with the humble, but strong faith of this little child. All the while they were wondering just how this all came about—a six-year-old child leading a whole group in simple faith that God would restore to health a "hopeless" sister, upon whom the Grim Reaper already had his clammy hand.

Near the close of the prayer season, a bright glory flooded the room. The light was dazzling in splendor, and a rushing wind swept over the kneeling suppliants. They all felt the presence of God's Holy Spirit. They were assured that something wonderful had happened in answer to their prayers of faith.

The Answer

"I feel impressed that someone should go to the hospital right now and see how Mary is," one of the group suggested.

Arriving at the hospital, they inquired, "How is Mary?" They then learned that in the short intervening time since Mother Black had talked with the doctor, Mary had regained consciousness. She was speedily restored to her normal health.

At the time, the family was living in the West Indies. Mary later moved to England. We first met Jane in Canada, and later, again in California. Mother Black, herself, passed on to us this thrilling story of God's carefulness to answer the sincere, believing prayers of His trusting children.

It is not difficult for us to believe that God Himself, through His Holy Spirit, spoke to Jane's childish, trusting heart, and impressed her to lead the whole family in a prayer of faith. I am often asked why it is that under such circumstances, some sick folk die, regardless of the earnest, childlike prayers offered, while others are miraculously restored to health. We do not claim to know all the answers. But this we believe from the depths of our hearts: if we go to God in simple, childlike faith, and bow low at His feet in sincere, believing trust, He will either heal, or He will allow His beloved to sleep in Him. Which He does, after we have exercised the required faith and fulfilled the conditions essential, depends upon whether the individual can serve God best in life, or in resting in his grave until the resurrection morning.

My friend, if God has restored you, or preserved you from sickness, why not take this as a sign that He wants your life to fill a special mission of service for Him? You can then say with the Apostle Paul, "For to me to live is

Christ." Phil. 1:21.

15: Foolish prayer that asks for the guidance of the Holy Spirit without the Gift of Tongues

Not really foolish, for "Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, and have not charity [love], I am become as sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal." 1 Cor. 13:1.

"HAVE YOU received the gift of `tongues', my Dear?" Jeane looked up in surprise at the question posed by her friend.

"No. I never felt the need of receiving that gift," Jeane answered.

Rosetta's face lit up with excited animation. "You realize the gift of tongues is a sign of receiving the Holy Spirit, I suppose. I'm sure you desire the Holy Spirit in your life. Come, Jeane, I will pray for you.

Jeane had not known her friend very long, but had become very attached to Rosetta; for she found her to be a most sincere Christian. Hesitating for only a moment, she knelt in prayer with her, as Rosetta began to pray.

Long and fervent was her prayer. Jeane was much edified by her friends' sincere prayer, but did not receive "the gift." At last Rosetta arose from her knees.

"I suggest you return home and continue to seek for the gift of `tongues,' Jeane." Rosetta's face showed a trace of disappointment that her friend had not been blessed as she expected. "God will surely reward your perseverance."

Guided into Truth

Jeane had just begun to keep the Bible Sabbath. The Holy Spirit had guided her into "truth" (John 16:13). The Holy Spirit has already given to us the Bible through "holy men" (2 Peter 1:21). Now He was impressing her with added fellowship that could be hers by a more complete obedience to His commands (Acts 5:32). She was also finding her Christian experience strengthened by returning to God His own in tithes and offerings (Mal. 3: 8-12; Matt. 23:23).

She was now giving God His day in her observance of the seventh-day Sabbath, His money in rendering her tithes and offerings, her body as a tabernacle for the indwelling of His Holy Spirit (Isa. 58:13, 14; Mal. 3:8-12; 1 Cor. 6: 19, 20). She began to "ask" and "receive," and her joy was "full" (John 16:24).

"Above All" She Could "Ask or Think"

"Here are the answered prayers," she begins, "and the circumstances surrounding them. And I might add, our heavenly Father always answers. But, much to my surprise, and delight, it is not as I have asked. It is usually more abundant," Jeane continued. "Also, it is so natural the way it happens."

A Two-Year-Old Babe in Christ

Only two years ago Jeane and her family, cousins and sisters, found eternal life in Jesus Christ (1 John 5:13). She also found the wonderful truth of the third angel's message of Revelation 14:6-12.

Jeane immediately began selling truth-filled literature. The trials were great. The purging process extreme.

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Going to work in a market, Jeane found it hard to concentrate on her customers and their needs. Her mind churned in a constant turmoil. "What am I doing here?" she asked herself, over and over. "My four children need me at home with them. But if I don't work, they cannot go to church school," she reminded herself. "While I work, all the good of the church school is being undone," she continued to argue with herself. The tears flowed often, and freely.

Then a finger injury forced Jeane to stay home for a few days. Each day she realized more than ever just how much the children needed her. Finally she could stand it no longer. Facing her employer, she told him of her decision to quit.

"We'll be sorry to lose you, Jeane," he said. "Isn't there some way for you to stay on with us?"

But Jeane had made up her mind. Walking from the building, her heart felt light, and the tears stopped, too. From that very day, she felt a new assurance of doing the will of God.

The Holy Spirit, the Holy Money, and the Promises

Two days later, Jeane looked out at the dripping world, and leaden skies. The weather forecaster added no comfort. "Heavy rains through tomorrow," he said, to add to the gray gloom of the little household. Her husband, Barry, could not work in all this rain, for the carpenter job available just then involved outdoor work.

For a moment the temptation to return to work surged strongly within her and threatened to engulf her. Resolutely she shook it off like a loathsome dirty garment.

Then Barry made a decision. He would go in business for himself, on a small scale to begin with. He had no choice really, for capital simply was not to be had.

Immediately, when Barry decided to go into the business of cabinet making, the phone started to ring. No advertising sent them off to a flying start--only prayer. Soon they were able to buy food, and to begin paying off bills in the amount of around \$700 per month. Then a near-by contractor needed a cabinet maker, and Barry got the job.

Every time they ran short of money, they would kneel and pray again. Then money would come in, either by mail, as a deposit on a new job, or from someone they had forgotten as owing them.

It was at about this time that the good Christian lady tried to persuade Jeane to receive the gift of "tongues." But although Jeane did not receive that special "gift," she did pray that God would pour out His Spirit upon her. As she prayed, she seemed to empty her soul and to be raised higher and higher, a soft glow surrounding her as if lifted by a beam of light.

Prayer Began to Be Answered

One of Jeane's sons desired to attend a Christian boarding academy. After placing his application, he received notice of rejection. He, and a friend who had also applied, retired to a secret place and told their Heavenly Father all about it. The next day they received word of a reversal of the decision. The two boys were accepted!

Praying for a Home

As Jeane prayed one morning and read the precious promises from God's Word, she felt strongly impressed to purchase a house in the state where her boy had been admitted to the academy. Each time she opened her Bible, the words seemed to jump out at her as if God was right then answering her requests.

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34. Further statement of the priority of prophecy over tongues. 1 Cor. 14:5.
35. Unknown tongue experience reprovved because others cannot understand. 1 Cor. 14:6.
36. The true gift of tongues made it possible for every man to hear in the language "wherein" he was "born." Acts 2:8.
37. This is exactly the opposite of the unknown tongue. 1 Cor. 14:7.
38. The unknown tongue movement is further gently reprovved. Verse 8.
39. Still further reproof. Verse 9.
40. Contrasting the unknown tongue with every sound in the world. Verse 10.
41. A pointed reproof of the experience. Verse 11.
42. The unknown tongue does not do the job God wants done in the church. Verse 12.
43. The unknown tongue these believers were experiencing did not correspond with that of Pentecost, when everyone heard in his "own tongue." Acts 2:8.
44. To pray in an unknown tongue causes "my understanding" to be "unfruitful." 1 Cor. 14:14.
45. God wants our worship to be fruitful. Verse 15. 46. The reason for its being "unfruitful." Verse 16. 47. It does not edify others. Verse 17.
48. Paul was a linguist, verse 18, yet there is no record of his ever engaging in an "unknown tongue" experience.
49. Paul's strong reproof, stating that in the church five understandable words are of more value than ten thousand "in an unknown tongue." Verse 19.
50. After Paul has stated in verse 15 that understanding in worship is of the utmost importance, in verse 20 he commands them not to be "children in understanding . . . but . . . men." What a kindly, and yet pointed, rebuke!
51. The real "Pentecostal" purpose of tongues is to teach people of other languages. Verses 21 and 22. (Also Acts 2:8.) The "unknown tongue" experience these people were having, did not accomplish this.
52. Here is contrasted the kind of "tongues" experience the Corinthians had with a true teaching ministry. Verses 23-25. (See Acts 2:8 for the true.)
53. Paul reprovves them. Verse 26.
54. God's plan is that there should be an interpreter, so folk speaking other languages can understand the message. Verses 27, 28.
55. If there is no interpreter, the counsel is-be quiet. Verse 28.
56. Even those with the prophetic gift were counselled to speak one at a time-others to be silent. Verses 29, 30.
57. A teaching ministry emphasized. Verse 31.
58. A true prophet will exercise self-control. Verse 32.
59. Their experience of confusion not authored by God. Verse 33.
60. Even their women were becoming obstreperous. Verse 34.
61. They should not interrupt the services, creating confusion. Verse 35.

62. Sanctimony was also part of their church's experience. Verse 36.
63. Each must test his experience by the Scriptures. Verse 37.
64. A pointed rebuke. Verse 40.
65. The people were also disorderly. Verse 40.
66. The true gift of tongues, such as was given to Cornelius, was the same as given at Pentecost when people heard in their own language. Acts 2:8; 1 Cor. 14:16.
67. We are not to forbid the exercise of either the true gift of prophecy, or the true gift of tongues. Verse 39.

16: Foolish prayers that God would Rebuke the Devourer

Not really foolish, for they had fulfilled the condition of Malachi 3:10:
"Bring ye all the tithes into the storehouse."

"LOOK, BILL!" Arlene laid her hand on her husband's arm. "The sky is almost black! What will we do?"
"Do!" he exclaimed. "Only one thing we can do now!"

The lightning flashed ahead, and with it came a loud clap of thunder that told Bill things were going to start happening around there—and soon.

This was on a late October evening. Bill and Arlene Thomas had just started home. Their visit with friends in a nearby town had been pleasant, and conversation in the car, now headed for home, was animated as the children told of their encounters.

At first the travelers did not notice that the sky was becoming dark. In the San Joaquin Valley of Central California, rain is the last thing grape and raisin growers are wanting at this time of year. Thousands of dollars of damage can be done in a very few minutes if rain falls when grapes are drying between the rows of vines. (Growers spread the Thompson seedless grapes on papers between the rows to dry.)

As they entered their driveway, the thought of sixty acres of soggy raisins loomed before them. Bill and Arlene had been studying faithfully the ABC's of Bible Prayer in a series at Prayer Meeting at their little church. Already faith had grown in their hearts and they decided to put God to His own test. Does He not promise:

"Bring ye all the tithes into the storehouse, that there may be meat in mine house, and prove me now herewith, saith the Lord of hosts, if I will not open you the windows of heaven, and pour you out a blessing, that there shall not be room enough to receive it.

"And I will rebuke the devourer for your sakes, and he shall not destroy the fruits of your ground; neither shall your vine cast her fruit before the time in the field, saith the Lord of hosts" (Malachi 3:10, 11)?

"Bill, it looks as though that promise was put there just for us." Arlene's tone radiated trust and assurance.

As the Thomas family knelt and claimed God's promise, which exactly fit their immediate need, they felt a peaceful calm. Knowing that their income for the year ahead was in God's hands, they retired and went to sleep.

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At 2:00 a.m. Dad Thomas called on the telephone. It was raining heavily at his place, only five miles away. It thundered all night long, and lightning tore the darkness. But when daylight finally dawned, Bill and Arlene found that not one drop of rain had fallen on their crop!

Ada Green was attending classes on the ABC's of prayer, and her faith and confidence in the promises of God were steadily increasing. She writes: "One day, during the time I was attending these classes, the State Tax Board notified us that our income tax records would be investigated for a certain year. We turned the letter over to our Certified Public Accountant for him to handle. After talking with the tax man, he called us, asking that we send him our receipts, or cancelled checks, for contribution deduction. The church receipts were handy, and were promptly mailed to him. The tax man apparently made photostatic copies of these and took them back to his office.

"Later, the CPA called advising us that the amount allocated to church school would be disallowed; that the Tax Board had posted a letter to us confirming this stand. Our CPA did not feel that such action was warranted, and told us he had discussed his opinion with the tax man. I told the CPA of our 'temple plan' of caring for the education of our children, along with other church expenses. He suggested that it might be well to call the conference attorney to see what he knew about such cases.

So we called the conference headquarters, and they told us that one of the attorneys had been working on just such a case as ours, but that as yet he had not been able to get anywhere with the Tax Board, and that the outlook was not too hopeful.

"The following afternoon about 2:30, the tax man called me personally. He seemed surprised when I told him we were not required to pay tithes or offerings to belong to our church. That we could still be members if we contributed nothing.

"We have always faithfully paid our tithe, even when our income was meager. And the Lord has more than provided for our needs. I can remember paying tithe under protest, before marriage, and the Lord stretched those remaining dollars to pay college bills. I believe the Lord means what He says. I believe that if we will faithfully pay our tithes and offerings, and live Godly lives, He will open 'the windows of heaven, and pour ... out a blessing, that there shall not be room enough to receive it.'

"At 3:00 p.m. I took my children to their music lessons, and returned a little early to pick them up at 4:30. While waiting in the car, I seriously thought and prayed about the whole matter. I sat there and reasoned with the Lord. Then I thought of the Bible promises, and wondered which one I might claim. There was no Bible in the car, but the natural promise to remember was, 'I will rebuke the devourer for your sakes.' I told the Lord that He could change this fellow's mind if He saw best, and asked Him if He would please do it.

"At 6:15 I talked with the conference attorney, who gave us no hope in the matter. So I thought I should call our CPA, which I did later in the evening. I was about to tell him of my conversation with the attorney, when he said, 'The tax man called me about 4:30 this afternoon, saying they were going to drop the whole thing.'

"When I recalled that it was just at the time I was praying that the Lord would change this man's mind that he had made the decision to drop the matter, I was overwhelmed and amazed at God's goodness to us! I believe there is a divine science in prayer. I believe the Lord will open the windows of heaven when we faithfully pay our tithes and offerings. I thank Him for the many blessings He has given us, and pray that He will teach us more and more how to use these means for the advancement of His cause in the earth."

Pat and Sid moved to a location where Sid took up a new job. It had been some time since he had had a good paying job, consequently there was little money on hand. Pat's shoes were worn thin, and the

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soles had holes in them. Then she prayed, "Lord, please send me some shoes. And please, Lord, may they fit." (She had a hard foot to fit—a very narrow foot, and the heel narrower still.)

At that time a dear Christian friend, who was aware of Pat's problems and was always on the lookout at rummage sales and used clothing stores, et cetera, for bargains in clothing for Pat and her two little children, was in the middle of papering her house. She and her husband were in a real mess—wall paper and paste all over, and furniture pushed to one side. In the middle of all this, she stopped her work abruptly, washed her hands and said, "I must wrap up those shoes and send them to Pat." She had had them for several weeks, waiting for an opportune time to give, or send them, to Pat. Suddenly she felt she had to do it now. She wrapped them up, gave them to her husband, saying, "Mail these right away, please."

A couple days later, a small box—about the size of a shoe box—arrived in Pat's mail. She looked at it and exclaimed, "Those are my shoes! And they will fit!" They were! And they did!

God Rewards Tithers

Pat came to an Adventist academy as a non-Christian, or at best, a nominal one, with only a vague idea of what Adventists believe. In her Bible class one day she learned that God desires His children to pay tithe. This was on a Friday, and Pat had only a little money on hand. She thought to herself, "If I pay tithe on what I now have on hand, I will not be able to go to the Saturday night program." So she reasoned, "I will go to the Saturday night program, and then start paying tithe after that." But her conscience would give her no rest. Finally she thought, "All right, I will pay my tithe. And if I can't go to the Saturday night program, I won't go!"

When Pat went to church the next day, she dropped her tithe envelope in the offering plate. After the Sabbath, when the mail was distributed, she received a letter with of all things!—a \$1.00 bill enclosed. So Pat went to the program! Need I say that she has been a faithful tithe-payer ever since?

Man's Extremity-God's Opportunity

For some time Pat and Sid had been trying to sell their house on the outskirts of a small town. They wanted to move to a more secluded area, as the one they were in would cause problems for them when school started. Their oldest child, a boy, was six years old, and Pat desired to keep him out of school another year or so, believing it would be better for his mental and physical development. Neighbors would be sure to report his nonattendance if they remained where they were. The house had been advertised repeatedly, with no success.

Pat went to Camp Meeting. Sid came after her the last Saturday night, packed her up in the middle of the night, brought her and the two children home, and literally dumped them and their belongings in the middle of the floor. He took off immediately to go fishing.

In the morning Pat decided that since she had to clean up the place and put everything in order from the Camp Meeting trip, she would just do a little more and give her kitchen cupboards a thorough cleaning, and get everything put back clean and orderly.

Just as she was in the midst of this "mess," there came a knock at the door. A man was standing there, and said, "I am interested in seeing your house. I have been thinking about buying it."

"Oh no!" Pat exclaimed, "you can't see it now. It's too messy!"

Then she changed her mind and let him in. He crawled around through the boxes and clutter, looked in each room, then said, "I'll take it." Before this, Pat had kept the house in spotless order and cleanliness

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just in case anyone should come to look at it. God works for His trusting children in strange ways sometimes. But--He works!

No Vegetables

Even when things were bad financially, Pat always managed to serve nourishing meals to her family. There were no extras, but she made sure they had a well-balanced diet. One winter when she was unable to buy lettuce, she used alfalfa sprouts. And really, she could not have done better, for alfalfa sprouts supplied just what her family needed.

One day, around the same time Pat received her shoes in the mail, she realized they had no vegetables for dinner. There was something to eat, but she felt it important they have vegetables. So she knelt with her two children and prayed to their Father about it, believing and thanking Him for hearing and answering their prayer. An hour or so later they had a visitor, or I should say two visitors, a man and his wife, members of the church, who came with a large box of garden produce!

Gas Money

After Pat and Sid had lived in this area for some time, an evangelist began a series of meetings in a nearby town. He treated Sid with such respect that he began attending the services with his wife. Pat was overjoyed. One day they realized they had no gas to go to meeting that evening. They would not even be able to take their boy to school the next day, as things stood right then.

Sid said, "It doesn't look like we'll be able to go tonight."

Pat undauntedly replied, "The Lord will provide the means for our transportation, because it is His will that we go to the meeting tonight." She prayed earnestly about it. That day they received three letters in the mail, each one containing money from three different sources. They went to the meeting that night. Sid was later baptized.

What a wonderful Father we have!

"A Little Child Shall Lead Them"

"See that thunderhead! It spells hail, and plenty of it, too!" Father Clark's face reflected agonized concern over his grain field.

"Let's kneel right down here and ask Jesus to keep the hail away from our fields," spoke up their ten-year-old son Ernest, adding, "Hasn't Jesus promised us that He will `rebuke the devourer'?"

The Clark family knelt in prayer, claiming the promise of God, "And I will rebuke the devourer for your sakes, and he shall not destroy the fruits of your ground; neither shall your vine cast her fruit before the time in the field, saith the Lord of hosts. And all nations shall call you blessed: for ye shall be a delightful land, saith the Lord of hosts" (Mal. 3:11, 12).

This devout family well knew that the promise they were claiming was conditioned on the fulfillment of the command, "Bring ye all the tithes into the storehouse" (verse 10). But they had been faithful tithers. Hence, their faith was strong, and their confidence firm in the Lord. They believed He would keep His word. "Hath he said, and shall he not do it? or hath he spoken, and shall he not make it good?" "The Strength of Israel will not lie nor repent: for he is not a man, that he should repent" (Num. 23:19; 1 Sam. 15:29).

Wonderful Witness for God

The storm came. The winds blew. The hail fell. Grain crops on every side of the Clark farm were badly damaged. Neighbors came over to Mr. Clark's farm to witness, with furrowed brow and dumfounded

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spirits, why his wheat was untouched. Other farmers did well to harvest half the crop that the Clarks did. But the Clark family knew why!

"This Is Your Wisdom"

God also promised His obedient children wisdom. Speaking of His commandments, He said: "Keep therefore and do them; for this is your wisdom and your understanding in the sight of the nations, which shall hear all these statutes, and say, Surely this great nation is a wise and understanding people" (Deut. 4:6).

The Clark family engaged in what is called "agronomy farming." Mr. Clark specialized particularly in testing wheat to produce new varieties. Clark's farm was a sort of center for the entire wheat growing area in that section of Kansas.

