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## “...According to your FAITH”!

### Part 2

*by Robert Ardis*

The “Hall of Fame” characters of the Old Testament recorded in Hebrews 11 did not walk by faith only—they also walked by sight. The Eternal distinctly spoke to them or actually appeared unto them in many different ways.

In Gen. 14 the Eternal appeared as Melchizedec and prepared bread and wine for victorious Abram returning home from battle. Then later as the Word, who became Jesus Christ, He enjoyed a full meal and Abram’s hospitality as he “retuned the favor” at his home in Gen. 18. God also appeared to Isaac and re-established the covenant He had made with Abraham (Gen. 26). Later in chapter 32 the Eternal and His angels appeared unto Jacob and the God who became Christ even wrestled with him in the dirt of the earth all night long and changed Jacob’s name to Israel. The Mighty God appeared face to face with Moses (see Ex. 33:11 and 34:29-35) and “dictated” to him the Books of the Law and other preserved books and records (see Gen. 5 and 10). The Eternal first spoke to Joshua the son of Nun and then as the *Captain of the Hosts of Heaven* appeared to him (Joshua 5 and 6). He revealed Himself or spoke to the judges and the prophets of Israel—and sent His angels on numerous occasions to his prophets. These faithful heroes of old walked by **faith and sight!**

To actually see God and hear Him speak would be an unforgettable experience that would bolster faith and make a lasting impression—and most of those He spoke to or appeared unto had God’s Spirit.

In the New Testament, the Apostle Paul tells us that Christians “*walk by faith and not by sight*” (II Cor. 5:7). But remember that Christ appeared unto Paul on at least three occasions, thus he walked by faith and sight. Yet Christians of the Church age—even to the

“time of the end” and the *Day of the Lord*—walk by *faith* and not by *sight*. Certainly, miracles of all kinds given a merciful God have been seen down through the ages of time since the first century AD, but not in the same manner as described with the “hall of fame” characters or as Jesus performed them during His ministry. But that will soon change! Dramatic miracles, signs, and wonders, fulfilling every aspect of Mark 16:17-18 will soon be done by those who *believe!*

No one alive today [as far as I know] has had any personal experiences such as we have just read about—but we still **believe!** We believe and have not seen. We believe because God has called and chosen us and has opened our mind to the written Word of God and Jesus Christ, the Living Word of God, lives within us! Therefore the life we live [the Christian life] we live by the FAITH of Christ. We have the power of God’s Spirit and God renews His Spirit within us daily as we ask Him. Thus our FAITH should be as great as, or possibly greater, than the patriarch, prophets, or any of the righteous ones of the Old and New Testament times due to our more complete understanding of God’s Plan. Our Lord states in John 20:29: “... *Thomas, because thou hast seen me, thou hast believed: **blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed**”.*

We have FAITH to believe although we have not actually seen—because Christ lives in us! We have the power of the FAITH of Christ.

Mark 16: 17-18 states: “*And these signs shall follow them that believe (#4100); In my name shall they cast out devils; they shall speak with new tongues; They shall take up serpents; and if they drink any deadly thing, it shall not hurt them; they shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover”.*

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## Greetings brethren!

As I put together Issue No. 13 of the periodical that is specially produced for members of the One Body of Jesus Christ, the time is approaching for the beginning of the last Sabbath before the onset of the twelfth Passover and Days of Unleavened Bread in the Day of the Lord. The countdown to Passover that we were all involved in is now nearly complete and, come sunset next Tuesday, we will all be gathered together – some with other fellow faithful begotten children of God and others on their own – to commemorate the death of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

Surely, we have all been getting ready to present ourselves before our Merciful God for this solemn, yet most joyous, occasion. **Solemn...** because we recall and vividly remember that the Word that was made flesh and dwelt amongst us went through unprecedented suffering. Our sins, iniquities and transgressions were laid upon Him as He bore our sicknesses and diseases and as He carried all of our sorrows and troubles on His Body, which He then took to the cross where He shed His blood and died. **Joyous...** because we understand that His ripped and torn Body represented that veil that was rent in two from top to bottom to grant us access to the Father (Heb. 10:19-20), and His death paved the way so our sins may be washed away through His spilled blood. Yes brethren, **we rejoice because the total sacrifice of Christ, our Passover, provided access to God, Who forgives our sins and heals our diseases.**

