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“They confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth. Wherefore God is not ashamed to be called their God: for He hath prepared for them a city.” (Heb 11:13–16)

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TWO TREES, ONE SAVIOR

And out of the ground made the Lord God to grow every tree that is pleasant to the sight, and good for food; the tree of life also in the midst of the garden, and the tree of knowledge of good and evil (Gen 2:9).

Earth in its entirety must have been very beautiful when God created it. Even now, after the curse (Gen 3:17), there are many places on earth that are still beautiful. Eden would have been more beautiful than the rest of the earth—and the garden planted there more beautiful still! Can we ever hope to imagine how wonderful this garden must have been, seeing that God Himself had designed, arranged and planted it? Of all the exquisite trees, two of them stood out: the tree of life and the tree of knowledge of good and evil—both of which bore fruit. For the purpose of this article, these trees can represent two very different things that God’s people can be filled with. We can be filled with *grace*, leading to abundant, eternal life; or *self-justification*, leading to spiritual and eternal death.

God commanded Adam and Eve not to eat of the tree of knowledge of good and evil. It is important to note that the tree of knowledge of good and evil was *not* evil. In fact, it was “very good” (Gen 1:31); it was perfect, since

God Himself had made it. However, disobeying God’s command regarding the tree—that was evil. If God made the tree of knowledge of good and evil, it must have had a purpose. Likewise, there was a purpose for the Law given to Moses. “*But we know that the law is good, if a man use it lawfully*” (1Tim 1:8). Paul said that the purpose of the law was: **a)** to make us aware of our sin (Rom 7:7), **b)** to make our sin exceedingly sinful (Rom 7:13), and **c)** to bring us to Christ (Gal 3:24). When Adam and Eve ate of the tree of knowledge of good and evil, they came to understand good and evil. So, the tree of knowledge of good and evil is a symbol of the Law. The tree of life is a shadow of Jesus Christ.

Weakness Of Adam

With or without the devil’s help, at some point in time, Adam would have wondered, “What does the fruit of the tree of knowledge of good and evil taste like? I’m sure it’s unique. Anyway, what is right and wrong? Why can’t I know right and wrong?” And those thoughts in his heart, when they came, should have been discussed with God. Adam should have marveled at his own willingness to disobey God’s clear instruction not to sample the fruit. From that vantage point he would be able to see the “weakness” (*not* “sinfulness”) of his own spiritual state.

Adam was not sinful; he was perfectly innocent. But this law, *“Thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die”* (Gen 2:17), was bringing to the surface the fact that he could have disobeyed. The penalty for disobeying testified of the seriousness of the matter.

Was this tree some sort of trap laid out for man in the Garden of Eden? We know that the devil lays out all kinds of snares before people. Yet, Satan had no part in the creation of the world or the planting of the Garden of Eden, and therefore, could not have planted a trap in the garden.

Ministration Of The Law

Was there a ministration of law in the Garden of Eden, when there was only Father, Son, Holy Spirit, innocent Adam and Eve in fellowship? Let us consider Hebrews 10:5-7: *“Wherefore when He cometh into the world, He saith, ‘Sacrifice and offering Thou wouldst not, but a body hast Thou prepared Me: in burnt offerings and sacrifices for sin Thou hast had no pleasure. Then said I, ‘Lo, I come (in the volume of the book it is written of Me,) to do Thy will, O God.’”*

Here, the writer to the Hebrews is quoting Psalm 40:6-8: *“Sacrifice and offering Thou didst not desire; Mine ears hast Thou opened: burnt offering and sin offering hast Thou not required. Then said I, ‘Lo, I come: in the volume of*

the book it is written of Me, I delight to do Thy will, O My God: yea, Thy law is within My heart.”

When Jesus Christ came into the world, He had His Father’s law written on His heart. This was not the law of Moses written on a hard, rebellious heart. The Israelites who tempted God “ten times” in the wilderness had hard hearts. But Jesus had a tender heart, ever longing to please His Father and do His will. This law was not something imposed on Jesus; it was something within and native to His own heart. He loved the Father and wanted to do whatever pleased Him. Similarly, the law in the Garden of Eden was not a cause of bondage, but an opportunity for Adam to choose God’s will over his own.

Death vs. Life

Jesus said that the Scriptures testified about (or pointed to) Himself; but the Jews would not go to Him to attain eternal life (Jn 5:39-40). Jesus is the Bread of Life (Jn 6:48), and the Author of eternal salvation (Heb 5:9). The law came from God through Moses, but God never intended for it to be a source of life. God intended for the law to show us our insufficiencies, weakness, and sin, and our need for God’s intervention and help.

Isn’t it amazing that man ate of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil rather than the tree of life? The

tree of life is mentioned first, showing its preeminence. Concerning the tree of knowledge of good and evil, God said, “*Thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die.*” Does not this imply that it was alright to eat of the tree of life? In essence, death would come from eating of one tree and life from eating of the other. Therefore, the tree of knowledge of good and evil itself pointed by contrast to the tree of life. So, why was not man drawn first to this tree to eat?

God’s Plan

Man felt no desire or need to eat of the tree of life, thinking, “*I have life. I’m fine.*” In reality, he didn’t know what he was missing. But God knew. Being part of God’s creation, Adam and Eve were sinless and righteous, but this righteousness was “weak”; it depended on their obedience. This weakness was soon revealed by their *disobedience*, and then immediately after their righteousness was lost. But before Adam had a chance to obey or disobey, God already had a plan whereby He would impart His own righteousness into man. Adam and Eve lost their righteousness through one act of disobedience; but God’s plan for us is to endure and overcome many temptations, cleaving to Jesus in love. God’s plan for us is to be filled with His *grace* according to the Gospel.

For us who belong to Jesus Christ, there is a conviction of sin, a turning away from sin, and a trusting in our risen Savior, Jesus Christ. Our love for God, our faith in Him, our fear of Him, and our gratitude to Him are some of the major bonds whereby God keeps us close to Him. Adam and Eve lacked these bonds. Eternal life that we receive through Jesus is backed by God’s promises (Tit 1:2), God’s new covenant (Heb 8:10), and the blood of Jesus (Mat 26:28). Adam and Eve lacked these things.

