

# THE HERALDS OF TRUTH

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## WHAT MUST YOU DO TO BE SAVED?

*Reuben Warjri*



**B**efore I understood what is really involved in the plan of salvation, I was unsure as to what would become of me when Jesus would finally appear in the clouds of heaven to take His people to that place where He has prepared for them. I often asked myself, “Will I be permitted to enter through the gates of heaven or will I be numbered among those who will not be counted worthy to inherit eternal life?” And each time I asked this question, I could never give a resounding YES as a reply.

Practically speaking, I understood very little of what salvation is, to the extent that I felt that salvation was something that was next to impossible to achieve. In short, I was unable to believe what the Bible says about a Christian being saved because I could not really see the significance of Christ as our Redeemer. This is not to say that I did not grow up to be familiar with the notion that Jesus is the Saviour of us all and that “He died to save us.” I believed in all this but at the same time I had a feeling that there was something more to this rhetorical jargon

that needs to be dissected and properly understood. My inability to comprehend just what the missing piece of the puzzle is, grew to the point that the adage, “Christ died to save us,” became nothing more than a banal expression of Christian faith.

This expression became all the more stodgy as I was also led to believe that law-keeping was THE WAY to gain God’s pleasure and acceptance. So, I set out on my journey to eternal life with the aim to try and keep holy the Lord’s commandments hoping that someday, I will be able to observe the law without ever breaking it. But the more I tried, the more I found myself falling well short of the goal of being perfect as my Father in heaven is perfect. And speaking of perfection, I thought that it was perfection of character that God demanded of me. I was thoroughly convinced that as long as I found myself unable to keep God’s requirements to the letter, it was an indication that I am yet to deserve heaven and heaven would not be so keen to receive me with all my imperfections. Often times, I would recall the verse found in James which reads, “For whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he was guilty of all.” (James 2:10). This verse made my

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struggle all the more demanding and difficult. But there were days when I thought that I had gone through an entire day without breaking the law, I felt very accomplished and I would wake up the next day with renewed hope but only to be disappointed sooner or later.

If somebody were to ask me to give my take on the gospel as I knew and believed it then, I would simply put it as, “A message of false hope.” By now you can understand that the system into which I was born and brought up (not to blame my parents because they too are unwitting victims of the same system) compelled me and everyone around me to adopt “another gospel” which endorses the idea of salvation by the works of the law. So steeped in the law was this system that it eventually led me to become as dry and as barren as the hills of Gilboa – hopeless, lifeless, unfruitful and, most of all, Christless. Like most people I knew, I was convinced that enough good works could ensure me a spot in heaven and yet I did not know how much good work was actually enough. Therefore, no amount of good works could satisfy my soul and it never seemed that my struggle would ever come to an end.

Before the spirit of self-condemnation could take hold of me, I began to find the answers I have always been looking for. Initially, this answer came when, in 2015, I learned that God indeed had a Son to give. I began to understand what it means that God loved the world so much that He spared not His Son and gave Him as a surety for the human race. But still I was not satisfied because even though I had come to the true understanding of who God is and that this knowledge has shed some “new” light on the subject of

salvation, I was still hooked to the idea that salvation is by works. Then, in 2016, I stumbled upon Open Face Fellowship (formerly known as Restoration Ministries) whose newsletters I downloaded. At first, I thought that I would gather as many anti-trinitarian based materials as I could and add to the collection of materials I already had at my disposal, to aid me in my “debate” with non-believers should a discussion on this topic arise. However, little did I know that the most pleasant surprise awaited me. As I progressed from one issue of *Open Face* newsletter to another, I was led to discover the wonderful truth about righteousness by grace through faith and all the answers that I have been longing for all my life, were finally revealed to me in a language that was so plain and easy to understand. My part was simply to believe that what Christ has done is sufficient for my salvation.

Till today, I cannot thank God enough for using this ministry that sits on an island on the other side of the globe as a tool to bring light and hope to my soul. This is nothing short of a miracle. That was the first time that hope sprang in my life because now I knew that salvation is not earned but it is indeed a gift from God. The words, “For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.” (Roman 6:23) now made sense to me. Also, the notion that salvation was unachievable became a thing of the past. I therefore, highly recommend our readers to visit the Open Face Fellowship website ([www.restorationministry.com](http://www.restorationministry.com)) and download their newsletters and other materials. All of these are free of cost. As a matter of fact, I drew inspiration from Open Face Fellowship newsletters to

publish a newsletter of our own here in Shillong.

