

FOOLISH PRAYERS—FABULOUS ANSWERS

Glenn and Ethel Coon
Roan Mountain, Tenn. 37687

CONTENTS

1. Take on the Devil
2. Kneeling Love
3. Cancer Can Be Cured
4. When Cancer Strikes Repeatedly
5. \$15,000 Higher than His Competitor
6. A Dying Man
7. Returning Son
8. Disintegrated Knee
9. A \$50,000 Offer
10. Angel Visitor
11. Rapist
12. Home for a Minister
13. Without Medication
14. An Unconscious Sister
15. The Gift of Tongues
16. Rebuke the Devourer
17. Supernatural Guidance
18. God Has Problems, Too
19. Fabulous Vision
20. Fabulous Deception
21. No Scientific Explanation
22. Doggie and a Daddy
23. Superficial Prayers
24. A "Dead" Water Buffalo
25. A Worldwide Answer

The Stan Chinn Experience

Oh, the miracles of divine grace in the Chinn's life! What a thrill to both hear, and share them! And they are, as the other stories in this book, every word true, as nearly as memory can recall and pen portray.

We first had the privilege of meeting Brother and Sister Stan Chinn at the Laurelwood Academy prayer series. Then our paths crossed not long afterward at Bozeman, Montana. They were on a business trip. We on a prayer mission. But, as always, they loved to share the love, the protection and the care of our miracle-working Christ.

As we entered their motel room that Saturday night, by kind invitation, the fellowship in Jesus Christ was sweet. As you read these wonderful experiences, we believe you will unite with us in exclaiming: "O magnify the Lord with me, and let us exalt His name together." Psalm 34:3.

The Authors

1: Foolish prayer for a puny man to take on the Devil

Not really foolish, because God promises us we
"shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked." Eph. 6:16.

THE CHALLENGE of my life is to defeat the devil." Those are strong words from a puny man! Stan Chinn had been a super-salesman, swinging deals of up to \$1,000,000.00 before he became president and owner of Compass Industries, Inc. with headquarters at Gresham, Oregon.

Trade Unions

But when Stan spoke these meaningful words, he was in one of his several crises with a trade union which insisted on unionizing his construction industry.

Stan had studied most carefully the principles of trade unions. He fully believed the big businesses had, at times, taken advantage of the working man. He also recognized that unions have in many instances been a source of help to laborers. Yet he felt the principle of force, too often employed by trade unions, is incompatible with the principles of the Gospel. He could not be signatory to any program which goes contrary to the plain injunctions of Scripture pertaining to the very issue of capital and labor. Though taken advantage of, the laborer is commanded to, "Be patient therefore, brethren.... for the coming of the Lord draweth nigh ... behold, the judge standeth before the door." (See James 5:1-9.)

Not a Hasty Decision

Stan's decision not to join a trade union was in no wise hastily made. He had studied the Scriptures most prayerfully. He had studied the writings of our favorite author. He consulted with a number of prominent ministers of the Gospel.

Some of the clergymen with whom Mr. Chinn discussed the problem, had not considered the matter too carefully. Yet all felt that in the last analysis, the decision is personal with each individual. Stan did receive the support, however, of his Elders in being true to his convictions. Among these clergymen were those who united with Stan in earnest prayer that he would receive the sustaining grace of God to prove true to what he, and they, felt were pure principles of the Gospel. Hence, Mr. Stan Chinn did not take on the devil in his own strength, but in God's. "I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me" (Phil. 4:13).

Christian Attitude

"Resist not evil: but whosoever shall smite thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also," is a principle direct from the lips of our Lord Jesus, Himself (Matt. 5:39). "Avenge not yourselves." Love "seeketh not her own." "Freely give." "Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you," commanded Jesus, "that ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven." (Rom. 12:19; 1 Cor. 13:5; Matt. 10:8; Matt. 5:44, 45.) These verses of Scripture epitomize Stan Chinn's code of honor--not the principle of force, with it's resultant strife. Even bloodshed has followed in the path of trade unions in an effort to receive what man believes is his own due.

Jesus had said of Satan, "He was a murderer from the beginning" (John 8:44). Satan's kingdom is built on the principles of selfishness, force, hatred and bloodshed.

Stan concluded that once a human being accepts the Gospel, he begins a specialized relationship with two supernatural beings--One is Christ, the other, Satan. The spirit and character of the two are at complete variance with one another. And "no man can serve two masters: for either he will hate the

Foolish Prayers—Fabulous Answers

one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon" (Matt. 6:24).

A Winning Stan

Again and again, Stan had won out against the powerful pressure of trade unions. Try as they would at intimidation, they met with a Luther-like response: "Here I stand. God help me. I cannot do otherwise." Stan Chinn wondered if his standing firm to principle might result in bodily injury, or even jail. But little did he dream Satan would attack him from within.

Knot-like Boils

"So went Satan forth from the presence of the Lord, and smote Job with sore boils" (Job 2:7).

At first something appeared on Stan as knots on his chin and back of his right ear. His family doctor gave him a series of antibiotics, hoping that these knots were mere infection symptoms. When after a week, the knot behind Stan's ear was larger, his doctor suggested they consult with Dr. Syphers, who felt surgery would be wise.

Dr. Syphers informed Stan that the right side of his face would probably be paralyzed temporarily--possibly three months, or so. He also warned of sizable scars in the two locations.

Stan realized the full import--confinement, and the inability to carry on with his construction activities as before.

Checking into the Hospital

But Stan had complete confidence in these Christian doctors. "I did not feel there was any reason for concern over the possibility of this being a malignancy," he said. And the following Tuesday evening Stan checked into the Portland Adventist Hospital as a patient.

Stan found himself among friends when he entered the spacious hospital lobby. Many of the workers attended the Mt. Tabor church located across from the hospital, where Stan served as the head elder. While chatting with a friend, he learned that Pastor Ernsten was a patient in the hospital at that time. Stan asked the admitting clerk for the privilege of being assigned the unoccupied bed in the pastor's semiprivate room. Stan and the pastor were close friends. So his request was understandable.

A pleased smile brightened the face of the ill pastor as Stan walked into the room, for he thought Stan had merely come for a visit. After chatting a while, Stan chuckled: "I like you so much I think I will spend the night with you."

Pastor Ernsten showed a wee bit of gracious embarrassment when Stan began removing his shoes and preparing to do exactly as he had suggested. The good pastor replied with a curious smile: "That is all right with me, if you think the authorities won't object."

"Seriously though, I am a patient here, too, and requested the privilege of sharing your room," Stan explained.

The Surgery

The operation the next day took about three-and-one-half hours. When Stan awakened, he groggily understood that his wife and Mrs. Ernsten were standing over him. That night the side effects of the anesthetic caused Stan great discomfort, restlessness and tossing.

The next morning Stan overheard Mrs. Ernsten ask her husband, "Did you sleep well last night?"

"No," the Pastor replied, "I couldn't sleep. My brother was sick."

Foolish Prayers—Fabulous Answers

"Pastor Ernsten was a very Godly man," Stan told me. "He was concerned for my life and could not rest, knowing that I was sick. He was that kind of man," Stan emphasized.

Thursday afternoon, a customer of Stan's from Denver called him, stating that he wanted him to build a plant for him back in Montana. After concluding the call, Stan's wife and two daughters came in to see him. They were quite elated over the prospect of the deal. Although Stan was still in the hospital, they were thrilled that he was able to carry on his business.

Cancer

In the midst of their rather carefree conversation, suddenly Dr. Syphers appeared in the room. He visited with the family for a while, and then said, "Well, I hate to break the spell of a happy family, but I have a message for you that I don't like to share, but it is my duty to do so. Our findings were, that your tumors were malignant. Being in the lymph glands, it is impossible to know how extensively it has spread."

In relating this story, Stan said, "I don't know whether or not any of you have had this shock; but if you have, you know somewhat the way I felt."

"I realize," he continued, "that I am not the only one who has ever had cancer. I am not the only one who has been afflicted. Needless to say, my emotions changed quite rapidly."

Mrs. Chinn asked their two daughters to leave the room. These things are not easy, or simple, for a family to take.

Facing the Grim Reaper

"If you've ever seen a grown man cry," Stan continued, "you know what it is like."

(He recalled that at the Toastmaster Club, they recommended that each of the students get to his feet and give a two-minute talk on what he would do if he had only two days left to live. Stan challenges the readers of this experience, and all with whom he comes in contact, to give this same solemn thought much earnest consideration.)

Security

Stan actually, for days, gave himself up to almost uncontrolled tears. "All the things I thought I had to make me secure, suddenly became very insecure. I couldn't seem to think of any magic number I could dial to ask for money to save my life." Stan exhorts business men who have made their business their god, to remember that they cannot call on business to save their life. "I can testify that your only salvation is Jesus Christ," Stan says.

But the greatest challenge that faced Stan in that crisis hour was the possibility of breaking the chain of friendship. "I don't know how much you crave the friendship of those around you," he said, "but I know how much it meant to me in that hour."

Discussion with God

"I had a pretty long, drawn-out discussion with God after this announcement of the doctor," continued Stan. "So I felt that He and I had a pretty good understanding about things. But I remembered some of those I loved very much who were not in the Ark of Safety; who had not accepted the truth of God's Word; who had not come all the way; who had not taken Christ as their Savior. This is a hard link to take out of this chain. I remembered the letters I should have written to those I love, to encourage them to give up the gods of this world, and to lay hold on the One who is life eternal."

Later, in his public testimony, Stan challenged his hearers, "I wonder if you are remembering the letters you have not written yet; of the ones you have not yet approached with the knowledge of the love of God, of His Word; of the surety of salvation it offers through Jesus Christ."

Changed Plans

"The word cancer," continued Stan, "will change your prayers, and bow your head. If you prayed a 'canned' prayer previous to this, it will change that, too. It will change your conversation with the Lord. It will change the type, the quality of the music you listen to. It will change your talk. It will change your value of time. It will change the excuse, 'I'm too busy to win souls.' It will change your attitude toward the pastor, toward church work, and toward the spirit of cooperation. Toward unity, toward criticism, and toward every branch of the work of Christ."

"For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places" (Ephesians 6:12).

2: The Foolishness of Humbling Self into the Dust in Kneeling Love

Not really foolish, because "Charity [love] never faileth." 1 Cor. 13:8.

O GOD, WE love this man. We are not willing that he should perish. We feel there is a work for him to do. We have loved him in the church. And we know that You love him as a father loves his child. Father, be mindful of his family." This was part of the heart cry of Pastor Ernsten, Stan's roommate, as he humbly knelt there beside his suffering friend. The tears were running down his cheeks as Stan awakened in the morning to the most beautiful love prayer he had ever heard! It was the morning after the diagnosis of cancer.

Love Prayers

Not merely did good Pastor Ernsten offer this tearful love prayer, others followed suit. They came from the church, the hospital, the day school. They prayed also wherever two or three could assemble. Nurses met for prayer. The associate chaplain of the Portland Adventist Hospital came to Stan's room, and kneeling by his bed, placed both his hands over Stan's. Solemnly and humbly, lovingly and pleadingly he implored the great God of heaven to come to the rescue. Others, many others, came, prayed, and went.

Power of Combined Prayer

Jesus had said that if even two agree on earth, it shall be done. There is power in harmony-prayer harmony. One of Mr. Chinn's favorite texts since this experience with death is Acts 12:5: "Prayer was made without ceasing of the church unto God for him [Peter]." With it, he loves another promise, "The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much" (James 5:16). The latter passage of Scripture Brother Stan applied to such men as Pastor Ernsten, Pastor Avery, and a large number of other ministers of righteousness. Combined prayers in the first century worked for the deliverance of Peter, meeting the executioner the next morning. And in the 20th century for Brother Stan Chinn, meeting the Grim Reaper face to face.

The Visits of His Pastor

"I want to make a little confession about our Pastor," Stan continued. "One morning I was in the little bathroom, about 4 feet by 6 feet in size, taking a bath in the tub, when overwhelming grief flooded my soul. I don't know whether there were more tears or more water in that bath tub. After I cried so long I

Foolish Prayers—Fabulous Answers

felt I did not have any more tears, I came back to my room and saw my own Pastor Avery standing there. His back was turned toward me. I did not want him to see me in tears. I wanted him to think of me as happy, courageous, carefree and hopeful in trying to lift another. I did not care to have him see me in the terrible state I was in.

"So I went back into the bathroom, closed the door and locked it, and waited until he left. I know that isn't a very courageous thing to do," Stan remarked self-reproachfully.

(Just then, lovely Mrs. Chinn broke in with, "Don't think for a moment," she spoke kindly, "that this attitude of self-pity is part of the general attitude of my husband. He is anything but a man given to self-pity." And, friends, when I heard the story through to its close, I could utter a redounding "Amen." Seldom have I met a man of stronger fortitude and abounding faith and courage. Stan Chinn radiated kindness, and yet of stamina; of love, and yet of amazing action; of the uplook, but not of pride; of confidence, but not self-centeredness. His spiritual maturity blessed my own heart and that of my wife, Ethel, as we listened to some of his taped recordings, and to his own testimony as he related it to us personally.)

Although Brother Chinn was able to stay in the bathroom that day until his Pastor Avery had gone, yet another day the same pastor caught him napping. Awakened, he saw the kindly-faced minister sitting close by his bedside.

Doubts and Misgivings

Coming to full consciousness with a little sudden surprise, Brother Chinn looked his pastor full in the face and began: "Pastor, there are a lot of things I don't understand about this."

Like Job of old, Brother Chinn felt that his business was "somewhere in the realm" of Christian justice and integrity. Therefore, the question "WHY?" appeared before him in big blocked letters. Now Stan Chinn looks back and feels just as Job did when he uttered that meaningful prayer: "But he knoweth the way that I take: when he hath tried me, I shall come forth as gold" (Job 23:10).

"I was not well enough acquainted with the Word of God," Stan said, reminiscing with keen insight into the past.

Christ has said, "What I do thou knowest not now; but thou shalt know hereafter" (John 13:7). There is no question now in Brother Chinn's mind. If we could see the end of time from its beginning; if we could only discern clearly the purposes of God in permitting Satan to afflict us, we would choose to be led in no other way than the road in which He is now leading us.

Stan saw it clearly after it was over. The affliction was nothing less than Satan's response to his statement, "The challenge of my life is to defeat the devil." But Satan's response was in such a different garb than anticipated that for the moment it had almost floored Stan. This is one of the tricks of the warfare--unexpected attacks in unexpected places and unexpected times.

Calvary Love Gives the Answer

About this time Brother Chinn picked up a book in one of the rooms in the hospital which proved to be a real blessing to him in his hour of suffering. One of the experiences related in the book, told of a man who lost his son while in the service of his country. The father in scorn had approached a minister of the Gospel. "You have preached God to me," he began, and with a sneer continued, "and where was God that night my son died out there on the fields of battle? Tell me now, where was He?"