Unlawful Use Of The Law

“*But we know that the law is good, if a man use it lawfully*” (1Tim 1:8). We mentioned that the tree of knowledge of good and evil could be a type of the law. Unlawful use of this tree was to disobey God’s command and eat the tree’s fruit. Today, God wants us to eat of Jesus and live by Him—God does not want us to try to live by the law. If we try to obtain righteousness by living by the law, we will only be conscious of the laws we are keeping, and—knowingly or unknowingly—blind to the ones we are neglecting. Much of the ministry of Jesus to the Pharisees was to point out and make clear the laws of God that they were breaking (Mk 7:9-13). Self-justification constitutes unlawful use of the law.

“For I testify again to every man that is circumcised, that he is a debtor to do the whole law. Christ is become of no effect unto you, whosoever of you are justified by the law; ye are fallen from grace” (Gal 5:3-4). Either we are justified by Christ, or we are fallen from grace. Either we are saved or we aren’t. If we try to be justified by the law, we are *not* justified in the sight of God. *“But that no man is justified by the law in the sight of God, it is evident: for, ‘The just shall live by faith’”* (Gal 3:11). We cannot eat of the tree of knowledge of good and evil *and* the tree of life. After Adam and Eve ate fruit from the tree of knowledge of good and evil, cherubim wielding a flaming sword was placed at the east of the garden to keep Adam and Eve from re-entering and eating from the tree of life (Gen 3:24).

What Is The Standard?

Even today, many are interested in knowing right from wrong: “Can I go there?” “Can I do that?” “What does the church believe about this?” Many want to know the minimum standard they should keep; they want the least required holiness and the maximum allowed worldliness. They also want to *know* the standard so that *they* can decide whether or not they want to keep it. They want to be in control of their lives—the opposite of servanthood. This attitude reveals a spirit of self-will and pride.

The Pharisee who stood in the temple praying was picking and choosing what he was doing (fasting, paying tithes), and he was quite proud of himself. He came empty to the temple, and left the same way. But the publican, knowing that he was a sinner in need of grace, was able to break through in prayer and receive justification and life from God (Lk 18:10-14).

At one time, a man came running to Jesus, not to eat of Jesus, but to eat of the “tree of knowledge of good and evil.” He only wanted to *know* what he needed to do to be perfect. After learning what was required, he chose not to eat of the “Tree of Life,” and sadly walked away from Jesus (Mk 10:17-22).

Today, those who eat of the Tree of Life (Jesus) have a hunger for righteousness and holiness. These are they who are poor in spirit and recognize that they have a need. Therefore, they beg for the mercies of God. They eat abundantly of Jesus and are satisfied. But those who eat of the tree of knowledge of good and evil have a lust of the eyes, a lust of the flesh, and a pride of life. They eat but are never satisfied. From which tree will you eat today? □

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“Who can understand his errors? Cleanse thou me from secret faults” (Psa 19:12). In reading this verse, a similar verse comes to mind in Psalm 90:8 which says, *“Thou hast set our iniquities before Thee, our secret sins in the light of Thy countenance.”* In both of these verses, the word “secret” is used. A secret is something that is kept hidden from others. When we were children, we used to love secrets. We would say to our best friend, “Can you keep a secret?” And then we would tell them about some wonderful thing we had discovered and make them promise not to tell anyone else. What fun it was! But in these verses the word “secret” is used with regards to hidden faults and sins. To be ready for the soon appearing of Jesus Christ, there can be no such “secrets” in our lives. The bride of Christ will be one who has nothing hidden from her Heavenly Bridegroom. Her life is totally transparent before Him. *“Thou art all fair, my love; there is no spot in thee”* (SS 4:7).

Learning to walk in the light is essential for every child of God. Proverbs tells us that *“he that covereth his sins shall not prosper: but whoso confesseth and forsaketh them shall have*

mercy” (Pro 28:13). In the first epistle of John we read, *“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”* (1Jn 1:7). True cleansing from sin can only take place as we walk and live in the light. Everything that is hidden in our lives will be brought to the light, whether it be now, or at the final judgment. The Lord does not want us to be judged with the world, so He has given us His Holy Spirit to bring conviction to our lives in areas that need to be corrected. *“For if we would judge ourselves, we should not be judged. But when we are judged, we are chastened of the Lord, that we should not be condemned with the world”* (1Cor 11:31-32). We are called to walk in this dark world as children of light (Eph 5:8). That is why He must expose every hidden thing in our lives now, so that we can be filled with His light and be able to stand faultless before Him on that day (Jude 24).

Why does God want the hidden things brought to the light? Can He not see what is concealed within our lives unless the light is turned on? Not at all. *“For Mine eyes are upon all their ways: they are not hid from My face, neither is their iniquity hid from Mine eyes”* (Jer 16:17; Heb 4:13). Whether we are in darkness or light, God sees everything. **Then why does God insist on bringing all of our sins and faults into the light? One reason is so that we might see them.**

As God was bringing the children of Israel into the promised land, they were met by many threatening enemies.

To be able to possess the land, they had to first defeat each enemy and utterly destroy them. There were the Canaanites, the Amorites, the Hittites, the Perizzites, the Girgashites, the Hivites, and the Jebusites—frightful enemies indeed. So much so that when the spies came back from viewing the land, they said *“we be not able to go up against the people; for they are stronger than we”* (Num 13:31). Although these nations were greater and mightier than the children of Israel, they were not greater than the God of the Israelites—a God Who said that He would drive out their enemies from before them one by one (Num 14:8).

Overcoming the Seen & Unseen

These seven nations represent various unsanctified natures in us that prevent us from living an overcoming life and being ready for the coming of the Lord. Things such as pride, anger, fear, independence, lust, discouragement, slothfulness, evil speaking, unbelief, and a multitude of other enemies can keep us from living a victorious Christian life, and will ultimately hinder us from being ready for the coming of the Lord. Very often the task of overcoming these intruders seems so impossible that in despair we exclaim like the children of Israel, “I am not able to get the victory over this enemy; it’s too much for me.” How true! In fact, all of our enemies in this spiritual life are too strong for us to overcome alone. That is precisely why God said that **He**

would destroy them for us if we trust Him and obey His instructions. *“Only rebel not ye against the Lord, neither fear ye the people of the land; for they are bread for us: their defense is departed from them, and the Lord is with us: fear them not”* (Num 14:9). Even the mighty king David, who had overcome many strong enemies, writes in Psalm 18 that, *“He delivered me from my strong enemy, and from them which hated me: for they were too strong for me”* (Psa 18:17). Nothing is too difficult for our God!