At one time Ernest's father experimented with just one grain of wheat. This grain produced one plant which had 280 grains. He then planted the 280 grains in his test plots. Each year for four years he took the grain produced from this small beginning until the fourth year he harvested 420 bushels of wheat! Had various farmers taken and planted this amount of wheat once more, it is estimated that the fifth year, it would have produced a harvest of between 50,000 and 100,000 bushels! Think of it—from one kernel to more than 50,000 bushels in five years! Ernest's father sold part of his harvest of 420 bushels, for \$10.00 per bushel. The name of that particular strain of wheat was "redchief." It was brand new at that time. This grain developed by a tithing Christian, produced 60 bushels to the acre. Across the road, that which was developed and produced by the Kansas Agricultural College produced an average of 20 bushels to the acre! The tremendous yield from this particular strain of wheat accounts for the high price Mr. Clark received.

When I hear experiences such as these, I ask God to forgive us Christians for missing the boat of blessings He has been waiting to anchor in the harbor of our lives, if we would only ask, believe, and receive what He has promised. But, first, we must set our faces in the direction of obedience. "He that turneth away his ear from hearing the law," writes the wise man, "even his prayer shall be abomination" (Prov. 28:9).

Blessing Others Also

God told Abraham of old that in him, and in his seed all families of the earth would be blessed. (See Gen. 12:3; 22:18.) We know that this is speaking primarily of Christ and His salvation. It does not, however, overlook the fact that men and women today who, like Abraham, are true to God can be a present blessing, too. Abraham was used of God to deliver his nephew, Lot; also to deliver the kings of Sodom and Gomorrah. (See Genesis, chapter 14.)

Earl Clark, Ernest's father, the tither, was able to finance the education of his children in a Christian school through the blessings of God upon his wheat crops. It was not unusual for him to sell \$50,000 worth of grain a year. And through him, farmers from far and near were blessed. One man came to Clark's home, driving his late model Cadillac, exclaiming, "I have paid off all my debts and have purchased a house in town besides." By purchasing his "tithed" seed wheat, they too enjoyed bumper crops, giving them good incomes. So he was not merely blessed himself, but the blessing was passed on to others.

Blessings upon His Son, Too

Ernest's father set a good example. His son, who is now a faithful and devoted pastor, followed in his father's footsteps and rejoices in claiming Bible promises.

Foolish Prayers—Fabulous Answers

For instance, a few years ago Pastor Clark and his wife felt their need of a second car. Mrs. Clark was working part of the children's way through school, so needed transportation. But living on a minister's salary, their money was limited. They decided to kneel again as they had often done, and as his father's family had done before him, and claim the same promise they did when the hail storm threatened his father's wheat harvest.

A few days later they spied a 1955 Plymouth in a used car lot. When they drove over and examined it more closely, they discovered it had new tires, new brake linings (when inspection was made), and it was really in good shape. The owner asked only \$95.00. It was just what they needed! Three-and-a-half years later they had spent money only for a tune-up, a battery and seat covers. Their "tithe" car was still running beautifully.

Again, the tithe-paying Ernest Clarks needed a good chair. They found just the right kind, but priced at a figure far beyond what their budget would permit. But due to a special sale, they were able to purchase it for almost one half the original price. They call these their "tithe car" and their "tithe chair." It is because they claimed a tithing promise for each, and God opened "the windows of heaven," giving them real bargains.

Prayer Chart

As we were associated with Pastor and Mrs. Clark, we observed that the pastor owned a copy of our book *Path to the Heart*. In the back of this book he had placed a list of answers to their prayers of faith. They were wonderful experiences in Christ. They had put into effect the suggestions we had made a few days earlier, about following the instruction of Deuteronomy 8:2. It is that we remember all the way God has led us in the past. It strengthens our faith as we list miraculous answers from our Lord.

Sale of a Church

Among the requests Pastor and Mrs. Clark made of the Lord was one for the sale of the old building owned by the congregation which they were pastoring. The church building was located on approximately two-and-one-half acres of land. The Clarks led the congregation in claiming the promise of Philippians 4:19. They would use the money from the sale to construct a new church and church day school.

He called on his church to join him in a day of not merely prayer but of fasting, too, since up to that time they had been unable to dispose of this property, try as they might! The new construction program, already under way, had left the church heavily in debt. The congregation was really becoming discouraged. They were at a loss to know which way to turn to finance the finishing of their half-completed building.

Only a few days after the day of prayer and fasting, the church property sold for the sum of \$165,000 cash. And without a real estate agent at that! !

I say God loves to answer our prayers of faith. And it pleases God when we claim His promise found in Malachi 3:8-12 that we might advance His cause of truth, and fulfill our God-given mission.

17: Foolish to expect Continuous Supernatural Guidance

Not really foolish, for God declares, "The steps of a good man are ordered by the Lord." Psalm 37:23.

I WAS HUMMING to myself as I turned the little Borg-Ward from the gravel road on to the main highway," testified Pastor Clark. We were holding a series of meetings with Pastor Clark in his church in Little Rock, Arkansas, and we invited him to share with us some of his personal experiences of God's protection and guidance in his life.

Foolish Prayers—Fabulous Answers

"Junior camp had been an enriching experience as always," Pastor Clark reflected. "The enthusiasm of the young people, their endless energy, made me feel good to be alive.

"The motor beneath the hood of my little car sang a higher note, and the miles slipped easily behind me. I looked with eager anticipation to my destination which was Wichita, Kansas, where I knew my family awaited my arrival.

"Suddenly, from a side road at the left, a car hurtled at me with tremendous speed, striking my car squarely in the side, sending the Borg-Ward tumbling. After turning over several times, it came to rest with the four wheels lazily turning in space. From inside, I checked myself, and decided it would be safe for me to move, and carefully crawled through a window, trying to avoid jagged edges of splintered glass.

"Standing beside the demolished car, I noted that every window except the windshield was broken. Though I felt fine, I went to the doctor and had a thorough physical.

"'I see nothing wrong with you at all,' the doctor said. 'You came out of that wreck in fine shape.'

"Insurance on the demolished car amounted to \$2,000, enough to buy another car.

"The promise is, 'The angel of the Lord encampeth round about them that fear him, and delivereth them' (Psalm 34:7).

"Did God Make a Road Shoulder?"

"Or did He hold back a maniac until He got me to the one place where there was the only shoulder I could drive off onto and save our lives?" Pastor Clark continued.

"A few years ago, my family and I were traveling from Virginia to Kansas. With no time to think of what to do, we saw a car coming at break-neck speed on our side of the road, attempting to pass another car. Just at that spot, a wide shoulder projected from the highway. I swerved onto it, barely in time to avoid a head-on collision.

"For a moment I was completely drained of energy. I looked up, and just ahead was the end of the shoulder. Turning around, one of the children observed that behind us there was no shoulder either. The only place we could have gotten off the highway was right where our car was sitting!

"Together our hearts exclaimed with the psalmist, 'O magnify the Lord with me, and let us exalt his name together' (Psalm 34:3).

"I am wondering if the Lord said, 'If this driver is going crazy, I will hold him back until I find a good place where My servant can turn off on a shoulder.' Or, maybe He said, 'I will create a shoulder right here!'

"Won't it be wonderful when we get to heaven, and our guardian angel explains all these events to us? If we are thrilled now with God's miraculous deliverances, what will it be when we learn all the details of the various encounters, and the divine plans underlying God's miracles in our behalf?"

Daina's School

"One weekend I took my family to visit Little Creek School, a boarding academy near Knoxville, Tennessee," Pastor Clark continued. "Daina, our daughter, liked the school very much. The atmosphere was wholesome and spiritual. Daina felt perfectly at home.

"'Please, Daddy,' Daina begged, 'Let's hurry and put in my application now. I do want to go to school here next year.'

Foolish Prayers—Fabulous Answers

"They only accept fifty students, Daina," I reminded my eager daughter. "But we will do all we can. I am very much impressed with this school myself." Daina Knew Her Prayer Was Answered

"All the way home, Daina repeated her conviction, 'I know I'm going to be accepted into Little Creek School.' Then added, 'Philippians 4:19 promises that God will supply our needs.'

"A Christian school of such high standing as Little Creek is certainly one of the needs," I exclaimed.

At home, the family kept on praying, and believing. One day a letter came, and the return address brought a squeal of delight from Daina. Dismay replaced her happiness when the letter had been read.

"We are sorry to inform you that our capacity of students for the coming school year has been filled ..."

"Believing still that God had a plan for Daina, we began the process of applying for admission and for work at another school. While crossing the campus, someone stuck his head out of a window and called, 'Daina, long distance call for you.'

"Daina rushed to the phone. Mother was at home, and had just received word from Little Creek School. The message stated that there was a cancellation by another student, and Daina was next on the list. They would be glad to accept her if she still wanted to come.

"Did she still want to come! Like any ecstatic teenager, Daina nearly hit the ceiling in her delight. And after three years attendance at Little Creek School, she is as thrilled as when she first went there.

"Her brother, Dennis, is now attending the same school. When Daina was accepted, probably a hundred students had been turned away for that year. The administrators of the school were heard to say that the young people who pray the most to be able to enter, are the ones who are accepted. They feel this is a guidance of the Lord.

Guidance to a Home

"My wife and I spent much time in prayer the day we arrived in Little Rock, Arkansas," Pastor Clark went on to say.

"We were both impressed with the neat and attractive layout of the city, but the problem of where to live took our time and attention. We prayed often as we drove from one house to another, seeking the Lord's guidance (Psalms 32:8).

"One house especially impressed us. It was located between the churches in the new district, close to the interstate freeway, making transportation more convenient for the heavy duties of a pastor of two churches.

"This house seemed like the very one we should buy. And then the real estate lady did a very strange thing. Since ministers often have to move to another place of labor in a hurry, there is always the problem of selling the house right away. She said that she didn't usually do this, but she would write a letter stating that her Company would give us exactly the amount we paid for it in case we couldn't sell it as soon as we had to, in the event we had to move suddenly. Of course most people want to make a profit if they can. And we did make a profit when we moved. But we at least had a guarantee that we wouldn't lose anything by buying this particular house.

Even Death's Timing Is Perfect

"My family and I had just opened the door of the house when the phone rang. Answering it, we learned that my wife's father who had been very ill for some time, had passed away.

"Since that evening was the closing meeting of a series, I reflected on the circumstances. 'How fortunate,' I said, 'that his death came now and not a few days ago when we were so busy with the

Foolish Prayers—Fabulous Answers

meetings. And, if the phone call had come a few hours later, we would have been on our way to a convention in Pennsylvania, and wouldn't have known about it soon enough to save 600 extra miles.'

"Some folk do not believe that God is so interested in the program of soul winning that He can hold back the death of His saints until the appropriate moment. The same God who has said, 'Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth' (Rev. 14:13), also said of His timing, 'He hath made every thing beautiful in his time' (Eccl. 3:11)."

I love Pastor Clark's experiences. Don't you? Let him continue.

Healing a 75-Year-Old Lady

"This is the hospital in Little Rock,' a feminine voice spoke over the phone. 'We thought you would like to know that we have a patient here by the name of Mrs. Bennet, and she is in very critical condition. She is asking for a minister from your church to pray for her.'

"When I visited Mrs. Bennet, I found her in intensive care. 'I simply can't feel that my work is done yet,' she whispered. 'Even though I am not young any more, I still feel that there is a work for me to do in building up my home church in Clinton.'

"You and your husband have certainly done much for the Clinton church,' I said. 'Others have also said they don't believe God would have you leave us yet.' I paused, then quietly asked, 'Mrs. Bennet, are you sure that all is right between you and the Lord?'

"Every sin has been confessed,' she stated simply. 'All is under the blood of Calvary. I also have submitted myself to the Lord, wholly and completely. Whatever is His will is my will also. If God orders that I shall die, I am willing. But I am willing to stay and advance His cause. "For to me to live is Christ" ' (Phil. 1:21).

"Let me read a few statements from the book *The Ministry of Healing*, in the chapter under "Prayer for the Sick," ' I said. Also, I read from James, chapter 5, the verses dealing with healing. All knelt and I prayed a prayer of commitment.

"The prayer of commitment is not to make our faith less strong, but only more trusting in a situation where we do not know what is best. We have a God who does know best. He has promised that man's life may exceed the three score and ten, in some instances, but not that it will be free from difficulties, or of declining strength.

"When the elders, Mr. Bennet, and I arose from our knees, Mrs. Bennet smiled happily.

"I feel a marked improvement,' she said. 'I believe the Lord has seen fit to heal me.'

"The next day the doctor checked her and ordered her out of intensive care. The following day she was discharged from the hospital. Today, she is continuing to work in her home church."

Snow Money

Pastor Clark tells of earlier experiences, even back in college days.

"Years ago, one day in mid winter, my young wife and I faced a critical situation. I was a young theology student.

"We've both worked all we can,' I said one night to my wife. 'I know of no way to obtain food for tomorrow, except the Lord. Come, Dear, let us go to Him with our problem.'

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"Kneeling together, we laid the problem all out before the Lord. Confident that God would somehow see us through, we retired for the night, and slept soundly. While we slept, God worked. When we looked out the next morning, we saw the ground covered with a heavy snowfall.

"The answer to our prayer is right before us,' I said to my wife, with a smile. Donning my coat and cap, and pulling on overshoes, I trekked down the street from door to door. At almost every house, the occupant was glad to see me come with my shovel. I cleaned the steps, driveways, and sidewalks.

"Open your hand, Honey,' I said two hours later, my cold closed fist shut tight over my wife's small warm palm. There you are!—God's answer to our prayer!

"One, two, five, eight, ten dollars! Oh, wonderful! We can eat again! This snowfall was a real blessing to us,' she cried.

"Why not rejoice together, for all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose' (Rom. 8:28)?

From Basement School to New Building

"When I began my pastorate at the Roanoke, Virginia church, we found the children meeting in the basement of the church for day school classes.

"We are trying to raise money for a new school building,' one of the members informed me. But so far, we only have \$1,000. It's rather slow going.'

"I gave much thought to the crowded conditions of the little church school. I began to pray, to plan, and to work. Others were inspired and soon a new building program was begun. In three years, with God's help, a new \$130,000 building stood ready for the youngsters! In addition, the Lord had helped them find a contractor to build at a saving of around \$50,000 to \$65,000. What a God! What a Lord! What a Friend!

"Surely we may respond by saying, My God shall supply all your need according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus' (Phil. 4:19).

Membership Nearly Doubled in Three Years

"It was at the Potomac campmeeting when Pastor Coon had most of the evening services, that I had gone to him to unite with me in claiming promises for souls to be won to the Lord in the church where I had been called to labor. During the next three years, the district nearly doubled its membership.

"For one soul our Lord would have died. When we pray for the salvation of a soul, we are praying according to the will of God, and so can expect answers if we will but comply with the conditions of soulwinning.

The Gunman

"One dark night, my family and I left one of the shopping centers in Roanoke, Virginia and headed home on the interstate.

"Suddenly, looming up in front on the right-hand lane, a large man stood with a gun pointed at the car. Beside him in the ditch, another crouched. Taking in the picture at a glance, we simultaneously breathed the promise of Psalms 34:7, the precious one about the encamping angel.

"I darted the words, Bend down!' My wife and two children obeyed instantly. I lowered my own head as far as I dared and slipped at full speed over into the left lane. The gunman kept pointing his gun at us. Hurrying on to the police station, I reported what had happened, but by the time the police arrived, the two had fled.

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The Pursuing Driver

"One day in Little Rock, we were driving up toward the ramp leading to the interstate. We noticed a man driving very close to us—closer than we thought he should. Speeding up to get out of his way, we were startled to note that he initiated a hot pursuit, evidently thinking we were not practicing the Golden Rule.

"We offered a quick prayer, and God gave us traveling mercies. The Lord enabled us to pass a car or two on the road, and traffic kept us separated from the irritated driver. Soon we slipped to an off ramp, and saved further trouble.

"God has promised, 'No weapon that is formed against thee shall prosper; and every tongue that shall rise against thee in judgment thou shalt condemn. This is the heritage of the servants of the Lord, and their righteousness is of me, saith the Lord' (Isa. 54:17)."

Daina's Algebra

Pastor Clark's family, like himself, believe and claim God's promises. "Our daughter, Daina," he adds, "had a tremendous experience of answered prayer. She was fourteen years old, and was flunking algebra. Try as she would, she could get no better grades than a D- or a D.

"She carried back to boarding school my copy of the book *Youth Prays*. Using the principles outlined there, she prayed for special help in this subject. She had been much concerned about her failure in this class. But after turning the problem over to the Lord, she brought her grade up to B+."

Sunnydale Tornado

Going back to his own prayer experiences, Pastor Clark says:

"One summer, I was working near Centralia, Missouri, helping to prepare the grounds of Sunnydale Academy for Camp Meeting. One day in the chapel with several other men, readying the room for the Junior meetings, I chanced to look out the window, and saw a tornado coming right toward us.

"'Hurry, men! A tornado coming!' And I began running toward the stairs. The other men followed. Someone went to ring the bell to give the alarm, and soon every one of the workers clattered down the stairs. Quickly we knelt and prayed.

"Outside we could hear the fury of the storm and the increasing roar. In the midst of the prayer, the tornado lifted from the ground, passed over the encampment, and went on its way.

"How wonderful to be on God's side!"

Bottle Cap

Pastor Clark says, "As a boy of twelve, I learned for myself the way God loves to answer prayer. One day I was helping my father 'rogue wheat,' a process having to do with picking out the odd heads in a field of wheat.

My father had advertised his wheat as '99 and 99/100% pure!'

"As I came to the end of my row, I went to the water bottle and drank gratefully of the cool water. When I had finished, I searched unsuccessfully for the bottle cap. It seemed to have completely disappeared. After looking all around me, I knelt and prayed. Opening my eyes, I caught my breath in astonishment—the lost cap lay directly in front of me. I have never been able to forget that experience, nor am I trying to forget God's wonderful kindness."

Lost Billfold

Two years after this experience, young Clark lost a billfold in a large alfalfa field. This billfold meant much to him, and he hated to lose it.

"Ten acres is a big place in which to lose something, Son,' my uncle called down from atop the noisy mowing machine, when I had told him my misfortune. 'It would be like finding a needle in a haystack!'

"I know it,' I replied. 'And I've looked and looked!'

"My uncle promised he would keep watching that afternoon as he worked, not really thinking that he might find it in such a place.

"But suddenly on one of his rounds, he glanced down, and there it lay!

"Later that evening when he brought the precious billfold to the house, I'm not sure who was the most excited. I do know that my prayer was answered, and it was a great faith-builder to me."

Special Direction

Often in his ministry, Pastor Clark asked special help from the Lord so that he would not waste time.

"Lead me, dear God, to the souls who are the most eager to know Jesus and His truth," he prayed.

"One answer to that prayer came on the day when Mrs. Ross called," he told me. "Her questions on the telephone were deeper than a stranger would casually ask an unknown pastor. She wanted to know about the church; why did they keep the Sabbath? and many other questions. Only a few weeks later she was baptized." It was also Pastor Clark's privilege to witness the baptism of her two lads as they joined their mother who sought for truth and found it.

Keeping a List of Answered Prayers

God has graciously answered so many prayers of the Clarks. It is an excellent plan to keep a list of these requests and their answers, along with the promise claimed. Someone has written:

"It is for our own benefit to keep every gift of God fresh in our memory. Thus faith is strengthened." The Desire of Ages, p. 348.

"There is greater encouragement for us in the least blessing we ourselves receive from God than in all the accounts we can read of the faith and experience of others."-Ibid.

"We have nothing to fear for the future, except as we shall forget the way the Lord has led us."-Testimonies to Ministers, p. 31.

I would suggest that you, our reader, turn to the lesson set on The Prayer of Reception. You will note that Lesson No. 7 tells Eight Ways to Build Faith. The making of a chart is one of the ways to remind us of God's miraculous answers to our prayers. It is really a wonderful way to keep faith strong. Why not try it for yourself?

18: Foolishness of asking God to keep us from having problems when God has Problems too

Really foolish, since one of His problems is to perfect beautiful, trusting characters in us which will never jeopardize the peace and harmony of heaven, throughout eternity.

WHY DOES God treat me this way?" Sue began.

Sue Winters had come to our office in a dither. She was sad, melancholy and despondent. In fact, anger with God plainly registered in her voice and countenance.

Foolish Prayers—Fabulous Answers

"What has God done to you that He should not have done?" we asked kindly.

Angrily cataloging a lengthy list of heartbreaking sorrows, including the death of a father in the service, a mother by cancer, a brother from tuberculosis, followed by financial bankruptcy, she blurted out, "Isn't that just about enough!"