Foolish Prayers—Fabulous Answers

For a moment the minister remained silent, reflecting on the question. Then, with a heart full of understanding, he replied, "The only thing I can tell you, sir, is that God was the same place He was when His own Son died on a cross on Golgotha."

Many of you may have read before the following quotation taken from the Signs of the Times, Dec. 30, 1889. I feel it is at the very heart of the matter under consideration. It places the cross at the answer point of man's questions--and of angels:

"The angels ascribe honor and glory to Christ, for even they are not secure except by looking to the sufferings of the Son of God. It is through the efficacy of the cross that the angels of heaven are guarded from apostasy. Without the cross they would be no more secure against evil than were the angels before the fall of Satan."

"So the book I found in the hospital and its story," Brother Chinn continued, "gave meaning to my situation in those days of grief and doubt."

The Crowning Act

Pastor Avery knelt by the bedside of the afflicted man and offered a wonderful prayer for a man whom he must have known had criticized him and his sermons, his activities and his program.

"He prayed and wept for me for about thirty minutes," Brother Chinn continued, adding, "And I cried that long. So the Pastor did see me, a grown man, cry after all. This time I couldn't evade him." Oh the blessing of that hour of humble, loving, contrite prayer!

The Atmosphere of Love

Love prayers were aided and abetted by love songs, flowers and tears. Morning by morning during Stan's stay in the hospital, he heard the sweet strains of music coming through the sound system or the hallways of the Portland Adventist Hospital. Heart-healing melodies such as, "There's Not a Friend Like the Lowly Jesus," or, "I Will Sing of Jesus' Love," or, "Sweet Hour of Prayer," caused the nurses' voices to sound to Stan like "an angel chorus direct from glory-land."

Especially dear to Stan in his struggle to defeat Satan, the author of death, were the words of that song which goes like this:

"Sing them over again to me,
Wonderful words of Life;
Let me more of their beauty see,
Wonderful words of Life.

All so freely given,
Wooing us to heaven;
Beautiful words, Wonderful words,
Wonderful words of Life."

It seemed almost as if heaven itself had selected these prayers, songs, and flowers to woo the fear-tortured soul of Stan Chinn to heaven. They were all God's preparation. Stan would build on this fellowship, and through his radiation of that love the whole church would be blessed.

3: Foolish prayer that expects Metastasized Cancer can be Cured

Not really foolish, when its cure healed the cancer of criticism which had mastitized through the church.

Read John 17:21.

WHILE STAN was confined in the hospital, some of the most refreshing experiences came to him in the form of fellowship with the medical doctors on the staff. One after another, they came to his bedside. Although their tight schedules all but demanded they be about six places at the same time, they took time to speak kindly to him, and then to pray prayers of faith.

"Yes, doctors have tears, also," Stan mused. Then added, "You may think they operate on enough people, and see enough sickness and sorrow, and witness enough death to lose their ability to sympathize or weep—almost as if they have no more feelings. I can testify this to be untrue. "

On the Sabbath when Stan gave his testimony in the Portland Tabernacle church, his physician, Dr. Edgerton, sat on the rostrum, listening to every word. Pointing to the doctor, Stan said warmly, "This man is one of them. Every day I was in the hospital he was there to inspire me, to keep me up-to-date on my progress, and to notify me if there was anything that might be encouraging. For several days after I was out of the hospital, he either came to see me, or called me every day. That is what a true friend is—someone who cares enough to go the extra mile."

Satan Caused It

Stan, referring back to the statement made earlier when he said, "The challenge of my life is to defeat the devil," added wisely, "Satan took offense at that statement. He is jealous, proud, retaliatory, I believe." Stan paused in his graphic description of the arch enemy. "Satan was the cause of this affliction. God only permitted it."

Isn't that Job's experience all over again? If we only could see God's tears, and feel His heartache when he accepts the challenge, we would cry out, "in all" our "affliction he" is "afflicted," for He is "touched with the feeling of our infirmities." (Isa. 63:9; Heb. 4:15.)

An Answer

As Stan shared this experience one morning in church, he said, "I can tell you, I am the happiest I have ever been in my life, because of the experience that this has brought me."

Then he prayed, "Dear Lord, take my life and use it in any way You see fit, that it might mean the salvation to those I love."

"Now," he asked others, "did you ever think about how you pray? Do you expect the Lord to answer your prayers? I didn't tell Him how to answer this prayer. But He did exactly what I had asked Him, but in His own way. I see people right here this morning that this has had a reconverting influence upon. They've told me it has. And if it has saved even one of them, it has been an affliction that would be easy to bear again—a price not too great to pay."

Heavy Emphasis on Prayer

The doctors told Stan there were two "chances" he could take; that is, two possible cures. One was cobalt. The other was prayer. "They put the heavy emphasis on prayer," Stan said. "And I am putting heavy emphasis on prayer, also."

"Sabbath morning, the day I was to be anointed, I sat on my bedside. Half of my room was on the corner where I could look out upon the church. I saw my friends coming and going from the church. As my mind

Foolish Prayers—Fabulous Answers

wandered, I began to think. I wondered if I would ever have that privilege again—of being in the sanctuary with those whom I loved so much. As I sat there reminiscing, my mind was flooded with memories of happiness that such occasions had brought. I recognized almost everyone that came in and went out of the church that morning, because I had always made it a point to find out who people were. I love people, and they are all my life to me. So I knew almost every one who made his way in or out of the church.

"And after the church service started, all was quiet. Nothing was stirring. I was sitting with my head in my hands weeping. No one was in the room with me. I was quite alone, I felt.

"But in my tears, suddenly I felt some reassuring hands on the back of my neck. You have probably already guessed it. It was my wife."

As Stan was relating the story, he directed his remarks to the men, and said, "Fellows, I don't know how much you care about the bonds of marriage, the bonds of love that come from a faithful wife. But I confess this had meaning to me. I don't know how she knew I needed her in the worst way at that moment. But she did, and she was there. Let us re-evaluate what our wives mean to us."

Before the Anointing

"Just before the anointing," continued Stan, "my wife and I, my brother and his wife, went over to the home of the Agnetta's. We knelt down in their living room in a circle of prayer. Each of us prayed. I promised the Lord that if at the anointing, He should see fit to raise me up, and had use for me in His service, I would serve Him all the days of my life."

Anointing Prayers

At three o'clock that afternoon, Dr. Edgerton, Dr. Syphers, Pastor Avery and Pastor Hackett met in the hospital room. They laid their hands on Stan's brow and anointed his head with oil, calling upon the Lord, each one of them individually, in his behalf. "I wish that I could relate to you the words that were spoken, the meaning that they had for me, and the power that was felt," Stan continued.

It was more than merely Elders meeting and praying for a man. Pastor Hackett called upon the Lord to perform a miracle. "Lord," he prayed, "we need this miracle. Our church is in such a state that we almost have to have a miracle. We expect big things from You."

At this point in relating the story, Stan said, "Since then I have been thinking, 'I wonder why we don't see more miracles. Do you suppose if we weren't so lukewarm, we would witness more miracles?'" Obviously, God would be frowned upon were He to perform miracles for a church which is not on fire in His cause, don't you think?

After the Anointing

"After the anointing, I felt strengthened. In fact, I was strengthened to such an extent that they let me go home immediately. Dr. Edgerton, and his family came out that afternoon, and we took a long hike on our little acreage at Gresham, and had a very prayerful visit, all of us rededicating our lives to God."

Plans for the Future

"Isn't this wonderful! Isn't this an occasion! We were up until eleven o'clock at night visiting about our plans for the future."

New X-Ray

"On the following Monday I had an appointment at Dr. Hyman's office. He is an X-ray specialist, using the cobalt treatment. I waited two-and-one-half hours before I got to see him. And if you haven't

already guessed, I was praying most of this time. I was praying that God would show by this examination that He had performed a miracle.

"The doctor took me into one of these little rooms where they give you the check-up, and examined me very thoroughly in the area that had been affected. Then he left the room to get the X-rays that had been taken before the anointing service. He returned and showed me the X-ray pictures of my chest. It looked as if I had a large sack, or balloon, between my lungs. I don't know all the medical terms or details. But he said, 'The doctors think this is the area that is most critical. And I am inclined to agree with them. This will be the area that we will have to treat first.' "

Trying not to sound too pleading, Stan asked, "Don't you think we should take another X-ray just to be sure there isn't anything faulty here?"

"Well, I suppose it would be all right," returned the good doctor. As he left the room, Stan prayed, "God, let this be the answer. If this X-ray reveals that this area is back to normal, I will know this is a direct and specific answer to our prayer for healing last Sabbath afternoon."

Repeat X-Rays

Stan continued his story with growing enthusiasm.

"The doctor carried the new X-ray back to the little room. In about ten minutes, the technician returned and said, 'Mr. Chinn, you will have to come back to the X-ray room. We want to X-ray this area again.'

"They did this three times. Before I left that evening, Dr. Hyman told me, 'I just don't know about that chest of yours.'

"'Is it smaller?' I asked.

"'Much smaller,' he replied." As Stan told this, he exclaimed, "Can't you say, 'Praise God' for that?"

"My wife had been sitting in the car all afternoon with a sick headache. You can imagine why.

"Dr. Hyman had me lined up with a specialist before the last X-rays were taken. This man was the head of the cancer department of the Maryland University—world renowned in the cobalt treatment of cancer. But with a strange, and almost embarrassing expression of humor, he added, 'I don't think you need to see this specialist. You don't have anything to show him except some stitches and an incision.' "

Sick Headache Cured

"Needless to say, I had the cure for my wife's sick headache. I don't know whether I hit the ground between the doctor's office and the car or not!"

Stan Chinn brought to his home church a ringing challenge to be reconciled to one another. To give up the little criticisms that grieve the Holy Spirit. And that challenge worked. What a spirit of love flowed through the church! What differences were reconciled! What hard feelings cured!

4: Foolish prayer of continued faith When Cancer Strikes Repeatedly

Not really foolish, if your motive is:

"I shall not die, but live, and declare the works of the Lord." Ps. 118:17.

STAN CHINN brought to his home church a ringing challenge to be reconciled one to another. He also became a physical fulfillment of the Savior's promise, "Ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me," in areas outside the church. (See Acts 1:8.)

Foolish Prayers—Fabulous Answers

Everywhere he went, Stan told of Jesus and His love, of His healing power, of the Lord who was mightier than cancer and stronger than the mysterious foes of darkness. He was fulfilling a mission to live to defeat Satan by representing Jesus and telling of His love.

To a Banker

One day he was on a street corner in the city of Caldwell, Idaho, chatting with a fine Christian banker. He related the story of his own healing from cancer, of the love of his God, and of the power of the Holy Spirit. So thrilling was his testimony that both the banker and a friend of his became entirely disinterested in a dinner appointment they had started out to meet. They stood and listened in rapt attention right through the dinner hour. This kind of experience in a man's life obligates him to witness for his God; for, "whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap" (Gal. 6:7). If a man wants to receive fabulous answers to prayer, let him "magnify the Lord with me, and let us exalt his name together" (Ps. 34:3). This is the first challenge Christ gave to the healed demoniacs (recorded in Mark 5:19), and it is His commission to us today.

But Satan listened. Satan puzzled. Satan decided. Satan talked it over with God. He offered a challenge, something like this: "God, if you let me strike this man again, You will see what will happen to his submission, to his integrity, to his faith."

And God accepted the challenge! "Go, Satan. But do not take his life. You will see there are men and women in this dark age of human history who love Me more than all else beside, and whose only object in living is to bring glory to My name."

So it came about that on Stan's birthday, July the 29th, that Satan struck again. It came in a mysterious way, and only three months after his apparent healing mentioned earlier in this book.

"I really don't feel too well today," Stan told his wife early that evening. "But I guess I can make it out to the fair at Gresham. I hate to be a killjoy, when we had the evening all planned."

At the fair they met a friend and watched an entertainment together for awhile.

Stan, in telling the story later, still seemed unable to account for the sudden illness, which struck him then. "I was feeling like I was paralyzed. I had a hard time breathing. So I suggested that my wife and friend stay there, and I left to drive over to the friend's home in Gresham to wait for them.

"By the time I reached the house, I was barely able to drive, and I did not feel normal at all. I was almost unable to walk up the steps. I had a strange feeling that I was going to die. I was nearly paralyzed and scarcely able to breathe."

Stan sat down beside the phone and began a fruitless search for a doctor. Trying every doctor friend he could think of—which amounted to about ten—and finding none of them at home, he finally gave up.

"This was evidently another of the tricks of Satan," Stan continued. "I kept the door unlocked so my wife could get in. I felt I could not live until they returned from the fair."

Beautiful Bed Prayer

Stan went downstairs and rested on the bed.

"Dear Lord," he prayed, "I've gone through some other experiences with You, and my fear is all gone. I don't need anyone's sympathy or tears, but I do want You to know, that if You see fit to sustain my life, I have many things I would like to do in Your behalf for the benefit of the salvation of others. But Lord, if You don't see fit, I am perfectly willing to cast my life to You. We have been through other crises before, and I feel secure in Your hands. Do whatever You see fit."

Foolish Prayers—Fabulous Answers

Mysterious Recovery

"About thirty minutes later," Stan continued, "I felt better. I felt strengthened to the point that I was able to go back upstairs. I called the doctor who had previously done the biopsy on me. He answered me almost immediately and suggested I go to the hospital. I did, and was examined very carefully. By the time I arrived at the hospital, however, whatever it was that had afflicted me had disappeared just as mysteriously as it had come. The doctors found no reason whatsoever for it.

"I have my own opinions about that strange attack," Stan concluded. "It was just another trick of Satan, to make me lose my faith."

What Life Is All About

Stan Chinn had reached an important peak in his life. He knew in his innermost soul of souls what the Christian life is all about. He knew what it meant to give Satan the challenge, "My great purpose in life is to defeat the devil." Maybe Stan had already read a concise statement we ourselves have read many times. It is from the pen of our favorite author.

"No man can serve God without enlisting against himself the opposition of the hosts of darkness."-The Great Controversy, p. 610.

Satan Pours It On

About eighteen months later, Satan came again. In eternity we shall know more of how the devil sought permission of God to attack Stan, and how it parallels that of ancient Job. (See Job, chapters 1 and 2.)

Stan noticed one day large lymph nodes under his arms and in his groins. He realized this to be a recurrence of the cancer, and that this attack was much more severe.

All Fear Had Gone

This time Stan had no fear. Believing, however, that we are to do all we can to maintain our life and our health, Stan felt he should seek help. Since we are created in the image of God, He expects us to do all we can. Then when we have reached the height of impossibility, He can do the most. Then it is that God's work can start.

California

At the suggestion of friends, Stan left Portland and went to California. He began to run down all the leads he could find on any place that might have help for his problem.

"It seemed that all roads led to one particular man who had just finished a specialized course in hematology," Stan said. "He gave me quite extensive examinations. He sent me through a bone-scan and numerous tests, using very specialized electronic devices to try to see how far this had spread. After his complete analysis, he indicated that there was no question but what I would die in just a few days. I was in the very final stages of this disease, and whatever I had to do, or anything that had to be done, I should get it done immediately, because I could not live more than a few days. He sent me home without any hope, as far as medicine was concerned."