All along I knew that my experience with regards to the issue of eternal life and salvation was not unique. But the actual scale and scope of this problem became very apparent when I was recently led to a website<sup>1</sup> that talked about a survey that was conducted by the Cultural Research Centre at Arizona Christian University, which found that there is a growing number of people in the US who are of the notion that salvation has to be earned. This problem strikes at the core of what the story of Jesus' encounter with the rich young man has to teach us.

The rich young man came to Jesus to find out what he should do to gain eternal life. His actual words were, "Good Master, what good thing shall I do, that I may have eternal life?" Notice how he phrased his question. In saying, "what good thing shall I do, that I may have eternal life", he was basically asking the same question I once asked myself, "What and how much good deed should I perform to gain salvation?"

Jesus' reply was, "But if thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments." He went on to list the commandments which related to man's relationship with his fellow men. These words of Jesus have been used extensively to back the idea that the way to attain salvation is by keeping the law. If this statement is taken out of the context, this is exactly what it appears to be saying. But the conversation did not end here. To the Saviour's words, the young man's reply was, "All these have I kept from my youth up: what lack I yet?" In thus saying, the young man demonstrated that his confidence in law keeping was further

boosted by what Christ seem to be saying about the means to gain eternal life. He was also quick to pronounce that from a young age, he was diligent in keeping the law and so, there should have not been anything lacking in him. Yet a part of him knew that his efforts were but "filthy rags", otherwise, he would not have paid Christ a visit to ask him what should he do to gain eternal life. Thus, his predicament was far from over even though he was steadfast in keeping the law of God.

The young man was told to sell all that he had and give to the poor and then follow the Saviour. But on hearing this, "he went away sorrowful." The fact that his conversation with the "Good Master" ended in utter disappointment proves that all the law keeping and good works in the world could never be enough to help him attain salvation. Eternal life depends on one's faith in Christ and one's willingness to yield one's will to the will of Jesus and accepting Him as the ONLY WAY TO SALVATION. This is not to say that the ten commandments have ceased to become relevant or that they no longer serve as an affirmation of what is right and wrong, good and bad. It simply means that the law was never designed to give salvation. Here is what Paul said concerning this matter:

*"If there had been a law given which could have given life, verily righteousness should have been by the law." (Romans 3:21)*

Besides, law keeping, according to the account I have just mentioned, proves futile without the living law living in us. Further, the belief that keeping our eyes fixed on the law and hoping that by so doing, our character will change to the

kind that truly reflects the character of Jesus, is a ploy by the deceiver of souls to take our eyes off of the One who lived not only to save but also to give us a new life. If you are one of those who believe that the law can change you, I advise that you pay a closer attention to the following words from God's word:

*“For what the law could not do, it that it was weak through the flesh, God sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh.” (Romans 8:3)*

*“For the law made nothing perfect, but the bringing in of a better hope did; by the which we draw nigh unto God.” (Hebrews 7:19)*

*“Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved.” (Acts 4:12)*

What then can I say of myself? It is true that I have not yet attained perfection of character as some may expect to find in a person who claims to have Christ living

in him. But this I know, that ever since I gave my life to Christ, I have a new life that hates unrighteous deeds and I am still on my way to becoming perfect as my heavenly Father is perfect. In other words, I am a work in progress. I am born again into a new life and just like any new born baby who continues to grow day by day, I also continue to grow in Christ from day to day. On the other hand, as far as my life experiences with the issue of salvation and eternal life is concerned, I know that I have finally found the peace that “passeth all understanding” because it is not so much the perfection of character that will make me worthy to be a citizen of heaven but it is the righteousness of Christ that covers me that makes me commendable before God. In weakness He is my strength and in Him I am complete (2 Corinthians 12:9; Colossians 2:10). This is what makes salvation a gift that is given by God because of His grace. I do not have to work for it. My struggle against sin is over long before I even knew it. All I need to do now is to believe and allow Christ to take care of the rest.



# THE COST OF SALVATION

*Reuben Warjri*



untold misery sin has caused heaven, particularly God and His Son. Little do we know or grasp what it cost heaven to buy us back from the life of bondage and slavery to sin.