That was the First Step of God's Great Master Plan for the salvation of Man. We then go through seven Days of Unleavened Bread that remind us of **our part** in this same Plan – **to completely remove sin from our lives.** And we begin these Days with another joyful celebration - the Night to be Much Observed, when, as symbolised by ancient Israel's coming out of Egypt, we celebrate our coming out of sin.

With these thoughts in mind then, and with a renewed determination to continue to increasingly develop the mind of Christ, let's all enjoy the best Spring Holy Day Season yet!

With much love, in Christ's service



Daniel Frendo

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We walk by FAITH and not by sight—we have not seen Christ or any angelic beings or heard their voices—yet we **believe!** And although we **believe** we do not see the **signs** of Mark 16:17-18. All of us have cried out as the man with the demon possessed son did; *“Lord I believe—help me in my unbelief!”* We cry out every day to give us of His Holy Spirit and though FAITH we BELIEVE He does this—more so than we would feed our hungry children [See Luke 11: 9-13 again and II Cor. 16]. And Christ lives in us—“I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, **but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live** [our Christian vocation] **in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me** (Gal.2:20).

Therefore, our FAITH—our BELIEF—is great and is pleasing to God! It is Christ's FAITH within us; therefore, I repeat, our FAITH must be as great as or greater than the righteous elders of old who had God's Spirit accompanied by personal visible and/or audible contact with God and His angels. They received a good report as recorded in Hebrew 11. Isn't our FAITH today receiving “a good report” as we walk only by FAITH [the faith of Christ that is renewed day by day] and not by sight?

And remember; Jesus said—“When I return, will I find FAITH on the earth?”—and he did find FAITH in the CGF. That is a miracle the CGF can truly see in the abundance of New Truth given by Christ to His True Church.

The Islamic terrorist's mind operates on faith too—a false faith—but a faith they believe in so fervently they will blow themselves to bits in their efforts to carry holy war to their enemies. Their sincere, faith based efforts are the works of the flesh stemming from hatred and intolerance (Gal. 5:19-21). However, the FAITH of Christ—the way of life of a true Christian—produces the fruits of the Spirit, *love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance*” (Gal.5:22-23). This is the fruit of Christ living in us through God's Spirit—His way of life.

Today there is an obvious absence of dramatic healings such as we have read of in this article. Why is this? Let me repeat this for emphasis! We are filled with faith—we walk with Christ—He lives in us! Each day the Holy Spirit is renewed within us as we ask our Father to do as He promises. He gives us the POWER of His Holy Spirit daily. What God promises He will

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fulfill! I have FAITH and believe this! He gives us abundantly of His Spirit and we grow in the fruits of the Spirit—and the seventh fruit listed in Gal. 5:22 is faith. Thus a lack of faith is not the reason why “these signs” are not following those who believe! No! God has another reason why.

Remember Mark 16:17-18 declares emphatically that “these signs” will follow those that **believe**: But these signs do not follow us although we believe in full faith that nothing is impossible with God. And the Bible never contradicts itself—so what is it that we are learning?

Ephesians 2:8-10 gives this vital information: “*For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast. For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them.*” Notice this is God’s Plan! By His grace and wisdom He calls those He has chosen and gives them (us) the gift of faith to walk in the way of good works—the Christian faith, Christ’s way of life.

God our Father gives us the gift of FAITH! We HAVE FAITH! Thus if a lack of faith is not the reason these “signs” do not follow us—what is the reason or reasons?

The CGF has been given marvelous and wonderful New Truth. That is a definite fact! We have grown in grace and the knowledge of Jesus Christ, which is New Understanding directly from the Word of God.