After arriving at home, Stan concluded that unless God saw fit to sustain his life, it was nearly at an end. While there was no fear involved, Stan experienced a feeling of lonesomeness in that he knew he was going to have to give up his family and all that was dear to this life.

On a Thursday evening, Stan still felt impressed that he must do all he could in cooperation with God, so God could cooperate with him.

Very Special Love Session

Foolish Prayers—Fabulous Answers

That evening Stan held a special prayer session with God. In describing that prayer, Stan said, "I say a very special session. It was special to this extent—I knew Him well enough by this time that I could talk to Him as a heavenly Father. I talked as one who could talk to his Father with whom he had a perfect understanding.

"I talked with the Lord just as I would talk with a friend. I told Him all about my heart, and just how I felt. I reminded Him that my greatest challenge was still to defeat Satan, and somehow to bring salvation, and hope, and help to those who were afflicted. I desired to help others to know that God's grace is sufficient for them. I asked the Lord to permit me to do this. I told Him that if He saw fit to sustain my life, and if He really felt I could carry out this mission, I would forever try to be a fit vessel and to reflect Christ's character."

Thus Stan rededicated himself to his Master, then left the consequences with Him.

The following Sunday, Stan received a surprise telephone call from a doctor whom he did not know.

"I thought this was rather strange that a doctor would call me," Stan recalled. This is highly unusual to be called by a man in this profession whom he knew not at all. This doctor suggested that he would try to help Stan in his distressing condition.

"The next morning I went to see him. The swellings had started to dissipate. He gave me a very thorough examination, and then gave an injection of some kind of chemicals. Within five days I was back to see him. All the swelling was gone. I only had one little kernel on the back of my neck.

"After examining me, he just sat back on his table and exclaimed, 'Stan, this is impossible! This medicine just does not work that fast. I've never seen it react this way before.' "

Sunshine of His Day

The doctor continued with a course in chemical treatments. From that time, Stan has had regular checkups, approximately every three months. After a recent treatment the doctor told him, "You are the sunshine of my day.

Fear Is Gone

Stan does not claim that he will never die of cancer. Not at all. He asks, and believes, only that he will be spared until his work is done.

It has been some four-and-one-half years now since there have been any symptoms of the disease. Yet Stan takes advantage of every scientific medical treatment he can find. He believes in the Bible statement that we are "workers together with" God (2 Cor. 6:1).

As long as life shall last, Stan is committed to a blessed partnership with God. He desires to live up to his challenge of life to defeat the devil.

As this goes to press, Mr. Stan Chinn writes: "After the last checkup, the doctor told our family physician that I was healed. I am now completely off of all medication, feeling fine, and praising God."

My response is, "Let all the people say, Amen. Praise ye the Lord" (Ps. 106:48).

What is yours?

5: Foolish prayer to win a contract at a bid of \$15,000 Higher than his Competitor

Not really foolish, because God promises: "My God shall supply all your need." Phil. 4:19.

SO FAR, each of the discouragements of Satan had been overruled by God, and each one to His own glory. But Satan had not finished with Stan Chinn.

While he was taking cobalt treatments, shortly after the first affliction, a multimillion-dollar corporation began negotiating to buy Stan's company. They indicated they would be willing to consider \$250,000 as the purchase price, with a five-year contract with him for \$35,000 per year to continue the management of the company.

Stan spent much time in meditation and prayer. Finally his decision was made. He felt that the Lord had blessed his company and made it possible for them to succeed that far, giving them many material things in life. The company provided employment to Sabbath-keeping men where they could have Sabbath privileges, without the worry of trade unions. Stan felt sincerely that this was at least part of the reason why God had so bountifully blessed the business.

So Stan elected to maintain the business. He hadn't much more than rejected the offer until it seemed the company could do nothing right. Satan began an assault with all his forces, on the financial front. It made no difference how hard they tried, or how effective they tried to be, no matter how many critical paths they tried to follow, everything they did was wrong.

In trying to send freight to jobs, it would often get lost, sidetracked, or pushed off on a siding. Some of it they never did find. As a result, \$110,000 was lost.

The business went downhill just as fast as Stan's health. It seemed there was no possible way of existing, and being able to maintain the business.

It came to the place where the company was \$182,000 in debt. Stan's attorneys, accountant, and bookkeepers all indicated that the company was bankrupt; the liabilities were much greater than the assets, with no possible way of going on.

Man's Helplessness-God's Opportunity

"I find this is the time," Stan testified, "that God can effectively work. Always, when I find that I am helpless, that my self-sufficiency is without honor, then I can come to God, and He takes care of the impossibilities."

Stan's attorneys refused to service his account any longer, because of his financial condition. The accountants would go no further, because Stan owed them both money and could not pay them further. They dropped him at that juncture.

"Somehow I will have to maintain the banner of Christianity. I know God has seen me through some places that were narrower than this," Stan told these men. "So, as long as my key fits the door to my business, bankruptcy is not a part of my vocabulary. I will continue to work as long as my key fits that door."

In telling the story later, Stan added, "My key still fits the door! Somehow, God has seen me through, step by step. Through every financial hazard and every trial that Satan has made to defeat me, God has given me the victory."

Five Attacks of Satan

Foolish Prayers—Fabulous Answers

"So," Stan continued, "Satan has tried to reach me five separate times: First through the trade unions. Then three times in physical affliction. And last of all, through the affliction of my daughter."

*His daughter had a mole on her shoulder diagnosed as melanocarcinoma. The doctor did a skin graft. No further development of the disease has appeared since then, and two years have passed.

Simultaneously

Actually, the financial attack of Satan began from the time of Stan's first attack of cancer, and lasted for five years!! It is only now that Stan Chinn is recovering. He had to sell his \$50,000 home. He now lives in a modest apartment in connection with his business. But if ever there was a stalwart man of faith, it is Stan. Just to hear his story, and observe the pure, wholesome, unselfish resolution stamped on his countenance, is enough to stimulate one's faith and trust in our Heavenly Father's care and provision.

Tremendous Triumph

"I have had many interesting experiences with the Lord through the things I have discussed with you, Pastor," Stan continued. "I've found there is no restriction with God. God is absolutely not limited! I found also that God's ways are perfect, and that if we only have faith to believe, no matter what the crisis is, no matter how dark the picture—in all cases, God's grace is sufficient!"

Gethsemane Light

During this very severe period in the company's financial straits, when they desperately needed work, a contract became available near Salem, Oregon. It came after the third attack and victory over cancer.

"By this time," said Stan, "I had learned to completely believe in God, and to know that regardless of what happened, His will is being done, because I have given my life completely to Him. I did not know for sure that He meant for us to go ahead and maintain the business. The only thing I did know for sure was that I was going to do all I could. And then if it failed, I would know it was His will, and He had something else in mind."

The job under consideration in Salem involved a rather large facility which would amount to about \$120,000 in cost. Stan badly needed this work, and did everything he could to convince them to buy his facility.

Impossible Situation

But another company had built all their other structures. They had built their feed mill for them, a grain elevator, a seed mill, and even their offices. Worst of all, this company's price on their design for this particular facility was \$15,000 less than Stan's design.

Stan felt he didn't have a chance of coming out on this job. He felt he had gone as far as he could. In fact he knew he had gone as far as he could, on his own. So he decided it was time for a talk with his Heavenly Parent.

"God, you know that I have gone as far as I know how to go," Stan prayed. "So if it be Your will, show me a design that I can somehow create that will convince these people they should make this purchase from me. I am willing to accept whatever Your answer is."

Vocalizing Faith

Shortly afterward, Stan met with the manager of the cooperative there. At that time he said, "Stan, I am going to feel terrible if you don't get this contract, because you have worked so hard on it. But I don't see any way that we can overcome this \$15,000 difference. I feel that I would be inclined to give it to you, but the Board of Directors cannot see past that money difference."

Foolish Prayers—Fabulous Answers

"Herb, do you know something?" Stan replied. "Your Board of Directors may think they are the ones to decide whether I get this contract, but they really aren't. I've talked this over with God. And He is going to be the One who decides whether or not I am the one who gets this contract. If God wills I get the contract, there is nothing your Board of Directors can do to keep me from it. And if it is His will I should lose, there is nothing I can do to keep from losing it, for I have done all I can to get it."

Herb regarded his friend for a long minute. "You really believe that, don't you?" he stated.

"I certainly do!" Stan replied.

Creator Sits with Creature

After Stan's conversation with Herb, he felt all the more determined to plead with the Lord to give him the contract if it could possibly be arranged.

"I prayed," said Stan, "that He would give me some design. On the way to Seattle the next day, I did not know what I would present for a plan, but I knew I was going to come up with something! So I took a piece of paper and a pencil, in certain faith, believing that God would instruct my mind as to what to put on it.

Amazing Design

"I started to scribble on the paper. Suddenly, I came up with a configuration. It was of a bin that made so much sense, was so practical, and so perfect for what the company needed!

"The characteristic of the product which is handled in these chemical fertilizer plants is one that is a water conductor. It sucks moisture out of the air on condensation. If it isn't constructed in a particular configuration, it will bridge, and hold up in the bin. And removing the product from the bin when this happens, can be an almost impossible process.

"The configuration which God gave me was the biggest and best step to eliminate this problem that the industry knows today. I was so thrilled with it that I have a patent search on it. I have since learned that it is patentable.

"I went back home," Stan continued, "and told my engineer to design it structurally. He did, following my plans. We all were so elated with it that we built a little model bin to scale and made it so we could run the product through it and demonstrate the merits of the bin."

Elated Manager

Excitedly, Stan strode into the plant in Salem--box in one hand, and bucket of sand in the other. Placing the tiny model on the manager's desk, Stan proceeded to pour the sand in the box and put a bucket below.

"Here's how it works, Herb," Stan said, demonstrating the procedure. "And I want you to know that I am not the designer of this revolutionary idea. God is. The Lord gave me this on the plane on my way to Seattle!"

Herb watched the mechanism with growing enthusiasm. "That's wonderful, Stan! That's wonderful! It looks better to me than anything I've seen."

Stan looked up from playing with his miniature "toy". "Herb, if you really do believe that, call your Board of Directors. Let me show it to them."

"All right," he said, "I will."

Foolish Prayers—Fabulous Answers

A little later at the meeting of the board, Stan took his little box and bucket of sand. They teased him a bit about having his "squirrel cage" with him. Stan grinned good naturedly. "This is really 'a better mouse trap,' " he replied.

Setting the miniature model on the desk and pouring it full of sand again, he demonstrated it to the Board of Directors.

The president of the board walked around and around the table several times, rubbing his chin. He looked over to the manager and asked, "What do you think of that?"

"I think it's great!" the manager answered.

"That is the most perfect thing I've seen!" exclaimed the president. "It is exactly what we want. It's just what we need. What do the rest of you fellows say?"

The members of the board looked at one another and back to the tiny model on the desk, smoothly and efficiently doing the job usually so hard to do. One by one, they began to add their compliments to that of the president's. They unanimously voted to give the job to Stan at a price \$15,000 above the bid of his competitor!

Helpless Situation

The victory appeared to be complete when Satan began another assault. The cooperative group was borrowing money from the Bank of Cooperatives in Spokane, Washington. One of their requirements was that the contractor had to furnish a performance bond. Stan, for a moment, felt shot down. He did not have enough net worth to come up with a performance bond.

God-Centered

But the God Stan serves is a God of impossibilities. As related earlier, a year-and-a-half previous to this, Stan had been given an opportunity to witness to a man on a street corner in Caldwell, Idaho. Stan had known at that time that he was a bank official, but did not know in what capacity. But he had felt impressed to tell him about the God he served--the God of impossibilities.

"I had told him about how God had sustained my life. I had told him I had faith to believe that He would see me through any other crises that might come to me in this life," Stan said.

Stan Talks Faith

Herb was the manager of the cooperative, and he discussed at some length with Stan the apparent impossibility of securing a performance bond. Finally Stan turned to Herb and said,

"God has seen us through this far. Call a meeting with the bankers. I will tell them the honest truth, just exactly what is my position. God will take care of the results. Either they will accept in the affirmative, or they will decide in the negative. Whichever way it is, I will accept it. Because I know it will turn out the way God wants it."

Who Enters Here?

The day of the meeting found Herb fidgety. While they waited in the prescribed place near Salem, Herb nervously reiterated the impossibility of the situation.

"I've learned to appreciate you as a very good friend, Stan," he said. "I do wish you could have the job, but I just don't see how it can happen."

Foolish Prayers—Fabulous Answers

In a few minutes the door opened and in walked the banker to whom Stan had witnessed a year-and-a-half before. He now held the position of bank official from the Bank of Cooperatives in Spokane, Washington. He had been sent to this job to determine whether or not Stan should get this contract.

Herb jumped to his feet as the bank official entered the room. "We surely like Stan's plan," he said, shaking hands with the new arrival. "I'm sure he can do the job. There is one minor problem. He doesn't have enough net worth to secure a performance bond. Isn't there some way that problem can be overcome? What would you suggest?"

All Glory to God

"Herb," the banker began, "this man doesn't need a bond. His word is just as good as his bond. If every contractor we have was like this man, we wouldn't need a bond from any of them."

"You understand he hasn't the required money, don't you?" Herb didn't think that the banker had heard him correctly.

"Oh, I know this man," he said to Herb. Then turning to Stan continued, "The story you told me about your experiences with God--you'll never know how many times I have repeated that. It has been a wealth of good to my friends, too."

Very little time after that was devoted to bonds. The banker was more inclined to talk about the God of impossibilities.

Perfect Answers

I asked Stan what his attitudes were before he received answers in business like the one stated above. This was his reply:

"The day I avowed the name of Christianity, I took on a Friend, and I took on an enemy. I declared war with Satan the day I accepted Jesus Christ as my partner. I've realized I have had those two to deal with ever since then. God has used each of these experiences to mature me spiritually; to give me the degree of faith needed to face the next trial that Satan brought. So in all my prayers I have special faith that I serve a special God. That God is willing and anxious to give me anything that is good for me. Each time I pray, I have no doubt but that God will answer in a perfect way. "

Hand on Promises

"Brother Chinn," I asked once again, "have you ever claimed specific Bible promises?" His answer brought me a great deal of delight.

"Ever since I first heard your series of sermons, I have been claiming promises. The first time I ever heard you speak on the Bible promises, I thought you must have been inoculated with some special kind of serum. I was delighted with your enthusiasm and message. Yet, being a business man, I knew I always had to decide on the basis of facts. So I purchased a set of your four books on the subject of prayer, and began a personal investigation of this 'new kind of prayer.'

"Each crisis that has come into my life that I have shared with you has been a time of claiming Bible promises in a personal manner. I have found the Bible facts, and know your theology on the ABC's of prayer--ask, believe and claim, are Biblical. There are times when my wife and I have found ourselves opening the Bible and placing our hands right on the promises of God, just as you teach."