There is a verse in the Bible that gives us an idea of what it cost God and His Son to redeem us from the powers of darkness. This is how this verse puts it:

*“For ye are bought at a price...” (1 Corinthians 6:20)*

I like the way that the Khasi Bible translates this verse because it brings out the true meaning of what this verse is actually talking about. Here is how the Khasi Bible renders it:

*“Namar la thied noh ia phi **da ka dor bah...**” (Ka Baibl Khasi, OV, 1 Korinth 6:20) [Emphasis supplied]*

The English words, “at a price” appear in the Khasi Bible as “*da ka dor bah*” which literally translates into “a heavy price.” Just how heavy this price is, no one can really tell. But we can get a glimpse of that sacrifice heaven made for us by examining six points that I have provided here for you to read and to consider.

## **1. God gave all of heaven**

The first point in the list is, in giving His Son, God gave all of heaven. All the heavenly beings owe their existence to the Father and the Son. It was the Son who actually performed the works of creation. Many times, we find that the Bible tells us that the Father created all

**W**hen a discussion on the consequences of sin ensues, most often than not, our conversation centres around the problems that humanity faces on a daily basis. In fact, the problems that humanity faces in light of what transpired in the garden of Eden occupies centre stage in our minds and hearts. This is partly due to the fact that we feel that our problem is extremely large that nothing in this world or in the universe can ever come close in comparison to it; which explains why we find ourselves and others around us constantly complaining of the hardships and difficulties we face from day to day. However, amid all this, we forget or perhaps, do not even consider what

things through His Son. Here are two samples from God's word:

*"All things were made by Him; and without Him was not any thing made that was made." (John 1:3)*

*"For by Him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by Him, and for Him. And He is before all things, and by Him all things consist." (Colossians 1:16,17)*

But before the work of creation began, God begat His Son who was in the "express image" of His very person. (Hebrews 1:3). The term "express image" that appears in Hebrews 1:3 primarily implies that Christ reflects the very character of God the Father. But on a secondary sense, it also denotes that, before His human incarnation, the Son of God possessed a body which was comprised of the very same divine matter as the Father Himself. Therefore, "being in the form of God," He "thought it not robbery to be equal with God." (Philippians 2:6). The fact that the Father has only one begotten Son, suggests that there was only one being in the entire universe who is truly like God spiritually AND PHYSICALLY. In other words, the only person who can truly relate to God and His character is His Son. No other being can come close to fully understanding God and what He is. The world of God chose to express this fact in this fashion:

*"No one has seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, He hath declared Him." (John 1:18)*

This verse does not mean that only the Son is privileged to see the Father's face because Jesus once said that the angels in heaven "*always behold the face of My Father which is in heaven.*" (Matthew 18:10) It simply means that apart from beholding the physical aspect of the Father, the spirit of the Son is so closely knit with the spirit of the Father that the Son has a very close and intimate relationship with God that is unrivalled by any relationship that God has with any other being.

Hence, for God to give His Son, who only was in the express image of Himself, He gave all that He could ever give. It was a big sacrifice on His part, especially considering that the Son's physical aspect would have to undergo a change. This brings us to the second point.

## **2. The Son was made lower than the angels**

Once again, it is worth mentioning the fact that all things were created by Jesus which makes Him the creator of the angels as well. Because He holds the title of the Creator of the angelic host, it stands to reason that in His divine form, He was far superior and greater than those whom He had created. At the same time the Bible also tells us that when the Son created man in His image, He created him to be lower than the angels. The words in the book of Hebrews spell this truth for us.

*"But one in a certain place testified, saying, What is man, that Thou art mindful of him? or the son of man, that Thou visitest him? Thou madest him a little lower than the angels; Thou crownedst him with glory and honour,*

*and didst set him over the works of Thy hands:” (Hebrews 2:6,7)*

The words of this passage suggest that, even before the fall of man, it was humiliating for God to take on humanity. Notwithstanding this fact, the plan of salvation entails that the Son of God had to take on humanity. In other words, the physical nature of God’s Son had to be changed to the one that occupies a position lower than the angels whom He Himself created. And we see this truth inscribed in Hebrews when the author of this book went on to say thus:

*“But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honour; that He by the grace of God should taste death for every man.” (Hebrews 2:9)*

As a matter of fact, the humanity of Christ is all the more humiliating when we realise that because of sin, man has turned out to be the lowest being in the universe. He is the lowest being because of the degradation brought about by sin. And yet, Christ was not hesitant to take on this human form with all its degradations. In fact, the Bible says that it was in His best interest to take upon Himself the form of man and not the form of an angel.