Our booklet, *The Plain Truth About God’s Healing*, contains vital New Truth concerning faith and healing. This booklet brings out wonderful new understanding, but also reveals deeply engrained mistaken beliefs about healing we have followed in the past. To conclude this article I want to briefly list the new understanding given in the booklet and the mistaken past beliefs—and arrive at the specific answer to why these signs do not follow us at this point in time. The “problem” is not a lack of FAITH—God has plenty of FAITH to give. But there is a definite reason why miracles, signs, and wonders are not dramatically occurring in the Church today.

- The Worldwide Church of God has taught us that our “physical” sins are forgiven through the brutality Jesus suffered in his beaten and torn body; *by his stripes we are healed*. This was emphasized each year as we partook of

the unleavened bread at Passover. We were taught that our “spiritual” sins are forgiven through Christ’s spilled blood. However the Bible is absolutely clear in the fact that all sin, physical and spiritual, is forgiven though the blood of Christ. “*But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin.*” See also Rev. 1:5.

All through our years in the WCG and the PCG when illness occurred we would follow the Church instructions and call upon the elders to anoint the sick and pray the prayer of faith in Jesus’ name that they would be healed according to James 5:14-15. But to my surprise as these scriptures were carefully studied they do not say what we had thought they did! And the instructions do not stop at verse 15 but continue to the end of the chapter in verse 20. Verse 16 is where “healing” is first mentioned, not in verse 15, and the brethren’s part in the “healing” instructions is emphasized... “*Confess your faults one to another, and pray one for another, that ye may be **healed**. The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much.* This is a necessary and vital part of the healing doctrine that is clarified in our booklet *The Plain Truth about God’s Healing*.

Two more very important instructions that have not been accentuated are listed below:

- Persistence in prayer (v. 17-18) and true love for the brethren are so important as vv. 19-20 explains, but has not been emphasized in the past.
- One extremely important fact of God’s Plan that had been overlooked or not had proper attention called to it is Hebrews 10:19-20: “*Having therefore, brethren, **boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus.** [Our sins being forgiven through the blood of His Son we may enter into the presence of God Almighty] By a new and living way, which he hath consecrated for us, **through the veil**, that is to say, **his flesh**...*” The instant Christ died, the veil in the Temple separating the Holiest of Holies from the rest of the temple, was ripped open from top to bottom. Christ beaten and torn body represented the **veil in the Temple!** He bore all the sins of the World upon His ripped and torn body. As His blood gushed forth from the spear wound in His side, His life paid the penalty for our sins that He bore upon his body—and gave us access to our

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Father, God Almighty, that we could be total forgiven of all our sins. Hebrews 10: 19-20 must be taught and thoroughly understood.

Let's remember FAITH is not the problem. We live by the FAITH of Jesus Christ who gave Himself for us. The Apostle Paul was a man of faith—he followed Christ in the Christian vocation (I Cor. 11:1). Paul had been given much New Truth, but he had a serious health problem that he beseeched God on three occasions to heal him of, as II Cor. 12:7-8 tells us: *“And lest I should be exalted above measure through the abundance of the revelations, there was given to me a thorn in the flesh [his eyes?, my cancer?], the messenger of Satan to buffet me, lest I should be exalted above measure. For this thing I besought the Lord thrice, that it might depart from me.”*

Paul most likely sought out one of the congregation that had the *gift of healings*, but to no avail. Did he go to one of his fellow ministers to be anointed and prayed over? Did he have the congregation to persistently pray for him? Possibly! But here is what God told him—understand GOD SPOKE to him—Paul walked by FAITH and had personal encounters: *“And he (God) said unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness. Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me. Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses for Christ's sake: for when I am weak, then am I strong (II Cor. 12: 9-10).*

We walk by faith and not by sight! Our faith is great, it is Christ faith is us. We walk in the entire Christian way of life and though the trying of our CHRISTIAN FAITH in each one of the fruits of God's Spirit we grow in patient continuance as James 1:2-4 explains: *“My brethren, count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations; Knowing this, that the trying of your faith worketh patience. But let patience have her perfect work, that ye may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing.”* Understand, James is inspired to write we are to become perfect and entire in the complete Christian way of life through the power of God's Holy Spirit producing the fruits of the Holy Spirit—love, joy, peace—growing up into Christ in all things—the acts of faith included.