Going back to Deuteronomy chapter 7 again, we see that God speaks of another kind of enemy that was a little harder to detect—the kind that hid themselves. *“Moreover the Lord thy God will send the hornet among them, until they that are left, and hide themselves from thee, be destroyed”* (v.20). In reading Psalm 90:8, there is a marginal reference to a verse in the book of Job: *“That which I see not teach thou me: if I have done iniquity, I will do no more”* (Job 34:32). Job said, Lord, if there is anything in me that displeases You, and I do not see it, please reveal that to me so that I can stop doing it. The truth is that there are, undoubtedly, many areas of our lives that do not please God, and of which we are totally unaware. These are the hidden enemies, the ones we do not know are there. When we read Psalm 19:12 in the Good News Bible, it actually says, *“None of us can see our own errors; deliver me, Lord, from hidden faults!”* Others around us may

see an untold number of failures in us that we do not see at all. They are “secret faults” in that they are hidden from our eyes. In a sense, we are the ones left in the dark, so to speak. God must therefore bring these areas into the light of His countenance so that we ourselves can see them. It was only when the prophet Isaiah was faced with the glorious holiness of God that he was able to see his own impurities. Likewise Job, when brought into the light of the Lord’s countenance, could only exclaim, *“I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes”* (Job 42:6).

Hornets Get Ready For Battle

We can also see from Deuteronomy 7:20 that God used hornets to expose these enemies that were hiding themselves from the children of God. Hornets? What an odd way to fight the enemy! But it was in fact a very effective means of warfare: these hornets would swarm into the hiding place of the enemy and sting them, causing the enemies to scream out in pain and come running out of their refuge. Once these enemies were revealed, the children of Israel could see them and smite them.

It is interesting to see in verse 23 of the same chapter that God would deliver the enemies over to the children of Israel, but He Himself would destroy them. He only wanted the Israelites to identify the enemy, and then God would destroy them from before His people. *“But the Lord thy*

God shall deliver them unto thee, and shall destroy them with a mighty destruction, until they be destroyed” (Deut 7:23). It seems that God’s main interest was for the Israelites to see who the enemy was. Of course they had to fight them, but God would do the work of destroying them, one by one.

The Worst In You

In our lives also, it is the same. God is concerned that we see who our enemy really is, and He uses “hornets” to drive them out of their hiding places. Who or what are these hornets that God uses? They are people, and they are situations. It is that boss at your job who is always overloading you with work. He might be sent by God to let you know that there is still a trace of anger lurking in your heart. It is your husband or wife, who does not meet your expectations. They might be sent by God to show you that there is still a lot of “self” lingering in your life. There may in fact be a multitude of other people or other situations that seem to literally bring out the worst in you.

We are sometimes very quick to blame others for our reactions in these various situations: “I only got angry because he provoked me!” What we do not realize is that if anger were not already there inside our hearts, it could not have come out. That is why Jesus said, *“For from within, out of the heart of men, proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders, thefts, covetousness, wickedness, deceit, las-*

civiousness, an evil eye, blasphemy, pride, foolishness: all these evil things come from within, and defile the man” (Mk 7:21-23). Because we do not know it is there, God sends His “hornet” to drive it out of its hiding place.

As God begins to send in His hornets, we may at first be overwhelmed, as one after another the enemies begin to come out from their hiding places. Just when one is destroyed and we think we can rest, another one might emerge. Our part is to acknowledge our anger, our pride, our foolishness, our bitterness, our selfishness; then God will help us to overcome in that area. *“I acknowledged my sin unto Thee, and mine iniquity have I not hid. I said, I will confess my transgressions unto the Lord; and Thou forgavest the iniquity of my sin”* (Psa 32:5).

Liberating Truth

Dear child of God, as we are going through this painful process, let us remember that our loving Lord has promised to drive these nations out, one by one, until they are all destroyed. *“And the Lord thy God will put out those nations before thee by little and little: thou mayest not consume them at once...but the Lord thy God shall deliver them unto thee”* (Deut 7:22-23).

Only after every enemy was exposed and destroyed could the children of Israel peacefully inhabit their promised land. Only when we recognize the truth about ourselves

can we truly be set free. *“And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free”* (Jn 8:32). *“Behold, Thou desirest truth in the inward parts: and in the hidden part Thou shalt make me to know wisdom”* (Psa 51:6). Only after realizing the truth about ourselves can God fully cleanse us (Psa 51:7). And only after the work of entire sanctification is complete in our lives will we be able to dwell in our Promised Land, the New Jerusalem and Zion. *“If the Lord delight in us, then He will bring us into this land, and give it us”* (Num 14:8). *“Fear not, little flock; for it is your Father’s good pleasure to give you the kingdom”* (Lk 12:32). Let us be open to the work of the Lord in our lives to reveal all the hidden things deep inside us. Then we can live in the light of His countenance and enjoy His presence for all eternity, ruling and reigning in His kingdom as children of light. □

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“But as for me, I will come into Thy house in the multitude of Thy mercy” (Psa 5:7). When I look back upon my life, I can see the hand of God working from the moment I took my first breath. At birth, I was not expected to live. I was a breech baby (born feet-first) and doctors had informed my mother of the risk that she or I might not survive the delivery. Thanks be to God, we both survived. I can now see that God was in control of my life, ordering my steps, so that one day I might serve Him.

I grew up in Washington D.C., where I lived with my mother and four other siblings. My mother did not know the Lord, but she taught us right from wrong as best she could and tried to steer us down the right path. I knew very little of my father; I was about five years old when he died. This left a wound in my heart. (Years later, when I met Pastor Don and Sister Alice, they became like parents to me, and this wound eventually healed.)

Words like “Christ,” or “Cross,” are words that mean *everything* to me now. However, they were words I had never heard of growing up. At the age of 15, I started getting into all the wrong things: friends, parties, and all

those empty allurements that the world has to offer. I was steadily spiraling down the wrong path, towards a bleak and ungodly abyss. But by His mercy, three years later, God provided a way out.

It happened before I knew what was happening. One day, while I was visiting a friend at his apartment, a man stopped by. This man was an old acquaintance of my friend and he invited me to attend his church, a place called the “New Testament Church.” I voiced a polite acceptance to the invitation, though in my mind, I made no actual commitment. I told him what he might have wanted to hear, but my heart had no desire or intention of attending his church. He left saying he would call me for a Bible study, but I was convinced he wouldn’t actually call.