*“For verily He took not the nature of angels; but He took on Him the seed of Abraham. Wherefore in all things it behooved Him to be made like unto His brethren...” (Hebrews 2:16,17)*

The extent of this humiliation that Christ suffered in taking on humanity is expressed more clearly in Paul’s letter to the Philippians when he said that Christ took the form of a servant.

*“Who being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: but made Himself of no reputation, and took upon Him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men.” (Philippians 2:6,7)*

From these words you can easily tell what sin has done to human kind in terms of our relationship with God. Man was initially created to be the son of God. (Luke 3:38). But on account of sin, he was demoted to the rank of a servant. This was essentially the position that Christ took upon Himself when He was clothed with humanity.

In light of this truth, our eyes are opened to see the loving and selfless nature of Christ. This nature will become even more pronounced as we go to the next point.

### **3. Jesus retains humanity for all eternity**

As far as the plan of salvation goes, the Son of God was required to remain clothed with humanity throughout all eternity. This is sustained by the words of Paul to Timothy where we are told the following:

*“For there is one God and one Mediator between God and man , the man Jesus Christ.” (1 Timothy 2:5)*

When Paul wrote these words, he used the present tense of the verb “is” to indicate that even as he wrote this letter, the Mediator who stands between God and man is a man whom we know to be none other than Jesus Christ. This notion is further supported by the words of Jesus Himself when He spoke to one of



His disciples, seventy years after He ascended into heaven.

*“I Jesus have sent Mine angel to testify unto you these things in the churches. I am the root and the offspring of David, and the bright and morning star.” (Revelation 22:16)*

The words, “I am the root and the offspring of David” do not simply connote a mere title that is associated with Jesus. But these words signify the fact that even when the visions of what constituted the book of Revelation were given, the one who revealed these secrets to his servant was Jesus Christ in human form.

Additional prove can also be supported from the fact that as far as the eternal purpose of God for the human race is concerned, it is a human being who should be the representative of humanity. Because Adam was defeated by Satan, his position as the king and representative of the human race was transferred to the enemy of souls. But on account of His victory, Christ was able to dethrone the Devil from his position as the representative of mankind. Therefore, as the Mediator between us and God, Jesus occupies the office of the eternal representative of the race. This is in keeping with the eternal purpose of God, that the representative of the human race is concerned. Besides, there is no better representative of man other than man himself.

*“Wherefore in all things it behooved Him to **be made like unto His brethren...** for in that He Himself hath suffered and tempted, **He is able to succor them that are tempted.**” (Hebrews 2:17,18)*

*“By so much was Jesus made a surety of a better testament. And they truly were many priests, because they were not suffered to continue by reason of death: **but this man, because He continueth ever, hath an unchangeable priesthood.** Wherefore He is able to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by Him, **seeing He liveth forever to make intercession for them.**” (Hebrews 7:22-25)*

The above verses demonstrate that Christ’s humanity comes in very handy when it comes down to the fact that He has to intercede on our behalf.

#### **4. It took the most humiliating and ignominious death to save mankind**

So far, we have seen that taking on humanity was a humiliating experience as far as the Son of God is concerned. If this were not enough, Christ was destined to suffer the most humiliating and ignominious death then known to man. This picture was summed up by Paul in so apt a manner in his letter to the Philippians.

*“Who being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: but made Himself of no reputation, and took upon Him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: and being found in fashion as a man, He humbled Himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.” Philippians 2:6-8*

Many Christians today openly and proudly display the symbol of the cross as the symbol of their faith. But the image of the cross was, to the people living in the ancient world, a symbol to be detested



and abhorred. As per the culture of those days, no one wished to be associated with the cross or with anyone who was condemned to death by crucifixion. Once again, the words of Paul sum up the matter convincingly when he says that “Christ crucified” was “unto the Greeks foolishness” because there was nothing amusing about the idea of a man, let alone a king, who was crucified.