The apostle Paul brings the same message in his writing style in I Cor. 12: 27-31 *“ Now ye are the body of Christ, and members in particular. And God hath set some in the church, first apostles, secondarily*

*prophets, thirdly teachers, after that miracles, then gifts of healings, helps, governments, diversities of tongues. Are all apostles? are all prophets? are all teachers? are all workers of miracles? Have all the gifts of healing? do all speak with tongues? do all interpret? [the answer is obviously NO!] But covet earnestly [earnestly desire and ask for] the best gifts: and yet show I unto you a more excellent way”*

Then the apostle takes us to chapter 13:1-3 and we read in the Revised Version: *“If I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, but have not love, I am become sounding brass, or a clanging cymbal. And if I have the gift of prophecy, and know all mysteries and all knowledge; and if I have all faith, so as to remove mountains, but have not love, I am nothing.”* Paul concludes this wonderful chapter with verse 13 stating: *“**But now abideth faith, hope, love, these three; and the greatest of these is love.**”*

In I John 3:22-24 the importance of LOVE is emphasized: *“And whatsoever we ask, we receive of him [faith included], because we keep his commandments, and do those things that are pleasing in his sight. And this is his commandment, That we should believe on the name of his Son Jesus Christ, and love one another, as he gave us commandment. And he that keepeth his commandments dwelleth in him, and he in him. And hereby we know that he abideth in us, by the Spirit which he hath given us”.*

Think about that! We can ask anything because we keep His commandments and do those things pleasing in his sight! We believe on the name of Jesus Christ and He tells us in Mark 16: 17-18 that these signs shall follow those that believe through the power of God's Holy Spirit that has been given to us. We don't need a can full of spinach like Popeye and we have more than a mustard seed amount of faith, but we must grow in LOVE primarily—and in the other fruits of the Spirit to be recognized as the True Church of Jesus Christ.

The command of our Lord that John is writing about is in John 13:34-35: *“A new commandment I give unto you, **That ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another**. By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another.”*

*“According to your FAITH”, to those of us who have been blessed with the calling as Firstfruits means we must walk in the FAITH of Jesus Christ—the way of life He walked! Certainly, as we walk with Him, growing up into Him in LOVE and all the fruits of the Spirit, then we will walk according to the Christian*

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FAITH. God has delayed THE TIME for the signs of Mark 16:17-18 to be fulfilled—but they shall be fulfilled by the CGF when the TIME is right. Understand; all will know we are Christ's Church if we have LOVE one to another (John 13:35)! Our "meat" today is the same as Christ's during His ministry; to do the Will of God and to finish his Work! We are to love God and keep His commandments and do those things pleasing in His sight. God is LOVE! Christ is at one accord with the Father, therefore He also is LOVE—and He lives within us!

God will gather and give many of the synagogue of Satan to us. They will all be awakened by the "Midnight Cry" and gratefully come to us. They will come and worship God at our feet. We will teach them all the NEW TRUTH God has revealed unto us. The last clause in Rev. 3: 9 tells us: "*and to know that I have loved thee*".

Each year as we are privileged to partake of the Passover ceremony we are reminded of the greatest act of LOVE—ever! God gave His only begotten Son and His Son gave His life—that we might have life eternal in the Family of God. Therefore let us beseech God in fervent prayer to be given His Holy Spirit that we may grow in LOVE—as He is LOVE—and hasten the day when the signs of Mark 16:17-18 will surely follow us according to the FAITH of Jesus Christ.

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## With His Stripes We Are Healed

*by Frank Borg*

The Church of God's Faithful has been given profound understanding on the Passover sacrifice. This New Truth gives the Passover Service deeper meaning, and helps us to further understand what the Passover symbols of bread and wine exactly represent.