We understandingly listened to the tale of woe. "How long have you been a member of our church, Sue?" I asked, trying to get a little background of her life's problems, and the reasons behind her bitterness and complete discouragement.

"About ten years," she growled.

"When you were baptized, Sue," I continued, "did anyone tell you the meaning of the cross of Jesus?"

A puzzled expression appeared on the face of the distraught girl. "What are you referring to?" she asked.

"I mean, did they tell you how much God has already demonstrated His love for us in the death of Jesus?"

Romans 8:32

Earnestly I leaned forward, darting a prayer to heaven for wisdom to help this floundering child of God. "Sue," I continued, "the teachings of Scripture to which you should have been directed when you prepared for baptism and fellowship in the church is summed up in Romans 8:32. In almost blazing letters God tells us of His tremendous, fabulous love for the human race in general, and of you in particular. In this Scripture He declares, 'He that spared not His own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things?'

"God is faced with a real problem, Sue," I said; "that of helping us to develop characters which will not jeopardize heaven, and yet at the same time give us many of the blessings and conveniences we want here in this life. The Bible declares that those who go home with Jesus will be a patient people. (See Rev. 14:12.) God also states that the only way to develop patience is by having trouble. (See James 1:2, 3.) This is the reason why the Apostle Paul, by inspiration of the Holy Spirit, defends trouble as very precious. He states, 'But we glory in tribulations, also: knowing that tribulation worketh patience'! (Rom. 5:3)

Mysteries of Life Solved Only by Calvary

"A way exists, Sue, by which it is possible for a human being, surrounded by mysterious troubles, to be kept from bitterness. That way is looking to Jesus--to His sufferings and His humble death for us. Even the angels, observing the 'mystery of iniquity,' cannot fully understand its depth, except by looking to the central figure of the ages--Jesus dying on Calvary."

Then opening my Bible to the pages of notes in the back, I invited her to read the following quotation from my favorite author: "The angels ascribe honor and glory to Christ, for even they are not secure except by looking to the sufferings of the Son of God. It is through the efficacy of the cross that the angels of heaven are guarded from apostasy. Without the cross they would be no more secure against evil than were the angels before the fall of Satan." Signs of the Times, Dec. 30, 1889.

A New Picture and Revelation

Like the unveiling of a beautiful painting, the love of God and the plan of salvation took shape before Sue's wondering eyes. This new revelation caused her to think and reason on an entirely new level. Her "why?" was being answered from the Word of God.

Foolish Prayers—Fabulous Answers

This life is a school. However, a very different school from what it would have been had there been no sin. But sin is a fact--a historical fact, a personal fact, a horrible fact! We deal with it daily. We witness its disastrous results continuously. Sin is deep. Sin is mysterious. The Apostle Paul wrote: "For the mystery of iniquity doth already work: only he who now letteth will let, until he be taken out of the way" (2 Thess. 2:7).

But Satan did not begin his mysterious, baneful work in Paul's day. He began it while still in heaven. It was when he sought to uplift himself at the expense of God. (See Isa. 14:12-14.) It was He who filled heaven with iniquitous violence. (See Eze. 28:18, 19.) It was he who was a "murderer from the beginning" (John 8:44). It was he who waged "war in heaven" (Rev. 12:7) against Christ. But he--the destroyer--will finally be destroyed forever. (See Heb. 2:14, 15; Eze. 28:19.)

Satan comes as a cunning serpent as in the Garden of Paradise. He comes with doubts of God. (See Gen. 3:1-5.) He has "the power of death" (Heb. 2:14, 15), and yet he charges the death of our dear ones on the One who has loved us "with an everlasting love" (Jer. 31:3). He leaves us aghast at the suffering of those near and dear to us who have scarcely begun their lives, claiming that God is the author of all the troubles of life. He snatches babes from their mother's arms, and then claims Christ did it. He stirs up battles from East to West, from North to South (Rev. 16:13, 14), and then charges it all on the innocent sufferer of Calvary--the One who came to bring peace, salvation, and life.

Calvary Explains What Nothing Else Can

"Sue," I said earnestly, "God, compelled by no other force than love, gave His Son for you. He did not have to do so. He could have, by one thought, blotted the entire universe out of existence and begun all over again. But in the mystery of life which we face, one point of history--Calvary--declares that the author of death is not God.

"Go back home," I directed, "and think through the events of Calvary. Put yourself in God's place. Think of what you would be thinking were you giving your own bosom son to die for a race of rebels, and how you would feel if, after all this, they questioned your love."

"The mystery of the cross explains all other mysteries. In the light that streams from Calvary the attributes of God which had filled us with fear and awe appear beautiful and attractive. Mercy, tenderness, and parental love are seen to blend with holiness, justice, and power." The Great Controversy, p. 652.

God Is a Daddy

"God is a Daddy," I told Sue. "Jesus taught us all to call Him, 'Our Father.' What a price our Lord paid for us, Sue! Please, as you go home, study for a long time the death of Jesus Christ and saturate your mind with the meaning it brings to you as you relate to the problems of life."

Sue Converted

Before the series of meetings concluded, Sue was back in the counsel room. "I see now what you are talking about," she confided. Her face shone with an understanding realization of what really constitutes life.

The Boy, Too

Then there was Dick Walters. I recall vividly of how he stomped into the counsel room with an air of, "You can't tell me anything!"

Foolish Prayers—Fabulous Answers

"You can talk all you want to about the ABC's of prayer, but none of it works for me. Not one answer do I get. Not one!" He almost spat the words out. One could imagine that he would shake me like a rat and fling me aside for even suggesting marvelous answers, if he thought it would do any good.

The pastor had cautioned me I would have trouble with him. As I listened quietly to his outbursts, I saw they were calculated to shock me. But then it came my turn to speak.

"Dick," I asked kindly, "what are you asking for?"

"I am asking God to help me find some things I lost. I am always losing things. I misplace them and God won't help me find them," he grunted accusingly.

Asking for the Wrong Thing

"Perhaps, Dick, you are asking for the wrong thing," I suggested with a smile.

"What do you mean?" he demanded.

"I mean that if God sent an angel after you to pick up all you slovenly threw around hit and miss, God would be encouraging you in carelessness. So you are presenting God with a real problem." Then I sat quietly so as to give the suggestion time to sink into the thinking of the confused teenager. Then I continued, "Which should God do? Answer your prayers to find things you leave around? or teach you a lesson to have a place for everything and then put everything in its place? God wants to answer every one of your prayers, Dick, but you place a heavy load on the Lord when you become bitter because He does not let you have a life of spineless, careless conveniences here at the expense of eternal life--a life that measures with the life of God.

"For God to take into heaven people who are impatient, rude, slovenly, and perpetually thoughtless and careless, would be for Him to impeach His own wisdom. Therefore, God has a problem. It is whether to answer every selfish prayer to make up for our own neglect, or whether to wait until we ask for grace to overcome, for strength to resist evil, and for courage to face our troubles."

Life a School

I believe God wants to answer every prayer exactly as we pray, except that He knows there is often a far better answer than the one we humanly plead for. He wants to make the path ahead smooth and flowery, with blue and cloudless skies. But while many times He does this to a certain extent in answer to our foolish prayers, yet, looking ahead into eternity, He must balance these gifts with lessons often hard to learn.

So as He permits the tests in the school of life, He also sends us answers to encourage our faith, to prove His love, and to keep us looking up. He is a wonderful Father, a pitiful Daddy, an ardent Lover. He alone can blend severe lessons with generous gifts!

When He permits affliction, He does it in love. More than this, He Himself suffers with His children far more than any earthly parent could. "In all their affliction he was afflicted" (Isa. 63:9).

A Sharp Contrast

Mary Thomas' attitude toward God was so different from Sue's and Dick's when we first met them! Hers must have brought real pleasure to our Lord. His sustaining grace upheld her in the horrible tragedy which befell her. Here is her story.

"Come, Jeffrey. Dad just called and will be in Little Rock in an hour. We can ride with him to Louisville, Kentucky."

Foolish Prayers—Fabulous Answers

The boy's eyes shone in anticipation of seeing his father again, and he reached for his jacket without hesitation. The very thought of traveling with Dad in the big truck sent little thrills racing up and down his spine. And they saw Dad little enough. Mary watched her boy while she put on her coat. Her own eagerness nearly matched his, for she, too, looked forward to seeing her husband and traveling with him for awhile.

Pulling to the side of the road at a truck stop, she and Jeffrey sat in silence for some moments. Many cars and trucks whizzed by in the darkness while others pulled in. Suddenly a car pulled up beside their own. Mary looked up in surprise.

"Stephen! I didn't know you would be coming by! What a surprise!"

"Twenty-eight miles is no hindrance to seeing Dad, and you too, Mom," he said affectionately. His wife and two children tumbled out of the car. "I just came on an impulse, really. Say, there's Sis and her kids," Stephen added a few minutes later.

Louise and her children greeted Stephen's family with talk and happy laughter. A few minutes later when all had pulled in at the truck stop, Don Thomas stepped down from the cab. The only family member missing was the son serving in Viet Nam.

For two hours the clan talked, ate, joked and reminisced over the past in the brightly lit restaurant. Everyone seemed especially happy tonight, and a bit excited. But no one could tell just why. No one made a move to go for some time. But schedules have a way of intruding, and as midnight drew near, Louise and Stephen reluctantly spoke of getting home.

Good-byes were called from car windows and Jeffrey climbed bleary eyed into the sleeper in back of the cab. Don and Mary talked of many things as the miles flew by and twinkling lights introduced cities and blinked their hurried good-byes. Several times topics of conversation were changed abruptly by one of the two. The other usually remarked, "How did you know I was thinking about that?" A special closeness bound the three together--husband, wife and the young teenager in the sleeper.

In West Memphis, Don halted at a service station long enough to replace a burned out light in one section of the dash. In a nearby restaurant, as the two drank a hot drink and talked a few moments, Jeffrey walked in, blinking at the bright lights. Again the three felt especially close and happy to be together. It was around 4 a.m. when they returned to the cab, and Jeffrey turned to his mother.

"How about trading places with me?" he said. "I'd like to talk to Dad for awhile."

Mary climbed into the sleeper, and stretched a bit, easing tired muscles. Recalling the events of the previous day, a wonderful Sabbath, and the happy evening with all the family, Mary thanked God for the good things of life He had given. Gratefully she thanked Him for the love of her family, and listened to the laughter of a boy and his dad. As she breathed a prayer of thankfulness to God for blessing her as He had, suddenly the cab lurched and Mary was tossed about inside the sleeper.

It seemed to her but a matter of seconds when she asked, "Don, what happened?" His answer came readily, "I ran out of road."

In that area some construction work going on to extend a freeway on the other side of Memphis, was ill-lighted by the detour sign. Don thought he had room to back up and get back on the road but the truck overturned down a five foot embankment.

Suddenly Mary looked about her, realizing that Jeffrey should be right in front of her. "Don, Jeffrey is not in here!" she exclaimed, and began calling over and over, "Jeffrey, Jeffrey!" Dead silence rose up to

mock her. And the more she called, the more she realized she would not hear his answer. Finally Don kicked out the windshield and crawled through.

At that moment a man's voice came through. "Oh, my God!" And it sounded more like a prayer than a vain exclamation. Even before she heard it, Mary knew within her that her boy was dead.

Another man asked, "Is there anyone else in there besides you?" Don answered, "Yes, my wife." Strong arms helped her to safety and Mary saw her husband walk to the side of the overturned truck, then to a nearby field where he dropped to his knees with his head bent in a prayer-like manner.

Mary felt kind hands steering her away from the truck and heard a man mumbling about, "fuel running all over," and "afraid of a fire." Not until then did Mary notice two ambulances, two fire trucks and six police cars, besides many spectators. (Later she learned she had been unconscious for twenty to thirty minutes, so missed hearing the sirens.)

Walking into the field, Mary knelt beside her husband, and putting her arms around him tried to console him. A man in uniform came over and said, "We're taking you two to the hospital," looking significantly at Mary's badly bruised forehead.

"No, you aren't," Don said firmly. "I have a boy under that truck and I am not about to leave my boy!"

And he never did. Don walked back to where Jeffrey lay, face down, nose broken, life crushed out by the fuel tanks striking him across his back. Suddenly, he crumpled beside his son, dead from shock and grief.

In the hospital in Memphis, the doctor who cared for Mary came by to see her about 8:00 a.m. "Mrs. Thomas," he said, "I'm off duty, but before I went home, I felt I just had to come and talk to you." He paused a moment, seemingly to find words to comfort a woman bereaved of both husband and son in one brief hour. "Remember, the Lord won't put any more on your shoulders than what you are able to bear, and your faith in God must be awfully strong for Him to place this double tragedy on your shoulders."

Mary felt a strong resolution well up within her at the doctor's kind words. Suddenly she knew for sure she would not go to pieces.

"You know, Doctor," Mary said quietly, "at the accident I heard a little voice within me saying over and over, 'I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee.' No one else could hear it I know, but I felt it going through my mind."

The doctor smiled, patted the bruised forehead, and said, "I'm glad to know that. I won't have to worry about you going into shock or getting hysterical, like some do. You have something to carry you through all this."

As the doctor smiled and walked from the room, Mary felt the presence of the Lord in a greater measure than ever before. The events of the past twenty-four hours marched before her memory like the events of a long year.

Just the morning before, she had stood before nineteen young people in the Sabbath School Earliteen Class. One member of that class was Jeffrey. Mary had felt impressed to tell these young people to "make sure at all times that your heart is right with God, for you don't know when you leave here if it will be for the last time." She couldn't know the words were meant especially for Jeffrey. Only later did she learn that in a call for re-dedication during the eleven o'clock hour service, her son sprang to his feet before anyone else in the room. Everything was all right with Jeffrey that night!

Mary remembered the words of her husband but fifteen minutes before the accident. "I'm arranging my run so I can be home on week-ends from now on instead of in California," he said. "I want to go to

church with you." That decision, plus the little time God gave him in the field to make things right, gave Mary encouragement and peace.

The future might have looked bleak from the white hospital bed. No insurance, no money in the bank, and the end of a steady income. But Mary did not become discouraged. As the news went out over Associated Press, and was picked up by newspapers across the country, cards and letters began to arrive from many folk she had never met, but who had known Don in his travels. Altogether, kind friends donated \$1,500, which Mary used for living expenses and paying bills until she felt able to go to work. And when that time came, she didn't go job hunting--the job came to her, a job with a higher rate of pay than she had ever earned before.

Mary's own testimony is a beautiful witness to the power of God and His sustaining grace: "I have never had nightmares or bad dreams about this experience. And I feel that since the Lord has provided for me, led me every step of the way, I can do no less than work for Him. I have never once questioned the taking of my two loved ones from me. I know the Lord knows best and that all things work together for good. I do not know the reason why my life was spared--perhaps there is a work for me to do. If there is, I am ready to do it! Becoming a Bible Instructor is the goal I have set--and with the Lord's help in supplying the wisdom, love and understanding, the ability and whatever else it takes, and my supplying the willingness, I know that I will be used as an instrument in furthering His work and helping to win souls for Him.

"My life has been dedicated to serving others, and now that I have learned the ABC's of prayer, I am confident that I can ask for, and receive even greater things to do. And I am thanking Him for already having answered this prayer! "

As this goes to press, Mary is holding a position of trust in a large Christian organization. In conversing with her recently, we observed a look of triumph in Jesus Christ. Every expression, every word from her lips gave evidence of a radiant faith in Him who died on Calvary, is now our Minister in the Sanctuary above, and is soon to return and reunite families separated by the cruel hand of death.

Her attitude certainly makes God's problems lighter. She says, "God has done for me more than I could ask or think."

19: Foolish Humility—Fabulous Vision

Not really foolish, for "God resisteth the proud, and giveth grace to the humble." 1 Peter 5:5.

A HIGH STATESMAN turns from a long row of parchments demanding attention. A scribe looks up, puzzled as his master walks to a window and stands in thought. Suddenly he faces the secretary and announces: "I will be seeing no one the rest of the day." He pauses. "Oh, yes. Please inform His Majesty that I will not be able to attend the royal banquet this evening."

"The special banquet honoring all the presidents?" the secretary asks incredulously.

"Yes," the statesman answers firmly. "That is all for today," he adds. Briskly he walks to the doorway and pushes aside the heavy tapestry. Deep in thought, he treads the long corridors, graciously nodding to the guards and messengers he meets along the way.

Coming to a large entry at the back of the palace he descends the stairs, past the palace guards, and walks into the rear courtyard. Past several smaller buildings and into a narrow corridor, darker and not so well kept. A beam of light falls in a long shaft against the building on one side of the alley. The rich robes of the highest president in the Persian kingdom contrast sharply with the gray walls of his surroundings.

Foolish Prayers—Fabulous Answers

We are surprised to see this high official stop before the heap of ashes in front of him, where evidently rubbish has been burned. Picking up a broken piece of pottery lying nearby, he fills it with ashes and retraces his steps into the palace and through the corridor. Past the office vacated only moments before, through other corridors and up a winding stairway he passes nearly unnoticed. The broken pottery containing the gray ashes is still held tightly in his hand as he enters a room which evidently is his own apartment.

Setting the pot of ashes on a low stand, he begins removing the gold chains and vestments from about his neck, the brilliant robe, the white linen tunic. Over the undergarments, the gray-haired president drapes a piece of rough, brown sackcloth. Picking up the vessel containing the ashes, he begins sprinkling them over his head and shoulders. Satisfied that he is covered, he kneels before his window and prays to the God of heaven. Freely the tears flow. He does not merely kneel, he lies prostrate upon the floor, convulsed in sorrow. In deep agony he confesses the sins of Israel, classing himself among the vilest of them.

After a time, a knock is heard. We are surprised when the statesman shakes his head politely and declines the daintily prepared tray of food. Even a servant bearing a pitcher of water is courteously waved aside. A dark cloud seems to have settled over the countenance of this mighty man. We are puzzled over his strange behavior. Finally we have the opportunity of speaking with this prominent official.

"Your Excellence, we understand you are a prophet. We've heard the story of your faithfulness when offered the king's idolatrous meat. We know the great God of heaven entrusted you with the interpretation of the dream for Nebuchadnezzar. And to you was revealed the meaning of the handwriting on the wall in the days of Belshazzar. You are a holy man. Please, if we may beg, do not degrade yourself with these uncouth clothes, and these dirty ashes. Do not deprive yourself of food and drink. Pray for your sinful brethren, yes, but keep your own image untainted. You don't need to take the blame for the practices which have brought God's frown. You have neither aided nor abetted in any."

But the statesman ignores our remonstrances. Later he solemnly and humbly wrote, "I prayed unto the Lord my God, and made my confession, and said, O Lord, the great and dreadful God, keeping the covenant and mercy to them that love him, and to them that keep his commandments; we have sinned" (Daniel 9:4, 5).

"Daniel, Daniel!" we cry, "don't be so foolish as to identify yourself with abominable sinners. Please! Please! You are a holy man! You are the most wonderful man of the generation. Even the Queen Mother declared, 'the spirit of the holy gods' is in him (Daniel 5:11)."

But Daniel pays no heed. "We have sinned," he cries, "and have committed iniquity, and have done wickedly, and have rebelled, even by departing from thy precepts and from thy judgments." "And whiles I was speaking, and praying, and confessing my sin and the sin of my people Israel . . . the man Gabriel . . . touched me" (Daniel 9:5, 20, 21). (You will profit by reading the complete context in Daniel 9:1-23.)

This man of God did not have the spirit of the gods of idolatrous Babylon in him as they thought, but he had the Holy Spirit, for he was a prophet, and prophecy is a gift of the Holy Spirit. Daniel the prophet, and the rest of the holy prophets, spoke as they were "moved by the Holy Ghost" (2 Peter 1:21). "The Spirit of Christ . . . was in them" (1 Peter 1:11). Yet this great man completely ignored his worth, his good deeds, his virtues, and his righteousness as he classed himself with those who were guilty of grossest evil. What a humble man! What an example of the right kind of "sighing and crying"! What a lesson his attitude teaches as contrasted with those who are inclined to take the holier-than-thou approach to iniquity around us.

Rich Dividends in Such a Type of "Sighing"

Daniel had the spirit of Christ (1 Peter 1:11). And that spirit is revealed in the statement of our Lord, "He that humbleth himself shall be exalted" (Luke 18:14).

Daniel, as he thus sighed and cried, placing himself with the unworthy, was tremendously exalted by the Lord! God sent a holy angel, fresh from glory land, to this marvelous man. Heaven commissioned this angel to declare to Daniel:

"At the beginning of thy supplications the commandment came forth, and I am come to shew thee; for thou art greatly beloved" (Daniel 9:23). Where in the annals of time do we find a more exalted expression, or eulogy of a man, except of Christ Himself, who was so completely saturated with love for sin-drenched humans, that he laid aside his princely robe, clothed himself in garments of humility, and, like His Master, "made himself of no reputation" (Phil. 2:5-7)? For this reason Daniel was highly esteemed and exalted by heaven.