Stan concluded with a ringing testimony: "Since that day, more than five years ago, when I was first afflicted with cancer and was given for a time to self pity, until today, I have learned that the things that Satan brings to us to crush our lives, and to ruin us through discouragement and disappointment, may be turned into beautiful and fruitful blessings through the God of impossibilities."

"My God shall supply all your need according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus" (Phil. 4:19).

"My only purpose and challenge in life is to know God and defeat His foe—the devil."

Dear reader, "What is your real purpose in living?"

The Ashkenaz Experiences

It was one of the delightful surprises of our life—to listen to the experiences of God's grace as related by a ninety-one-year-old giant of faith, whom one would have taken to be not more than sixty or sixty-five years of age. His memory was as keen as that of a young man. His speech unhesitating—clear and full of assurance in Jesus Christ.

None of these incidents are manufactured, or exaggerated. Each is God's actual dealing with His trusting child.

Not merely are the experiences related, miracles, but the appointment we had with Pastor "Ashkenaz" (as he has termed himself) itself was miraculous; for both he, and we, were so tied up in busy schedules that, except for definite answers to prayer, we would never have been privileged to learn, and share, these encounters. As you read these chapters, may the Holy Spirit bless your hearts, even as He has ours.

The Authors

6: Foolish Prayer of Reception for a Dying Man

Not really foolish, because "God . . . hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation." 2 Cor. 5:19.

DON'T WANT anything to do with any d____ sky pilot. Forget it!" With more cursings and swearing the contorted face of Pastor Ashkenaz' neighbor turned, vending a volley of words at the kind man who could have been one of his best friends. A vicious kick sent his dog flying, yelping and skulking around the corner of the house, his tail between his legs. The cat, sleeping on the front porch, disappeared in a streak of yellow under the veranda.

Pastor Ashkenaz shook his head sadly and stepped slowly up the stairs to the back porch. The resounding crash of the neighbor's screen door contrasted sharply with the soft click of his own door.

It had happened many times before. No matter what the kindness shown, Pastor Ashkenaz received only cursings, and mean demonstrations on the nearest animals handy to receive physical blows accompanied them.

It was always that way until one night.

Mean Man's Request

A midnight knock at the door, caused Pastor Ashkenaz a bit of surprise. The mean neighbor stood in the dim light from the porch, shivering in the cold under his heavy mackinaw and woolen cap. Pastor Ashkenaz lost no time inviting his neighbor in out of the cold.

The mean man's request surprised Pastor Ashkenaz even more. "There is a man down the street, about three blocks, who is dying. He is a member of the Baptist church, but his minister is out of town, and he wants to talk to a preacher. He will die before morning. His leg is severely swollen and fluid is oozing out

onto the carpets they have put below to absorb it. He can't lie down and has been sitting in a chair for six weeks, bent over, dying by the inch.

"I don't know where to find a preacher," the old man added. "I know you are a preacher, although I don't know anything else about you. But would you go to visit him?"

"You have been sitting up with him?" Pastor Ashkenaz inquired, amazed that his mean neighbor could also be kind.

"Yes, he is a very dear friend of mine. Two of us friends have been sitting up with him and his wife."

"You go to bed and I will sit up in your place," Pastor Ashkenaz replied. "Go down the street a few blocks to 14 Carrol Street where the elder of my church lives. Arouse him and tell him to come up and sit with me. That will relieve your friend to get a little rest, too."

A Dying Man

Pastor Ashkenaz knocked gently on the front door of the dimly lit house. The woman who let him in showed signs of much weeping. Deep lines of worry and tiredness etched themselves across her face.

She led the way to the corner where her husband reclined in a large chair. She lifted her hopeless eyes to Pastor Ashkenaz, which were again filling with unbidden tears.

"The doctor says he cannot possibly live till morning," she said. "He can speak only a word or two with labored breath."

Pastor Ashkenaz spoke softly, his kindly blue eyes taking in the whole scene at a glance. "Now, Mrs. Calhoun, I think I have some good counsel for you. Go lie down and go to sleep. Do get a little rest. You do not want to sit here and see your husband die."

"Oh, thank you, Pastor," the wife replied, "I am so weary." And with that she slipped out of the room.

Pastor Ashkenaz had other plans in mind, than appeared on the surface. Yes, he wanted her to get some much needed rest. But he also wanted to be alone with the dying man. He wanted no one there who might not have fulfilled the conditions to answered prayer. Like Jesus of old, he wanted to be sure that unbelieving hearts were not present. As Jesus had cautioned, "If thou canst believe, all things are possible to him that believeth." Again, "If thou wouldest believe, thou shouldest see the glory of God." (Mark 9:23 and John 11:40.)

Pastor Ashkenaz also sensed that the stakes were high. For a mean old neighbor to have called him—the very man who had cussed him out so many times—was a challenge to the truth of God and the mission of His servant. What would take place with the friend of that mean old man could affect many a life for years to come. It was a divine providence that called him at midnight to pray for a dying man, a man who would be visited in a few hours by the doctor with a death certificate.

The odor from the dripping fluid permeated the whole room and gave an atmosphere of death. The death pallor was upon the face of the sufferer in the chair. Pastor Ashkenaz lifted his heart to God in earnest prayer. The Holy Spirit filled him, bathing his soul in heavenly influence. "This is the occasion when I want to work," the Spirit seemed to say, as faith swept over his heart and soul. He seemed to sense in every nerve of his body that he was called to this home "for such a time as this."

Pastor Ashkenaz began to speak tenderly to the dying man—still conscious, still clinging to the thread of life, still hoping against hope that the next breath would not be his last.

"Bless the Lord, O my soul," began Pastor Ashkenaz, reading from Psalm 103:1-5. He began to speak of Him "who forgiveth all thine iniquities; who healeth all thy diseases" (Verse 3). The sufferer's attention

Foolish Prayers—Fabulous Answers

was fixed upon a God who heals; a Jesus who is the same today as two thousand years ago; a Jesus who never turns a deaf ear to a plea for help.

Pastor Ashkenaz cited examples of those who had been healed, like King Hezekiah, doomed to die immediately, but who was completely restored. Case after case of others who had no hope were cited to build the dying man's faith in a loving, healing, restoring Christ.

Then Pastor Ashkenaz opened the Bible to the book of James, chapter 5—the great healing chapter. It speaks of anointing with oil. It speaks of the sick being raised up. It speaks of confession of faults. It speaks of victory in Christ.

Looking kindly into the face of the dying man, Pastor Ashkenaz asked, "Why do you want to live?" Would the dying man say he wanted to live to make a little more money? Or would he say he wanted to become a success in politics, or industry, or some branch of learning? What would be his reply?

Pastor Ashkenaz sensed that on the basis of the dying man's answer he would, or would not, be able to pray the prayer of faith. In the fourth chapter of the book of James, the Apostle makes clear the reasons for God's not answering requests. He wrote under the spirit of inspiration: "Ye ask, and receive not, because ye ask amiss, that ye may consume it upon your lusts" (James 4:3).

There have been men and women, both youth and aged, who have asked for healing of body without having clearly in mind the glory of God and the blessing they can be to humanity. Some have actually been healed, only to live a miserable existence in sin and folly. The writer recalls a man he himself prayed for in his early ministry, without asking, "Why? Why do you want to be healed?" The man was healed. But the very first walk he took after his healing was back to the harlot with whom he had been living. So Pastor Ashkenaz showed wisdom, indeed, by asking the question, "Why? Why do you want to live?" And while the question itself was searching, yet the voice vibrated kindness, and no offense was taken.

A Reason to Live

Said the dying man: "I lived on a farm a few miles from here and farmed it with a son, my boy who is about twenty years old. We got into a fuss one day, and" Here his voice wavered, and tears came to his eyes as he continued, "I got angry and ran him off. After that, I came to this city to work in the shops as I could not farm it without my son. I want to return to my farm. And I want to get my boy back with me." The dying man's voice trembled as he haltingly continued, "I can't die with this trouble between that boy and me."

There is a promise. It goes like this: "What things soever ye desire, when ye pray, believe that ye receive them, and ye shall have them. And when ye stand praying, forgive, if ye have ought against any: that your Father also which is in heaven may forgive you" (Mark 11:24, 25). Here our Lord Jesus placed the spirit of reconciliation right in the midst of His instruction on prayer. As our favorite author has remarked: "To every promise there are conditions." Then adds, "The conditions met, the promise is unequivocal." *Education*, pp. 253, 258.

At this point, in relating his experience to me a few days ago, Pastor Ashkenaz exclaimed, "Brother, God will answer that kind of prayer!" I responded with two fervent "Amens." This is the very spirit of Calvary. There Jesus died to reconcile man to God. There it was that Jesus cried out, "Father, forgive them."

Now here was a man, entirely ignorant of the faith which we hold so precious, but he knew enough about the Gospel to feel the surgings of the Spirit compelling him to reconciliation.

Great Faith

As Pastor Ashkenaz read James, chapter 5, the dying man broke in and asked, "Do you think the Lord would do that for me?" Pastor Ashkenaz replied, "Yes! But do you think He will do it for you?"

Gaining new courage, and faith, and assurance, the dying man responded with a fervent, "Yes, I do." There are times, friends, when the Holy Spirit reveals clearly the will of God in regard to healing of the body. The general rule in praying for the sick is that since we do not know whether the sick have fulfilled the conditions for healing, we pray a prayer of commitment. We must not presume on God to do what He has promised when we ourselves refuse to do what He has laid out as conditions to answered prayer. But, while this is true, there is no question that at times the Holy Spirit teaches us what to ask for, and gives us in our very souls the assurance that this particular prayer is heaven-inspired. So it was with Pastor Ashkenaz and his church elder as they knelt beside the dying man.

Praying a prayer of faith, with a soul tingling with the presence of the Holy Spirit, Pastor Ashkenaz gently anointed the dying man with oil in the name of the Lord.

No sooner had Pastor Ashkenaz said his "Amen," than the man got right up from his chair, put his clothes and shoes on and walked over to the windowsill where were eight different medicines. He spoke with firm assurance. "I am going to wake my wife. But before I do so, I am going to take this medicine out of here, because she will say it is time to take my medicine. I have absolute faith that I am healed, that God has done it, and that it is permanent." With that, he opened the door and threw the medicine out into the snow.

Nearer My God

Pastor Ashkenaz began to sing his favorite healing song:

"Nearer, my God, to Thee, Nearer to Thee!
E'en though it be a cross That raiseth me!
Still all my song shall be, Nearer, my God, to Thee,
Nearer, my God, to Thee, Nearer to Thee."

He went on singing verse after verse of that grand old song:

"Though like a wanderer,
Daylight all gone, Darkness be over me,
My rest a stone.
Yet in my dreams I'd be
Nearer my God to thee."

The song seemed to fit the experience of the newly healed man. He had been a wanderer. Daylight was gone. Midnight had come to his soul. Now he longed for reconciliation with God and with his alienated son. Thus, "God . . . hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation" (2 Cor. 5:19).

7: Foolish prayer that the "ghost" may become host to a Returning Son

Not really foolish, because, "he is our peace, who hath made both one, and hath broken down the middle wall of partition between us." Eph. 2:14.

PASTOR ASHKENAZ actually sang five or six stanzas of the song, "Nearer My God to Thee." You may wish to look at some of these meaningful stanzas and observe how completely they seemed to fit the need of the healed man's soul, and how truly they depicted his experience that night in a cold, snowy December.

Foolish Prayers—Fabulous Answers

Mr. Calhoun walked to the bedroom door and called to his wife to come out. As she walked into the living room where the healing had taken place, she was almost beside herself. Pastor Ashkenaz said that she looked like a woman in a nightmare. She exclaimed, "Am I dreaming? Or having a nightmare? Or what?" Then looking at her husband she exclaimed, "What are you doing up walking around?" Turning to Pastor Ashkenaz she asked very excitedly, "Is this his ghost? Has he died?"

A peaceful smile lighted his face as Mr. Calhoun assured his wife, "It's me!" Then he related to her the story of his healing.

The chiming of the clock on the mantelpiece caused Pastor Ashkenaz to turn. "Five o'clock already," he said. "We must be going now."

"No, no. Not yet," Mr. Calhoun pleaded. "I will build a little fire in the kitchen stove and make some coffee. It's a cold morning, and we ought to drink something hot."

"Thank you, but we do not drink coffee," replied Pastor Ashkenaz.

"Populas tea then?" Mr. Calhoun suggested, referring to a drink of hot water with milk and sugar. "I will go and get some kindling," he added in a firm clear voice.

"Let me do it," Pastor Ashkenaz offered.

Mr. Calhoun would have none of it. He hurried to the closet and donned his cap, coat and scarf. His shining face and buoyant step showed his great joy in being healed and able to do things again. "No sir!" he said, "I'll do it myself."

At the chopping block he bent over the task of cutting kindling. In the midst of the task, the doctor's rig pulled up in front. The doctor came up the walk, exchanged a brief cheery, "Good Morning," and knocked on the front door.

"I just came from delivering a baby, so thought I would drop by," the doctor explained as he came into the living room and glanced at the now vacant chair in the corner.

Startled he asked, "Where is Mr. Calhoun?"

"Didn't you see him?" began Mrs. Calhoun. "He was out there cutting kindling."

"That was Mr. Calhoun!" A look of shock and great surprise registered on the doctor's face. "I thought it must be his twin brother. What has happened?"

"Let the man come in and tell you himself," Pastor Ashkenaz suggested.

In a moment Mr. Calhoun entered with his arms loaded with small wood and kindling. Seating himself before the doctor he related in a very moving way the power and love of God in his healing.

The doctor sat there dumfounded. The death certificate resting in his bag, which he had fully expected to sign for Mr. Calhoun, remained where it was.

The Outworking of God's Grace

In just a few days Mr. Calhoun and his family moved back to the farm.

Pastor Ashkenaz wrote a letter immediately to a Pastor McIntosh, who was holding a series of meetings nearby, and instructed him to visit the Calhoun family.

When Mr. Calhoun learned that Pastor McIntosh was a friend of Pastor Ashkenaz, he was cordially received into the home. All of the family still living at home, attended the meetings being held, and gave their hearts to Christ, uniting with the Sabbath-keeping church.

Foolish Prayers—Fabulous Answers

But the son, for whom the father was burdened--still estranged from his father--continued to remain away from home, unaware of the recent happenings in his family. Mr. Calhoun thought about it much and prayed for the son, and for wisdom to know how to become reconciled with him.

One day Mr. Calhoun called his family together.

"God has worked miraculously in my life to save me from death. Can't He now work on the mind of our boy and impress him to return to his home?" Mr. Calhoun spoke earnestly. "I believe He can, if we will but pray to this end."