I was wrong. He did call, and when he did, I was caught unaware, and gave him a rather poor excuse: “I don’t have anything to wear,” I said, embarrassingly. He responded by saying he would try back the following week instead. He continued to call and I continued to give excuses. This persistent, unrelenting, but truly loving brother continued to ask me, until by the *fourth* time, I was so exhausted by his asking that I finally conceded, and went to his church. If anything, I thought, it would keep him from bothering me any further. Yet I will admit, by this time, I was starting to grow a little curious myself about this church.

That night, one of the brothers picked me up and when he opened the door to let me out, he looked at me and my worldly appearance, and said in his heart, “Lord, there is no hope for this man!” (I only came to know about this ten years later!) It was true, I had a real problem with worldliness. My whole life revolved around nothing but fashionable clothing, parties, and friends.

When I entered the church, everything was very peculiar to me. All the people seemed “different.” They were in the middle of a Bible Study, and since I didn’t know the Word of God at the time, it was all very confusing and I understood very little of it. After the Bible Study was over, one of the ministers invited me to a prayer meeting they were having on Saturday night. Like before, I told him I would come, but I had no intention of coming. I mean, it was Saturday night, “party night,” the night I would go out with all my friends.

However, for some unknown reason, I actually went to the church that Saturday. To this day, I still have no explanation of this; I found myself drawn there somehow. The prayer meeting was at first quite strange to me, and I remember just sitting there, mute, watching. This meeting continued on for almost 2 hours!

During the second hour, of what seemed forever, I remembered saying a little prayer to God. (It was God Whom I addressed my prayer to at that time—I had still

never really heard much of Jesus.) My prayer was simple: “God, if You exist, prove it to me.” By this time, the church began to sing a chorus, and then, all of a sudden, the anointing fell upon me! I stood up on my feet, with my hands lifted high, and I started praising God! In my mind, I thought, “*What* am I doing?” Afterwards, I understood from the Bible, that it was the experience David spoke of in Psalm 51, “the joy of salvation!” It was at this moment, I received Jesus Christ into my heart as my personal Lord and Savior.

From then on I continued to attend church, but I was still hanging on to all my worldliness. My hair was long, and my clothes were always fancy and outlandish. Yet, no one condemned me, but rather, continued to show me love. But it was the Holy Spirit that now began to convict me. I cut my hair and began to dress more modestly. My family was quick to notice the change in my life, but could not quite understand what was happening to me.

Soon after, I received the baptism of the Holy Spirit; it occurred as I was driving home from Bible study one Wednesday night. Later on, one of the elders asked me if I had been water baptized. I hadn’t been, so I was baptized in a place called Sligo Creek in Maryland.

Around this time, as God was wonderfully working in my life, I still had my own plans and ambitions to fulfill. I had strong intentions of entering the military. However,

I began to sense the call of God upon my life. This began to feel real to me as I would go out witnessing. When I would share about salvation to others, I started to see the grace of God upon my own life, especially as I ministered to young people. It was much the same as when Paul said, “When God called me, He called me by His grace” (Gal 1:15). I then began to lose interest in my work, and whenever I went to the faith home, I would talk to the elders about serving God.

At this point, now around six months after my salvation, I moved into the faith home, and began to really seek God about serving Him. One day God clearly spoke to me, saying He had called me and chosen me. One of the pastors advised me to start a diary and write down all that God spoke. As I did so, and was seeking God, I kept clearly hearing His voice speaking to me. God confirmed His calling on my life through His Word and through the elders.

As an extra, final confirmation, a friend who did not know what I was going through at this time—and actually had never written to me before—sent me a card from Guatemala. When I opened the card, there was a verse on the inside from the book of Isaiah which read, “I have called you, I have chosen you, you are Mine, says the Lord” (Isa 43:1). God brought a real peace to my heart, when I knew I was called to serve Him. As God con-

firmed His call upon my life, I obeyed and came out to serve Him.

Now, I thank God for the opportunity to serve Him in various places of the world. Presently I am serving God in Dominican Republic, where the work is growing steadily.

The Lord has been there from my first breath, and I know He will be there for me forever.

“No man can come to Me, except the Father which hath sent Me draw him” (Jn 6:44).

*Pastor Idarway Lee
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Eating ^{IN} Acts

PART 3 — HURRY UP AND WAIT

In this third installment, we will continue to explore spiritual meanings in the physical activity of eating, beginning as before, in the Book of Acts. This time, however, we will focus more on the *servicing* of food rather than the *consuming* of it. **Jesus had to teach His selfish and ambitious disciples that it was greater to serve than to be served.** For His entire earthly existence, Jesus taught what He lived and lived what He taught. Jesus, the “Bread of Life”—from His humble birth in Bethlehem (literally “house of bread” in Hebrew) till the last night of His mortal life when He hosted the Passover—constantly gave of Himself and served others. In the end, He washed His disciples’ feet and commanded that He be remembered with broken bread and poured out wine.

Waiting For Waiters

As we observed in the first study, even after His resurrection, Jesus revealed Himself to His disciples at meals (Mk 16:14) and continued to serve and cook for them (Lk 24:30; Jn 21:13). Eventually, unworthy as we are, we have the hope

that He will serve us in eternity (Lk 12:37; Rev 7:17). In the Book of Acts we find one of the rare sayings of Jesus outside the four gospels, “*it is more blessed to give than to receive*” (Acts 20:35). Let us now study and put this saying into practice.

It goes against human nature to esteem the waiter or waitress greater than the one being served, or to think that the cook could enjoy making the meal more than the one eating it. It is against reason that one can gain more weight by giving away food than by hoarding it (Pro 11:25; 28:27). **You can gain more by giving.** By faith we understand this truth to be a defining principle of the character of Christ and the Kingdom of God. Christlike Christians see and value other’s needs more than their own. **When we selfishly serve ourselves, we rob ourselves of the greater blessing.** The opened heart and hand is the one the Lord will fill. He richly gives us everything so we can have everything to give (Deut 15:8; 2Cor 9:8-13; 1Tim 6:17-18). Is there anyone greater than Jesus? No! Nevertheless He descended from the highest place to become a Servant and humbled Himself to death, and even lower, for our sakes (Phil 2:8; Eph 4:9). It is the same with His disciples: those who follow Him in the last place will win first place.