*“But we preach Christ crucified, unto the Jews a stumbling block, and unto the Greeks foolishness.” (1 Corinthians 1:23)*

## **5. Christ bears the scars of crucifixion for all eternity**

Humanity is not the only thing that Christ carries with Him throughout eternity. Though He rose from the grave with incorruptible flesh, His scars remain as can be witnessed from the account of the doubting Thomas who was told by the risen Saviour to see and touch for himself the scars that the Saviour sustained at the cross.

*“Then said He to Thomas, Reach hither thy finger, and behold my hands; and reach hither thy hand, and thrust it into my side: and be not faithless, but believing.” (John 20:27)*

The scars serve yet another purpose that there will be many people who live and die without knowing Christ who will be in heaven. The scars will be an evidence to prove that He had come to save them. Notwithstanding this, the righteous will not retain the scars on their bodies when they go to heaven. In other words, from among the human race, Christ will be the only One who will have to retain the marks of the sinful past.

## **6. God had to kill His own Son!**

Perhaps the most unfathomable and an unexpected outcome of sin is that it caused God to take the life of His very own Son! Just how this is the case can be understood when we are aware of certain basic truths about how God and His Son are related to each other.

Apart from making a very clear and to-the-point statement that both the Father and the Son are divine, the Bible also talks about certain things that differentiate them. A specimen of this distinction is seen in 1 Corinthians 8:6 which reads, *“But to us there is but one God, the Father, of whom are all things, and we in Him; and one Lord Jesus Christ, by whom are all things and we by Him.”*

Besides highlighting the fact that the one God of the Christians is the Father, this verse also tells us that, while the Father is the “of whom”, the Son is “the by whom”; which makes the Father the source of all things, including life, and the Son the channel through which all things come to be. This is in keeping with what I mentioned a while ago that all things were created by God through His Son. Life can therefore spring from God the Father alone. This truth is summed up by Paul in his letter to Timothy when he was speaking of the Father.

*“Who only hath immortality, dwelling in the light which no man can approach unto; whom no man hath seen, nor can see: to whom be honour and power everlasting. Amen.” (1 Timothy 6:16)*

In saying that the Father alone has immortality, Paul does not subvert the fact that the Son also has immortal life.

What the apostle means is that, the Father alone is the source of eternal life. And, as the “of whom are all things,” it stands to reason that the immortal life in the Son also comes from the Father. This is a plain teaching of the word of God, the evidence of which can be seen in what the apostle John wrote in his gospel account about the life of Jesus where he chose to dub the immortal life of God as “life in Himself”.

*“For as the Father hath life in Himself; so hath He given His Son to have life in Himself.” John 5:26*

Notice that the above passage emphatically states that the Son was given eternal life by the Father. The fact that the Son is immortal was true before His incarnation and when He was clothed with humanity. Therefore, even in His human form, there was nothing that man could do in his power to take the life of God’s Son. A prove of this can be witnessed in the crucifixion scene.

Death by crucifixion was designed to be a form of torture. The victim had to suffer for days before he would actually succumb to his injuries. But Christ died within hours after being nailed to the cross. So unusual was this incident that one of the executioners was compelled to pierce with his spear Jesus’ side to confirm his suspicion. The only logical explanation to this phenomenon is found in the book of Isaiah where we are told that God smote and bruised His Son.

*“Surely He hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows: yet we did esteem Him **stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted.**” (Isaiah 53:4)*

***“Yet it pleased the LORD to bruise Him; He hath put Him to grief: when Thou shalt make His soul an offering for sin.” (Isaiah 53:10)***

This is also confirmed by Jesus Himself when, shortly before His arrest, He warned His disciples that they would be offended because of Him for it was prophesied that God would “smite the shepherd.”

*“Then saith Jesus unto them, All ye shall be offended because of me this night: for it is written, I will smite the shepherd, and the sheep of the flock shall be scattered abroad.” (Matthew 26:31)*

God accomplished this task by separating Himself from the Son (read Matthew 26:46). Being separated from the Source of life, Jesus eventually died. In short, God had to take the life of His very own Son who did not deserve to be killed. If man who is wicked and sinful finds it impossible to perform such an act, how much more difficult it is for God who is righteous to perform this part of the plan of salvation.