Two scriptures in the Bible must be closely studied if we are to completely understand the Passover Sacrifice. Let us take a look at these scriptures paying particular attention to the Strong's definitions for some of the words:

**Isa 53:4** Surely He hath borne<sup>H5375</sup> [*carried, received, taken up, worn*] our griefs,<sup>H2483</sup> [diseases and sicknesses] and carried our sorrows.<sup>H4341</sup> [*pain, grief, sorrow, affliction*] yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted.

**Isa 53:5** But He *was* wounded for our transgressions,<sup>H4480 H6588</sup> [*sins*] he was bruised for our iniquities.<sup>H4480 H5771</sup> [*evil, sin*] the chastisement of our peace *was* upon Him; and *with His stripes we are healed*.

**1Pe 2:24** Who His own self bare<sup>G399</sup> [*carried*] our sins in His own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness: by whose stripes ye were healed.

As Christ was beaten, scourged and bruised He took upon Himself our diseases, sicknesses and sins (Is. 53:4-5). We are also told that He carried all to the stake (1 Pet. 2:24). Interestingly, both scriptures tell us that it is with His stripes that we are healed. What exactly does this mean?

Let us understand: *The Bible tells us that healing is the forgiveness of sin* (Matt. 9:2-5). Scripture also tells us that All sin is forgiven through Christ spilled blood: "The blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from ALL sin" (1 John 1:7). See also Eph. 1:7 and Rev 1:5 etc. Therefore when we put all the scriptures together, it is clear that the phrase "by His stripes we are healed" means that Christ *had to* endure being beaten, scourged and bruised to take on the weight of sin *before* He could pay the penalty. Isaiah 53:4-5 confirms that it couldn't be done any other way. The

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spilling of Christ's blood *had to be preceded* by His beating to make possible the sacrifice, forgiveness of our sins and healing.

Consider this scenario: A friend of yours is sentenced to prison for breaking the law. If you wanted to pay the penalty in his or her stead, you would first have to accept the weight of that penalty and *then* pay the penalty by going to prison. If, for whatever reason and at whatever stage, you decide to 'pull out' and not go through with paying the penalty, that same penalty would still have to be paid by your friend. Your friend's penalty will not go away until it is fully paid.

Remember, healing is the forgiveness of sin. The beating, scourging and bruising represented Christ taking upon Himself the weight of the penalty for ALL sin (Is. 53:4-5). Once He took that weight and carried it to the cross, He could then pay the penalty in our stead. The penalty was payable by His death (Romans 6:23). Christ's spilled blood (death) ultimately paid the penalty for the World's sin and healing (1 John 1:7).

## **Seek You First The Kingdom of God**

*by John Durrad*

As ministers we sometimes have to travel to far out places to visit God's chosen people and on one such occasion I can recall how I felt to get to my car which had been parked at the airport for a number of days. How glad I was to be able to drive home on good, well surfaced roads. It was good upon arriving home to freshen up by having a hot shower and a change of clothes, followed by a nice meal prepared by my wife. Then it was to bed for a restful night in a warm comfortable bed.

I was more aware, more appreciative, of some of the things we sometimes take for granted. Such things as electricity and the electrical appliances we have use of fresh running water at the turn of a tap. A good communication system, whether it be by post, telephone or e-mail.

More than ever before, I was able to see just how God has blessed our people of modern-day Israel.

You see brethren, I had just returned home from visiting God's people in Africa. I had not been able to travel on well surfaced roads. The main tarmac roads had numerous potholes ranging from about one inch deep to those that could swallow a small car! Minor roads are just dirt tracks, choking you with dust when dry, and turning to deep mud when wet.

We visited people who live in mud huts, with corrugated tin roofs that heat to an uncomfortable level in the sun. No electricity! No running water! Unless you call the stream a mile away "running water" And these are the people that live quite well! Most of Africa's population live in miserable abject poverty: Poor education, poor health, disease, malnutrition, starvation. This is the lot of the average person on that continent.