Wash Your Bread Before You Eat

The world’s wisest man once wrote, “*Cast thy bread upon the waters: for thou shalt find it after many days. Give a portion*”

to seven, and also to eight...” (Ecc 11:1-2). Anyone who has ever seen a rushing river or a turbulent sea, does not expect anything thrown into these waters to return to them again—much less something so fragile as bread. That which was not pounded to paste and washed away by waves would be consumed by fish and fowl. But in this parable the waters can stand for needy souls and nations (Rev 19:6). Many days later does not only imply in this age, but in eternity. Since seven is the number of completion or perfection, giving portions to seven symbolizes perfect ministry and generosity. Yet this scripture commands us to go beyond even perfect service and give extra—even unto eight. The good works we do now will not be forgotten by God. They will be rewarded one day. Yet sometimes the recompense returns to us even in this present world. People that we feel we have wasted our efforts on can become profitable to us in the future. The very one we judge as useless or an enemy, can one day become the one who meets our own need (Acts 15:38; 2Tim 4:11). An example of this very thing is demonstrated in the book of Acts.

Previously, we saw that after the early church’s first recorded dispute—caused by discrimination between those in Jerusalem of Greek and Hebrew origin—was settled in a Christlike way by the majority yielding control to the minority. It resulted in a great increase in the Word of God

and disciples (Acts 6:1-8). We also observed that the gospel was first shared with the Gentiles after God gave Peter a vision of unkosher food.

Tables Turned

Nevertheless some believers in Jerusalem were offended because there were those of their race that had fellowship, and had even eaten, with foreigners. It got to the point where in Antioch, Peter and Barnabas gave in to prejudice and peer pressure and stopped eating with their Gentile brethren (Gal 2:12). It is ironic then that God chose to reveal through prophets in Antioch the coming famine. It was through those same despised disciples in Antioch (where the brethren were first called Christians) that God chose to feed the believers in Jerusalem (Acts 11:26-30). The recipients of this charity were some of the same Jews who normally would not have eaten with Gentiles because of long standing customs and culture. It appears that for many years God continued to cause material support to flow back to Judea from different nations that had received the Gospel and spiritual blessings that first flowed out from Jerusalem on the day of Pentecost (Acts 24:17; Rom 15:25-26; 1Cor 16:1-3). Like Joseph, these Gentiles could also say, “*you thought evil against me; but God meant it unto good...I will nourish you and your little ones*” (Gen 50:20-21).

Truly, our God is not too proud or busy to wait on tables (Psa 23:5). If He sets them in the presence of our enemies we can be sure that everything will work out for good. Perhaps those who now see us as enemies will one day sit down with us, and we can serve one another. The Lord may seem like a sloppy waiter, by overflowing our cups, but this will eventually become a blessing that flows back to us.

Laboring In The Word

The early apostles were not at all pleased to wait on tables; they felt it more important to wait on God (Acts 6:2). This spiritual response to the widows' material need can be considered in two ways. First let us look at their attitude from a positive and practical viewpoint. At just the right time, Jesus put down His carpenter tools and left Nazareth in order to fully preach the good news. From that time on, He worked full-time for the Kingdom of God. Even then He could have remained in Galilee catching fish, multiplying loaves and turning water into wine (though, in fact, the Lord caused all these increases to happen in the hands of others). But it was only through His death on Calvary and resurrection that Jesus multiplied Himself for His disciples—enabling them to do greater works than He did (Eph 2:10; Jn 14:12).

The Lord calls and commands His disciples to consecrate secular work just as He did, so that they can better

concentrate on spiritual tasks. Every family in an assembly could ask their pastor to come cook Sunday breakfast for them like the Lord did at the Sea of Galilee, but it would be more beneficial if he spent his time preparing their sermon and praying for them. Those who labor in the Word and doctrine must be appreciated and doubly honored by those ministered to (1Tim 5:17; 1Cor 9:7). Church members should be more than willing to relieve their ministers from material matters so they can have more time to attend to spiritual affairs.

On the other hand, problems arise when ministers are unwilling to get their hands dirty or do manual labor (Act 20:34). Surely Mary chose the better part when she waited at Jesus' feet but let us hope that when the Bible study ended, she arose and helped Martha with waiting on the guests. When saints begin to feel their time is too valuable to waste on work, they often begin to gain weight and expect others to wait on them. If they keep refusing "unspiritual" labor they may miss the greater work God was planning to do through them. This brings us to the second way of appraising the apostles' response to the widows' empty tables.

Seeking Deacons

When the twelve stated they were not at all pleased to serve tables, the original Greek word that was used for "serve" was "diakoneo," from which we derive the word

“deacon.” The origin of this word comes from the idea of someone so busy serving that they are rushing all around, even to the point of stirring up dust. Surely every restaurant would want their waiters to work like this. In contrast to what the apostles said, Jesus stated that He came to be a “deacon” (Mat 20:28; Mk 10:45). One of the Lord’s last services on earth for His disciples was to cook for them, after which He commanded Peter to feed His flock (Jn 21; 1Pet 5:2).

Last Shall Be First

It is again ironic when we discover the outcome of the seven disciples who were willing to wait on tables, compared to the apostles who were not. Stephen, the first on the list, whose name means “crown,” was stoned and received the church’s first martyr’s crown. His witness was something that greatly affected Saul (later named the Apostle Paul) who took the Gospel all over the known world (Acts 22:20). Because of persecution arising from the murder of Stephen, all the disciples were scattered abroad—all that is, except for the apostles (Acts 8:1,4; 11:19). They were left waiting in Jerusalem while everyone else preached the word everywhere else. The second deacon named was Philip. No longer able to wait on tables in Jerusalem, he was privileged to preach Christ and be an instrument of revival in Samaria (Acts 8). Only later did the apostles follow after him. Next

Philip was sent to evangelize and baptize a eunuch who may have taken the Gospel back to Africa. After this he preached the gospel all the way to Caesarea where we find him many years later still being hospitable and serving the saints—even Paul who had once been his enemy (Acts 21:8).