Not merely did the angel bring him this love message; he also presented before the prophet's vision a great revelation of the future. "He informed me," declared Daniel, "and talked with me, and said, O Daniel, I am now come forth to give thee skill and understanding" (Daniel 9:22).

Do we want skill? Do we need understanding? Are we praying for guidance? Then, "Dare to be a Daniel." You know that chorus. Don't you think we should add another stanza which would picture the humility of this stalwart servant of God? True humility in prayer is the prelude to true revelations from our Lord. Says the Scripture, "The meek will he guide in judgment: and the meek will he teach his way" (Psalm 25:9).

Understanding of a Former Vision Not Fully Explained

Daniel had been given a former vision. Concerning this vision, the eighth chapter of Daniel closes with the words, "I was astonished at the vision, but none understood it" (Verse 27).

This Godly man placed himself in the class of the vilest of sinners just as the Apostle Paul did when he said, "I am chief" of sinners. By using the correct method of sighing and crying for the abominations done in the land, Daniel was prepared to understand the vision which "none understood." Without this deep humility, would the church today have the light on that grand prophecy pointing to the very year of Christ's baptism; and again, to the very year of His death of Calvary?

I say that is a reward of humble prayer. What do you say? Here is concrete evidence that heaven is pleased with this kind of humility. This is proof that He that dwelleth "in the high and holy place" dwells also "with him that is of a contrite and humble spirit" (Isaiah 57:15).

Gabriel Himself Responds

The very same angel, Gabriel, whom Daniel had seen in the former vision, was sent to give him "skill and understanding" (Daniel 9:22).

Isn't that wonderful? As a result of this amazing story, each earnest child of God can rejoice. He may cry out, "Lord, now I also understand something of the meaning of the Scripture which says, 'He that humbleth himself shall be exalted.'"

The angel brought tremendous comfort to Daniel by stating, "At the beginning of thy supplications the commandment came forth, and I am come to shew thee; for thou art greatly beloved: therefore understand the matter, and consider the vision" (Verse 23).

Thus we see that the very vision Daniel could not formerly understand was now to be made clear through self-distrust, humiliation, and through falling down before God and confessing-not the sins of

others, which he justly could have done-but his own. "The first thing to be learned by all who would become workers together with God is the lesson of self-distrust." *The Desire of Ages*, p. 250.

The Messiah Himself

The angel Gabriel told Daniel the event that would mark

the commencement of the time pointed out in the vision of Daniel, chapters 8 and 9. It was "the going forth of the commandment to restore and to build Jerusalem" (Daniel 9:25), given by King Artaxerxes in 457 B.C.

To show that this date indicated the starting point of the prophecy, the angel Gabriel presented the baptism of Jesus Christ and the cross of Calvary as proof. These events validate the beginning and the ending of the great twenty-three-hundred-day prophecy. While "seventy weeks are determined" (literally "cut off" from the preceding vision of the twenty-three hundred days), yet sixty-nine of these weeks, or four hundred and eighty-three years, would reach to the baptism of Jesus. Then it was that Christ actually became "Messiah the Prince" (Verse 25). "Christ," the "anointed" one, and "the Messiah" all refer to the same glorious One. For Christ means "anointed." And He was anointed at His baptism when the Holy Ghost descended upon Him. (See Matt. 3:16, 17; Acts 10:38.) "We have found the Messias [Messiah]," cried Philip, referring to Christ after His anointing (John 1:41).

Therefore, all we of this age have to do, is to locate the time of Christ's baptism and go back sixty-nine prophetic weeks, or four hundred and eighty-three prophetic days, to locate the beginning of the great twenty-three-hundred day prophecy. In symbolic prophecy one prophetic day stands for a literal year. (See Num. 14:34 and Eze. 4:6.) Sixty-nine weeks, being four hundred and eighty-three prophetic days, gives us actually four hundred and eighty-three literal years. So counting backward from the date A.D. 27, when Christ was baptized, we find the beginning date of the prophecy: 457 B.C.

When I was in college, we students had the opportunity of studying this marvelous prophecy in detail. We spent days in research, and were literally astonished at how clearly the date 457 B.C. was validated, both in the Old Testament and by history, centuries before the birth of Christ. Marginal references of most Bibles also carry this date in connection with the three-fold decree of Cyrus, Darius, and Artaxerxes. (See Ezra 6:14.) This date we found established beyond question. We students learned that unquestionably this date is as sure as the cross of Christ itself.

Isn't it thrilling that Daniel, the prophet, in humbling himself, received the revelation of the very year when our Lord Jesus Christ would be baptized in the river Jordan (Matt. 3:13-17)!

Gabriel also aided humble Daniel in understanding the meaning of the statement that after the sixty-nine weeks were expired, there would be another prophetic week of seven days still allotted to the Jewish nation. This seven year period would be cut in half. For in the midst of this week the "Messiah" would "be cut off." It is common knowledge that Christ was crucified three-and-one-half years after his baptism. This occurred in A.D. 31 (Dan. 9:26, 27).

Another three-and-one-half years brought an end to the seventieth week of prophecy. The Gospel would then go to the Gentiles. Acts, chapters 6 to 8, depicts the events of the end of the day of grace for the Jews as a nation, with the stoning of Stephen, and Saul's conversion, his name being changed to Paul. Not long after this, Paul proclaimed, "we turn to the Gentiles" (Acts 13:46).

Wonderful Reward of Humility

No wonder when Christ came He began preaching, "The time is fulfilled" (Mark 1:15). The sixty-nine weeks of Daniel's prophecy had just been completely fulfilled. But Daniel would never have known this prophecy, and consequently would never have been able to share it with God's children, had he not

have "sighed and cried" in the humble self-effacing way he did. Had he contrasted his righteousness with the uncleanness of his people, well might the church today have been denied this wonderful prophecy of the cross of Christ—at least through Daniel. Now this glorious Gospel is being heralded to every nation on earth.

Because of the spiritual pride of God's chosen people, they rejected Christ. He sorrowfully declared, "Your house is left unto you desolate" (Matt. 23:38). Then followed His trial and crucifixion. Earlier in His ministry He had called the temple, "My house." Now it had become, "your house." The marginal reference of Daniel 9:26 gives the literal meaning, "and [the Jews] they shall be no more his people." No wonder the Apostle Paul cried out, "Lo, we turn to the Gentiles" (Acts 13:46). "For he is not a Jew, which is one outwardly . . . but he is a Jew, which is one inwardly" (Romans 2:28, 29). The spiritually proud are rejected, while the meek learn God's way. It is not enough to be religious. It is not sufficient to be right. A man who is right is wrong when he becomes sanctimonious. We need Christ's humility to understand Christ's way.

Promises and Conditions

This great prophecy of Daniel teaches us another valuable lesson. It is this: Just as there are conditions to every Bible promise, so there are conditions to certain Bible prophecies. God's Word declared millenniums ago: "At what instant I shall speak concerning a nation, and concerning a kingdom, to build and to plant it; if it do evil in my sight, that it obey not my voice, then I will repent of the good, wherewith I said I would benefit them" (Jer. 18:9, 10). Thus is summarized an earlier principle enunciated by the Lord through Moses when He promised blessings on obedient Israel and cursings if they were disobedient. (Please see Deuteronomy, chapter 28.) It constitutes a tremendous challenge to us to obey the conditions if we expect God to fulfill His promises to us.

Israel as a nation rejected Christ. Now anyone who receives Christ is grafted into the old vine and is, by faith, a child of Abraham. "If ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise" (Gal. 3:29).

The chart at the close of the chapter presents a review of the twenty-three-hundred-day vision of Daniel, chapter 8, from which the seventy weeks of Daniel, chapter 9, were cut off. By simple computation we find that the vision brings us to the year 1844 A.D., when our great High Priest, Jesus Christ, entered into a second phase of His intercessory work in the heavenly Sanctuary, represented by the ministry of the High Priest on the one special day of the year, the Day of Atonement in the Holiest Place. (See Heb. 9:7-9.)

Yes indeed! God's way is in His sanctuary (Psalm 77:13). Are you not grateful that Christ "maketh intercession" in heaven for guilty sinners today? for you? for me?

Wrong Way to Sigh and Cry

Diametrically opposed to the spirit of the prophet Daniel is the spirit of Satan, the "accuser of our brethren" (Rev. 12:10). This same verse says that Satan accuses God's children before God "day and night." He never tires of this baneful work. Yet God rebukes this kind of sighing and crying. Jesus cries out to Satan, "The Lord rebuke thee" (Zech. 3:1, 2).

Certainly anyone who loves to expose the sins of others rather than to humble himself before God, is doing the work of the accuser of the brethren. No one can expect to receive visions of God when not cooperating with the Spirit of God. No one can see the cross of Jesus in its beauty and meaningfulness when he is selfishly cross with another. No one can advantage himself of the intercession of our Lord while leavened with this hard and unforgiving attitude. (See Luke 6:37; Matt. 6:15.)

As we think of this picture of humility of a mighty prophet of God, we are reminded of a resolution made this last week by one who attended our studies on prayer.

We shall call her name Mary. Little Mary was contentious as well as a cry baby. After she picked a quarrel, she would cry, scream, or stamp her feet.

After the series of studies, she exclaimed to her father, "Daddy, I am not going to cry and quarrel any more." As the father sat in silent admiration, his humbled daughter added, "I'll tell you what I am going to do instead. I am going to claim Bible promises."

And what seven-year-old Mary resolved to do, we too, by the aid of the Holy Spirit can do. For "he that humbleth himself shall be exalted."

Let us learn a lesson—a wonderful lesson indeed, from that humble, but mighty man of God, Daniel the prophet, the spokesman of the Almighty. He has taught us the way to receive fabulous light by being "foolishly" humble.

"Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in due time" (1 Peter 5:6).

20: Foolish prayer, fabulous answer under a Fabulous Deception

Really foolish, because "If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me." Psalm 66:18.

THE EXCITED gabble of voices died to hushed whispers. Every girl in the nursing class followed the tall, dignified man with her eyes as he strode purposefully into the classroom. Everyone guessed who the tall stranger must be—the doctor from across the great Eastern city had been promised for a series of lectures.

As the days went by and Dr. X became a frequent lecturer, his name entered often into the conversation of the girls in the class. Elaine Perkins enjoyed all her nursing classes, but looked forward to this one with a special eagerness. She found others felt as she did. Dr. X's soft-spoken sincerity caused each student to feel like she would like to crawl into his coat pocket.

A True Father

Elaine learned that the Dr. was a respected leader in his church and a friend to everyone. She found she must use every ounce of her moral rectitude and feminine self-effaciveness to save herself from crawling right under the arm of the beloved Dr. X. His soft voice and quiet, humble manner, melted the heart of the hardest stoic, and Elaine found it hard to keep her reserve.

Elaine's Marriage

Besides, Elaine did have a special friend, young Bill Swanson. Elaine and Bill had been high school sweethearts, but somehow he left her feeling very unromantic.

The months of training were drawing to a close for Elaine, when Bill brought up the subject of marriage. The two young people had enjoyed many good times together, but for some reason Elaine had never imagined herself married to him. He seemed more like a brother-friendly, fun and amiable. But romantic? Hardly!

At first she told him, "No." But when her family found out about it, they descended on her like a swarm of angry hornets!

"You're not going to marry him!" exploded her brother Jim. "How could you think of turning him down?"

"I hope you realize what a good man you've jilted," Jack added.

Her sister literally sputtered. "Of all the silly things! Now if Bill had asked me, you'd see some action around here! "

But Elaine's mother spoke far more emphatically, "If you don't marry Bill Swanson, you needn't bother to come home!"

Elaine withdrew in confusion from the unexpected attack. After a week of quiet reconsideration, she changed her decision to "Yes."

Caught in a whirl of wedding plans, sewing of bridal dress and accessories and all the rest, Elaine felt almost happy. And Bill presented himself at the altar as one of the "handsomest" bridegrooms Elaine had ever seen. Her own lovely face, shining beneath the white crown and swirls of lace, appeared happy and beautiful.

But the first weeks of marriage left Elaine confused and unhappy. Bill did everything he could to show kindness and love. Perhaps he tried too hard, for his every effort at being a loving husband left Elaine cold and unresponsive. She seemed to be unable to shake the feeling of a brother-sister relationship. And her mother's threat kept ringing in her ears . . . "If you don't marry Bill Swanson, you needn't bother to come home!"

Somehow she felt she must fight those words. She felt pushed into a corner by her family--pushed into marrying this handsome man she did not really love. Therefore when he tried to make love to her, she felt like fighting to get out of that corner--only the person she fought was Bill, instead of the real cause of the problem, her family.

Day by day, Bill became more heartbroken, for he could see that his efforts to win Elaine to his heart were without success. Each drew into a little world of his own, with not much to discuss between them. Within a very few weeks Bill and Elaine were more strangers than they had ever been before they married.

Fatherly Counsel

Elaine felt no joy in her heart the day she learned she must be expecting a baby. The burdens would only be greater now. As she thought about the new little one to be born, it suddenly occurred to her that she would need a doctor. And that doctor might as well be Dr. X.

For the first time in weeks she felt almost happy. With trembling fingers she dialed the number of the office and made an appointment to see the doctor.

When she sat in the office several days later chatting with her former teacher concerning the diet regulations she would need to follow, she felt more relaxed than she had since her marriage. Dr. X smiled frequently, and radiated a warm glow which filled the room. It occurred to her then that Dr. X would probably be able to help her in her unhappiness at home.

She wanted to tell him, but she didn't. It was hard to acknowledge that she had somehow made a mistake and her marriage appeared to be floundering on the rocks. She dropped her eyes as she felt them fill with hot tears. Once she had begun, the story poured out in a rush of bitterness and regret. She lifted her eyes, moist with unbidden tears and with quivering lips begged for advice.

"What can I do?" she pleaded. "I am so miserable." The tears began to flow as she told of how she had always admired Bill but did not want him for a husband. The office rug absorbed the salty tears which fell while she told of her unwise but well-meaning family and their interference.

Foolish Prayers—Fabulous Answers

Dr. stood thoughtfully; chin in hand, while Elaine related her story. He listened patiently, then walked to her side. Placing a kind fatherly arm on her shoulder, he spoke in a quiet voice. "God will help you to adjust to your situation," he said. He bowed his head and prayed that the Lord would guide and sustain Elaine each day and give her new courage.

Elaine left the office filled with a feeling of warmth and well being. Someone cared! And that someone was Dr. X.

Unselfish Nobleness

The nurse wrote out the next appointment for two o'clock, exactly one month in advance. But only three days went by before Elaine felt concerned about a small physical problem.

"I guess it won't hurt to give the Dr. a call," she said to herself. He listened to her problem and gave good counsel as to what she might do to relieve the situation.

"By the way, Elaine, how are things going at your house now?" he added. "Better I trust."

"I hope so," Elaine spoke hesitantly. She could have said plenty, but she didn't want to be a cry baby or take all the doctor's time. After all, hundreds of people were paying for his time.

"Don't forget to offer a little word of prayer," encouraged Dr. X, as they said good-bye.

A Heavenly Nearness

In a few days Elaine again sat in the office of her doctor. So many things pressed in against her. He seemed to be the only one who really understood. Never had Elaine known anyone so sympathetic and helpful. This was her greatest need, at the present time, she felt.

In a couple more days, Elaine opened her door to find her favorite doctor standing there.

"I just noticed I was in your block, as I was out this way making house calls, Elaine," he said. "How's everything?" he asked quietly, looking sympathetically into her troubled blue eyes. As they talked, he slipped through the door and she closed it behind him. For only a moment he stayed, counseling with the distraught girl, and as he stood near the door, ready to leave, she looked up into his eyes with admiration and a strange longing. Her two lips were more than he could resist and the helpful Dr. X planted a kiss, "right where it belonged."

Personal Infatuation

Elaine and Dr. X kept telling themselves, and one another, that their association was on a pure, high level. Dr. X's demonstrations merely served to strengthen and ennoble her, Elaine assured herself. From Dr. X Elaine received the emotional satisfaction she found lacking in her own marriage.

The infatuation grew while Bill was in the service. Dr. X found ways and times to spend with Elaine, consoling the unhappy wife. Soon Bill was shipped overseas, and Elaine breathed a sigh of relief. It had become increasingly difficult to pretend to be a good wife to Bill while carrying on a secret love life with Dr. X.

Marriage Contemplated

The wife of Dr. X possessed a pure Christian character as pure as a lily and as unsexual as an angel. The fact that her husband approached her less and less, gave her greater and still greater respect for her already beloved mate. No evil was suspicioned and the relationship became completely platonic. The doctor and his wife were still seen occasionally arm in arm, in a fellowship gathering.

Foolish Prayers—Fabulous Answers

Elaine gave birth to a lovely seven pound boy and named him Lane. Many times she and the doctor talked of their future and of how their world would be complete after the death of the doctor's wife.

"You are the one I really love, Elaine," Doctor X spoke softly. "Someday, you will be mine."

"And you are the only one I want for a husband," Elaine replied. "Nothing but death could separate us now."

Divorce

When Bill Swanson returned from overseas, proudly carrying his discharge papers, he met another set of papers which turned his world to bitter gall. Angrily he stuffed the divorce papers into his pocket and left the house.

When the shock of the blow had mellowed a bit and all that was left was the heartbroken remnants, he figured he should at least try to see Elaine and reason with her. Every attempt was another bitter disappointment. After several vain attempts of reconciliation with Elaine, he met another girl and married her.

For the first time in several years Elaine felt free. Free now to marry the wonderful Doctor X, as soon as he could be released from his wife. Then they would both find the happiness of which they had dreamed!

The Shock

"I am free now to marry," Elaine's face glowed with anticipation. "Our divorce is final, and Bill has just married another girl."

The doctor's face fell and plainly registered shocked consternation. "I can't marry until my wife dies." His voice held concern, for he could see that Elaine held high hopes of a new life with him.

"Why not?" Elaine demanded. "It only takes three months in this state to obtain a divorce. Besides, Dear, we love each other so much. We can't go on forever as we have been doing."

The Church

"My church will not permit me to get a divorce," Dr. X replied, hoping Elaine might understand.

"Your church! What has a church to do with divorce? It is the State that grants a divorce." Elaine shook her head in disbelief. She lifted her tear-filled eyes to the man who had come to mean so much to her. "What has happened? Don't you still love me?"

Dr. X leaned forward and tried to explain. "Yes, I do. But my church is different from others, Elaine. I am not permitted to marry while my wife is living. But I trust she will pass away soon."

"You have deceived me," sobbed Elaine. "You are just a nasty old man."

"Dr. X's head dropped into his hand and he began to cry like a baby. "Elaine, my dear, my love, my sweetheart. You don't understand. I am a Seventh-day Adventist."

Elaine's tear-filled eyes registered a question. She said nothing, and the doctor continued. "My church does not believe in divorce. It is a sin against the church! I am the head deacon. It would ruin my reputation in the church and also my practice, for the whole community respects my religion."

"Your religion! You're bluffing!" cried Elaine, thoroughly satisfied that now Dr. X had merely taken advantage of her loneliness to satisfy lust.

Foolish Prayers—Fabulous Answers

"No, No!" begged Dr. X. "Please, PLEASE! Just for my sake study the teachings of my church and you will know my church would disfellowship me immediately, were I to divorce my wife and marry you."

Dr. X sat tensely after finishing his speech, pleading as earnestly as if he were pleading for his life. The air hung heavily about the two people caught in the web of their own weaving. Finally Elaine spoke.

"OK," she said. "I will study and find out for myself if there is such a crazy religion as that."

"It is not crazy," objected Dr. X. "It is a true faith. It is Biblical. Here, Elaine. This is some literature you can read. You will see that my religion is absolutely wonderful, true, and pure!"

So Elaine started studying in earnest. After several weeks of diligent concentration on the material the doctor had given her, she made her decision.

"I am convinced," she said. "The Seventh-day Adventist church has a pure Biblical faith. I wish to become a member."

The church welcomed Elaine warmly. The fellowship she found surprised her and caused a new light to shine in her eyes. No one knew of the relationship of Elaine to Dr. X. She continued to see him frequently as before her church affiliation.

Fabulous Fight

As Elaine attended the church of her new found faith, her conscience began to prick her. This life she was leading with Dr. X could not be right. Many a sermon caused Elaine to blush inside and wonder what Jesus would say if He should come to church, personally speaking from the pulpit.

"I can't stand it any longer," Elaine said one day when she and Dr. X were alone. "We cannot continue living a lie."

"I don't see how it will be possible for us to call it quits." Dr. X's face was strained. "You know how much I care for you."