So, on returning to England I had been able to see the stunning contrast between the have and the have-not nations. But what was most shocking to me was a comment someone made to me a few days later.

On asking this person how he was, his comment went something like this. "Yes I'm fine thank you, life is pretty good and I'm enjoying it. Even if the Work

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doesn't end as soon as we thought it would, that's fine by me. I don't mind a few more years' enjoyment."

What is wrong with this attitude? I came back from Africa painfully aware of the absolute necessity of the soon return of Jesus Christ and the setting up of the Kingdom of God. We know that only Jesus Christ can put an end to the suffering of millions of people who live from day to day in poverty and ill health. Yet here was a member of God's Church, a member who was an integral part of telling the world the good news of the end of all suffering, actually saying he would be quite happy if Christ delayed His coming for a few more years! I'm all right Jack is the phrase that springs to mind to describe this selfish attitude.

What about you? Can you honestly say you yearn for the Kingdom of God to be established, or would you, like this person rather see it delayed a little longer? Just a little longer so you may continue to enjoy the good things of life that God has given to modern-day Israel.

Let me show you why this attitude is wrong:

"Woe to them that are at ease in Zion, and trust in the mountain of Samaria, which are named chief of the nations, to whom the house of Israel came!...That lie upon beds of irony...and eat the lambs out of the flock,...That drink wine in bowls, and anoint themselves with the chief ointments: But they are not grieved for the affliction of Joseph." Amos 6:1, 4-6

God says "Woe to them", those who couldn't care less about moral values in this land and troubles in the world. If they care little for the sickness in their own nations, how much less do they have concern for other nations. This can describe an attitude we in God's Church can get into if we are not careful.

Do you really desire God's Kingdom? Do you pray fervently "Thy Kingdom come?" If Christ should return in your lifetime, the question of preparation is most important. But should you die before He returns, as billions have before you, the question of preparation is still important. We are a part of a privileged group which will be changed or resurrected to immortality when Christ returns. When the Kingdom comes! Brethren, in our lives, we must be seeking first, the Kingdom of God. Matt 6:25-33

How should we then be seeking the Kingdom of God? Or, in other words, what should we be doing from now until the kingdom comes?

"Take therefore no thought (no anxious thought) for the morrow: for the morrow shall take thought for the things of itself. Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof." Matt 6:34

These verses are not saying seek the Kingdom and do not be concerned with anything else. We still need to work to provide for ourselves and our families. We need to be able to give tithes and offerings to the Work. Notice verse 33 says, "Seek you FIRST the Kingdom of God." The key word here is FIRST. There are other things we should seek.

In the booklet, The seven Laws of Success, Mr Armstrong said this:

"...Most people have no aim – they are, merely the victims of CIRCUMSTANCE. They never planned, purposefully, to be in the job or occupation in which they find themselves today. They do not live where they do by CHOICE – that is, because they PLANNED it that way. They have merely been buffeted around by CIRCUMSTANCE! They have allowed themselves to drift. They have made no effort to mastery and control circumstances."

And in the Missing Dimension in Sex Mr Armstrong wrote:

"There is no sense of PURPOSE today. We are told we must adjust to living in a world of problems with no solutions! Nuclear war – the erasure of human life from the earth – appears to be just around the corner – liable to strike us any second.

Young people today are given NOTHING TO LIVE FOR! NO HOPE! NO FUTURE! They are more prosperous than ever before. THEY ARE BORED! They are rebellious. The spirit of REVOLT is in the air! They resent all AUTHORITY!"

In the first book of Corinthians Paul makes an interesting statement:

"If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable" 1 Cor 15:19. The key word in this verse is "only". The hope of a Christian is the resurrection to eternal life, but if being a Christian is only of value to us in this life then we are missing out. But if we are truly seeking FIRST the Kingdom of God then hope and success in this life will be added to us.

"See then that ye walk circumspectly, not as fools, but as wise, Redeeming the time, because the days are evil." Eph 5:15-16.

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Circumspectly means discretion. Church of God's Faithful members need to walk discreetly, be prudent, be watchful, be cautious, be PILLARS!