While there is more to comment on this subject, I hope that through this short article, you have become more aware of just how much it cost heaven to redeem us from sin. No human effort or worldly wealth can ever repay what heaven has done for humanity. If I were to speak in the tone and the language of the world, humanity has an enormous debt to pay. But thanks be to God that this debt was paid in full by our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ. He chose to pay it with His own life! The apostle Peter puts it so eloquently when he said, *“For as much as ye know that ye are not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver or gold,*

*from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers; but with the precious blood of Christ, as a lamb without blemish and without spot.” (1 Peter 1:18)*

It is all the more evident that salvation is a gift. Whatever had to be done to deliver us from sin, was taken care of by God and His Son. And whatever debt that was needed to be paid to buy our life back from the hands of Satan, Christ had done that with His own life.

With regard to the subject that has been discussed in this article, I feel that it is

worth mentioning that I personally feel that the words of one of my favourite hymns sums up the matter so unequivocally.

*Jesus paid it all,  
All to Him I owe;  
Sin has left a crimson stain;  
He washed it white as snow.*

*(“Jesus Paid It All”, Mrs. Elvina M. Hall, Seventh-Day Adventist Church Hymnal, Review and Herald Publishing Association, Eleventh Edition, 2000)*

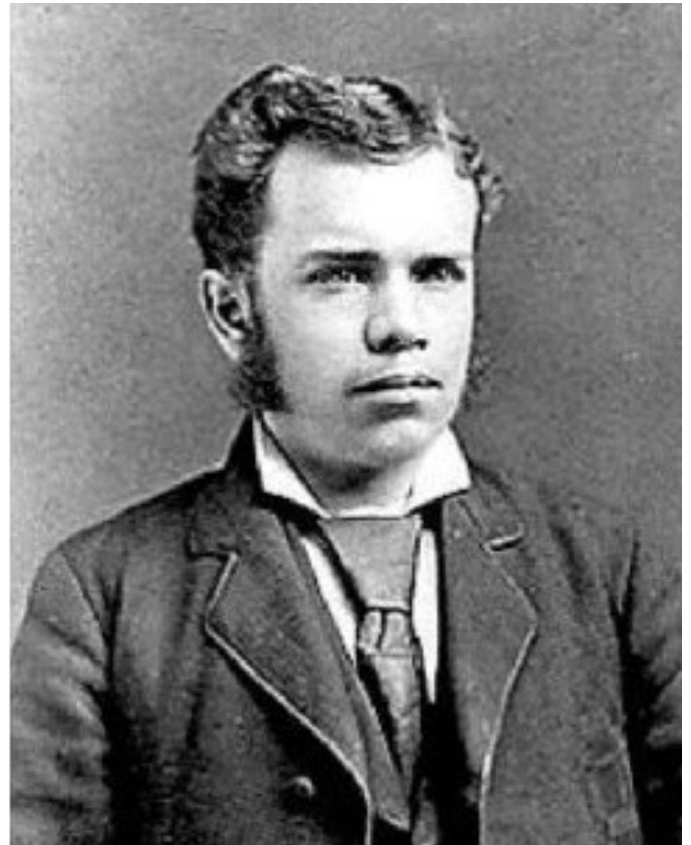
## 1888 MESSAGE

The “1888 Message” is a section in this newsletter that focuses on the teachings of E. J. Waggoner on the subject of righteousness by faith in Jesus as it appears in his booklet, *Christ and His Righteousness*, published in the year 1890. The sheer unpopularity of this message within the Adventist circles led to its immediate rejection by the Seventh-Day Adventist Church when this message was presented at the 1888 General Conference Meetings held at Minneapolis, Minnesota.

On account of this, very little or nothing was ever mentioned about this event that many are left in the dark as to what the messengers of God had to offer His people. Little did we know that this message contains the most precious gems of truth that has in it the power to break the chains of darkness that binds the human soul longing for the fountain of living waters that gushes out from the Rock of our salvation – Jesus Christ our Lord.

Since the team in Christ In You Ministries is dedicated to broadcast this wonderful message, we are happy that by God’s grace we are able to share with our readers the message that have so long been swept under the carpet.

With every new issue of this newsletter, we will be publishing a chapter in sequential order as arranged in Waggoner’s booklet.





## CHAPTER I

### HOW SHALL WE CONSIDER CHRIST?

*Ellet Joseph Waggoner*

**B**ut how should we consider Christ? Just as He has revealed Himself to the world, according to the witness which He bore concerning Himself. In that marvellous discourse recorded in the fifth chapter of John, Jesus said, “For as the Father raiseth up the dead, and quickeneth them; even so the Son quickeneth whom He will. For the Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment unto the Son; that all men should honour the Son, even as they honour the Father. He that honoureth not the Son honoureth not the Father which hath sent Him.” Verses 21-23.