"But our church does not condone this type of life, any more than it would condone your having a divorce."

"You are right of course." Dr. X turned abruptly and left the room.

But only a few days later the relationship between the two had returned to the old ways. Many times Dr. X arranged to be with Elaine. Only one look from her beloved doctor was many times enough to control all her thoughts and actions.

Elaine now grew desperate. She came to us in great distress. "How can I break this terrible infatuation?" she pleaded. "Help me! Pray for me! Something! Anything! I can't seem to help myself."

We pointed her to Jesus and the necessity of giving her will to His will. For hours we talked, prayed and counseled. One later visit revealed that God was working and showing her the problem.

"I believe I am hypnotized," Elaine declared emphatically. "I don't believe I can break off with this cursed affair. I just obey his every suggestion as if I have no mind of my own."

Jacob's Trouble

Elaine's time of Jacob's trouble lasted several weeks. During this time she spent the amazing sum of \$600 in one month for long-distance telephone calls to us. She begged us repeatedly, not to forsake her, to keep claiming Bible promises.

Foolish Prayers—Fabulous Answers

"I need power to break off with the Dr." she cried in one call. "Don't stop praying. I can't do this alone. It's too big for me."

"Remember Hebrews 2:14, 15," we reminded her. "Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same; that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil; and deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage."

When our phone would ring again, Elaine would likely be in the depths of despair. "I am through with God. I don't want to be saved. I will never go to church again. I am going to lose my mind."

But our intercessory prayers continued to storm the Throne of Grace. God had promised that He would "deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage." We asked, we believed and we claimed, with eyes and hearts choked with tears.

One day we gave counsel to Elaine, which seemed to be her only answer. "Elaine, your only hope is to move to the midwest. You cannot expect victory while you are on temptation's ground."

"I'll do it," she said. And immediately she began planning to move.

ABC Answers

In the great city of Denver where Elaine moved, a letter came one day from a member of Dr. X's church back East. This friend, not knowing the relationship that existed, told Elaine of wonderful miracles from the hand of God, particularly those reported by Dr. X. But while ABC answers to prayer seemed denied Elaine, Dr. X was actually receiving fabulous answers. They were miraculous! Not one, but a whole chain of "impossible" miracles were his, in answer to claiming Bible promises.

"Why," lamented Elaine one day, "does Dr. X get answers like dominoes, while I am denied even one?"

We discussed the answers. They were not trickery. They were amazingly wonderful. So wonderful, in fact, that when Dr. X related them in church one Wednesday night at prayer meeting, the one who reported the experience to Elaine said you could hear fervent, "Amens" throughout the audience. Those present looked at one another, thrilled, and "Praise the Lord" was on many lips. The congregation little dreamed of the unconfessed sins of this kind and humble man.

"Elaine," we spoke carefully and prayerfully, "we cannot agree that it is God who is answering the prayers of Dr. X. The truth is, 'If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me' (Ps. 66:18). And God says, that he has turned his ear from hearing the law (see Prov. 28: 9), for the law commands, 'Thou shalt not commit adultery' (Ex. 20:14). So according to Proverbs 28:9, his prayer is 'abomination.' Dr. X has clearly indicated he does not want to give up this affair, even now."

"What then is the power behind these miracles," queried Elaine.

"There are millions of people on our planet who think all miracles are of God, Elaine," we continued. "Any miracle is immediately equated by them with God's power. But this is not the teaching of the Word of God. The Holy Scriptures declare in no uncertain terms that Satan can work miracles also, and that his purpose in doing so is deception.

"And deceiveth them that dwell on the earth by the means of those miracles which he had power to do" (Rev. 13:14).

"So great is Satan's power, that so far as our eyes are concerned, he can perform 'with all power and signs and lying wonders' (2 Thess. 2:9).

Reasons for Deception

Foolish Prayers—Fabulous Answers

"Elaine, God's Word makes clear, why men are deceived into thinking that Satanic miracles are God's answers to prayer. `And with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish; because they received not the love of the truth.... but had pleasure in unrighteousness.' And adds that it is for this cause that `God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie' (2 Thess. 2:10-12)."

Sin Is Deceitful

The Bible speaks of "the deceitfulness of sin" (Heb. 3:13). This verse also states that it is possible for us to be "hardened" by it.

Balaam was once a true prophet. His fame spread to the plains of Moab and his righteous reputation was great. Even the wicked king of Moab recognized it. He exclaimed, "He whom thou blessest is blessed, and he whom thou cursest is cursed." Yet this former great man of God was slain by God's vengeance and made his grave with the wicked (Num. 22:6; 31:8).

Saul, a man chosen by the Lord, became so hardened that he sought repeatedly to slay David, a man after God's own heart.

The very leaders of God's chosen people in the days of Jesus' earthly ministry were so hardened in sin that Christ declared, "Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do" (John 8:44).

There is not the slightest question in my mind as to the basic greatness, nobility and selflessness of Dr. X. But he lost his sense of mission. He engaged in presumptuous sin. He played on Satan's magnetic field. The Word of God forbids it. "Lead us not into temptation" (Matt. 6:13) is a safeguard, when heeded. Proverbs 4:25 contains equally pertinent counsel, "Let thine eyes look right on, and let thine eyelids look straight before thee." "Resist the devil, and he will flee from you," James exhorts believers (James 4:7).

Dr. X was not blind to these verses, nor to the one which says, "Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall" (1 Cor. 10:12). Somehow he had closed his mind to the words of Jesus which pertained to him and to his salvation.

Almost Persuaded

One night in a revival meeting, Dr. X felt many firm pricks of conscience. As never before, the minister seemed to be speaking directly to his heart, although the minister knew nothing of his secret sin. Dr. X felt his own black-stained life rise up in front of him like a hideous, huge blot of ink. For that one hour he realized that, although no one knew of his real life, save his former partner in sin, God knew. "In the lives of all who reject truth there are moments when conscience awakens, when memory presents the torturing recollection of a life of hypocrisy and the soul is harassed with vain regrets." The Great Controversy, p. 644. Dr. X experienced this time of remembering, and he saw himself as he really stood in the eyes of God. He was "almost persuaded" to yield his all and give up his life of sin.

"Almost persuaded now to believe;
Almost persuaded Christ to receive.
Seems now some soul to say,
`Go, Spirit, go Thy way,
Some more convenient day
On Thee I'll call.'

"Almost persuaded; harvest is past;
Almost persuaded; doom comes at last!
`Almost' cannot avail;
`Almost' is but to fail!

Foolish Prayers—Fabulous Answers

Sad, sad that bitter wail,
'Almost-but lost!' "

One of God's greatest gifts to man is the power of choice, and with it also the beautiful characteristic of persistence. This attribute can be to the saving of man if he uses it to pursue his course in the right direction. If he persists in his own way, that beautiful characteristic becomes a curse, for it now is known as stubbornness. Dr. X allowed this to happen to him, for he wanted to enjoy the association of the lovely girl who had come to him for counsel.

The downfall came, not when he counseled her, but how. A man may be social to save, and by discretion, choose the right times and places to counsel and pray with those who need his help. He may also maintain a reserve which is his surest safeguard. If this reserve is broken down and the association reaches a personal level, the man becomes social to destroy. And he is destroying himself along with the person he sought at first to save. Never should a child of God forget His God-given mission in life is to draw another nearer to Jesus and to a higher plane of purity.

The Mind

If a man is "all in the mind of Jesus," then he will be completely dedicated to Him and to His service. He will go on God's errands in the manner in which the Lord Jesus would go. He will not follow his own inclinations or desires, or unholy passions.

We have found it to be true over the years, that the more spotless a man's character and the higher his reputation, the more powerful he can become if he yields to Satan.

He must be kept by the power of God, dedicated to God every morning, and yielded to Him "moment by moment." By neglecting the quiet hour with God for even one morning, the way may be opened whereby Satan can gain an entrance. And then by "lying wonders" and "miracles" of so-called answers to prayer, he fastens the sinner in his snare.

Fabulous Deception

The experience of Dr. X is particularly important to us today. The Word of God declares that the dragon's power will be exceeding great in the last days. "He doeth great wonders, so that he maketh fire come down from heaven on the earth in the sight of men, and deceiveth them that dwell on the earth by the means of those miracles which he had power to do" (Rev. 13:13, 14). So close will be the test at that day that God has seen fit to send a special warning to us to prepare us against miracles displayed by those who turn in any way from a strict "thus saith the Lord."

The special message of warning found in Revelation 14: 9-12 contains a most amazing denunciation against this dragon and the beast powers, and warns everyone to turn from their false teachings, backed up by "lying wonders" and miracles, or they will be recipients of the "wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out without mixture into the cup of his indignation."

Dear Reader, depend on no miraculous power, however great appears to be the light attending it, unless the instrument displaying this power can give chapter and verse in God's Holy Word for every precept taught, and displays a purity of life and purpose as becomes a true child of God.

21: Foolish to expect miracles for which there is No Scientific Explanation

Not really foolish, because "God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise." 1 Cor. 1:27.

IT WAS nominating time in the Memorial Church of a Northwestern city. Ed Schneider was pastor, Don Jordan first elder, and Jim Crawley one of the deacons.

The church had just voted on nine members of a nominating committee. But Jim's name was not among them. Had there been ten, Jim would have been on the committee, for he received the largest number of votes after the first nine.

"Standing for the Right"

As the nine names were read off, Jim sprang to his feet, as was his custom at such times, and demanded that he be heard by the Church Board before these nine individuals served on the nominating committee.

Pastor Schneider, a man of mature Christian stature, replied kindly, "That will be all right, Brother Crawley. We shall have a Church Board meeting Sunday night, and the nominating committee will meet Monday night. That will give you the opportunity to present your thoughts before the nominating committee meets."

When the Church Board met Sunday night, Jim's "righteous indignation" was clearly evidenced as he tore into the leadership of the church, accusing them of trying to run the church of the living God, and making politics of the religion of Jesus Christ. It could be seen that here was a man standing—as he saw himself—for the right. He deplored such meanness as that which greedily perpetuates oneself in church office.

Two Ladies Were Crying

Jim's cutting words slashed in all directions, revealing his righteous abhorrence of wrong, and his holy ardor for the right. Two ladies began to cry.

Then a strange thing took place. Don Jordan asked to speak. The pastor's recognition having been given, Don began in a low-keyed, kindly voice: "I feel, brethren," he said, "that we should add the name of Brother Jim Crawley to the roster of the nominating committee."

Pastor Ed Schneider was new at his post in the Memorial Church. Consequently, he hesitated to take issue with any of its leading lights. Yet, he was not a man given to compromise—not where right and wrong were actually involved. The Church Board could not place any individual on the nominating committee. The church had not given it this authority, but had chosen the members themselves at a regular worship service. For the Church Board now to take this matter into its own hands would clearly be a breach of trust. Hence, Pastor Schneider, as kindly as he knew how, tried to make this clear to his Church Board that Sunday night.

Voted Unanimously

"What you say is true, Pastor Schneider," Don Jordan conceded, "but you don't know our people. Please go along with us just for this one time until you become better acquainted with our particular problems." While the pastor was weighing in his mind just what course to pursue, Don continued. "And I would move that Brother Jim Crawley be placed on the nominating committee." Immediately there was a second to the motion, and it was carried unanimously.

Pastor Dismayed

The conclusion of the Church Board meeting that evening left Pastor Schneider in deep dismay. Returning to his home, he fell on his knees in agony of spirit. "Lord, I do not know what to do. The action taken by the Church Board tonight is not right, as I see it. They were never authorized to take that action. When it comes before the church, I shall appear as one who ignores the authority of the church. Dear Lord, I have never faced such a situation before in my ministry. Shall I resign my post as pastor, dear Lord? Please show me what to do, for I have no wisdom to cope with this knotty problem."

Pastor's Dream

That night Pastor Schneider had a dream. He dreamed that he had parked his car near the home of Jim Crawley early in the morning. People living in the apartments of that area had to park their cars on the street. Consequently, after ten o'clock at night parking space was seldom to be found until folk started to work the next morning. But in Pastor Schneider's dream, as he drove down the street near the Crawley home, a car pulled out from its parking place just in time to give Pastor Schneider a place where he could observe Jim Crawley as he came out of his apartment, wearing a brown suit and brown hat.

In his dream, he saw Jim coming down the front walk, headed in the direction of Pastor Schneider's car. He saw him look this way and that. Then he paused at a pillar, threw his arm around it, and came up with a package of cigarettes. Pastor Schneider, in his dream, then saw Jim pull a cigarette out of the pack, tap it on the back of his hand, light it, and begin to smoke.

A Voice Spoke to His Soul

At that instant, in his dream, Pastor Schneider heard a voice which he knew to be the voice of the Lord, "I have made you a shepherd to the flock."

When the pastor awakened from his dream, he looked at his watch and it was 5:30 a.m. He climbed out of bed, shaved, brushed his teeth, and dressed. His wife, Annabel, peeking through sleepy eyes, asked wonderingly, "Ed, what are you going to do?"

"I am going out and make a call," he replied.

"Make a call!" Annabel exclaimed, more fully awake by now. "Make a call at 5:30 in the morning!"

Pastor Schneider did not stop to explain. "You go back to sleep, Honey," he smiled, "and I will be home in a little while."

Previous Visit to an Infidel

Pastor Schneider did not tell me the thoughts that passed through his mind during the half hour trip from his home to the Jim Crawley residence. Not long before, however, he had visited in the home of a medical doctor parishioner of his whose husband was also a medical doctor--but a confessed infidel. He had visited with this doctor for two hours at one time about the Lord Jesus Christ and His great salvation, only to receive the reply, "I accept nothing that does not have a scientific explanation."

At the close of the conversation with the doctor, the pastor had suggested prayer. "If it makes you feel better, you may pray," is about the way the doctor had replied, adding, "but you know how I feel about prayer, too."

Awkwardly the pastor had prayed in the presence of the doctor that God might help him to be of help to his friend in finding the Lord Jesus Christ as his personal Savior.

I doubt, however, that the pastor was thinking very much about the medical doctor as he made his way that early morning hour to the home of Jim Crawley. Probably he was more likely wondering if this

dream came by chance, or whether it was a divine presentation. Yes, Jim Crawley had been in the church for years. The conviction began to fasten itself on the thinking of the pastor that if the dream was heaven sent, it would explain Jim Crawley's holier-than-thou attitude.

Hiding Behind Apparent Conscientiousness

Pastor Schneider had read, as other ministers have, statements, both from the Bible and our favorite author, to the effect that men often assume a holier-than-thou attitude as a cover up. Men and women who have used "railing accusation," weapons, are clearly pointed out in the Word of God. The Apostle Peter states that, "Angels, which are greater in power and might, bring not railing accusation against them before the Lord. But these, as natural brute beasts, made to be taken and destroyed, speak evil of the things that they understand not; and shall utterly perish in their own corruption." "The Lord knoweth how to deliver the godly out of temptations, and to reserve the unjust unto the day of judgment to be punished: but chiefly them that walk after the flesh in lust of uncleanness, and despise government. Presumptuous are they, self-willed, they are not afraid to speak evil of dignities" (2 Peter 2:11, 12 and 9, 10).

My wife and I were reading the book of Jude, about the time we were reviewing the experience of Pastor Schneider and Jim Crawley. We were also impressed with the similarity of the book of Jude and the second epistle of Peter, especially the second and third chapters. Both Peter and Jude write of men who love to make a "railing accusation." Both authors point out that this attitude is not characteristic of the true Christian.

"Railing" weapons are Satanic, not divine. It is not a question of whether the person against whom the railer rails is guilty—not at all! It is rather that a human being is assuming the prerogative of Jesus Christ, as judge, while using the weapons of Satan. "The Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment unto the Son," Jesus declared (John 5:22). This Scripture excludes any human being from being authorized to serve as an "accuser of the brethren." Even Christ Himself, the lawful Judge, "durst not bring against" Satan "a railing accusation" (Jude 9). Hence, it ill-becomes a professed child of God to assume such a role under the cloak of righteous indignation, or ardor for God's cause. Jude, by inspiration declares, "These are murmurers, complainers." He then goes on to explain the real basis for their attitude. They are men who are "walking after their own lusts; and their mouth speaketh great swelling words," he declares (Verse 16). Thus Holy Scripture exposes the real nature of chronic church grumblers.

The Dream Fulfilled

By the time Pastor Schneider arrived at the parking area of the Jim Crawleys, he prayed, "Dear Lord, if it was You who gave me the dream, I must find a place to park." Just then a car drove out of a parking spot. It was just the spot Pastor Schneider needed if he were to be located so he could observe what the dream had pointed out. Parking his car, he looked at his watch and it was 6:00 a.m. For one full hour he prayed and meditated on what he had dreamed.

At the tick of 7:00 o'clock he saw Jim Crawley step out of his house dressed in a brown suit and wearing a brown hat, and come down the front walk. Then he paused at the pillar. Looking this way and that, exactly as in the dream, Jim placed his arm around the pillar, and came up with the package of cigarettes. (It was observed later that the cigarettes had been hid in a hole made in one of the blocks of the pillar.) In astonishment, Pastor Schneider watched him as he pulled out a cigarette from the package, went through the gesture of tapping it on the back of his hand, as he continued walking in the direction of the pastor's car. Pastor Schneider fell to the floor of his car so Crawley would not observe him as he walked past and on down the sidewalk. Then he arose, just in time to see Crawley walking ahead with the tobacco smoke curling above his shoulder.

Foolish Prayers—Fabulous Answers

An Astonished Deacon, Too

Instantly, Pastor Schneider started his motor, drove his car rapidly around the block in the opposite direction to that of Jim Crawley, and came back facing him just as he was ready to step off the sidewalk. In fact, Crawley found himself standing beside the pastor almost within arm's reach.

"What is that in your hand?" the pastor asked firmly.

"It's a cigarette," Crawley replied.

"Throw it away and come over to the other side and climb in the car," the pastor directed.

"Who told you I have been smoking?" Crawley demanded of the pastor.

"Jesus told me," Pastor Schneider answered with assurance.

"Oh, come off with that stuff. God doesn't tell the pastor the sins of his members," Crawley added scoffingly.

Pastor Schneider parked his car. The two men sat there as the pastor told the story of his dream to his deacon.

"What are you going to do with me? Where are you going to take me?" Jim asked sheepishly.

Pastor Schneider confided to me, "I guess he thought I was going to have him arrested!"

As the pastor concluded the story of his dream and its fulfillment, Jim wept out, "So I suppose you are going to put me off the Board, and off the nominating committee, and kick me out of the church."

"No, I am not going to do any of these things." Pastor Schneider replied, "if you will give your heart to Jesus Christ right now. What has just transpired will only be between the Lord and us."

A Murmuring Hypocrite

Tearfully, Crawley confessed to his pastor, "I am almost seventy years old. I have been a member of the church for forty years. And for the whole forty years I have kept right on smoking." Crawley had known the stand that Seventh-day Adventists take regarding the use of tobacco. He had himself, when he was baptized, made a vow not to touch the filthy weed. Hence, he had lived a lie for these forty long years. Of how many other sins he was guilty, were the facts known, we leave with God, "the Judge of all the earth."

But someday the books of heaven will be opened, and the situation will be reversed. Then Crawley, the self-appointed judge, will be judged. The Bible speaks of the members of God's church—perhaps like Don Jordan, whose only desire was to advance God's kingdom, and who was willing to even "stick his neck out" in order to place Jim Crawley on the nominating committee—when it prophesies, "and judgment was given unto them." "And I saw a great white throne, and him that sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away; and there was found no place for them. And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is the book of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works."

"For God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil" (Rev. 20:4, 11, 12; Eccl. 12:14).

A Subdued Deacon

Foolish Prayers—Fabulous Answers

In great wonderment Jim Crawley looked at his pastor and exclaimed, "So you aren't going to put me off the Board! You aren't going to put me off the nominating committee! You aren't even going to tell my wife!"

Here was a man who for years had delighted in bringing embarrassment to leaders of the church, and now his Godly pastor was assuring him that if he would yield himself to the Lord and forsake his sins, he would not expose him to anyone, even though that pastor had received firsthand from his Master, knowledge which had uncovered the secret cause of Crawley's grumblings and complainings. Crawley had had no real desire to advance the cause of God by his critical attitude through the years. But he had deceived so many church members, that he was placed on the nominating committee by vote of the Church Board. Crawley, it was now evident, had only wished to serve himself. What a surprise to have the mask so suddenly torn from his hypocritical soul!

A Different Nominating Committee

That night as the nominating committee met, Jim Crawley was present. But throughout the entire discussion he sat silent. The committee was able to accomplish more in one night than they had usually done in three or four nights in previous years when Jim Crawley's pretended interest in the cause of God had been so persistent, yet so baleful.