“Those that shall be accounted WORTHY to escape have been selected as the PILLARS OF God's Temple. They STAND securely fastened to the solid foundation of the Word of God! Through the PILLAR members' efforts, those lost sheep in the synagogue of Satan, whom God will give to us (Rev 3:9), will be taught the Truth which you are reading, and they, also will be counted worthy to escape” Set Apart By Truth, page 27

In seeking the Kingdom of God let us concentrate on matters that really count: Loving our brethren. I Corinthians chapter 13 tell us about true love. Notice verse 13:

“And now abideth faith, hope, charity, (love) these three; but the greatest of these is charity.” I Cor. 13:13

It is not easy showing love and concern for those that in some cases actually hate us and what we are doing, but as pillar members of God's True Church we have no option but to place before them the Truth that God has revealed to us through Mr Robert Ardis.

One of those truths that many find hard to accept is that Christ has returned as a thief in the night. Even as we try to convince our scattered brethren of this fact, many ridicule our efforts.

“Knowing this first, that there shall come in the last days scoffers, walking after their own lusts, And saying, Where is the promise of his coming? For since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation. 2 Pet 3:3-4

Anyone who is truly seeking first the Kingdom of God realises that the Day of the Lord is here and that Christ has returned as a thief in the night, not as yet to appear but certainly to discern the goings-on of mankind and especially His Church. We need to keep ourselves busy doing what Christ says – doing the Work! Matt 24:45-51

We are all very aware of the parable of the wise and foolish virgins. Our booklet, The Midnight Cry, explains Matthew 25 very clearly. Ten virgins go out to meet the bridegroom. Half of them are well supplied with oil, half are not.

Mr. Gerald Flurry makes some very important and interesting comments in the very last few words of his book Malachi's Message:

“The WCG must accept the message of the Philadelphia Church, or go into the Great Tribulation! It appears that 50%of the Laodiceans will lose their Salvation (Matt 25:1-10).” (Mr Flurry at this time believed the WCG was the Laodicean Church). Why can't they take God and His truths more seriously? Why must they suffer so horribly to learn to obey God? Thank God, Jesus Christ shall return soon to rule His Church and bring it the unity it should have today.

Realise that this is all prophesied to happen. We can rejoice that the end of this age is very near.

Brethren, please study, and digest this message, and pray fervently for God to guide you. BELIEVE YOUR BIBLE – NOT MEN! Your eternal life hangs in the balance.” MM, page 151

Christ tells us to be lights to the world. Your light can shine if you have plenty of oil if you have and use God's Holy Spirit daily – but if you are not on fire for God, then you, like the foolish virgins, are suffering from a spiritual energy crisis.

The problem with them was not that they did anything particularly evil, but rather that they didn't do anything at all! We too can easily become spiritually complacent, or lukewarm.

The foolish virgins could not make up their deficiency by borrowing oil from others. We cannot make it into the Kingdom on someone else's coat tails! We will all be judged on our own merits. We need to have plenty of fuel on hand –God's Holy Spirit – through contact with God and His Word and not forgetting fellowship with God's people where possible. Iron sharpens iron! The watchword is, always be prepared.

We mentioned earlier that we should keep busy. We need to be doing something constructive with our lives.

“For the Kingdom of heaven is as a man travelling into a far country, who called his own servants, and delivered unto them his goods. And unto one he gave five talents, to another two and to another one; to every man according to his several ability; and straightway took his journey.” Matt 25:14-15

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A talent in Christ's time was a unit of currency worth several hundred pounds at today's rates. In this parable Christ used it to symbolise a person's natural abilities. It is possible that the modern use of the word talent is derived from the use Christ made of it in this parable. The Oxford Dictionary definition is (a) A special aptitude or faculty, (b) High mental ability (c) An ancient weight and unit of currency.

The parable begins with a man (Christ) taking a long journey into a far country (heaven). Among his servants (Christians) he distributes his wealth for them to invest. Some get more than others. Upon his return he calls for an accounting.