Christ is committed the highest prerogative, that of judging. He must receive the same honour that is due to God and for the reason that He is God. The beloved disciple bears this witness, “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.” John 1:1. That this Divine Word is none other than Jesus Christ is shown by verse 14: “And the Word was made flesh and dwelt among us (and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the Only-begotten of the Father), full of grace and truth.”

The Word was “in the beginning.” The mind of man cannot grasp the ages that are spanned in this phrase. It is not given to men to know when or how the Son was begotten; but we know that he was the Divine Word, not simply before He came to this earth to die, but even before the world was created. Just before His crucifixion He prayed, “And now, O



Father, glorify thou Me with Thine own self with the glory which I had with Thee before the world was.” John 17:5. And more than seven hundred years before His first advent, His coming was thus foretold by the word of inspiration: “But thou, Bethlehem Ephratah, though thou be little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of thee shall He come forth unto Me that is to be ruler in Israel; whose goings forth have been from of old, from the days of eternity.” Micah 5:2, margin. We know that Christ “proceeded forth and came from God” (John 8:42), but it was so far back in the ages of eternity as to be far beyond the grasp of the mind of man.

## GLIMPSES FROM THE PAST

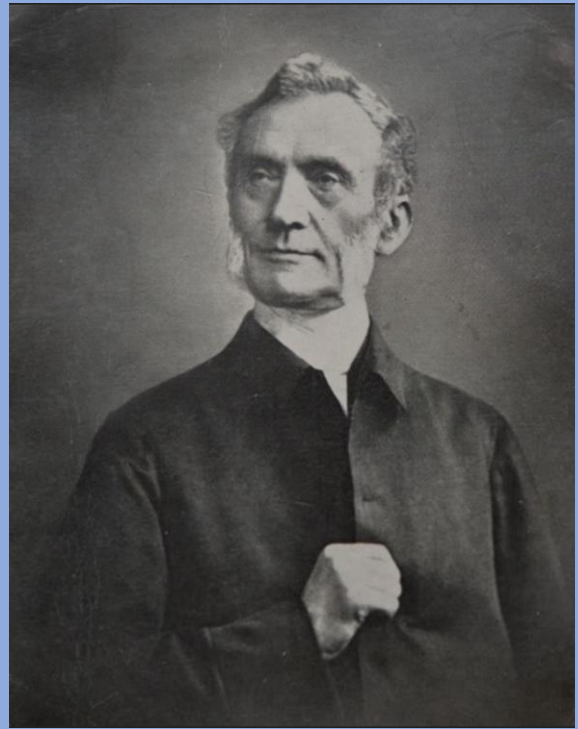
### STRENGTHENING FAITH (1842) – GEORGE MÜLLER, GEORGE MÜLLER CONVICTIONS AND TEACHINGS, CHAPTER 1, PAGES 6-8

**Y**ou ask, “How may I, a true believer, have my faith strengthened?” The answer is this:

“Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning” (Jam1:17).

As the increase of faith is a good gift, it must come from God, and therefore He ought to be asked for this blessing. The following means, however, ought to be used:

1. The careful reading of the Word of God, combined with meditation on it. Through reading of the Word of God, and especially through meditation on the Word of God, the believer becomes more and more acquainted with the nature and character of God, and thus sees more and more, besides His holiness and justice, what a kind, loving, gracious, merciful, mighty, wise, and faithful Being He is. Therefore, in poverty, affliction of body, bereavement in his family, difficulty in his service, want of a situation or employment, he will repose upon the ability of God to help him, because he has not only learned from His Word that He is of almighty power and infinite wisdom, but he has also seen instance upon instance in the Holy Scriptures in which His almighty power and infinite wisdom



**George Müller**

George Müller (1805-1898) was a Christian evangelist and Director of Ashley Down Orphanage in Bristol, England, who cared for 10,000 orphans in his lifetime. Before his conversion in 1825, no one would have imagined that such a sinful youth could ever become eminent for his faith in God and power in prayer. The work of Müller and his wife with orphans began in 1836. He was well known for great faith, never making his needs known nor asking for donations. He also provided an education to the children under his care, to the point where he was accused of raising the poor above their natural station in life. He also established 117 schools which offered Christian education to over 120,000 children, many of them orphans.

have been actually exercised in helping and delivering His people. He will repose upon the willingness of God to help him, because he has not only learned from the Scriptures what a kind, good, merciful, gracious, and faithful Being God is, but because he has also seen in the Word of God how in a great variety of instances He has proved Himself to be so. And the consideration of this, if God has become known to us through prayer and meditation on His own Word, will lead us, in general at least, with a measure of confidence to rely upon Him. Thus meditation on the Word of God will be one special means to strengthen our faith.