All this is not meant to say the apostles were wrong in refusing to do deacon’s work, but the evidence shows that when we are willing to do *any* kind of work, the Lord works to make us witnesses in all kinds of ways. From these examples we have found that no job God gives us—big or small—is worthless or goes unrewarded. May the Lord give us all a spirit of service to pour out our lives for Him. **Those who are willing to serve the Lord in any way, will end up being used in ways they never imagined.** Let us stir up some dust in the footsteps of our Master! Let us hurry up and wait for the Lord Jesus Christ! □

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PART 5 — THE KINGDOM OF THE FATHER

The Lord Jesus Christ has given us an eternal hope of a future glory in His Father's kingdom: "Then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father" (Mat 13:43). When all the kingdoms of this world have passed away, there is a kingdom that will still remain. That kingdom is not of this world. It is spiritual and composed of a different substance altogether. One must be born *into* that kingdom in order to have citizenship there.

The kingdom of God is a mystery more precious than any earthly treasure. Jesus said, "Again, the kingdom of heaven is like unto treasure hid in a field; the which when a man hath found, he hideth, and for joy thereof goeth and selleth all that he hath, and buyeth that field. Again, the kingdom of heaven is like unto a merchant man, seeking goodly pearls: who, when he had found one pearl of great price, went and sold all that he had, and bought it" (Mat 13:44-46). When someone receives an understanding of that kingdom, they are willing to give up all in order to

have it. They are willing to dedicate themselves entirely to the King and His service.

God's people have a big part to play in His kingdom. More than just being His subjects, we are given the right to rule and to reign with Him forever and ever. God has a kingdom and a throne which He wants to share with someone. But that 'someone' must be found worthy of His glorious throne and His glorious kingdom. That 'someone' is a body made up of many members, with Christ as the Head.

Israel was called to be a kingdom of priests and a holy nation (Exo 19:6). They were set apart and lifted above all the other nations because their God was the true God. As a kingdom of priests they were given the privilege to worship and serve the living God. They were given the word of God. As long as they were faithful, they were blessed above all the nations.

Now, through the Lord Jesus Christ, Jews and Gentiles alike are brought into this kingdom. We are a royal priesthood, kings and priests, having been washed from our sins by the precious blood of Christ. Entrance into this kingdom comes through the baptism of the Holy Spirit. Right now, the kingdom is known only by the saints; in time to come, it will be visible to all.

We can say that there are three stages of this kingdom. Now, we are living in the first stage which is known only to those who experience it by faith in Christ.

The Apostle Paul wrote to the Colossians, “Giving thanks unto the Father, which hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light: Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of His dear Son” (Col 1:12-13). The kingdom of God is a mystery, which can only be seen by those who repent of their sins and believe on the Lord Jesus Christ (Jn 3:3). *To truly enter into the experience*

of the kingdom, one must take water baptism and receive the baptism of the Holy Spirit (Jn 3:5). Jesus spoke of a day when the kingdom of God would come with power: that day was the day of Pentecost. Since that initial outpouring of the Holy Spirit until now, many continue to receive the promise of the Spirit daily—an experience that ushers a person into the kingdom of God. This kingdom is not visible to the natural eye, but it is within those who receive it. It consists of righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost (Rom 14:17). So, from the day of Pentecost until the rapture of the church, when Jesus comes sud-

When all the kingdoms of this world have passed away, there is a kingdom that will still remain

denly and secretly for His bride, we are in this stage of the kingdom.

To enter this kingdom, one must receive it as a little child by faith, not by sight. The kingdom belongs to those who are poor in spirit (Mat 5:3). Man is empty without this kingdom. There is a desire within each one of us that can only be satisfied by the great God Who made us. Therefore, we are like beggars before a God Who has all the riches of heaven to give us. We are always waiting on God to supply our every need, whether spiritual or physical—and He faithfully supplies.

The kingdom of God is for those who do the will of God. God is not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance. Jesus came down from heaven, not to do His own will, but the will of Him that sent Him. The will of the Father that sent Him was that none who believed in the Son should perish, but should be raised up on the last day. God is very concerned for the salvation of all men. Our calling is to partake of His effort to reach all men with the power of the gospel. We should seek to know the will of God and align ourselves with it.

The will of God clearly has to do with holiness, as well. It is the will of God that we be holy, as He is holy

(1Ths 4:3). This kingdom is not for the unrighteous. They will not inherit it. Some might experience the kingdom, but sadly will never be able to inherit it, due to carelessness and willful sinning. Living according to the lusts of the flesh will disqualify one from inheriting the eternal kingdom. Those truly in the kingdom understand that sin shall not have dominion over them. They have received the grace of God to overcome sin, not to be overcome by it.

The next stage of the kingdom will be seen during the thousand year reign of Christ and His saints on this earth.

During that time the devil will be bound in the bottomless pit and the earth will enjoy peace and prosperity for a thousand years. The entire earth will be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord, even as the waters cover the sea (Isa 11:9). Regarding the Millennial reign, John writes, “And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them: and I saw the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the word of God, and which had not worshipped the beast, neither his image, neither had received his mark upon their foreheads, or in their hands; and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years. But the rest of the

*Fear not, little flock;
for it is your Father's good pleasure
to give you the kingdom*

dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished. This is the first resurrection. Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection: on such the second death hath no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with Him a thousand years” (Rev 20:4-6). His saints will reign with Him. Therefore it is said, that His saints will possess the kingdom (Dan 7:22,27).

The third stage of the kingdom will be manifested after all the dead, both good and bad, have been resurrected and judged. This present heaven and present earth will pass away from before the face of God. New Heaven and New

Earth will be seen, and New Jerusalem will descend out of heaven from God. This will be the eternal habitation of God with His people. God will dwell with His people and will be their God (Rev 21:1-3).

Paul wrote about the kingdom thus: “For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive. But every man in his own order: Christ the firstfruits; afterward they that are Christ’s at His coming. *Then cometh the end, when He shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father; when He shall have put down all rule and all authority and power*” (1Cor 15:22-24). This is the time when we

will see New Heaven and New Earth. The current heaven and earth will have passed away. The holy city, New Jerusalem, will descend out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her Husband. All the glory of that city which we read about in Revelation 21 & 22 will be manifested on that day, and it will last forever.

This holy city, the New Jerusalem, in particular, is the eternal habitation of the bride of Christ. The glory of God and the Lamb will be the light of that city. The Father, Son, and Holy Spirit will dwell there in Zion. Those who have followed the Lamb wherever He went will stand with the Lamb on Zion. There will be a pure river of the water of life flowing from the throne. The tree of life will be there with its twelve different types of fruit for the inhabitants of the city to enjoy. The resurrected saints and the redeemed who will inhabit New Heaven and New Earth will receive their light from New Jerusalem, as the glory of God shines forth through the perfected church. There will be no curse there, no death, no pain, no sickness, no tears, nor sorrow. All things will be made new. His servants shall serve Him, and they shall see His face. They will reign with Him forever and ever.