As the meeting closed, Don Jordan looked over at Pastor Schneider in utter amazement. He expressed wonder at the tremendous progress of the committee in doing its work that evening.

Jim Crawley's Resignation

It was now Jim Crawley's turn to speak. Standing to his feet he began, "Ladies and gentlemen, I am not worthy to be a member of the Church Board. Nor of this committee. Nor even of the church. I herewith tender my resignation as an officer of the church and a member of this committee." Then he added pitifully, "But I do ask you to retain me as a member of the church."

As the nominating committee members listened in wonder, Jim Crawley said, "There is someone here on this committee who knows and understands what this is all about." With that final word, Jim Crawley opened the door and walked out into the night.

Pastor Schneider sensed that Crawley had not kept the victory He had apparently gained that morning in his car, and so he asked to be excused for a moment. In almost a flash he was hard on the trail of Jim Crawley. Out in the car they had another good season of prayer.

Esau-like Repentance

Evidently Jim had for so long schooled himself in hypocrisy that he was caught in the web he had spun. Like Esau of old "who for one morsel of meat" had "sold his birthright. For ye know how that afterward, when he would have inherited the blessing, he was rejected: for he found no place of repentance, though he sought it carefully with tears" (Heb. 12:16, 17). It is a sad thing to "fail of the grace of God" through "any root of bitterness" which "springing up" can "trouble you, and thereby many" can "be defiled" (Verse 15).

We are told by our favorite author that rebellion is seldom cured. When men once set their faces against God's ordained leadership, it is most difficult to renounce the selfishness that was at the root of the matter.

Like Judas of old, they may even confess, but it is too often only the feeling of guilt that pours forth from the soul, rather than a sincere sorrow for the sin they have committed. So it was in the experience following the destruction of Korah, Dathan and Abiram and their families and possessions. So it was with

the children of Israel who had seen the miraculous power of God in delivering them from Pharaoh's army, along with many other deliverances from God. But they would not cease from their murmurings against the leadership of God's own choosing.

Their Success Depends on Raising Doubts

Jim's attitude was similar to that of a member of an off-shoot group who was hitchhiking and was given a lift by a minister friend of mine. As they were traveling together, my friend asked, "Are you having success in the homes of our church members?" The reply almost dumbfounded my friend, for he said, "If I can raise one doubt in any home I visit, regarding your church, I consider I have been successful."

Probably neither my friend's riding companion nor Jim Crawley realized that they were using the tools of the "accuser of the brethren." Evidently the experience of David, whose conscience bothered him for merely cutting off a piece of King Saul's garment, had never made an impact on either of them. When later a man came flying to David, announcing the death of Saul and stating the part he himself claimed to have had in it, David slew him for his arrogance, and disregard for the anointed of the Lord. After Saul's death, David composed a beautiful song. And in referring to the tragedy of Saul's life and death he said, "Publish it not."

The Bible says, "love covereth." Our favorite author declares that anyone who will expose another's sins, rather than to seek to save him, is doing the work of the enemy. So also is anyone who extends his sympathies to those who are willfully sinning.

Again the statement is made to the effect that professed children of God can be guilty of no greater sin than to reject the messenger whom God sends. Jesus made this truth clear when He said, "He that receiveth whomsoever I send receiveth me; and he that receiveth me receiveth him that sent me" (John 13:20).

Making Infidels

Our favorite author makes clear that little words of criticism concerning even a Sabbath morning speaker can cause the children of these critics to become infidels. What a harvest must many parents reap from the seeds of murmuring so loosely sown around the family board after some Sabbath morning sermon, when God has spoken through human clay—so feeble, so weak, so unworthy, yet of God's choosing.

God Will Take Care of His Work

Some seem to think that when we caution against criticisms, murmurings, and railings against the leadership of the church, that we are actually defending sin in the leadership. Far from it! Did Christ defend the sin of Judas when He ordained him with the rest of the twelve, and gave him power to cast out devils, to heal the sick, to cleanse the lepers? Did Christ defend sin in him by not exposing him, right up until the occasion of the last supper, when he knew him to be a thief? No indeed! But God's principle is that while open sin has to be dealt with openly in the church, yet that which is not yet revealed is left with God alone. Jesus made the principle clear when He said, "Let both grow together until the harvest" (Matt. 13:30).

David followed the same principle when he stated that God Himself would deal with Saul. And when the harvest time of Saul's life came, it was clear to all that his character was ugly, sinful, rebellious. David needed to do nothing, to say nothing, to add to the evidence. His part was to pray, watch, wait. His part was to discern God's providence and follow His leading.

Last Interview with Crawley

Some few years later, Pastor Schneider chanced to return to the Memorial church for a visit. At the close of the service Pastor Schneider walked down the sidewalk and came across Jim Crawley. With a friendly tap on the shoulder he asked, "How is everything, Brother Jim?" Imagine his sadness as the reply came back in a throaty irritation, "I'm all right."

"I got the message," Pastor Schneider confided to me. Crawley evidently never accepted God's victory in his life. He died soon after.

Back to the Infidel Doctor

Not long after the Jim Crawley experience, Pastor Schneider found himself back in the home of the infidel doctor. There he related his dream and its fulfillment, without revealing, of course, the name of the offender. "Will you tell me," Pastor Schneider asked the infidel doctor, "what the scientific explanation is to that dream and its fulfillment?"

The doctor looked at him half-bewildered, yet endeavoring to maintain his dignity, and replied, "I do not know."

Pastor Schneider spoke with assurance, "Doctor, I know. Jesus told me." It was just that simple.

No Scientific Explanation

Not long after this the infidel doctor also passed away. His wife found this note among his papers, "Bury me from the Memorial Seventh-day Adventist church."

Could it be that the tremendous dream experience, which had no scientific explanation, of Pastor Schneider, failed to work a change of heart in a deacon who had all the advantages of church fellowship with its worship and its class study, and yet was used of God to lead a well-meaning, but infidel doctor to a final acceptance of Jesus Christ? Some day soon we shall know.

22: Foolish prayer of Sonny Fox for a Doggie and a Daddy

Not really foolish, because he claimed a definite promise from the lips of Jesus.

(See Num. 23:19 and Heb. 6:18.)

"DEAR GOD, please let Daisy go with me to Arizona." The tears fell freely on the rug. A small boy knelt in the middle of the living room, where half packed boxes and stacks of household goods in various stages of being sorted, cluttered the room. An amazed and perplexed mother stood with her hands on her hips, quietly surveying the pathetic scene before her.

A Sick Boy

Repeatedly Sonny Fox had visited the doctor, but with little relief. Finally the kind gentleman confided in the boy's parents.

"A dryer climate is the only suggestion I have for you," he said sympathetically. "I have nothing else to offer. I would advise you to go very soon, for his life is at stake."

"Where do you suggest we go?" Mother Fox asked.

"I think Arizona would be the best place," the doctor said.

Dog Daisy

So the packing began. And as she packed, Mrs. Fox found many things to give away. Two dogs would be too many for the crowded car, and since Mrs. Green had always liked Daisy, Mother asked if she would like to have her as her own. Mrs. Green readily agreed.

Foolish Prayers—Fabulous Answers

But Sonny was heartbroken when he learned that Daisy would not be going to Arizona, for Daisy had been his pal for years. He simply could not conceive of life without Daisy.

Patience Mother Fox explained why they could take only one dog. Mrs. Green had promised a good home to Daisy so the problem was already solved. There were so many things to take to Arizona and so little space.

The Crisis

But to a loving, sickly little boy, none of this sounded reasonable. He could think of but one thing—he wanted Daisy to go to Arizona with him. He begged his mother over and over, "Please let Daisy go with me to Arizona." Finally his mother became very firm and a bit upset.

"Sonny," she stated emphatically, "Daisy is not going to Arizona! It is absolutely foolish to ask me to permit such a thing. You ought to know the car will be full of necessary things. We are taking the younger dog for your companionship. Now I want you to forget this foolish idea!"

On His Knees

Mother Fox's firm reply should have caused Sonny to be discouraged. Instead, he cried to God as in the opening scene of our story. He did exactly what we are teaching people to do in prayer—what Jesus commanded His disciples; that is, to Ask (Matt. 7:7).

Jesus also taught us to Believe (Mark 11:24). But while we adults are so slow to believe after we have asked, not so with Sonny Fox. He possessed a good reason for believing while on his knees. It is the same reason and same basis for faith for adults as well as children—the promises of the Lord.

Sonny believed with all his heart his little pet would go with him to Arizona. Arising from his knees he exultantly cried out, "Mother, Daisy is going to Arizona."

"What do you mean, 'Daisy is going to Arizona'?" his mother demanded. "I have already told you repeatedly that Daisy is not going to Arizona, so there!"

"Oh, yes, she is going," Sonny replied without any thought of rebuking his mother.

"Why do you say that?" his mother asked, growing more concerned by the moment at her son's apparent refusal to accept her word as final.

"Oh, Mother," continued Sonny, "I know, because Jesus told me, 'Daisy is going to Arizona,' while I was still on my knees."

"I didn't hear Him say that," incredulously responded his mother, still a bit irritated over the issue.

"No, I know you didn't," replied Sonny assuredly, but humbly. "But I did. I heard Jesus saying to me, 'Daisy is going to Arizona.'"

"But this is impossible," exclaimed Mother Fox. "Mrs. Green already agreed to take Daisy and we are not going to change our agreement with her."

While the smile of assurance rested on Sonny's face, a gentle knock sounded at the door. Mrs. Fox opened it and saw Mrs. Green standing there. Mrs. Green knew nothing of the discussion between mother and son, but she had some news.

"Mrs. Fox," began Mrs. Green. "I hope you will not feel bad. Someone happened by just a short time ago with the very kind of dog we have been wanting for a pet for a long time. So we will not need Daisy."

Foolish Prayers—Fabulous Answers

Daisy went to Arizona. Sonny Fox had never heard about claiming Bible promises. But God has built faith—simple faith—into the heart of a child. He has told us we must be converted and become as little children if we would enter His heavenly home. (See Matt. 18:3.)

Dying Daisy

Not long after the arrival of the Fox family in Arizona, Daisy wandered beyond the bounds of the house where a hunter inadvertently shot her in the jaw. She struggled back to the house and crumpled in the corner.

"Oh, poor Daisy," cried Mother. "She's dying."

But Sonny remembered the promise of Jesus back in Georgia. He believed to such an extent, that down on his knees he went again in prayer. He reasoned with God in prayer as a man. He cried out, "Dear Jesus, you did not send Daisy to Arizona to die! Please let her live!"

With that he arose. Confidently he said to Mother,

"Mother, Daisy is going to get well." Immediately Daisy got right up from the corner of death, walked over to the feeding dish and began to eat. And Daisy did get well. Sonny knew in his soul that if Jesus made a promise, using the very name of Daisy, his pet dog, in it, he could believe it. The basis of the prayer of reception is the promise of God. "We must ask for the things that He has promised." Education, p. 258.

Mr. Fox Deathly Ill

Not long afterward, Mr. Fox, Sonny's father, became very ill. The doctors diagnosed his case as spinal meningitis, and held out little hope of recovery. No one was allowed near him, except under the most restricted conditions. At home Mrs. Fox and Sonny waited heart-broken for some word from the hospital, while Mr. Fox grew rapidly worse.

Around eleven o'clock one evening, Mrs. Fox and Sonny were thinking of Mr. Fox and wondering about the future. What would home be without a husband and father?

Now Sonny remembered his prayers to Jesus about Daisy. Jesus had been so good to him, all for a little boy and his dog. He reminded Mother how wonderful Jesus is. How Jesus answered his prayer for companionship and went so far as to speak to Sonny's heart, making him a personal promise in his hour of sorrow back there in Georgia, before they moved.

Mother's face lighted up in the darkness of that sad hour. She said, "Sonny, why don't you pray for Daddy as you did for Daisy? Jesus seems to hear your prayers." Mother's faith would have surely wavered if she had known that at that moment four doctors back at the hospital had officially pronounced Mr. Fox dead. God mercifully conceals from us things which would completely discourage our faith.

Sonny accepted the idea and went down on his knees once again. Buttressed by the knowledge of a Christ who had once given him a promise, and in the thought of how Jesus is willing to give a lad companionship, Sonny began to pray.

What happened while Sonny knelt there, I cannot prove, for I did not think to ask Sonny fifteen years ago, when I interviewed him about his pet dog, Daisy. In fact the reason never occurred to me for years, how Sonny could believe his Daisy could go to Arizona. The answer was simple enough; he heard the voice of Jesus speaking to his soul and promising him that his request would be granted. I can only speculate as to what happened when Sonny knelt down to ask, believe and claim the life of his Daddy.

Foolish Prayers—Fabulous Answers

Another reason why I delight to speculate this way is that I know of people who have prayed for the lives of relatives, only to see their lives snuffed out.

I recall standing at the foot of the bed where a dear minister friend of mine had just passed away. I pleaded silently with God to bring him back to life. I asked, I believed. In my heart I seemed to receive him back from the dead, while I stood there praying, his sorrowing family standing nearby.

But Jesus did not see fit to raise my friend to life again. Therefore I would not want anyone to feel that if they have prayed for the life of a close relative, and have not had the answer in the way they thought it should come about, it is because of any lack of faith on their part, or necessarily because they have not fulfilled the conditions.

There are conditions to answered prayer, to be sure. But I think I had fulfilled the conditions when I prayed for the restoration to life of my minister friend.

Triumphant Reception

Sonny Fox arose from his knees and exclaimed to his mother, "Mother, Daddy is going to get well." And Mother wondered, as she thought over the past, if it might be so, even in the face of no hope.

At that moment four doctors stood talking while Miss Harmon washed the surgical instruments. In the center of the room stood the operating table where lay the body of Mr. Fox, completely draped with a sheet. One doctor spoke to the nurse.

"Miss Harmon, why don't you stop by the Fox residence and let Mrs. Fox know the sad news. That would be better for her than a phone call." Miss Harmon nodded understandingly.

Almost inadvertently, one of the physicians placed his hand under the sheet which draped Mr. Fox, and took hold of his wrist. His face turned pale. His colleagues noticed his facial expression with astonishment. Hurrying to the opposite side of the table and checking the pulse on the other wrist, another doctor confirmed the finding of the first physician, Mr. Fox was alive! His respiration returned to normal, his pulse strong and regular.

Today it would be considered very foolish for anyone to ask and believe that a loved one would come back from the dead. And of all things to rise from ones knees and exultantly exclaim, "He is going to live." I never recommend it. I would never want to go on record as teaching it.

Why then, are we writing this? To show that God can answer the most apparently foolish prayers. And that He delights in the simple faith of a little child.

Mother Who Prayed and Did Not Receive

I know of another Mother, fully as righteous as Mrs. Fox, and Mrs. Fox herself would probably be the first to say, more so than she. She prayed that her boy would not die, yet he died on a cross. And myriads of saints since then have fallen asleep in Jesus when we have hoped they would live. We have, in some cases, agonized, pleaded, and wept before God. Still their lives were not spared. Some day we shall know, when we walk down beside the river of the water of life, just why. In the meantime we shall trust.

Promise Claiming

But there is one thing certain. It would have been wrong, very wrong, for Sonny Fox, having heard the voice of Jesus, making him a definite promise, to have ignored it just because someone else did not know about it.

So we are to accept God's word in the Bible as His message, speaking to us personally. Just because someone else knows not of the specific promises we know, is not sufficient reason for us to ignore them, and fail of the wonderful reward that comes by having the faith of a little child in approaching an understanding God of love and a wonderful Jesus who gave Himself for us.

"For any gift He has promised, we may ask; then we are to believe that we receive, and return thanks to God that we have received." Education, p. 258.

I know of people who have claimed promises never made by the Lord. For one to add his own words to God's, is to add to His promises. It is like the family who added to Philippians 4:19 the words, "which is a house on 16 N. Main Street," referred to in the ABC's of Prayer Study Guide you may have purchased. God had promised them their needs—a house, but the promise does not say it will be on 16 N. Main Street. That part of the prayer was their own words, not His. Sonny Fox did not do this. He claimed exactly what Jesus promised him. He did not add. He did not take away. He took the naked word of God and stood on it with both feet of faith. So may we.

Friend, do you have a problem? Why not take any one of God's 3,573 promises or clusters of promises? There are enough in number to cover every problem you and I have. We need not add to them. We need not subtract from them. We may take them with the same full assurance Sonny Fox had. And the same Jesus will perform every word He has promised to every one who in childlike faith fulfills the conditions. "To every promise there are conditions." "The conditions met, the promise is unequivocal." Education, pp. 253, 258.

When I was told by a Godly neighbor, who knew the Fox family well, of Sonny's outstanding experience, I determined never to relate it unless I had added evidence of its authenticity. So I did not rest until I learned where Sonny Fox lived and had a chat with him personally. He substantiated the whole experience. Before I left his home, I felt that God had a very special mission in life for him to fill.

"I believe God wants you to be a minister of the Gospel," I smiled.

And I believe with all my heart God has a special assignment for your life, too, dear Reader. We may expect fabulous answers to prayer both as an incentive to find our life-calling, and in pursuing it faithfully.

23: Foolish to expect God to answer Superficial Prayers

Yes, these are really foolish, because they are based on a low percentage of our real choice. God's principle is, "choose you." Joshua 24:15.

PASTOR TILESTON and I stepped back after his hearty rap on Carolyn's door. "Carolyn," we began with a big smile, when she had opened the door, "we are so happy that you have placed your name on the prayer card requesting victory over tobacco. We have come to share a few things with you in your decision.

"Now," we continued, after being seated in Carolyn's comfortable living room, "since you are a Christian, and have received the grace of God in your heart, we are going to share with you the ABC's of receptive prayer."

During the next half hour we Asked, as our Lord commands (Matt. 7:7). We Believed, as He directs (Mark 11: 24). And we Thanked Him that we had Received (John 11:41) as Jesus prayed at the grave of Lazarus.

"Good-bye now, Carolyn," we waved as we descended the steps. "We'll be back tomorrow morning to celebrate twenty-four hours of victory in Christ."

No Victory Reported

When the door to Carolyn's home opened the next morning, we were disappointed to see a dejected, forlorn face. Immediately we sensed that Carolyn had not received what we told God she had received. Upon inquiry we learned that she had not stopped smoking for a single hour, much less for a day.

"That's all right," we consoled. "We will start all over again, just as if we had never been here before." Carolyn smiled pleasantly. Again we knelt, opening the Bible to the promise of Matthew 1:21, the same promise we use so often in claiming victory. Again we asked, believed and claimed the promise of salvation from the habit which Carolyn so detested, and from which she longed for deliverance.

"We'll be back tomorrow," we called cheerily, as we left to return to the car. "Then we can celebrate the twenty-four hours of victory which God has promised."

God's Problems

But the next morning we were doomed to disappointment again. Carolyn was sincere, but defeated. She was eager, but a failure.

"I am desperately sorry," she lamented, "to have disappointed you. But I am not going to tell a tale. I have smoked several times today." Then added, "What are you going to do with me?"

"We are going to love you, believe in you and help you," we replied. And we started all over again just as we had the first morning.

The next morning and the next we met with the same failure when Carolyn opened her door. Then we claimed some promises for ourselves. We did not know her problem. So we claimed James 1:5, "If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him."

As we were praying in our hearts, we observed the television set going full blast with a murder picture on. It was not the kind that comes on without one's notice after a good program. It was planned. In the picture they were smoking, drinking and reveling. Then the guns went into action. We arrived just in time to take in the whole scene in a matter of seconds.

Our Question to Carolyn

The Lord answered our prayer immediately, for when we asked our hostess, "Carolyn, do you think it is a sin to smoke?" she immediately replied, "No, I really don't."

"Then why did you place your request to stop smoking?" we inquired kindly.

Carolyn was as honest in her last reply as in the first. "Because I want to unite with the church."

Jesus Smoking

My oldest brother had an experience many years previous to ours with Carolyn's. He had been working with a gentleman who wished victory over tobacco, but somehow he could never receive it.

One day he met my brother on the street and glowingly remarked that the victory was complete.

"It all happened because of a dream I had two nights ago," he reported. "I dreamed I met you on the street," the man began, "and we were discussing the smoking problem. You turned to me in the dream, and made this observation. 'I would advise you to lay aside this tobacco. Then when you see Jesus coming in the clouds of heaven, if He has a cigarette in His mouth, you light up and go to meet Him.' That settled it for me! I awakened and have had no battle since. God has given me complete victory."

It Would Be Beautiful

Foolish Prayers—Fabulous Answers

So I turned to Carolyn with a smile and asked, "Carolyn, what would you think if when Jesus comes, you saw Him with a cigarette in His mouth?"

I must admit I anticipated the same results with her I had often had with others in using the dream experience of that tobacco addict so many years ago. Imagine my surprise when Carolyn, without a blink of an eyelid replied, "I think it would be beautiful."