The Word of God says, "The king's heart is in the hand of the Lord, as the rivers of water: he turneth it whithersoever he will" (Prov. 21:1). Why would not a God who changed the heart of the king in answer to the prayer of the Prophet Daniel (Dan. 10:12, 13), change the heart of the boy away from his father's home? "God is no respecter of persons" (Acts 10:34). Therefore, anything He ever has done in ages past, He will do again, under like circumstances and with like faith. Certainly we may consider every act of God as a promise for His agonizing, believing, obedient children today! What consolation! What comfort!

God's Spirit at Work

Brother Calhoun, his family, and a few friends knelt together in the sunny parlor of the homey farmhouse. All was still, save for the audible voice of each suppliant, and the ticking of the clock. In the midst of the prayers, three chimes rang out. Still the prayers went on, each person loathe to rise from his knees; each heart yearning after the alienated son.

At that moment, on a nearby farm, the son glanced behind to the neatly plowed furrow and ahead to the distant object which helped to keep the furrow straight. A strange uneasiness possessed him. An odd compulsion seized him, and nothing would shake it off. His mind became flooded with thoughts of home, of Mother and Sister, of Father--yes, Father. True, Father had chased him off the old home place, and the unkind words spoken that day just would not be erased. But somehow Father seemed the central figure just now. Home and Father were very important. What if something was wrong at home? Suppose they needed him? Well, he certainly couldn't just keep on plowing!

He raised the plow, turned the mules, and headed for the barn. The animals did not resist. They hurried forward, glad to be through for the day. As he drove the mules into the barn, the owner walked in behind him.

"Having trouble with the plow?" asked the farmer. "Has something gone wrong?"

"No, I have to go home," the youth replied simply.

"What do you mean, 'go home'?" the farmer demanded. "This is no time to close your work for the day."

"I know it, but something has happened, and I must go home."

"Oh, foolishness!" The farmer turned aside in disgust. "You are just emotional."

"No, it is not that," the boy insisted. "Something has happened and I must go home at once."

"But you can't just leave!" the farmer remonstrated. "I need you!"

All during the conversation, the boy tugged at the harnesses, placed implements where they belonged and returned the mules to their stall.

Gathering up a few belongings, the young man waved a cheery "Good-bye," leaving the farmer fuming in his backyard.

Return to Father's House

It could have been that the father had never read the promise in Jeremiah 24:6, 7: "For I will set mine eyes upon them for good, and I will bring them again to this land: and I will build them, and not pull them down; and I will plant them, and not pluck them up. And I will give them an heart to know me, that I am the Lord: and they shall be my people, and I will be their God: for they shall return unto me with their whole heart."

But he trusted just the same. What joy came to his heart as he beheld the answer to his prayer, moving rapidly down the road toward home, then to learn that the boy had been impressed to return home at the same hour the family had knelt in prayer was really exciting.

Needless to say, the boy also accepted the "commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus" (Rev. 14:12). The family became complete in Jesus and His last great message for a world dying in sin, malice, revenge and hatred.

Happy Sequel

But this is not the end of the story. As Pastor Ashkenaz related this experience to me, he handed me a letter postmarked February 10, 1970. The signature was unfamiliar, but the letter brought joy to his heart.

"Dear Brother and Sister Ashkenaz," it began. "In the 'Reaper' [the weekly organ of the Central Union Conference], we saw your anniversary pictures. Congratulations, both on the sixty-fifth wedding anniversary, and the birthday [his ninety-first]."

"Brother Ashkenaz, I am wondering if you are the same minister who was with an Elder Martin of Springfield, Missouri, in about 1908, or 1909, that came to our house and anointed my father, Mr. Calhoun, and he got up from the chair, in which he was dying, and poured his medicines out on the ground."

The writer was Mrs. Vickers, a daughter of Mr. Calhoun. She expressed her happiness in the knowledge of God's truth. Married to a minister, together they had spent many years in the service of the Lord they love. Five generations now proclaim a risen Christ, with several grandsons entering the ministry. She ends her letter with these words: "So we thank God for all these experiences, and the way He has led us."

Surely, "What hath God wrought!" Numbers 23:23.

8: Foolish prayer for a Disintegrated Knee

Not really foolish, because he still had a special mission in life, assigned by Him who has given "to every man his work." Mark 13:34.

OH, GOD, please, please save my life! My knee! My leg! I thank Thee I have received." * Detailed in the following two chapters.

The anguished cry, uttered in a hoarse whisper, broke the quiet of the darkened house. Only a small light burned by the sofa where the sufferer lay. The ticking of a large mantel clock gave the room a lonesome sound.

To Joe Ashkenaz, the night seemed an eternity. The fate of the swollen knee, was the all consuming object of his prayers--almost, that is. Questions loomed up in his mind, begging for answers. And yet Joe felt a quiet assurance that God still loved and cared for him, though the last few years had brought anything but an outward evidence.

Foolish Prayers—Fabulous Answers

Again he prayed. "The devil is wrong. He has tried to make me believe You forsook me in the matter of the turkeys, and the chickens, and . . ." Joe lay back on his pillow and reviewed the past.

A Crushing Blow

The problems really began in the thirties, during the depression. First, he lost his job. The problem this misfortune posed, that of caring for a large family, did not affect his spiritual life. He determined to remain firm at all costs.

Finding a farm available in the area, he leased it for three years, at \$300 a year, and began farming. Four sturdy work horses, several husky sons, and a will to work, completed Joe's resources. They began with a large flock of turkeys, and Joe's wife faithfully cared for them.

But things were tight and the market was poor. Joe searched for some time endeavoring to find a way to sell the turkeys.

One day, Joe sat at the counter in the main restaurant in town. Soon the problem was being related to the friendly proprietor.

"Tell you what I'll do," he said. "I'll dress your turkeys and sell them for you at a commission."

Joe leaned forward eagerly. "You will?" he asked. The arrangements were quickly completed to have the turkeys brought to town.

"Let's see," mused Joe, when the last turkey had been safely corralled inside the truck. "That should bring about \$300, if I figure rightly. More than enough to pay for the feed and a good profit for our work." A satisfied smile played across his face.

Harvest time kept Joe and his boys busy from early morning until late at night. Days sped by and Joe barely had time to read the card which arrived in the mail one day. It bore the signature of the restaurant owner.

"The turkeys have been dressed and sold," he wrote. "I have deposited \$315 in the bank in my name until you can come in to pick it up."

More than a week elapsed before Joe found time to make a trip to town. When he did, he found the owner of the restaurant very ill. He had suffered a stroke of apoplexy, and after lingering for several days, he died, without ever being able to give Joe the money which rightfully belonged to him. When the estate was settled, Joe received a letter in the mail, a letter containing the returns from the turkey deal.

"\$16.50!! Is that all?" Joe didn't know whether he could even believe his eyes. Surely there must be some mistake, but no mistake had been made. The turkeys were a loss.

And Chickens Too!!

Contented little murmurs came from the tiny chicks huddled under the brooders. "Do you think they'll be alright in this cold weather?" asked Martha.

"I believe so," Joe replied. "Everything is working fine. We should see some good returns from this fine flock of a thousand."

And the prospects looked better every day. The chicks were a very healthy batch, and barring an unheard of situation like the one which took the turkey profit, surely this time they would be able to see a little cash for their labors.

"How about you and the boys singing for us tonight at the meeting?" a neighbor asked one day several months later. "We do enjoy that quartette you have going. Nothing can beat family harmony!"

Foolish Prayers—Fabulous Answers

"It is a real pleasure for us to sing for the Lord," Joe replied. "I think we can arrange to be there."

"We'll count on you then. Bye now."

The hour was late when the family arrived home that night. Everyone hurried off to bed, after a glance at the clock. A farmer's day begins early.

The next morning Joe stood at the kitchen window, where a movement caught his attention.

"Chickens, running around in the yard," he muttered half to himself. "Breakfast will have to wait a bit, Martha," he said. "Harold, come out and help a bit, will you? Some chickens got out in the night."

"Wonder how that happened. Say, look Dad. The door to the chicken yard is open! What in the world!"

Harold walked past the wandering chickens, intent on solving the mystery of the stray chickens.

Joe walked warily behind him, almost afraid to look in the chicken house. A strange foreboding told him all was not well.

"Dad! They're all gone! The only chickens left are those few in the yard!" Harold's face showed dismay and alarm.

"Appears like we had company in the night," Joe added. "Look here. See the marks of the truck tires. Someone figured it would be a good time to steal our flock while we were all gone to the meeting."

Father and son strode thoughtfully back to the house. The turkeys! And now, the chickens! Would the troubles ever cease?

A Modern Job

"Dolly is just getting too smart." Joe closed the corral gate behind the mare. "She's been getting out of that gate too many times to suit me!"

"Here, let me fix it, Dad." Harold tinkered with the latch a bit, disappeared into the barn and returned with more tools. "She must have more than horse sense," he grunted while he struggled to make the latch horse-proof. "There, that should do it!"

Joe nodded approvingly. "Looks like it should. Come. Mother has supper ready."

Harold rubbed the ears of the lovely saddle horse who put her nose inquiringly on his neck. "Yes, Dolly, you're a beautiful thing. But you must stay put."

The next morning, Joe and his son walked thoughtfully about the barnyard. They didn't bother to look up when the screen door slammed shut. "Say, what in the world is going on?" The usually boisterous Paul slowed to a halt and stood as if struck dumb. He looked from his father to his brother, and back to the four objects so still on the ground.

"Poison grain," Joe stated, pointing to the ripped bag of feed. "I begged the landlord to not leave it around here at all. I was always afraid one of the children would get into it."

"But how did they get at it?" Paul asked.

"Dolly and her lock picking, I suspect," Harold answered. "I had hoped my repair would hold her."

"What ever will we do with three of our work horses dead?" Paul looked at the three husky draft horses lying not far from Dolly.

"Well, we still have one left. Old Rex didn't play follow-the-leader with the rest. We'll have to get along with him as best we can." Joe walked with stooped shoulders toward the house. He felt sorely tempted to sit in a pile of ashes, clothed in sackcloth, for his trials were becoming increasingly like those of Job.

And Lightning Too!!

The task of burying the horses done, Joe and his boys struggled to carry on the farmwork with just one horse instead of four.

One day, dark clouds boiled across the sky, sending the farmers scurrying for the house. A gust of wind slammed the door behind them as Joe and his sons rushed into the kitchen, just as big drops of rain began to fall.

"The rain wouldn't hurt us any," Joe told his sons, as they warmed their hands by the kitchen fire. "But a thunderstorm is no time to hang around out in the open."

A brilliant flash of lightning punctuated his sentence. "Whew! That must have hit close!" he added.

The clap of thunder which followed burst over their heads and seemed to envelop the little farmhouse. Windows rattled and the floor beneath their feet shook with the vibrations. Rain fell in torrents, filling the gutters, and drenching the yard faster than it could run off.

After a few minutes the drops were smaller, and the shower began to subside. Suddenly, the sun burst forth, and the storm had ended as quickly as it began. Joe and the boys walked out onto the back porch to look at the dripping, freshly washed world.

"Say, Paul. See that white spot up on the hillside? Run up and see what it is, will you?" Joe pointed out a white blob which no one could remember noticing there before.

The rest of them waited while Paul took off running for the pasture. He paused only a minute when he reached it, turned and came back to his waiting family.

"It's Rex," he said. "He's dead."

"Just as I feared," replied Joe. "He must have caught the lightning."

The Unreasonable Landlord

The news of the death of the last work horse, traveled quickly all over the community. When the story reached the landlord from whom Joe was leasing the farm, he drove over without delay.

"I hear your last horse caught a bolt of lightning!" the owner stated, hands on his hips. "What do you have left to work the place?" he queried.

"I don't rightly know," Joe answered. "But somehow we'll farm it. Just give us a chance."

9: Foolish prayer for Wisdom regarding a \$50,000 offer

Not really foolish, because it is an offense to "do evil, that good may come." Romans 3:8.

"I SEE NO way you can make a go of it now," the owner shook his head. "I think you had better find another place to live so I can get someone in here who can pay when the time comes."

"But it isn't time for a payment yet," Joe pleaded. "Surely you can give us time and let us at least try."

"Sorry. Better start looking for another house. The risk is too great. I need my money when it is due."

"I will give you a couple of weeks to find a place," he added as he climbed into his car.

Foolish Prayers—Fabulous Answers

Joe watched the dust rising after the rapidly receding car, and shook his head in disbelief. The whole thing just wasn't reasonable!

The story of Joe's misfortune traveled from home to home. Joe's Baptist friends, where he formerly worshipped as a member, heard the story. A couple of evenings later, two of the deacons came to call on him.

"We've come to make a proposition to you," one said. "We know you believe a little differently now than you used to. But it doesn't matter that you are a Seventh-day Adventist. We would be happy to have you folk in our parsonage, and pleased to have you serve as our pastor."

Joe looked up in surprise. "I can't do that," he said. "You are very kind, but it would be impossible for me to accept your offer."

"But, Joe, think it over carefully. We need you, and you need us. Consider the needs of your family. The parsonage is large and well built. How about it?"

Pastor Ashkenaz' clear blue eyes gazed unseeingly past the two Baptist deacons before him. Thoughts churned in his mind. And through it all, his heart stretched up to God in inaudible prayer. "Help me, Lord, to make the right decision."

Clearly he could see that he could not become a Baptist pastor, receiving money for his services. How could he maintain his own integrity? The truths of the Word of God, as he believed them, were contrary to the beliefs of the Baptist people. If he should accept money, they would rightly expect him to say what they wanted him to say. No, he must remain free. But the matter of the house

"Tell you what I'll do," he said suddenly. "I cannot be your pastor. But I believe God has led you here to provide for our needs just now. And He knows we need a house. We accept your offer of a house, but I cannot accept any pay. I will preach for you on Sundays and help you in any way I can in Sunday School."

The two deacons smiled at one another, then at Joe. "Agreed," they said together.

Faithful in the Baptist Church

The next five years passed uneventfully. During the week, Pastor Joe worked at the building trade, his income supplemented only by milk from a kind Baptist neighbor, and vegetables from their own garden. On Sundays he preached in the little Baptist church. It was a little church too--at first, that is. The Sunday School Roster boasted of fifty people who gathered from week to week. Gradually it began to grow. Pastor Joe became well loved, for he never entered into controversy with the brethren, and always respected their interpretation of the Scriptures. Oftentimes he had occasion to visit in the homes of the members. When asked about his Sabbath belief, he kindly presented the doctrines of God's Word.

One day, one of the elders in the church came to visit Joe.

"Tell me, will you, why you observe the seventh day as the Sabbath?" he queried.

"I'll be happy to do so," Joe replied. "Sit down, and I will get a couple of Bibles." The next hour, Joe showed the Baptist elder some of the basic texts and reasons for Sabbath observance.

"Wonderful!" the elder exclaimed. "It all sounds very reasonable to me, and right from the Bible."

"There is more," Joe replied.

"I'll be back next week," the elder promised. He came back three more times. After the fourth study, he looked at Joe for a long minute. "I'm both happy and sad," he said. "I believe what you have shown me. I cannot be your elder any longer in the Baptist church. I must join with you in the Adventist church." Joe warmly shook the hand of his new fellow believer.