It is our Father's good pleasure to give us this kingdom. Did He not tell His disciples, "Fear not, little flock; for it

is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom"? (Lk 12:32). Our calling is to seek first His kingdom and His righteousness; He will add everything else that we need.

Jesus shed His blood, died and rose again that we might have a great reunion with Him in the Father's kingdom. At the last supper, when He had blessed the cup, He said, "For this is My blood of the new testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins. But I say unto you, I will not drink henceforth of this fruit of the vine, until that day when I drink it new with you in My Father's kingdom" (Mat 26:28-29). Let us seek to enter into that kingdom so that we may fellowship with Christ for all eternity! □

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The workmanship of His hands

THE MALLEE FOWL: THE THERMOMETER BIRD

The Lord once told the prophet Jeremiah that the various birds of His making know their times and seasons (Jer 8:7). Truly the Australian mallee fowl would come into this category as we shall now begin to see.

Newborn chicks of the mallee fowl can hatch only because their parents know how to acutely discern temperature. If mallee fowl parents did not know when the temperature of their egg chamber was 33°C (between 91 and 92°F), their eggs would not hatch. In fact, if the parents are wrong by more than just one degree either way, it's bye-bye birdie!

Unlike most birds, which usually let their body heat incubate their eggs, mallee fowl don't just sit on their eggs. Instead, they build a large mound and monitor its temperature with their bill and tongue. The mallee fowl are sometimes called the "thermometer bird" because its assessment of the mound's temperature is incredibly accurate.

When the first white settlers in Australia came across these huge mounds in the late 1700s, they thought they were Aboriginal burial mounds. Only later did they discover the greyish-brown, spotted birds that built them.

The mallee fowl begins building its mound in the spring as the breeding season approaches. The parents first dig a pit almost a meter (three feet) deep. They gather leaves, twigs, bark and other plant material, and scrape them in to fill the pit. When some rain soaks into the debris, the birds build it up into a heap by covering the litter with a thick layer of sand or soil.

As the vegetation begins to rot, the heat increases in the mound—similar to the compost heaps that gardeners often keep. The male probes the mound with his bill to check the temperature inside. When both parents are satisfied that the temperature in the mound is 33°C, the hen lays her first egg. She then lays a single egg each week or two for the next five or six months. Usually she will lay 15 to 20 eggs over this time. As each egg is laid, the male opens the mound and carefully moves the egg into the right position. He then works on the mound to prepare it for the next egg.

The hen usually begins laying eggs in late September—the Australian spring. From that time until about April, the male uses his beak and tongue to ensure that the temperature of the mound stays constant. In an amazing display of temperature sensing, the bird will alter the structure of the mound to maintain a steady 33°C. When the heat increases inside the mound, due mostly to the rapidly decaying plant material, the male mallee fowl uncovers the eggs to let air circulate around them. He then protects the eggs from the hot summer sun by adding sand or soil to the mound to serve as a shield.

When autumn arrives and the cooler weather causes temperatures to drop, the male uncovers the mound early in the day so that heat can reach the eggs. He covers it again in the evening to retain the heat.

Each egg needs seven weeks of incubation. This means that some eggs will be hatching while the hen is laying others. The newly hatched chick has up to 15 hours of hard work ahead of it. It has to tunnel its way through nearly a meter of soil and other material to reach the open air. The chicks are able to look after themselves from the moment they hatch, and can fly within only 24 hours. Jesus said in Luke 12:6, “Are not five sparrows sold for

two farthings, and not one of them is forgotten before God?” The Lord has taken care of even the smallest of creatures. This truly is a lesson for us who often let fears and worries brood within our heart.

To the wise, the mallee fowl’s ability shows remarkable design and planning by the living God. It is hard from an evolutionary point of view to explain how such activities and precision could come about naturally. There is no rhyme or reason in digging a deep hole and then burying your young at the bottom of it. If such a thing was in fact done by chance as evolutionists claim, then surely by now we would not be seeing any such wonder as the mallee fowl quite simply because the number of fatal errors which would come forth would most certainly out-number the “by-chance good results.” For instance, we see that though both male and female birds work together to prepare their egg-chamber, they also specialize in different tasks. The male is able to constantly monitor, and alter if necessary, the precise temperature needed to hatch the eggs laid by the female. The new-born chicks have to find their way through a meter of soil unaided, and are able to fend for themselves from the moment they hatch. Every step must work together perfectly for this reproductive cycle to be successful.

Try to think about how the mallee fowl's breeding cycle could evolve. How would the male and female determine their duties? How could the chicks know they must keep tunnelling for up to 15 hours? What if the newly hatched chicks gave up after an eight-hour day? And how would the male know, even from his first attempt at parenting, that he must maintain the temperature through various seasons and weather conditions at exactly 33°C for his eggs to survive?

If the first mallee fowl parents did not get everything exactly right, there would be no more mallee fowl. Instinct and perfect design implanted by the Creator of all life is by far the most reasonable explanation for the existence and perpetuation of the mallee fowl.

The mallee fowl belongs to a group of birds known as the megapodes—meaning “big feet.” Megapodes are large-footed birds which live in Australia and other islands of the Pacific. They all construct mounds of earth or vegetation either for display—as does the super lyrebird—or as an incubator for eggs, as do the mallee fowl and the brush turkey. The largest of these megapode mounds may be two metres (6.5 feet) high and 13 meters (more than 40 feet) across. They may contain 12 tons or more of earth.

In all of these creatures we can see the beautiful hand of a marvellous Creator. Truly, these things could not have come about by chance but only by careful planning. And the very Creator that made and is mindful of these animals is also very loving and caring for the greatest of His creation—man, who is made in the image of God. All praise and honor are due unto Him that created all things after the counsel of His own will. □

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Traveling through the interior of Africa amidst difficult and dangerous terrain, braving intense heat by day and sharp chilling cold by night, undeterred by wild beasts, lions, crocodiles, jackals, and the threat of the native bushmen, one man with a vision and a missionary call pressed forward with the words of eternal life in his heart in order to reach the lost in the jungles of Africa. He was a pioneer missionary to Africa, even before David Livingston, in fact he was later a great inspiration to Livingston—who later became his son-in-law. This humble young man who traveled to South Africa at the age of twenty-one and labored there for over fifty years, is now remembered as a valiant missionary, who laid down his life in some of the most primitive and hostile conditions. His name was Robert Moffat.