Had Carolyn made that remark as a result of unkindness on my part I could have understood that it was a form of retaliation. But no, she was as kind and as sweet as she answered me, as anyone could wish. She really meant it!

Pastor Smoking

Then I turned to a lesser, but still pure figure—that of her youthful pastor.

"What would you think, Carolyn, should your pastor, here, knock at your door and when you opened it, he stood there smoking?"

Carolyn gave the same reply but with a bit stronger emphasis. "I think it would be wonderful," she said.

"Carolyn," I continued, "Have you always felt that way?"

"No," she replied, "I used to think it was awful for people to smoke. And for a woman to smoke was absolutely horrible."

What Made the Change?

"Carolyn," I continued, "What do you think has made the change?" Then recalling the TV picture we observed when we entered the home, the Holy Spirit flashed into my mind the question, "Do you think possibly it could be pictures like the one we saw when we entered your home this morning?"

I had hit the nail right on the head! Carolyn then told us of her husband, a deacon in the church. "He abominated motion pictures, the theatre and all that goes with it," Carolyn pointed out. "To attend a fight would have put him into shock."

With a sweep of her hand toward the monster in the corner she continued, "But since this thing entered our home everything has changed, except that he is still a deacon. Now he loves to watch all kinds of programs. Pugilistic fights are his special delight."

As she talked, she recognized for herself that by constantly viewing smoking, drinking and reveling she had scarred her conscience and made it seem perfectly all right to do what previously she had abhorred. At that time light had not come on lung cancer, and various other physical and mental maladies which have attended smoking.

God's Problem of Choice

Through the years we have been teaching seven great laws of life, of marriage and of soul-winning. The same laws cover each in its own area. One of these laws is Jesus. Another is His Love. And since love cannot operate without choice, we have placed Choice in the list. Religious liberty, civil liberty, and all freedoms are bound up in the matter of the law of Choice.

Now for the Lord to have answered Carolyn's prayer, and ours, to give her deliverance, would have been for Him to break His own law of Choice which says, "Let this mind be in you" (Phil. 2:5). "Choose you this day whom ye will serve" (Joshua 24:15). In other words, God is saying, "If I am to help you, it must be on the basis of your choice."

Foolish Prayers—Fabulous Answers

In most national elections, one must receive a majority vote to win. So unless a larger part of our mind chooses victory, God has a problem in answering our request. He would have to force us to do what we have not chosen on the innermost, or soul, level. And force He will not!

When Carolyn fell on her knees and made a choice in depth, she was immediately delivered.

Bill Cameron Chose

There is a way, however, by which God will not be confronted with this problem. It is for the human suppliant to do things by which a larger percentage of his mind will choose that which he is requesting of the Lord.

Take the case of Bill Cameron for instance. He was an alcoholic, unable to find deliverance from the bottle. Members of the faith visited him repeatedly. Everyone chose victory for him except Bill himself. Oh, part of him chose it, but not a large enough percentage for God to be able to deliver him without breaking His own law of choice.

Bill's Astonishing Victory

One day in visiting Bill I explained how he could choose on the larger percentage basis. Thus God would not have the problem of holding back the victory when only 10%, or 20% of Bill really wanted it.

"Bill," I began, "why don't you tell God why—why you want victory over the bottle. I would hesitate to cite these reasons for you, Bill," I explained further, "because in doing so I might appear to be belittling you. But you can tell God why you want victory. Give Him every reason you can think of. In doing so, you will be choosing on the soul level, not on the superficial level. Then God will have no problem in giving you the victory, because more of you wants victory than does not want it."

As Bill followed my advice and recounted all the reasons why he wanted deliverance, something happened. He had wanted victory before, because he could then be called a Christian. But deliverance from drinking does not make a person a Christian. A man may not smoke, drink or run around, but still be doing nothing but lying in a casket. Dead people do not engage in any of these evil habits.

A Wonderful Promise

God has promised, "Ye shall seek me, and find me, when ye shall search for me with all your heart" (Jer. 29:13).

As we review the experiences of victorious men and women of Bible times, we find that their victory followed a search for God, and for His victory, with all their hearts. In great agony, Jacob of old found deliverance. In similar wrestling with God, Daniel the prophet found answers. Jehoshaphat led his kingdom in fasting and in prayer (2 Chron. 20:3-13), and the victory was absolutely fabulous. The church was praying for Peter continually when God's angel delivered him from the executioner. What was true of men of Bible times is true today. I know personally that when I have deep agony of soul in wrestling with God for answers, I find fabulous solutions.

Someone has written, "With earnest, fervent prayer, plead for purity of soul. Plead as earnestly, as eagerly, as you would for your mortal life, were it at stake. Remain before God until unutterable longings are begotten within you for salvation, and the sweet evidence is obtained of pardoned sin."-Testimonies, Vol. 1, page 163.

If you my Friend, have never followed this suggestion, try it out. Try it out for one brief hour and discover for yourself what fabulous answers are yours.

The Buffalo Story

This story was first shared with us by a dear friend, a fellow minister, and confirmed by Pastor Simpson of Mountain View, California.

He told us that the remarkable feature about the miracle is, that Hindu landlords were the first to tell him about it. He said the miracle was confirmed by many witnesses. The Authors

24: A foolish prayer, as they anoint and pray for A “Dead” Water Buffalo

Not really foolish, for Jai Ram believed this situation was a challenge similar to that of the prophet Elijah, "If the Lord be God, follow him: but if Baal, then follow him." 1 Kings 18:21.

MASTER JEE! Master Jee! Come quick! Come right now! My milch buffalo is dead. Please come and pray for her and anoint her with oil so God will heal her and give her back to me!" Thus spoke a converted Hindu, Jai Ram, an Indian village Christian, as, in desperation, he pled earnestly with the Muktesra Village school master, Sher Singh, to leave his class and help him save his buffalo.

While he was speaking excitedly, the twenty-four school boys sitting cross-legged on mats on the mud floor of the chopal looked up, wild-eyed, and one by one begged to be excused to go and see the dead buffalo. Muktesra was a small village and the news was carried quickly from one hut to another, as the villagers called out loudly what had happened.

Jai Ram had been aroused from his sick bed (where he was wrapped up in a white cotton, homespun sheet, shaking with malaria fever), on hearing the news. And he had come, all out of breath, running to the teacher, after all efforts to revive his bloated milch buffalo had failed. A large crowd of hundreds of village farmers was waiting in suspense to see what would happen next. Most of the people were Hindus who worshipped gods of wood, brass, or stone. Jai Ram was the only baptized Christian, and had waited five years for a teacher to come to his village to teach his neighbors and friends about his God, and Jesus.

Many of the people were joking and making fun of Jai Ram's simple faith-that anointing and prayer could save a dead water buffalo. All were gathered around the apparently lifeless, bloated animal which was lying near a mud feed trough just outside the village, where it had become poisoned, or had foundered, from eating poisonous gourds village herd boys had fed his buffalo, by mistake, while Jai Ram was ill. The Jat farmers and landlords had for many years ridiculed and persecuted our brother for his new beliefs.

The Issue

The issue was: Jai Ram had declared that the God he now served, after having forsaken the gods of the Hindus, was the true and living God, the Creator of all things, and He could give life back to his milch buffalo.

The Hindus who were looking on said, "No, He is not! Your God is not able to do such a thing!"

Jai Ram, in his simple faith, believed that God would demonstrate His power, if it was His will-by raising to life his milch buffalo. And if this did not happen then, that she would be given back to him on the resurrection day.

The heathen people sneered and laughed at the very idea. "We don't believe it! No, our gods are true, and your Yisuh Masih (Jesus Christ) won't be able to do so!"

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Some village boys had been feeding Jai Ram's buffalo, doing his farm chores for him, and in preparing the animal's feed had carelessly chopped up some poison gourds which they had gathered in the jungle by mistake, not knowing they were not fit for consumption as food. Grass was scarce that time of the year, and there was little green feed except weeds to feed the cattle. Jai Ram had been dependent upon his beloved milch buffalo's milk for food. Now his neighbors declared that this tragedy had come upon him because he had forsaken their Hindu gods; had not made the annual pilgrimage to the holy Ganges River; and he had not tied any charms around her neck to ward off the Evil Eye (common superstition in the Orient, and especially in India).

After rolling his buffalo over, twisting her tail and ears, putting his hand down her throat and pulling out some of the poison gourds and weeds, speaking to her lovingly, massaging her stomach, and hitting her with a stick in an effort to relieve her bloated condition, Jai Ram had declared with assurance: "But my God is a living God, who made the heavens and the earth. And I know He will give me back my buffalo alive!" So simple was his faith that he had arisen from his own bed of illness to be a witness to the wonderful miracle of the God of the Bible, the Creator of us all.

Great Faith

Master Sher Singh replied to his request just as I might have answered under like circumstances: "Yes, Jai Ram, but we do not anoint dead buffaloes! If you insist, we will go and say a prayer, and then you can bury your buffalo!"

The school boys had already left and gone to where the crowd was waiting. The teacher started off with Jai Ram when he remembered and called after him, "Listen, Jai Ram, I do not have any sweet oil to use for anointing! This is a small village and we would have to send someone clear to Bulandshahr, many miles away, to get some. God can hear us without using any anointing oil!"

Then it was that Jai Ram remembered the earthen pot of raw mustard oil hanging from his lean-to-shelter roof up under the eaves of his house. Full of confidence, he called out as he ran, "I'll go, Master Sahib, and bring my mustard oil for the anointing! We must show our faith in God that way you told us!"

In his heart he had no doubt but that if he showed his faith and did his part, that God would surely do as He had promised to do in His Word. He remembered the simple anointing service for the school master's wife some months before which had ended with her getting up after the service, fully healed. And he reasoned that God could do the same for his buffalo-if she was anointed with oil, and they laid hands on her, and prayed in faith.

A Wonderful Healing

Not long after the new mission school teacher arrived in Muktesra, his wife had become deathly sick with a high fever which would not break, although Master Sher Singh sought every kind of remedy available. The teacher and his wife had come in answer to Jai Ram's prayers and persistent pleading for a teacher to come to his village to teach his people about Jesus, and prepare them for baptism. Now, after five years or more of begging for a teacher to come-at every annual camp meeting in Hapur which he had attended-Jai Ram saw the new school, which began with so much joy, at a standstill while the master worked tirelessly and did his best to relieve his wife's suffering.

At the time, Pastor P. K. Simpson, the district missionary in charge of Hapur mission station, was on hill leave with his family in Kashmir, over six hundred miles away. The teacher had written Pastor Simpson of their difficulties and begged him to come as soon as he returned home from vacation, to Muktesra, and conduct an anointing service for his wife's healing, as we are directed to do in James, chapter 5, verses fourteen to sixteen. Upon his return, Pastor Simpson was very happy to go and comply with their request. The village people were looking forward to seeing how such a service was conducted, and there

were many curious eyes peering in from outside. The school master was away at the time the missionary arrived. He had gone to a nearby village to consult a native vaid (doctor).

When the teacher returned, they at once prepared for the anointing. It was on a Friday afternoon, just before sunset, and the weather was hot and sultry. Not a breath of cool breeze seemed to be stirring. The one-room house which Jai Ram had vacated for the teacher and his wife, had no windows. The only ventilation was through an open door which was full of curious onlookers. Pastor

Simpson felt it best to have the room cleared, as the heat was stifling and perspiration was running in tiny rivulets down his arms.

Some village Chumari women (of the leather-working caste, who were adherents) had been fanning Mrs. Sher Singh, and massaging her arms and legs in an effort to reduce her fever, while she tossed restlessly from side to side muttering incoherent phrases in Hindustani. Reluctantly they left the room by the teacher's orders. Jai Ram was appointed to guard the doorway entrance and keep the many sweating villagers outside so the anointing and prayer might be done quietly.

But as the healing prayer was being offered, and Jai Ram knelt in the doorway, with his eyes closed, his hand and arm barring the only entrance, a dozen or more of the persistent women who had been attending Sister Sher Singh quietly slipped under his arm, and crept into the room. They just must see what was going on and show their faith in Jesus' power by laying their hands, also, on the woman, and on the charpai (bed) as they saw the missionary and the master doing.

Master Sher Singh opened his eyes suddenly in the midst of his prayer as he heard the rustling of skirts and the sound of bare feet moving about near where he was kneeling. Half the room was already full of women, all with hands resting on the bed, their eyes closed and heads bowed in prayer.

Jai Ram was reprimanded for letting the women into the room. He replied, "My eyes were both closed, Master Sahib. What could I do? Let those who are in stay. I'll turn my back around and put my arm across the door the other way, and keep any more from coming in." He did so, but you can imagine what happened. More women crept in under his arm again, on the other side of the bed. Pastor Simpson was praying, and he opened his eyes to see both sides of the charpai surrounded with women, their hands touching either the sick woman or holding onto her bed, silently praying. Once more Jai Ram was reprimanded for letting people inside, but again he had a good excuse: "My eyes were closed." The service was soon over, but Jai Ram begged to be allowed to say "just one more tintsie-wintsie short prayer, too."

Then Jai Ram prayed. He raised his eyes toward heaven, stretched his arms upward, and talked directly to Jesus, pleading personally with Him, and imploring Him, like a man begs his best friend for a special favor. "Dear Jesus, we come in Your name because You have told us to do so. You have said that You never change. And You will hear us!" He reminded God that He had given His Son Jesus to die on the cross for his sins. And He had sent Him down to earth to heal the sick, cleanse the lepers, and raise the dead, so that we might know He was the "only Son" of the true God. He told God that he was "just a weak, poor sinner" and was asking this humble request, not because he was good-for he was a great sinner-but because Jesus was "all-powerful and mighty, and has promised to do all things. If we only believe, we can ask for anything in His (Jesus') name, and He will do it."

He reminded God that he had prayed for five years, and begged for a teacher to be sent to teach them about Jesus. Now that he had come, the devil had brought this sickness on the master's wife, who was teaching them about Jesus. Then in desperation he plead earnestly with feeling, "O Heavenly Father, don't let the master's wife die! Don't let the heathen Hindu people see her die! You have promised that Your ear is not heavy, and Your arm is not short to heal and save when we call on You in Jesus', Your

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Son's, name. Now hear us for Jesus' sake, who is up there right now, alive, sitting beside You, on Your big throne in Heaven where You are! Please reach down that long arm of Yours from heaven to earth and touch the master's wife right now, Piyore Yisuh Masih (dear Jesus). So all may see Your power, and know that You are the same to-day, and can heal the teacher's wife, take away her fever right this very moment! Thank you, Jesus! Thank you, Jesus! Thank you, Jesus! Amin (Amen)."

Instantly, Sister Sher Singh's fever had left her and she had joyfully cried out: "I am well! My fever is gone! Praise God! I am alright now! Put these people all out, bring water for me to bathe, and bring my clean saree (Indian woman's clothing) out of the tin trunk, Master Sahib."

The village women all filed out the door weeping for joy, not an eye was dry that evening, all were fairly treading on holy ground. They had seen a miracle, as far as they were concerned, for God had heard Jai Ram's prayer.

The woman bathed herself and soon came out onto the veranda to help make chapattis (whole-wheat pan cakes) and curry for the missionary's supper. As soon as supper was over, the whole village had gathered outside the doorway for the evening vesper service at the beginning of the Sabbath. There was a testimony service, and Mrs. Sher Singh was the first to give God the glory for hearing the prayers that had been offered at her anointing service.

"Jai Ram's prayer was what healed me," testified Mrs. Sher Singh, "for when he thanked Jesus three times, and said, 'Amen,' I felt something like a hand touch me and what felt like electricity went through my whole body, and my fever left instantly! Praise God, He healed me! I know He answers prayer! He heard Jai Ram's prayer! Praise God, He is a living God! Oh, I am so glad He heard our prayers!"

This instantaneous miracle of healing had left a lasting impression on the mind of Jai Ram, as well as upon the minds of the simple village men and women of Muktesra who had witnessed the healing of the woman after the prayer at the end of the anointing service.

Pastor Simpson, who was there and saw this all happen, will never forget the happiness there was that night in Muktesra when those simple men and women who had a part in that bedside anointing service knew that God could answer simple prayers, if we only believe and ask Him in faith in the name of Jesus Christ, God's Only Son.

Deeply Dedicated

But more than this, Jai Ram was a deeply dedicated Christian. To him, Christ meant everything. And the advancement of God's cause, and his eagerness for the enlightenment of his own village people, meant more to him than any physical comfort—even crude as that might be. Year after year, following his conversion to Christianity, he had traveled long distances on foot to the mission headquarters at Hapur, and never missed the annual meeting, where he begged for a school to be established in his own village to open up the area to the Gospel which meant so much to him. In his zeal he put God first in everything.

Finally, when the teacher, Master Sher Singh, had volunteered to go, and was sent to his village to open a school, he had gladly given the teacher and his wife his own humble dwelling house to live in (to make them comfortable even though it was only made of sun-dried mud bricks), while he, himself, lived outside under a lean-to shelter which he built to protect himself from the elements. Jai Ram had never had the privilege of learning to read and write, but he was determined to help those around him enjoy this rare privilege by his own sacrificial love for Jesus who had washed away his own sins in His precious blood.

His Buffalo—a Special Animal He Loved

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With this miraculous answer to prayer still vivid in his memory, is it any wonder that Jai Ram's faith was strong enough, and his zeal for the true God and His Name to be glorified great enough for him to approach the mission teacher and ask him to pray and anoint his apparently dead buffalo, and expect God to give her back to him? His main purpose in making such a request was to prove to his unbelieving Hindu neighbors around him, of his day, like Elijah did to Ahab and the idolatrous priests of Baal in his day, that there is a true God Who made the heavens and the earth, and He still answers prayer. His lesser purpose was no doubt to continue to receive milk from his milch buffalo which was his prize possession—a very special animal that he was proud of.

A Witness of the True God

"I have told all my friends and neighbors that God will give me back my buffalo, if it is His will," he told the mission teacher. Very reluctantly the master followed to the place where the buffalo lay quiet and still, while Jai Ram went to get his mustard oil for the anointing.

Soon Jai Ram came back running, panting, all out of breath, bringing his pot of dark yellow oil. (Pungent and rancid mustard oil odor is not pleasing to smell.)

"Here is the oil, Master Jee!" he called out. "Take plenty of it, Master!"

A shout of derision arose from the crowd of rough farmers looking on. Master Sher Singh asked them to quiet down and show some respect for the faith of Jai Ram, like they expected others to show respect for their gods.

Then the teacher took a little of the oil Jai Ram poured into his palm and let a few drops trickle down on the buffalo's head. "This is all we need, Jai Ram. It is enough to show our faith. You keep the rest of it. You may need it later yourself."

We can only speculate as to what were the thoughts in the mind of the Christian teacher as he decided he would not let Jai Ram down in a test like that before the village people. He went over and placed his hand on the apparently lifeless buffalo's head and gently let the oil trickle down the side of the animal's neck, while with his other hand he motioned to the people to be quiet while they prayed to the Creator God for Jai Ram's animal to be healed.

This did not satisfy Jai Ram who pleaded, "Use more oil. Take some more oil, please, Master! Great healing requires great faith. Use more oil!"

Jai Ram Also Anoints

"If the buffalo is dead, we must show more faith! Here! I'll anoint her myself! I really believe Jesus can do it, Master Sahib!"

Then, suddenly, in earnestness Jai Ram raised his earthen jar and dumped all its contents of dark-colored, raw mustard oil onto the back of the shiny black-grey water buffalo, saying, "In the name of Yisuh Masih (Jesus

Christ)," while from the crowd again arose a roar of laughter and derision. He took both hands and began spreading the oil all over the back of the animal, rubbing it down her legs and sides till the whole body was oily and slick. The teacher, smiling, looked on in astonishment, while Jai Ram asked the twenty-four school boys to come up and place their hands on her back.

Students Join in the Prayer

Then, while the school boys and Jai Ram knelt around the buffalo, laying their hands in reverent faith on its still body, the Christian teacher prayed that God's name might be honored and their faith rewarded. Then all joined in repeating the Lord's prayer, and ended with a, "Thank You, God!"

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Nothing had happened yet, and Jai Ram begged "to say just one more short little prayer in closing." When he began to pray, he raised his hands toward heaven and talked to God, as he would if talking to his best friend, pleading for Him to hear his prayer for Jesus' sake. He reminded the Lord of how He had sent them a teacher, and how He had healed the master's wife. He told Him how much he needed his buffalo. And most of all, how God was the same today as when His Son Jesus walked on earth, healing the sick and raising the dead. He asked Him to show His power again so that his neighbors all might know that the true and living God he served was "a prayerhearing God" who would answer if they did what was pleasing in His sight, and it was His will. He asked God to "do the impossible" and to raise his dead buffalo to life.