The lesson to us all is to make the most of the talents and opportunities God gives us.

This message is especially important to those who think they possess only one talent –or less! They can easily focus their mind on what they don't have instead of what they do have. They perhaps misunderstand Paul's statement in Corinthians: "For you see your calling brethren, how that not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called." 1 Cor. 1:26

But notice the job God has called us to do: "But God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty; And base things of the world, and things which are despised, hath God chosen, yea, and things which are not to bring to nought things that are: 1 Cor. 1:27-28

And look why God calls the weak and the base: "That no flesh should glory in his presence." 1 Cor. 1:29

God will not have vain pretentious people in His Kingdom. But many people sell themselves short, remain weak, bury their talent, and just wait for Christ to return. That's not good enough. As God's remnant Philadelphian Pillars, we need to grow!

God's response to Paul's weakness was, "My grace is sufficient for you, for my strength (God's strength) is made perfect in weakness. Paul's response to that was that he would take pleasure in trials for Christ's sake because in them he would be strong with the help of God, and be able to overcome.

What we start out with is Christ's responsibility—what we end up with is ours! Christ will hold us

accountable for what we do with what we have been given. So, getting busy and active in God's Work is certainly seeking the Kingdom of God.

In Matthew chapter 24 we are told "and because iniquity shall abound, the love of many shall wax cold." That is very serious for us today. One of the great challenges facing us today is to give love, to be concerned and involved in people's problems and needs. If we are actively seeking the Kingdom of God we must not allow our emotions to grow cold towards other brethren, and towards the plight of the starving millions in Africa and other underdeveloped nations.

"This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come. For men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy,...lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God;" 2 Tim. 3:1-4

Herbert W. Armstrong in his many writings was able to succinctly sum up and make plain the words of the Bible. Notice what he said about the Royal law of love:

"God's Law is spiritual and can be summed up in one simple but all-inclusive word – love. His law for the guidance of human conduct is subdivided into two great commandments, love toward God and love toward neighbour. These, in turn, are subdivided into the 10 commandments. Jesus magnified this law by showing how its principle expands to cover virtually every possible human infraction. It is summed up in one single word, love. Nevertheless, it is so perfect, that by applying its principle, it is a complete law. There is only one perfect lawmaker and that is God.

Bear in mind the government of God is based on the LAW of God, which is the way of life of out-flowing LOVE cooperation, concern for the good of the governed. And this law of God produces peace, happiness, cooperation through obedience." *Mystery of the Ages*, pages 49, 50.

The CGF is doing more than praying, "Thy Kingdom come". As the collective Body of Christ we are striving to make this important prophecy of Christ a reality to more people. And how do we do that? By each of us individually seeking first the Kingdom!

In comparison to most of Africa we have a comfortable life style. Are we too comfortable? Do we endeavour to maintain our life style at the expense of our Spiritual well being? Or are we seriously

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putting God first in our lives, not for ourselves only but for all of suffering humanity.

Those poor people of Africa may not realise that the return of Jesus Christ is so necessary, not just for their eternal Salvation but for them to have a joyous fulfilling life now.

The man spoken of at the beginning of this article may be enjoying his life now, but what an inward way of thinking, very selfish and certainly not putting his desires in second place to seeking first the Kingdom. We cannot be this way. It is not the way of outgoing concern for others. Seeking first the Kingdom will bring its own rewards both now and in the future.

“And seek not ye what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink, neither be ye of doubtful mind. For all these things do the nations of the world seek after: and your Father knoweth that ye have need of these things. But rather seek ye the Kingdom of God; and all these things shall be added unto you. Fear not, little flock; for it is your Father’s good pleasure to give you the Kingdom.” Luke 12:29-32

We don’t have to fear. God is delighted to give us our reward. We are His little flock whom He is guiding and directing through our lives.

So let us diligently seek, and continue to seek, FIRST in priority, The Kingdom of God. Because brethren, blessed is that servant, whom his Lord when he comes shall find so doing.