Foolish Prayers—Fabulous Answers

At the end of five years, the roster of the Baptist church stood at three hundred and fifty. The church continued to prosper under Joe's able ministry.

A Tempting Offer

One day one of the leading officials in the Baptist denomination came to see Joe.

"I'd like to have you attend our convention next week," he began. "I think you would enjoy it."

"I would be happy to go," Joe replied.

But a surprise awaited Joe at the assembly. Motions were being made, and business carried forward, when this same leader stood to his feet.

"Mr. Chairman, I would like to make a motion that we grant a ministerial license to our brother, Joe Ashkenaz."

"I second the motion," came from another portion of the room, without hesitation.

After the meeting, another surprise came to Joe. A ministerial official walked up to him and engaged him in conversation.

"I understand you are a very able speaker," he began. "I think you should hold some meetings. We have a tent you may use. The denomination is ready to stand behind you with \$10,000 to finance the meetings. What do you say?"

"You folk don't have as much money as I would need," Joe answered.

"How much money do you need?" the minister wanted to know.

"Oh, you don't have that much money. So there is no use talking about it."

"But how much is it?" he insisted.

"It would take \$50,000 for what I would need. And you folk don't have that kind of money." Joe felt sure the matter would be settled completely with the announcement of this grand sum.

For a moment the Baptist official didn't say anything, only fumbled in his coat pockets. Presently he drew out a roll of Kodak stocks and bonds, worth \$50,000!

How Joe would have loved to have used that money to preach the truth of God as he understood it. But he shook his head, as he said, "I'm sorry, friend. I cannot conscientiously take your money to preach for your church." And there the matter ended.

One Little Screw

One cold, windy day several months later, Joe offered to ride in the back of a truck which he and his son and brother-in-law had just loaded with household belongings of his son. He felt it should be steadied, so he jumped up into the back to watch things. But he forgot about a screw protruding from the back of a dresser. It stuck out in just the right place to plunge clear to the bone in Joe's knee as he leaped against it.

That night he went to bed with a very painful knee wrapped in an automatic heating pad. By morning he was very ill and the doctor was called.

All day the doctor and Joe's wife treated the knee with iodine compresses and good nursing care. By evening the knee had swollen to large proportions--ten inches above, and ten inches below the knee. After inspecting the knee in the evening, his doctor called a specialist.

A Christian Surgeon

The specialist, who came, happened to be a good friend of Joe's. Not only that, but he loved the Lord, and showed it by his life.

Carefully this Godly man looked at the offending knee. "I'm sorry, Joe, you are going to have to be operated on. There is no way out of it."

But Joe would not give up that easily. "First, Brother, would you do me a favor?" Pointing to the puffy leg before him, Joe said, "Would you drain that all out of there?"

The surgeon gladly complied with his request. Without benefit of anesthesia, he lanced the knee on either side and drained out a copious amount of pus. After this was done, he discovered the seriousness of the situation even more.

"Look here," began the surgeon, the joint water is all gone. The joint is completely eaten away. The ligament is no larger than a match stick."

Even this information did not discourage Joe. Turning to the doctor, he made a request strange to the ears of the doctor. "Brother George, will you do me a favor? Will you join with me in prayer tonight?"

Surprised, the doctor answered, "I'm a surgeon."

"Yes, I know, and you are a good Christian, too, Brother George. And you can't turn me down. Before you go to bed tonight, will you and your wife kneel down and pray that God will heal me? And if you wake up in the night, think of me and pray for me again."

Think of that! Asking his surgeon to unite with him in prayer.

"I'll do that," he promised. Then asked, "And in the morning, do you want me to still pray?"

"Yes, but change your prayer. When you get up in the morning just thank God that He did it. "

"You believe that?" asked the doctor incredulously.

"Yes. I have confidence that God will heal me."

There you have it. Exactly what we are teaching. Joe had confidence enough to ask, to believe, and to claim the promise, by returning thanks for the healing, even before the visible proof. The godly surgeon did the same.

This happened years ago, before we began gathering the material and teaching these classes on the ABC's of prayer. The principle has been existent all the time. God loves to hear that kind of prayer. It is true that in praying for the sick we offer a petition of commitment, because we do not know to what extent the sufferer has set his face in the direction of conformity to the conditions set down in the Word of God. On the other hand, there are times when the Holy Spirit seems to speak clearly, "I will heal him" (Isa. 57:19). This was one of those times.

10: Foolish prayer for guidance from the mysterious Angel Visitor

Not really foolish, if he would follow the counsel of the angel to "enter into controversy with no man," by obeying the Bible command, "Do all things without murmurings and disputings." Phil. 2:14.

Foolish Prayers—Fabulous Answers

JOE FELT his attention drawn from the throbbing knee outstretched before him, to a rustle in the doorway. What he saw caused him to raise slightly, his eyes riveted on the form of one he had never seen before. Everyone else in the house had long since gone to bed. Who now was this?

The being, about eight feet tall, who entered the living room, stooped to avoid hitting his head on the door casing. No one Joe knew, needed to do that. Joe felt no fear at the sudden appearance of his 2:00 a.m. visitor. But he was curious.

"Who are you?" he asked.

"I am an angel. You have stood the test. I have come to heal you," the tall stranger answered, seating himself beside the sofa where Joe lay, and placing his hand on the swollen knee.

Immediately Joe made an effort to get up. "I'm going to get up and dress," he said. "I have some things to ask you."

Angel Medication

But the angel restrained Joe, saying, "Now the doctor will be here in the morning. He will want to drain that knee again, but don't you let him touch it. In Ecclesiastes 3:14, God says that whatever He does is done forever. You cannot add to it or take away from it. Don't let anyone touch that knee. Leave it alone."

To further impress Joe with the importance of the method of healing to be used, the angel continued, "How did you get that leg in the first place? How did you come into the world?"

"In a bag of fluid," Joe promptly answered, not really knowing why he said it.

"Right," the angel responded.

"This leg will fill up with fluid. When this fluid is all absorbed by nature, you will have a new leg, just like the leg of a boy. Your leg is healed, but it will take time for it to be restored.

"Do you remember anything about the story of Gideon?" the angel continued.

"Why, yes. I remember about the fleece and the dew," Joe answered.

"That was a wonderful thing, wasn't it?" queried his visitor.

Joe promptly replied, "Most wonderful!"

"No, not the most wonderful," corrected the angel. "The fleece experience was very insignificant in comparison with what Gideon did. It was a sign to Gideon that he was chosen of God to deliver Israel from the Midianites. The main thing was that deliverance."

"Yes, I remember that," responded Joe.

"This healing, likewise, is a very insignificant thing compared to the real reason for my coming."

Real Purpose of Angel Visit

Joe looked at his visitor with new interest. "Tell me about that," he said.

"You are dedicated, and chosen like John the Baptist, the Voice in the Wilderness. You are like Jeremiah, who, even before he was born, was dedicated to a particular work. I am coming to tell you that heaven has dedicated you to a specific work."

"What is that work?" Joe asked eagerly.

Foolish Prayers—Fabulous Answers

"That you will live to be here to help proclaim the last warning message to this world. Let me tell you this," the angel emphasized. "You are healed. Don't let the devil beat you out of it. It took time for you to be formed before you were born, and the restoring of your knee will take time the same way. Your work now is to tell the world of Christ's soon coming."

One question still burned in Joe's heart, that he now found opportunity to ask. "I have a question I want to ask you. Should I have taken the \$50,000 offered me by the Baptists and used it to preach the truth?"

"No, Joe. When the time comes for you to take part in the closing work, you will know it."

With this, the angel left. In one month, Joe's leg was functioning as well, or better, than before—completely restored.

Impressive Dream

About seventeen years passed by. Many times Joe wondered how he fit into God's plan to give God's special message. Often he pleaded with the Lord: "You have said I am to help give the final warning. Just what does that include?"

Finally, one night, the Lord answered by giving him a dream. He seemed to be attending a General Conference session. In this dream, Elder Daniels was president, and came to him with a request.

"I understand," he said to Joe, "that in your tabernacle meetings, your advertising is different from many other men. I hear you advertise that during the first week, you will speak extemporaneously on any topic the audience may give you. I have never heard you do that. Is it true?"

"Yes, I do preach that way," Joe replied. And it was true. In real life he did preach, many times, with no foreknowledge of the subject to be requested.

In his dream, Elder Daniels continued, "We would like to have you speak before our General Conference brethren on some topic, extemporaneously."

Joe, in his dream, endeavored to reason his way out of the thing, stating he was an obscure preacher, etc. But Elder Daniels insisted, and even tried to tell him what topic he wished him to discuss.

"Wait!" and Joe held up his hand for silence. "Give me the topic tonight, after you have introduced me. If you give it to me now, it will not be extemporaneous. I would have enough material for five sermons by the time the meeting begins."

That night he was introduced, as scheduled, and given the topic—one which had been the topic of some controversy, and not too clearly understood. In his dream he presented the topic forcefully. While he was explaining one verse, Elder Daniels interrupted him by asking, "Now, Brother, do you have any additional light on that one phrase in that text? We have never dealt with that phrase because we have not understood it."

Without hesitation, Joe turned in his Bible to the Psalms. "Yes," he said, "the answer is right here." And he named the text of Scripture which fit perfectly. Most amazing of all, Joe himself had not known the text was there until he used it in his dream sermon.

Joe Ashkenaz was thrilled when he awoke. He realized the terrific import of the dream, and the explanation of a little understood subject. He also remembered the caution of the angel. "You will know when you are to have a definite part in the proclamation of the last warning message. Enter into controversy with no man."

Several times Joe did have opportunity to present before his brethren the material given him in that dream. At that time it seemed to be foolishness itself, and it was rejected by some who heard. Joe

humbly withdrew. He would not circulate a resume of his views when circulating them could cause controversy. Patiently he waited for further word and development of circumstances.

Finally his daughter-in-law pleaded to have permission to mimeograph a few copies for certain people. For awhile Joe insisted they be kept in the background. Later he consented for her to print a limited number.

One day a man came to the printers to have some work done and noticed the material that was being done for Joe's daughter-in-law. He happened to be an important man from the Orient who was even then organizing ten archeological diggings in that part of the world.

"What is this?" he questioned. "This looks interesting. How can I get copies for myself?"

The printer gave him the name of Joe's daughter-in-law and he wrote asking for a complete copy of the writing. She gladly sent it to him. A few days later he wrote again requesting ten more copies. He also told of his ten projects in the Orient, and how he desired a copy for each group.

Joe sat in thought a long time when his daughter-in-law confronted him with the request for ten copies of the material to be given to a stranger. He knelt in prayer and laid it all out before the Lord.

"Dear Lord, You know I want to follow Your leading. I do not want to create controversy. What is it that You want me to do? Am I to allow these printed copies to be distributed? Will it cause trouble to our people? Lord, show me the way. I am ready to follow Thy bidding. I thank Thee for Thy leading."

Another Dream

Only a few nights later, Joe dreamed a very strange dream. Answering a knock at the door, he greeted a man dressed in foreign garb, and the odd little hat on his head sported a red tassel. Since a convention was going on at that time in the town, Joe supposed the man to be someone visiting for the purpose of the convention.

"Are you sure you have the right house?" Joe asked in his dream.

"Yes, we are sure. We would like to come in and talk to you."

Joe stepped back to allow him to enter. The strange appearing man came through the door, and then it was that Joe noticed the others with him, dressed in a similar style. They crowded into the room, into the kitchen, and up the stairway.

Joe looked into the strange faces clustered about him.

"What is this all about?" he asked.

One man spoke up. "Well, we have a spokesman here." Then it was that an angel entered the room.

"Say, I have met you before," Joe said. "But I don't know your name. You didn't tell me."

"That is not important," the angel replied.

"I'm not worthy for you to come here," Joe stated, for he felt very humble to think that God would send a messenger two times to visit with him. "I have made so many mistakes."

"Well, you realize it, and like David, you have repented of all of them. Your record is clear and your dedication still stands. I have come to tell you something. Go ahead and let your daughter-in-law put out the little brochure. Have it copyrighted and give a pen name as Ashkenaz [meaning, 'the fire that burns']."

The angel gave further instructions to which Joe listened carefully. These instructions are important for every child of God to whom God has given special revelation.

"Never enter into controversy," he directed. "Be faithful in everything that the Lord reveals to you. The Lord can use you if you will follow these instructions.

"Now, you don't know any of these people, do you?"

And the angel made a sweeping gesture toward the crowd of foreigners wedged into his little home.

"No, I don't," Joe said.

"That book will go to the Orient, and you will meet these people who stand before you tonight, when you reach the kingdom. Don't be afraid to give the booklets to the man from the Orient."

To Every Man His Work

There are many of our readers who have never had such a signal revelation of God's mission for their lives. But Jesus said He has given "to every man his work." Mark 13:34. It has been our experience that to fulfill our particular mission, gives meaning and purpose to life.

Dr. George Crane has written that, for even an individual who has retired from active service, to sit around idly, usually spells for him pain, sickness and gloominess. But those individuals who keep the vision of service for others before them, as a rule, relish far more, every day of their lives. This is because our Lord has assigned to every heart a special mission. And happiness is found in fulfilling that mission with Jesus (Psalm 16:11). The time to discover that mission is early in life. The time to continue that mission is throughout life. The time to close that mission is the close of life.

The enemy of our souls will do all within his power to discourage, or to sidetrack us, from the real work, the mission, the Holy Spirit has assigned to us. How many have felt that a part of their mission in life is to belittle, or condemn others! Let the word of the angel speak to every heart, "Never enter into controversy."

The Would-Be Rapist Experience

This experience and those in the two chapters following, took place in California by people whom we know personally. The near-victim of the would-be rapist is the wife of a dear fellow minister with whom we held an ABC prayer series a year ago. He often repeated, "I shall be an ABC preacher the rest of my life."

Don't you believe we are now entering upon a glorious period of earth's history, when we may expect heaven to reach out its arm in signal blessings even as in the olden days?

The Authors

11: Foolish prayer for deliverance from a would-be Rapist

Not really foolish, for multitudes still needed her ministry,
and "my God shall supply all your need. " Phil. 4:19.

JUST DO what I say, lady, and you won't get hurt.' My blood chilled. Yet, I really couldn't believe this was happening to me.

Foolish Prayers—Fabulous Answers

"My retort was, 'You've got to be kidding!' He poked a gun very firmly into my side, and I got the message real quick-he wasn't kidding."

Have you ever wondered what you would do if someone would stick a gun in your ribs and tell you to start moving? Probably there aren't very many people living in this day and age that haven't mentally considered the possibility of something like this happening.

Rosemary, a minister's wife, had been visiting in Visalia, California, with her aunt who had recently lost her husband. That afternoon she had called Rosemary to tell her that she was leaving the very next morning for her home. She had been gone three weeks, and was now anxious to get back home. "I could sense," Rosemary told us, "that she was very lonely and knew that I must go over and spend some time with her. My home was approximately twenty miles from there. So I assured her that I would come over right away.