"Perform a miracle-right now!" He told God that the village people had accused him of bringing illness upon himself, and the death of his buffalo, "because I have forsaken the Hindu gods," he continued in his deeply emotional prayer.

As Jai Ram prayed often in Sabbath School, so he did again: "O Jesus, Thou Son of God, that sittest up there on the right hand of the Majesty on high, I am a sinner—the biggest sinner of all! But Thou hast forgiven my sins and sent peace into my heart. I know Thou canst give me another buffalo on the resurrection day when Thou wilt return to earth, but I believe Thou canst restore my buffalo now! Thou art all powerful. Thou art 'the same yesterday, and to day, and for ever.' (See Hebrews 13:8.) Please reach down from heaven right now and touch my buffalo so my neighbors will know Thou art a living God, and believe in Thee! Not for any good thing that I have done, but 'for Jesus' sake', do it NOW! Thank You, Jesus! Thank You, Jesus! Thank You, Jesus! Amin (Amen)!"

An Immediate Answer to Prayer

What took place immediately following this prayer, we leave for a Rajput zamindar (landlord) to relate. In fact, the Hindu landlords were the first witnesses who told the story to Pastor P. K. Simpson, who was not present on this occasion, but came to the village on horseback about two weeks later. They met him in the fields some distance from the village and beckoned to him to come where they were, and told him:

"When Jai Ram finished his prayer and said, 'Amin,' the buffalo opened her eyes, switched her tail, lifted her big ears, gave a bawling sound, and rolled her body over to find a standing position, sending the boys, who had their hands on her back, all a sprawling in the dust. Before we hardly knew what had happened, that buffalo was on her feet, running down the road to a field of corn close by and began to eat. The men were all running after her trying to catch her to tie her up again at the feed trough. Oh, how we all laughed when those boys went a sprawling in every direction, scrambling to get out of her way. She got up so quickly!"

They laughed with great amusement at the plight of the boys, but Pastor Simpson asked them, "Was the buffalo just sick or was she really dead?"

"That's not the point, Sahib Jee! That's no difference to us! How can we say? God only knows if she was dead or not. She surely looked to us like she was dead—if we've ever seen a dead buffalo! We've seen lots of dead cattle, and have never seen one get up from a bloated condition alive like that bhains (water buffalo) did that day!"

"I wonder if maybe she was just sick and got better in answer to prayer?" Pastor Simpson questioned them further.

Then they became quite serious and replied, "Sahib Jee, that is not the question! There is no doubt in our minds about it—that your God heard the prayer that your man, Jai Ram, offered that day to God! If you could have heard Jai Ram talk to Yisuh Masih (Jesus Christ) that day, like we did, you would not have

any doubt at all! We've never seen anybody with a faith like that Christian of yours, Jai Ram, has in his God!"

Upon his arrival in Muktesra, a large crowd soon gathered and Jai Ram took Pastor Simpson over to where his milch buffalo was tied. Everybody was quick to relate the details of the story of the mustard oil anointing of the dead buffalo, which was restored to life in answer to Jai Ram's prayer. Jai Ram was perfectly calm and matter of fact about the whole incident. He said, "It was the kindness of God, our heavenly Father, who heard our prayer, and for Jesus Christ's sake and glory, He did what He said He would do, if we had faith, and we asked Him. And He did it!"

The buffalo lived for many years after that, and several of our missionaries traveled to Muktesra to see the buffalo and personally investigate the miracle story.

"Jai Ram was one of the most humble, dedicated village Christians I have ever met," is the testimony of Pastor P. K. Simpson of Mountain View, California, who corroborates the story.

Elijah Faith

Soon after Master Sher Singh arrived in Muktesra, they were studying the Sabbath School lesson about Elijah and the great drought in the days of King Ahab of Israel. Jai Ram and the village people found the story most interesting. On Sabbath afternoon Jai Ram took the teacher and his wife in his bullock cart to near-by villages where they conducted branch Sabbath Schools and used the Sabbath School picture roll to illustrate the lesson. Jai Ram memorized the story of the great test at Mount Carmel and enjoyed telling the story in his own simple Hindi dialect in such a way that the villagers never tired of hearing him relate the vivid details.

Jai Ram's faith was in fact similar to that of the prophet Elijah, who, in response to God's command, announced to Ahab that there would be neither "dew nor rain these years but according to my word." It was as if He had shut up heaven, and run off with the key for three-and-a-half years, then had opened heaven and brought a pouring rain even on wicked Ahab and his drought-stricken land. (See 1 Kings 17.)

The story left its impression on Jai Ram. His occasion for praying for rain had been the conversion of a village landlord's servant boy who became interested one Sabbath as Jai Ram told the story, and he wished to become a Christian. This boy wanted to keep the holy Sabbath day in honor of the Creator of heaven and earth, but he had to work every day irrigating the fields of the Brahman chaudhari (head man) of his village because of a severe drought that year. No monsoon rains had fallen, and the farmers were dependent upon their wells and irrigation for a harvest.

The poor boy was obliged to work day after day without remuneration, to pay off the debt of his father to the zamindar (landlord), who knew how to keep someone who was illiterate, and in debt to him, in virtual slavery, forever working to pay off the interest which accrued. Jai Ram invited the boy to attend the Muktesra village vespers baptismal class. The missionary was to come that Friday night to examine the candidates, and the lad told Jai Ram he wanted to be baptized but couldn't get off on Sabbath days.

Jai Ram and Master Sher Singh had gone to see the village zamindar to request him to permit the boy to have his Sabbaths off each week so he could be baptized. They were met with the churlish reply, "No! I need him to irrigate every day! If we don't irrigate night and day, every day, there will be no crop this year. There has been no rain for so long that my wheat field will dry up if we stop watering even for one day. Forget it!"

This was a challenge to Jai Ram. Unhesitatingly he replied, "But Zamindar Sahib, have you ever heard the story about Elijah and the great drought when it did not rain for three-and-a-half years, and everything dried up, and the animals died, and there was no monsoon, and the wells all went dry?"

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He had never heard the story, so Jai Ram recounted the incident of the test on Mount Carmel, and then asked him, "If I pray to my God, and He sends rain so you will not need to irrigate on Sabbath, will you let the boy off so he can keep his Sabbath day holy?" He shook his head.

Then Jai Ram added, "If we pray to the God Who made heaven and earth, and sends the rain to supply your needs, and you get rain, will you in turn promise us to let this boy off to keep his Sabbath?"

He laughed, and replied in a cynical tone, "Well, maybe for just one Sabbath only!"

Such a compromise was not satisfactory to Jai Ram, who felt it necessary to secure a promise from the landlord to give the boy all the Sabbaths off each week to worship God according to the fourth commandment of the decalogue. "Listen, Zamindar Sahib! We are going to pray for God to send a hard rain—a real cloudburst—such a pouring rain that you will not need to irrigate for months! Then if God hears and sends such a rain, will you let this lad have all his Sabbaths off for worship?"

Laughingly the zamindar replied, "Why, yes, of course!" Then he added, "But we are not concerned with such a possibility! We have already prayed to Indira, the Hindu rain goddess, and our women have even danced in the nude in the moonlight to attract her, and offered sacrifices, but no rains have come! It is useless! It is most improbable that your prayers will ever bring rain!"

"But my God made the heavens and the earth, and He hears us when we pray to Him. He is a living God, and He controls the monsoons!" Jai Ram made clear to the landlord. "And He controls the sun and the rain! Now on your promise to give your servant lad all the Sabbaths off for worship, I will pray, and I promise you that the same God of Elijah is still alive, and He will send a pouring rain which will make it unnecessary to irrigate your fields tomorrow! You wait and see! If it is God's will, we shall get such a shower that you will know who the true God is today!"

Pastor P. K. Simpson, (now living in Mountain View, California), was in the Muktesra Village that Friday evening and examined the candidates for baptism. At the close of the meeting that night, he met the young lad who wished his Sabbaths off. Jai Ram then told the story of their visit to the zamindar during the day, and suggested that they all have a special prayer that the Lord would send a cloudburst that night so that the young man could have the Sabbath off the following morning, and every following Sabbath, so that he might attend Sabbath School and become a Christian. The meeting closed with such a prayer led by Brother Jai Ram. The people left the meeting, and Pastor Simpson, Master Sher Singh, and Jai Ram decided to see the lad off to his village, which was about a mile away, going with him a little way along the road, as the Indian custom is, before finally telling him "Salaam" (Goodbye).

As they walked along, looking at the stars, talking and thinking of a cloudburst they hoped might come, the sky was clear and studded with stars. Not a cloud was in sight, not even one the size of a man's hand, such as the sign given to encourage the faith of Elijah of old. Finally, as they reached an acacia thorn tree landmark between the two villages, Jai Ram suggested, "Sahib Jee, now we must go back, and let him go home. Can't we kneel down right here and say just one more prayer for rain for tomorrow?"

Falling down on their knees they poured out their hearts to the true and living God Who had promised to give rain (1 Kings 18:1), and asked Him to honor His name by sending a real cloudburst of such pouring rain that it would not be necessary for the farmers of this area to irrigate for months to come.

Pastor Simpson, who was present that night, described to me how Jai Ram lifted his hands up toward God in heaven, and in deep humility cried out earnestly, "O my heavenly Father, my God, I am a sinner! I am the greatest sinner in the world. But Thou hast forgiven me, and now I know that Thou dost answer my prayers when I come in faith to ask anything which is in harmony with Thy will! Please hear my humble prayer to Thee up there in heaven and open up the windows of heaven-wide open-and send the rain we need so this lad may be free to keep Thy holy Sabbath day-every Sabbath! Don't send just a little

shower, but send such a cloudburst that the landlords may know Thou are the true and living God!" Then he closed his prayer with the "C" of an ABC Prayer, "Thank you, Jesus! Thank you, Jesus! Thank you, Jesus! Amen!"

They returned to the village, and Pastor Simpson slept soundly all that night inside his mosquito net on his folding cot in the chopal (village council meeting house) where school was conducted in the daytime. Then early, just before sunrise, at about five o'clock in the morning, "it suddenly became very dark and the sky gathered blackness," as Jai Ram later described it, and lightning flashed across the sky. There was a clap of thunder and rain drops began to fall loudly, waking the village people sleeping up on top of their flat-roofed mud houses. What a cry and a scramble there was as the people quickly slid down and rushed inside for shelter. The rain fell in torrents, while in the darkness the missionary felt a tiny trickle of water seeping down from the roof and falling on his mosquito net, which he hastened to pull to a safer place. Water stood in puddles all around his cot, as he waited for the rain to stop.

But the thrilling feature of the answered prayer was that the rain which flooded the fields of the Brahman zamindar was limited to an area of only about two-and-a-half square miles, which included the fields of the zamindar, his village, and the village of Muktesra where Jai Ram's small farm was situated, and the immediate locality only. Five miles away, no rain fell and the highway was dry all the way back to Hapur. Indeed, so singular was this storm that one could step from one field that was soaked to another which was without rain, dry ground.

On Sabbath morning about nine o'clock the rain stopped and the sun came out bright and dazzling. After breakfast, the gong was rung for the Sabbath School and the people began coming to the chopal meeting house. Jai Ram kept going out and looking toward the east to see if the lad was coming from the village a mile away. All at once he cried out for joy, "There he is, Sahib Jee! There he is! And he's coming to church service!" Sure enough he did come, and what a rejoicing there was! A real victory for God's truth!

That Sabbath afternoon, Pastor Simpson, Jai Ram, and the teacher and his wife went by motor car to the village and met the Brahman zamindar who was profuse in his thanks for the prayers which had brought such a rain, and assured them that he would surely keep his word and give the lad his Sabbaths off thereafter. Probably he was afraid to renege for fear that the God Who sent the rain in torrents might drown him if he backed out later on.

In the evening Pastor Simpson was showing projector slides in the village of Muktesra when another cloudburst fell so suddenly that he had great difficulty finding his road in the darkness and blinding rain. On his way out to the highway he went on the wrong road at a "Y" and ended up in a ditch dug by road workers. Only after many hours, was he helped by some people from another village, who gave him shelter for the night.

Jai Ram's Land Case

At another time Jai Ram had not paid his taxes on time and the nambardar (landlord) tried to cause him to lose his land by foreclosing for payment of taxes. The law was that unless the taxes were paid within a certain time limit, the land reverted back to the zamindar and the owner would lose it. Jai Ram insisted on having a special prayer service, and asked God to change the law, if possible, and perform a miracle again if necessary to save his land so the heathen would not deride his God, and say He could not save his land. Over and over he came to see Pastor Simpson, with the village mission school teacher, and begged for advice and counsel, and pleaded with tears in his eyes. Pastor Simpson Sahib consulted an Indian vakhil (lawyer) friend in Hapur and went to see the district zillah (judge) of Bulandshahr about Jai Ram's taxes and inquire what he should do. He was advised that he should pay the taxes in to the local tehsildar who would issue a receipt for the full amount paid, although the time limit for payment had

already expired. Jai Ram then petitioned the local court to have his land returned, after many days spent going and attending court on the date set, without any earthly hope of being able to get the land returned to him. Finally, in answer to Jai Ram's prayer, the day of the last hearing in court arrived, but the lambardar (landlord who owned the village and collected taxes for the government) did not appear.

This gave the judge the opportunity he was looking for. Like "the unjust judge" in the Bible parable of Jesus, he called Jai Ram before him and announced that his land would be restored to him again, since, after all, he had paid his taxes, even though a little late. This was because he had persisted, and kept on believing in faith, and praying for that judge--especially with a little prayer after the hearing in the courtroom before he left the court. Each time the case came up, he did this and the judge showed plainly that he was "embarrassed by such prayers."

At the close of the case, Jai Ram, Master Sher Singh, and Pastor Simpson went to the judge's bungalow and thanked him for his decision in Jai Ram's favor. The judge's face brightened up upon seeing Jai Ram, and he said, "You would have lost your land if you had not prayed for me! I could not sleep last night thinking about you and your faith in your God and your prayers for me. Then the landlord didn't come today!"

But Jai Ram had fasted and prayed in a special prayer meeting that night. He had promised to give all the wheat from that plot of land to the Lord in thanksgiving if he won his case. Brother Simpson relates that Jai Ram gladly kept his word.

A Faithful Tithe: "Prove Me Now"

Jai Ram was the kind of a Christian who believed in doing everything God asked him to do, unquestioningly and without reservations. When he heard about the principle of tithe-paying, he eagerly decided to "prove the Lord."

As soon as his grain harvest was threshed out in the field, or at his farm threshing floor, he counted out very carefully one-tenth share of the crop-whatever it happened to be, barley, peas, wheat or millet. He called the mission teacher, or preacher, to bless his tithe, and gave every tenth sack of grain to the worker as his tithe for the Lord's share of all he had made. He asked that it be turned over to the missionary soon to help the gospel work to go forward, and he rejoiced as God prospered him with better crops than he had ever had before. In fact, Jai Ram's tithe paying became a fixed habit in his life and a source of great blessing and satisfaction to him. He then knew from experience that God was his great landlord, and he then told everybody that "God was his partner in farming."

How could God overlook such a witness? Jai Ram continued to pay his tithe faithfully, and set an example for the people in villages all around Muktesra to see how God prospered his fields and how much more milk his water buffalo cow gave more than other milch buffalos. In every thing Jai Ram was just simple enough to believe what God said.

In 1970, Pastor and Mrs. Simpson made a visit to India after twenty years absence, and had the privilege of going out to a little town in a remote area where they met Jai Ram-our faithful Christian and the hero of this story. Tears coursed down their cheeks as he prayed for them earnestly in Hindi before they left India.

After the Simpsons returned from their world tour vacation of March 1970, they received a letter from Pastor Dal Chand, who is now the local district leader in the area over the village where Jai Ram now lives with his brother Dhan Singh and his family at Jurkha, in Kashipur tehsil,

Nainital district, Uttar Pradesh in North India State where they had migrated about twenty years ago after the division of India and Pakistan. They had not been heard from for many years after Pastor Simpson left India.

Pastor Dal Chand related how he had gone to Jurkha Village to visit Jai Ram and his brother. When he arrived, he found his brother sitting at his grist mill reading a copy of the Urdu Bible. It was not long before many of the village men and women came to the house to ask for Jai Ram to pray for their sick children and lay his hands on their head and ask God to heal them.

Pastor Dal Chand wrote that he watched in silence, in the shadows outside, for some time while the people were coming to have Jai Ram pray for their sick, and ask his advice. Then he made himself known, and was welcomed by Jai Ram and his brother who was then reading the Bible to the people. He said the tears ran down his cheeks as he saw that the zeal and steadfast faith of Jai Ram had not failed after twenty-five years. He said he hoped to baptize from fifty to a hundred people in that village. They hope to build a church, some day, in that village, or nearby. He said he had never seen such faith and such a living testimony to the sincere life of a village Indian Christian as he saw that day. He wondered why our mission workers had not followed up this man when he moved, years ago, to the Himalayan foot hills, and kept in touch with him. But he said that there he found Jai Ram, after twenty-five years out of contact with his church, living in a remote, isolated village, but faithfully keeping the Sabbath and praying to the true God. So the faithful witness of Brother Jai Ram and his prayers, still lives on in India.

Recently Pastor Simpson received a letter from Pastor Lal Singh, the President of the Upper Ganges Section of the Seventh-day Adventist Church, who lives in the same bungalow where Pastor Simpson lived at Hapur until his transfer to Lucknow, U. P. (in 1938) for city evangelistic work. Pastor Lal Singh was then a school boy at Hapur Mission Boarding School, where Mrs. Maudie Simpson was his principal. He writes, "The man, Mr. Jai Ram, whose buffalo was healed, is still very much alive and zealous for the Lord."

25: Foolish prayer, visualizing a Worldwide Answer

Not really foolish, for God has promised, "Call unto me, and I will answer thee, and shew thee great and mighty things, which thou knowest not." Jer. 33:3.

TWENTY-FIVE years ago it was but a dream. We had just discovered for ourselves a truth which was as old as the hills—that God has placed promises within our reach which we can "Ask" for (Matt. 7:7), Believe (Mark 11:24), and Claim by returning thanks that we have received them (John 11:41; Matt. 21:22).

In great agony of soul we had struggled in prayer. Faith had been greatly strengthened by feeding on the immutable, impeccable, never-failing promises of a God who "cannot lie."

But there were many depressing hours. Some answers seemed slow in coming. The skies were often dark and gloomy. A confluence of circumstances caused the heart to tremble.

Then, as the cry ascended to God, "I know You are there, even though all looks dark," a shaft of light seemed to light up my very heart. It was as if it was saying just what the opening Scripture says: "I will do `great and mighty things.' "

I asked, "Lord, what kind of `great and mighty things' will take place?"

The answer came back, "Great and mighty things, which thou knowest not." This seemed to be saying to me, "I will `answer' so outstandingly that the `answer' will be spread all over America, and even to other lands."

Foolish Prayers—Fabulous Answers

Our response was almost like that of Sarai, Abraham's wife, when she laughed at the promise of God. It seemed so thoroughly impossible, that we almost felt presumptuous in thinking that God would do the "great and mighty" thing that would cause it to become worldwide.

But today, as the year 1972 is being ushered in, we feel like shouting, "Glory! Hallelujah!" From across America, Canada, Australia, Europe and the Far East; from Africa and the islands of the sea, come word of prayer groups studying the ABC's of prayer, and finding wonderful answers from the hand of our Lord.

During the year that has passed, we have witnessed marvelous answers in our own personal ministry. In one twelve-month period we have been strengthened to conduct almost thirty series of meetings. Recently, hundreds of pleading letters have been answered. Several books have either gone to press, or are almost ready to go.

Time and space would fail to tell of the dedicated work of many who, through faith, have subdued evil forces, closed the mouths of gossipers, brought to spiritual life those dead in trespasses and sins, wrought righteousness, waxed valiant in fight, out of weakness have become strong; while prayer group leaders from across the United States, Canada, in Singapore, and in the islands of the sea have been led by the Spirit to unite, in one way or another, their efforts with ours in spreading the love of Jesus Christ through claiming His promises. Tens of thousands are reading the books on prayer, and more than 100,000 lessons have gone out in various portions of the earth.

And this is but a trickle, we think, of what is going to take place in many parts of the great harvest field. We only saw a quick, sharp shaft of light twenty-five years ago. Now we see the light of God's promises shining almost everywhere. Surely this promise of Jeremiah 33:3 is wonderful and grand! It is glorious and eternal when it says, "Call unto me, and I will answer thee, and shew thee great and mighty things, which thou knowest not."

And we respond, "Oh that men would praise the Lord for his goodness, and for his wonderful works to the children of men" (Ps. 107:8)!

"And let all the people say, Amen. Praise ye the Lord" (Ps. 106:48).