In his youth, the Scottish-born Robert Moffat worked as a gardener. One day he happened to see a poster announcing a missionary meeting and decided to attend. There he felt the inspiration of the Holy Spirit and dedicated his life to be a missionary. He heard the Lord speak to him, “Will you give up *your* plans for My plans? Are you willing to suffer that the heathen

may be saved?” To this he replied, “Yes, Lord!” He was soon recommended to the London Missionary Society which would become his gateway to the ripe fields of Africa.

In 1816, Moffat set sail for South Africa, at the age of twenty-one, with the zeal and inspiration of a young man ready to conquer the world with the Gospel of Christ. However, the mission leaders were reluctant at first to let him go, thinking he was unqualified for the task. He would soon prove them wrong and the Lord would use this life that was yielded to Him to bring many into the kingdom of God.

When Moffat arrived in Africa it was an uphill battle. He was finally permitted to leave the coastal areas to travel to the interior regions to take the Gospel to the native tribes. While en route through the perilous interior, he almost died from heat exhaustion and lack of water. Yet he persevered through these and all other obstacles. He stayed one night with a Dutch family who inquired about his journey. He informed them that he was on his way to the “Kraal of Africaner.” Africaner was the most feared and hated man in all of South Africa. He was the chief of a vicious tribe that had killed many and instilled fear and hostility in many places of South Africa. This Dutch family warned Moffat that Africaner would “strip off your skin to make a drum to dance to and use your skull for a drinking cup!” Despite the warning, Moffat was persuaded that it was the will of God

to enter the “Kraal of Africaner.” When Moffat finally met Africaner face to face, Africaner was surprisingly gentle with him, and even commanded his people to build the missionary a house. In that small little hut, Moffat lived like the natives in simplicity—his food consisting mostly of milk and dried meat. Day and night Moffat would preach to this tribe and before long he opened a school for the children. Soon the chief, Africaner, started attending the meetings and having long discussions with Moffat about the love of Christ, His atoning death, and the beauties of heaven. Moffat won Africaner for the Lord and his conversion is considered one of the greatest accomplishments in Moffat’s ministry. Africaner was wanted by the government for many crimes he had committed, but when Moffat brought him to the coastal region, the government officials were astounded at the conversion—and new life—of Africaner. Because Moffat resolved a political problem through his religious and missionary efforts, he now had the support of the government as well.

Three years after arriving in South Africa, he married Mary Smith, who had traveled to Africa to join Moffat. Mary’s father originally gave a qualified acceptance to Moffat’s request to marry his daughter, saying, “My wife and I have no objection to your marriage, if you will stay in this country; but we will never agree to our only daughter going to some uncivilized land where she would suffer many hardships and, more likely than

not, die an early death.” It is a testimony to Moffat, that faced with such a decision, he chose to follow the call of God and set sail for Africa, leaving Mary behind. Yet he hung onto the hope that Mary’s parents would one day change their minds—and that they did. They later gave their approval and Mary went on to be a tremendous source of comfort and support for Robert throughout their more than fifty years of ministry. Although they faced a great deal of hardship and lost three of their children in infancy and youth, their work in Africa became a stepping stone which others used and built on to spread the Gospel. Their eldest daughter married David Livingston, who also went on to be a great missionary in Africa. Four other children stayed on in Africa as well and continued as missionaries.

In his early days as a child, Moffat despised education and tried to do things to escape school. Yet God used this same boy to later educate thousands. He learned the difficult African language of Sechwana, and also translated the Bible into this language for the natives to read. He wrote many other books and publications to enrich the African people, and also wrote to inspire others to labor in foreign mission fields. Moffat was also known for his efforts to improve living standards in Africa, introducing more modern methods of agriculture and irrigation. He labored for the physical and spiritual growth of the people. With faith in his heart that the Lord would do a great

work in Africa, he said, *“Some day this spiritual desert shall blossom into a garden for God!”*

Moffat traveled to many villages and tribes within South Africa to bring the Gospel of Christ. He set up many mission stations in his travels and was used by God to assist others in their own missionary endeavors. These travels were often very dangerous and damaging to his health. Some pathways were so terrible that even the natives would dare not venture them. Yet he had this confidence which was penned by his own hand: *“In my suffering I am cheered with this recollection—that it is for Jesus’ sake and the salvation of the heathen.”* Through his life we can see the fulfillment of Psalm 2:8, “Ask of Me, and I shall give thee the heathen for thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession.” He laid the foundations of the Christian church in Bechuanaland (now Botswana) and Southern Rhodesia (now Zimbabwe). Thousands were converted under his ministry and although the trials were very difficult, the fruit and blessings that followed were all the more sweet.

In 1870 he returned to England where he continued to speak at meetings and conferences to promote foreign missions. After laboring tirelessly for more than fifty years, Robert Moffat entered into the presence of God in August of 1883. 

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AT THE FOOT OF THE CROSS

Fearing the battle was over,
That I'd already lost the war,
I was tired of trying and failing—
I just couldn't fight anymore.

So, dragging my battle-scarred body,
I crawled to the foot of the cross
And I sobbed: "Oh, please, Father, forgive me,
But I tried...I tried...and still lost."

Then the air grew silent around me.
I heard His voice just as clear as the dawn:
"Oh, My child, though you are tired and weary,
You can't stop, you have to go on."

At the foot of the Cross, where I met Him—
At the foot of the Cross, where He died—
I felt love, as I knelt in His presence;
I felt hope, as I looked in His eyes.

Then He gathered me lovingly to Him,
As around us God's light clearly shone;
And together we walked through my lifetime,
To heal every wound I had known.

I found bits of my dreams long forgotten,
And pieces of my life on the floor.
But I watched as He tenderly blessed them,
And my life was worth living once more.

I knew then why I had been losing,
I knew why I had not grown;
At the foot of the Cross came the answer:
I'd been fighting the battle alone.

At the foot of the Cross, where I met Him,
At the foot of the Cross, where He died,
Then I knew I could face any challenge,
Together—just my Lord and I.

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