"Aunt Lil had suffered a real shock in finding my uncle dead three weeks earlier, when she had returned home from work. She still preferred not to be alone. This particular afternoon, her brother and his wife, with whom she had been staying, were gone and the house seemed larger than usual. In her loneliness and desperation, she had called me.

"We had such a fine visit, that lovely April afternoon, and I stayed later than I had anticipated. In fact, I stayed until one of the family members came home, which was about 8:15 p.m. Now, feeling that Aunt Lil would not mind, I took my leave and started for home. Thoughts of the afternoon conversation filled my mind. We had talked much about my uncle. My mother had been his sister, and they both had been very positive, plucky people. Reminiscing over their strong family traits somehow seemed to give me strength, too. I inwardly hoped I had the same kind of stamina.

"There is a very lovely shopping center on the road home. So I decided to stop and buy a couple of presents which I needed to purchase. After all, this would save me a forty mile trip the next day.

"I selected the two gifts and had them wrapped. Business was rather slow at this time of night, but there were people around. As I started for the door of the large department store, I observed that it was closing time. The clerks were just beginning to cover up their merchandise. I spoke to the young man who was attending the door. He let me out, and the door was locked! How many times I have done this before, as I am sure many other women have. We think nothing of shopping in the evenings, and the shopping centers stay open to accommodate us.

"Opening the back door of my car, I placed the two wrapped gifts on the seat, then slid into the front seat and closed the door. Just as I was putting the key in the ignition, a man swiftly opened the door on the passenger side and got in. As he did so, he said, 'Just do what I say, lady, and you won't get hurt.'

"The whole thing seemed so unreal. Here I was in real trouble and not a soul in the parking lot. I looked around, but could not see anyone. Surely someone would come. And he figured so, too. He really started pressuring me now, and poking me harder with the gun. I argued. I fought. I did everything I could think of to stall. All to no avail. Thinking I could perhaps get to a service station, or some other place where I could get help, I finally started the car. Nowadays people are so afraid to get involved that it is a real risk to even ask for help.

"You can imagine the many thoughts that started racing through my mind. Maybe I could run into the glass door of Penny's department store. No, I must not hurt anyone. Maybe I could run into this car coming toward me, and just sideswipe it. But no, that might not be a good idea either. Maybe my accident would be worse than I would anticipate. And anyway, he could just jump out and run, and there I would be trying to explain to the people in the other car, and the police, why I had run into a car. So that idea wouldn't work.

Foolish Prayers—Fabulous Answers

"He directed me out of the parking lot the dark way, and as I left those empty, parked cars, something just went out of me. He directed me down a street that I did not know. It was dark and not much traveled. Finally, I asked him what he wanted of me. Thinking that perhaps he had chosen my car for a 'get-away' car in a holdup really scared me. But his plan for me was much different. And to me it seemed far worse. I had heard of women who had been kidnapped as I had, and taken to dark, uninhabited places, used and left, or worse yet, killed. All of these thoughts raced as I tried to decide what to do. He told me in a very plain four-letter word what he wanted!

"I had prayed, of course, silently all through the ordeal, when I wasn't talking. The threats that he was making to kill me if I did not quit resisting and fighting with him over the gun did not scare me as much as you might think. I made up my mind right there that if my time had come and Jesus was ready to let me rest until His return, I was ready to go that way. I could never submit to this man. He was now telling me that he had taken the safety lock off the gun and that any more resisting on my part would mean death for me. I remember crying out, 'O God,' in my agony. However, he did not know that was part of my prayer. At that moment, Philippians 4:19 came into my mind in a way that I shall never forget. 'But my God shall supply all your need according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus.' My need was for help!

"We had reached the end of the road and he directed me to turn left. Of course I had stopped at the stop sign, so was not speeding. Just to my right, was the most beautiful sight I have ever seen in my life. A lovely ranch-type house spread out before me with every light on, it seemed. In front was a circular drive. I knew now what I must do. Previously I had asked God for wisdom and for help. I am so thankful that claiming promises has become a part of my life, because it was just as natural as breathing for me to ask God for help, and to tell Him that I knew He was giving it to me, and to thank Him for it. I swerved across that circular driveway, partly on the lawn, and blew my horn steadily. Later I found out that I had actually bent the chrome strip on the horn! The people in the house were startled to say the least. The lady came running to the window and saw the man jump from my running car. He had not said another word to me after directing me to turn left. Jumping over the fence he ran out into their orchard, leaving the car door standing open. The lady of the house ran to open her front door, thinking that there had been an accident down the road. She thought the man was my husband and that he had run back to help the people!

"I screamed for her to call the police, that this man was not my husband, but a man who had forced me to drive there. Then she was really scared, too. In fact, she was so frightened that she didn't even see the number she had placed on her phone for such emergencies but just called the operator for help. She had not invited me into her house, but ran back to the phone, closing the door as she went! Now, what was I to do? Weren't they even going to let me in, away from this man? The thought that he could shoot me at any time from the orchard where he had hidden didn't make matters any better. In fact, I was a 'sitting duck' in that automobile.

"Just then, the man of the house came out into the breezeway, and I mustered up enough courage to run to him. As I turned back to look at the car, I couldn't help but be amused. There it sat with both front doors open, as if it were a great bird about to take off. I had left the light on and my billfold on the seat. Fortunately, however, I had the presence of mind to take the keys with me as I ran.

"It took the police twenty to twenty-five minutes to come the three miles from town. There must have been four police cars. The big problem was that they were so long in coming that the gunman had made his getaway.

"An interesting thing happened about two hours later. A man answering the same description, who appeared to have been running very hard, knocked on the Deputy District Attorney's office door--on the

same street, only nearer to town--and asked for a drink of water, at gunpoint. He was not caught there either. The paper bore the headline--'Would-Be Rapist Flees When Woman Honks Horn.' "

Rosemary's God-given mission, plus her firm faith in God's promises, spelled escape on that threatening road in California. Many dear souls, including the members of the church of which her husband was pastor, still needed her ministry of love.

12: Foolish prayer that expects God to be interested in a small item, such as a Home for a Minister

Not really foolish, because of the promise, "All these things shall be added." Matt. 6:33.

I AM DESPERATELY tired looking for a house! This seems like an impossible situation. But no, it can't be hopeless; for hadn't we left all in God's hands, and sought His guidance? Yes, we had. So somewhere there was an answer to our need for a home in this new place of labor for the Master." So spoke Bertha, wearily.

Sympathetically we listened, as Bertha continued. "My preacher husband had accepted a transfer to a new pastorate. We had been house-hunting for days now, and just could not find anything. Besides that, rents were `out of sight.' Low in spirits, we felt we were just at the end of our rope.

"At the beginning of our search, we had come in contact with a very gracious lady real estate broker. She was delightful, and we spent many interesting hours in her company, searching for `our' house. She was understanding and patient, being careful to show us all the possibilities. They were all either too small, too dirty, or too high priced! She was now at the end of her rope, too, because she was out of houses to show.

"With the world in the condition it is, we pondered whether we should buy again, or just rent-that is, if we could even find a decent house. We had prayed that God would show us which way to go-rent, or buy.

"As the `looking' progressed, it became quite clear that we would have to rent. Our lovely home in the former pastorate stood waiting for someone to buy it. But without the equity from our own home, we could hardly buy another.

"Sitting in the real estate office, we made a rather dejected looking pair. My husband and I were seated by the lady's desk while she went to the back part of the office to eat her lunch. It was around 2:30 in the afternoon, and she had not yet had time to eat.

"I sat there, looking out of the window at the traffic, and with renewed inward fervor began to pray silently that God would take over and find us a place. Our needs have always been taken care of. I knew He would not let us down now. And especially so, because about a year before this, both my husband and I had decided that we must first seek `the kingdom of God' more diligently. Thus, we could rightfully expect more from Him. We had studied the ABC's of Bible Prayer, and had learned how to call upon God, claiming His promises.

"While I sat there recounting His promises, particularly the one found in Philippians 4:19, where God promises to supply all our needs `according to his riches,' our lady fairly shouted, `I know the place!' I thought she was talking with her secretary, as we had heard her dictating while she was eating her lunch. So I didn't pay any attention to what she was saying. Thinking that we had not heard her, she repeated, `I know the place!' This time we both turned in her direction. She began describing a place that just the previous week she had turned over to another realtor, because it was out of her territory. Her description of the place sounded like nothing she had yet been able to show us. We decided to go

Foolish Prayers—Fabulous Answers

and look. But just before we took off, she decided to call and inquire the price of the rent. When she relayed the message to us, my heart sank, and I mentally crossed off that place. But we decided to go and look at it anyway.

As we drove near the location, and I got the first glimpse of the house, I knew I would like it. It was a two-story structure, with a lovely purple bougainvillea shrub climbing halfway up the front. I think neither my husband nor I looked too hard, because we knew we could never afford that house. As we had suspected, it was just what we had been looking for, and with a swimming pool in the back yard as a bonus! To our surprise, our gracious 'guide' exclaimed, 'Don't give up! I have an idea.' I could not imagine what she could do to change this hopeless situation, but was certainly willing to let her try her 'idea.'

"After several phone calls, including one to the owner in New York, she presented us with an offer. If we would keep up the yard (which was sadly neglected because the house had been empty for quite some time), and if we would be willing to show the house by appointment to any prospective buyer, we could lease the house on a month to month basis with rent at a \$50.00 per month reduction. We could hardly believe our ears!

"So now we are enjoying God's choice of a house for us to live in. What a wonderful feeling it is to know that He is interested enough in us to provide so bountifully our every need!"

Friday morning was a beautiful morning, sun shining brightly, birds singing, and a great day to be alive. Little did pastor Clark know the miracles that would take place in the next few days, as a result of a phone call that would come that morning.

He was at the church study preparing for the activities of the Sabbath, when the phone rang. The voice on the other end of the line was that of a Conference President in the southeastern part of the country, and he was inviting the pastor to come to the Morristown, Tennessee district. The pastor could hardly believe his ears, for had not he and his wife been praying that somehow they could be nearer their children who were attending Little Creek Academy near Knoxville?

Looking at the map, they discovered that Morristown was only forty miles away. This was too good to be true!

Even though this district would be a smaller one, the work for the Lord is important wherever it is.

After discussing the matter with his wife, another phone call was made, this time to accept the invitation.

The following Tuesday, the pastor purchased a small "For Sale" sign and placed it in the front yard. And then, kneeling in the living room with his wife, claimed some Bible promises. One is found in Philippians 4:19, which says, "My God shall supply all your need." The other one is recorded in James 1:5: "If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him."

Before the day was over, a real estate lady knocked on the door, and asked to list the house with her company. However, this request was not granted, since the pastor wanted to try to sell it without having a real estate firm involved.

The gracious lady would not give up that easily, though. So it was agreed that she could show it, but if the Clarks could sell it on their own, that would be their privilege. She even told them that she had some friends who were coming to Little Rock that weekend, and they had to buy a house, and she knew that they were going to buy from her.

Foolish Prayers—Fabulous Answers

Friday evening, about two hours before sundown, the real estate lady came by and wanted to know if she could show the house. Permission was given if she could promise to be out before the sun went down. This was agreed upon, and since the pastor and his wife were to be at the church for a meeting, the house key was given to her.

Sabbath came and went, and late Saturday night the phone rang again. It was the real estate lady informing the pastor that the people from out-of-town were very interested in his house, and would like to make an offer early Sunday morning, because they needed to go back to their home in Dallas.

The offer was made, and accepted. By noon Sunday, the house was sold. Ironically, the name of the new owner was also "Clark." In six days the house had sold, in a town where the sale of property was quite slow.

Immediately, the pastor and his wife knelt and thanked the Lord for fulfilling His promises, and for helping them to sell their house so quickly.

But this was only half the problem solved, because the new owners were to be out of their house in Dallas by the first of the month, and that was just a few days away. That meant the pastor would have to look quickly for a house in Morristown. He could not leave until Friday when the series of meetings he was holding would be over.

Attending the graduation services at Little Creek Academy over the week-end gave him and his wife a quick breather from the whirl of events that had come upon them so suddenly.

Monday morning found them in Morristown, claiming the same promises of God that they did to sell their house in Little Rock; only this time that He would help them to find the right place, and that He would guide them in everything they did.

Several things were desired in thinking of a new home. First, they wished to live out in the country, away from all the noise and hustle and bustle of the city. Second, the pastor, knowing he needed more physical exercise than he was getting, thought a nice garden plot would satisfy that need. Thirdly, they needed four bedrooms, since his wife's mother was living with them. Was this asking too much of the Lord? They were not meant to be selfish desires.

After looking all day, and not finding the right house, they looked at each other and said, "Let's try just one more real estate company, and then quit. It has been such a long day."

Upon entering the office, a kind lady greeted them, asking if she could help them. She asked them to give her a description of the type of place they were looking for, the price range, the section of town, and all the details of "their" house.

Turning to her book, she said, "I think I have just exactly what you are looking for. Let's get in the car and go see it." She drove about three miles into the country, turned up a long hill and stopped at the top where a new vacant house sat. The view was magnificent! In the distance one could see beautiful mountains in Kentucky and Virginia. And, yes, it had a large garden spot.

Upon entering the house, and counting the bedrooms, of which there were four, the pastor and his wife looked knowingly at each other as if to say, "This is it. Just what we ordered!"

The lady didn't have to take much time explaining the selling points of the house, because the Lord already had the house picked out. All the pastor had to do was find it.

Quickly the papers were signed, and the pastor's family was on their way back to Little Rock to pack their belongings.

The following Friday, the moving van backed up into their yard and loaded their furniture.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

"Ten minutes after two, Uncle Bill."

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Jane's Determined, Believing Faith

Foolish Prayers—Fabulous Answers

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

The Answer

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

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

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

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

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

Christ." Phil. 1:21.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Guided into Truth

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

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

"Above All" She Could "Ask or Think"

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

A Two-Year-Old Babe in Christ

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

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

Foolish Prayers—Fabulous Answers

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

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

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

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

The Holy Spirit, the Holy Money, and the Promises

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

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

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

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

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

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

Prayer Began to Be Answered

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

Praying for a Home

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

One text seemed to say to get a house in the mountains. The next text said to do it on the morrow and make haste.

Could this be God speaking to her? Jeane felt it was. She felt the word was even then proceeding from the mouth of God. She was putting into practice, in a rather odd way, what we have read in the book *The Ministry of Healing*, page 122: "So with all the promises of God's word. In them He is speaking to us individually, speaking as directly as if we could listen to His voice." But we have felt that this refers mainly to spiritual things. Although Jeane was only a babe in Christ, so to speak, yet she had faith to believe the Holy Spirit would guide her in temporal and financial affairs, as well as spiritual.

Delinquent Children

Jeane felt a burden to care for children who needed special love and care—delinquent children. She knew she needed a large house in which to operate efficiently.