2. As with reference to the growth of every grace of the Spirit it is of the utmost importance that we seek to maintain an upright heart and a good conscience, and therefore do not knowingly and habitually indulge in those things which are contrary to the mind of God, so it is also particularly the case with reference to the growth in faith. How can I possibly continue to act in faith upon God concerning anything, if I am habitually grieving Him, and seek to detract from the glory and honor of Him in whom I profess to trust, upon whom I profess to depend? All my confidence towards God, all my leaning upon Him in the hour of trial, will be gone if I have a guilty conscience, and do not seek to put away this guilty conscience but still continue to do things which are contrary to the mind of God. And if, in any particular instance, I cannot trust in God because of the guilty conscience, then my faith is weakened by that instance of distrust. For faith with every fresh trial of it, either increases by trusting God and thus getting help, or it decreases by not trusting Him—and then there is less and less power of looking

simply and directly to Him, and a habit of self-dependence is begotten or encouraged. One or the other of these will always be the case in each particular instance. Either we trust in God, and in that case we neither trust in ourselves, nor in our fellowmen, nor in circumstances, nor in anything besides; or we DO trust in one or more of these, and in that case do NOT trust in God.

3. If we, indeed, desire our faith to be strengthened, we should not shrink from opportunities where our faith may be tried, and therefore, through the trial, be strengthened. In our natural state we dislike dealing with God alone. Through our natural alienation from God we shrink from Him and from eternal realities. This cleaves to us, more or less, even after our regeneration. Hence it is that more or less, even as believers, we have the same shrinking from standing with God alone—from depending upon Him alone, from looking to Him alone—and yet this is the very position in which we ought to be if we wish our faith to be strengthened. The more I am in a position to be tried in faith with reference to my body, my family, my service for the Lord, my business, etc., the more shall I have opportunity of seeing God's help and deliverance—and every fresh instance, in which He helps and delivers me, will tend towards the increase of my faith. On this account, therefore, the believer should not shrink from situations, positions, circumstances, in which his faith may be tried; but should cheerfully embrace them as opportunities where he may see the hand of God stretched out on his behalf to help and deliver him, and whereby he may thus have his faith strengthened.

4. The last important point for the strengthening of our faith is that we let God<sup>7</sup> work for us, when the hour of the trial of our faith comes, and do not work a deliverance of our own. Wherever God has given faith, it is given, among other reasons, for the very purpose of being tried. Yea, however weak our faith may be, God will try it—only with this restriction: that as in every way He leads on gently, gradually, patiently, so also with reference to the trial of our faith. At first our faith will be tried very little in comparison with what it may be afterwards, for God never lays more upon us than He is willing to enable us to bear. Now when the trial of faith comes, we are naturally inclined to distrust God, and to trust rather in ourselves, or in our friends, or in circumstances. We will rather work a deliverance of our own somehow or other, than simply look to

God and wait for His help. But if we do not patiently wait for God's help, if we work a deliverance of our own, then at the next trial of our faith it will be thus again: we shall be again inclined to deliver ourselves—and thus, with every fresh instance of that kind, our faith will decrease. Whilst, on the contrary, were we to stand still in order to see the salvation of God, to see His hand stretched out on our behalf, trusting in Him alone, then our faith would be increased; with every fresh case in which the hand of God is stretched out on our behalf in the hour of the trial of our faith, our faith would be increased yet more. Would the believer, therefore, have his faith strengthened, he must especially give time to God, Who tries his faith in order to prove to His child, in the end, how willing He is to help and deliver him, the moment it is good for him.

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*These lessons from the pen of George Müller have been used of the Lord to shape our lives and ministries. See too George Müller: My Journal, also available from Chapel Library.*

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## ***Notes***

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