As Jeane drove toward the house the real estate broker had told her about, a very strong impression came over her. This would be the house God wanted her to have—the one revealed in the text of Scripture. Even before she got out of the car, she told the broker, "We will take the house."

The seller of the house overheard her remark. "Did I hear you say, you'd take the house?" he questioned. "You haven't even seen the inside yet."

"I know it's the house the Lord wants me to have," Jeane answered simply. "I plan to take in children, and I know already this large house is more than a happenstance."

The seller looked at Jeane in amazement for a moment unable to speak. "I have something to tell you," he said finally. "We just finished praying that our house would be sold to people who want to take in children. That is the reason we had this house. But, due to circumstances, we have to sell it."

Jeane looked in wonderment at the house of the Lord's choosing. It was big enough, in the country, and fitted for her needs. But she had no money for a down payment. One of the texts she had read seemed to indicate she must only give her word, and the money would come later.

The House Was Purchased

Some may think it foolhardy to go house-hunting without a cent for a down payment. But Jeane went, and Jeane "purchased" the big house without a penny down. She then offered their place for sale.

She and Barry claimed one promise after another, including Mal. 3:8-12, and Phil. 4:19. Within three months a chain of houses was sold—one sale depending on the sale of another, in order for the seller to purchase the house of his choice.

One of the places for sale sat squarely in the area of riot-wracked Watts district. Houses all around were up for sale. Every other house down the street displayed a bright "For Sale" sign on the front lawn. But by one miracle after another, that house sold, then another and still another. In each case, each person purchasing and selling was delighted.

As I read from her pen of how various articles of furniture were sold—almost miraculously—to raise money, and of how money came in from various sources—some entirely unexpected—my soul leaped for joy. I could only cry out, "Here is a babe in Christ. She knew of no way to learn the will of God regarding a place to purchase except as she read texts of Scripture. And God rewarded her faith."

Not According to Hoyle

Now, I never recommend that people turn haphazardly to a closed Bible, asking God to open it where He will, and on that page tell them what to do. No, I think a better way exists—usually. I think it is God's

Foolish Prayers—Fabulous Answers

plan for us to use the feet we have, to walk, the hands He has given, to handle, and the eyes He has provided, to look. He wants us to use the brains He has given us, to reason.

God does not carry the food to the beaks of the robins. He provides the food, but they must go out and search for it. Yet God has made arrangements for baby robins. When they are young, God employs other means of feeding them. Those of older experience do take the food to them and put it in their mouths. So Jeane was a babe in Christ. She did not know how to look for, or find, the exact home needed. Neither had any one informed her, it appears, how to use the wisdom God had provided. So God in His great mercy just gave her on the printed page of His Word, directions which Jeane accepted as fresh from Heaven. Isn't God wonderful?

God has supplied the promises. We are to take a promise, let us say, of guidance, or of wisdom, such as, Psalm 32:8, James 1:5, or Philippians 4:19. We take that promise and ask for what we need, believe that God will supply it, then claim it as ours. After we have done this, we begin searching, just as Jeane searched. We even return thanks, as she did, before we realize the answer to our prayer. But there is one thing we do not do—we do not tell God just which place it must be. We leave this with Him.

When we have found a number of houses, we sit down and "reason together" (Isa. 1:18, first part). We use the reasoning powers God has given us. We ask that our wisdom be sanctified by the Holy Spirit. We believe God is keeping His word. We then return thanks that we have received before we know which place to purchase.

Exceptions to the Rule Are Not Themselves the Rule

But there are exceptions. You will recall in our book, *The ABC's of Bible Prayer*, we tell about how we selected a place before we had looked it over. This experience was the exception. We are now very confident that God was in that deal. But the procedure we followed in that particular instance is not the rule. The rule is to use our reason. Jeane will, I feel sure, use this rule most of the time in the future, too. But there are also days and times when God makes an exception to the rule. We believe Jeane experienced one of those times.

Foolish Prayer-Fabulous Answer

What would have been, as a rule, a foolish prayer, brought about a fabulous answer. Jeane wanted a house with at least eleven rooms. She found one with sixteen rooms five more than she asked for. But the Lord revealed to her before she ever looked at the house, that this was His answer. Both the seller and the purchaser had prayed similar prayers. God heard and answered.

Conditions Met

We would not wish to overlook some of the wonderful conditions to answered prayer. We believe Jeane had fulfilled them. Perhaps this is why God seemed to go the second mile in giving her an answer.

1. She wanted to help others. The house was to be a place where she could care for delinquent children. This unselfish purpose was like the man in our Lord's parable recorded in Luke 11:5-10. He asked bread of his neighbor that he might supply the needs of another. Jeane, also, was asking that she might help others. This kind of a prayer the Lord delights to answer (Luke 11:10-13). Personally, I want to say, that to me, Jeane's prayer was a tremendously unselfish one! What do you say? Her prayer was not that she might have a convenient life, an easy way, but that she might aid those little unfortunates along the highway of life. God's answer reveals how pleased our Lord was!

Although Jeane and her husband have not been in their new home very long, already one of "their" girls has accepted Christ as her personal Savior. They believe two others are on the verge of conversion.

2. Jeane did not use as an excuse, "See! I am trying to carry on a missionary project for God. So I will keep my tithes and offerings for my own project." No, Jeane's was an unselfish world-vision. She gave to the world-wide mission program of God (Matt. 28:18-20; 24:14) while she was watching her Lord lay out a missionary program for herself and her own family. God giveth "to every man his work" (Mark 13:34).

Surely God opened the "windows of heaven" just as He promised to do (Mal. 3:8-12). Do you suppose some so-called "missionary minded" folk lose out in answered prayer because they become too narrow in their own missionary efforts? I mean by this: Suppose Jeane had decided her own work was a missionary effort of such importance as to justify her forgetting the world field, and withholding her tithes, or to use them for personal missionary work. What then? Could God have come near and revealed Himself as marvelously to her as He did? Could He have so generously given her such near-fantastic answers to her prayers?

3. Jeane had asked for the power of the Holy Spirit in her life. She was not satisfied to merely exist. She wanted to be "on fire" for God. God has promised that His Holy Spirit will guide us (John 16:13). Thanks be to God, we are not alone!

As Jeane related her experiences, she added in glowing terms how much the book *The ABC's of Bible Prayer* meant to her.

The Book Itself a Miracle

As I thought of Jeane's experiences of tremendous answers to prayer, like tumbling dominos, I was reminded of the day, several years ago, when I was on my knees claiming the promise of Philippians 4:19. I asked God to supply my need to get out another book on prayer. And especially to find someone who would take my sermons off the tape, edit them, and make them ready for the printer. I had asked. I had believed. I had claimed. Then, as described in the book itself, I went down to two or three supermarkets and placed two little notices on the bulletin boards.

That very day God began to answer. Many people soon assisted in doing several books. Within a matter of months, we had done a whole set of books, and a set of lessons, on this new kind of prayer. We were happy that people who could not travel hundreds of miles to attend our classes, might still learn the true science of the prayer of faith. Since then, our people from all over the nation have been securing these books on prayer. Letters from Africa, Singapore, South America and Australia; from Canada, and the islands of the sea tell of the blessing that has come to the hearts of the readers. We can but praise the One who only deserves to be praised. And thank the Lord that we are privileged to be "workers together with him" (2 Cor. 6:1).

My soul cries out, "O magnify the Lord with me, and let us exalt his name together" (Ps. 34:3). I hear Jeane's voice, with a multitude of others, saying, "Amen."

A 67 Point Study on the Gift of Tongues

1. Sincerity is not an infallible guide. Prov. 14:12. 118
2. Human experience is not an infallible guide. Deut. 12:8.
3. We are not to interpret the teachings of the Bible to make them conform to our religious experience; but we are to correct our experience so it will conform to the Bible. 2 Tim. 3:16, 17.
4. Jesus is our example. 1 Peter 2:21.
5. He was anointed with the Holy Ghost. Acts 10:38.
6. Yet we have no record anywhere in the Bible of His ever speaking in tongues.

Foolish Prayers—Fabulous Answers

7. We are to know the false teachers from the true, not by their gifts, but by their fruits. Matt. 7:16.
8. The fruit of the Holy Spirit is "love," et cetera. Gal. 5:22.
9. If I speak in tongues, but do not have "charity [love], I am become as sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal." 1 Cor. 13:1.
10. Another gift of the Spirit is faith. 1 Cor. 12:9.
11. If I have the gift of faith but not the fruit of love, "I am nothing." 1 Cor. 13:2.
12. Prophecy is another gift of the spirit. 1 Cor. 12:10.
13. If I have the gift of prophecy, and not the fruit of love, "I am nothing." 1 Cor. 13:2.
14. We are to freely give. Matt. 10:8.
15. Yet if "I bestow all my goods to feed the poor," and have not the fruit of love, "it profiteth me nothing." 1 Cor. 13:3.
16. The fact that a multitude engage in the same practice does not in itself make it right. Exodus 23:2, first part.
17. The church is the body of Christ. 1 Cor. 12:27.
18. The body of Christ consists of members. 1 Cor. 12:27.
19. The body is not all one member, but many. 1 Cor. 12:14.
20. If they were all one member, there would be no body. 1 Cor. 12:19.
21. God likens the gifts of the Spirit to members of the body. 1 Cor. 12:8-31.
22. God sets the members in the body. 1 Cor. 12:18. 23. He does this as it pleases Him. 1 Cor. 12:18.
24. One member of the body is not to boast over another. 1 Cor. 12:21.
25. The members, or gifts, which we think least important, may in God's sight, be more important. 1 Cor. 12:24, 25.
26. To make the point clear, God Himself has enumerated, and stated the order of, the gifts—"first," "secondarily," "thirdly," and "after that." 1 Cor. 12:28.
27. God Himself has placed tongues, not "first," "secondarily," or "thirdly," but at the close of the list—"after that." 1 Cor. 12:28.
28. The treatise on the gifts of the Spirit, including the gift of tongues, begins with 1 Corinthians 12, and closes with 1 Corinthians 14.
29. Therefore, we are to study the three chapters, so that we shall be found "rightly dividing the word of truth." 2 Tim. 2:15.
30. The main emphasis of 1 Corinthians 12 is that there are several gifts, given at the discretion of God, of which tongues is listed last. 1 Cor. 12:14, 12, 6, 8, 10, 11, 17, 18, 19, 20, 22, 23, 25, 26, 27, 28.
31. The main emphasis of 1 Corinthians 13 is that not the gifts but the fruit of love is the test, explaining what love really is.
32. Prophecy is more to be desired than tongues. 1 Cor. 14:1-3.
33. Edification of tongues contrasted with edification of prophecy. 1 Cor. 14:4.

Foolish Prayers—Fabulous Answers

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

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

16: Foolish prayers that God would Rebuke the Devourer

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Foolish Prayers—Fabulous Answers

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Foolish Prayers—Fabulous Answers

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

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

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

God Rewards Tithers

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

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

Man's Extremity-God's Opportunity

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

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

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

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

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

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

Foolish Prayers—Fabulous Answers

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

No Vegetables

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

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

Gas Money

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

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

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

What a wonderful Father we have!

"A Little Child Shall Lead Them"

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

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

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

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

Wonderful Witness for God

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

Foolish Prayers—Fabulous Answers

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

"This Is Your Wisdom"

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

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

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

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

Blessing Others Also

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

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

Blessings upon His Son, Too

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

Foolish Prayers—Fabulous Answers

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

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

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

Prayer Chart

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

Sale of a Church

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

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

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

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

17: Foolish to expect Continuous Supernatural Guidance

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

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

Foolish Prayers—Fabulous Answers

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

"Did God Make a Road Shoulder?

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

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

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

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

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

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

Daina's School

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

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

Foolish Prayers—Fabulous Answers

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Guidance to a Home

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

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

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

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

Even Death's Timing Is Perfect

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

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

Foolish Prayers—Fabulous Answers

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

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

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

Healing a 75-Year-Old Lady

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Snow Money

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

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

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

Foolish Prayers—Fabulous Answers

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

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

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

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

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

From Basement School to New Building

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

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

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

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

Membership Nearly Doubled in Three Years

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

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

The Gunman

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

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

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

Foolish Prayers—Fabulous Answers

The Pursuing Driver

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

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

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

Daina's Algebra

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

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

Sunnydale Tornado

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

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

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

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

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

Bottle Cap

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

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

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

Lost Billfold

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

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

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

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

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

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

Special Direction

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

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

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

Keeping a List of Answered Prayers

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Foolish Prayers—Fabulous Answers

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

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

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

"About ten years," she growled.

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

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

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

Romans 8:32

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

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

Mysteries of Life Solved Only by Calvary

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

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

A New Picture and Revelation

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

Foolish Prayers—Fabulous Answers

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

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

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

Calvary Explains What Nothing Else Can

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

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

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

God Is a Daddy

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

Sue Converted

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

The Boy, Too

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

Foolish Prayers—Fabulous Answers

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

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

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

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

Asking for the Wrong Thing

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

"What do you mean?" he demanded.

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

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

Life a School

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

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

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

A Sharp Contrast

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

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

Foolish Prayers—Fabulous Answers

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Foolish Prayers—Fabulous Answers

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

19: Foolish Humility—Fabulous Vision

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

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

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

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

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

Foolish Prayers—Fabulous Answers

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Rich Dividends in Such a Type of "Sighing"

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

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

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

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

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

Understanding of a Former Vision Not Fully Explained

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

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

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

Gabriel Himself Responds

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

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

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

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

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

The Messiah Himself

The angel Gabriel told Daniel the event that would mark

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Wonderful Reward of Humility

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

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

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

Promises and Conditions

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

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

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

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

Wrong Way to Sigh and Cry

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

20: Foolish prayer, fabulous answer under a Fabulous Deception

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

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

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

A True Father

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

Elaine's Marriage

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Fatherly Counsel

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

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

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

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

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

Foolish Prayers—Fabulous Answers

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

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

Unselfish Nobleness

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

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

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

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

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

A Heavenly Nearness

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

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

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

Personal Infatuation

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

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

Marriage Contemplated

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

Foolish Prayers—Fabulous Answers

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

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

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

Divorce

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

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

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

The Shock

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

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

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

The Church

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Foolish Prayers—Fabulous Answers

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Fabulous Fight

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Jacob's Trouble

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

Foolish Prayers—Fabulous Answers

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

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

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

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

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

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

ABC Answers

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Reasons for Deception

Foolish Prayers—Fabulous Answers

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

Sin Is Deceitful

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

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

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

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

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

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

Almost Persuaded

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

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

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

Foolish Prayers—Fabulous Answers

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

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

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

The Mind

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

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

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

Fabulous Deception

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

"Standing for the Right"

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

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

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

Two Ladies Were Crying

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

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

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

Voted Unanimously

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

Foolish Prayers—Fabulous Answers

Pastor Dismayed

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

Pastor's Dream

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

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

A Voice Spoke to His Soul

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

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

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

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

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

Previous Visit to an Infidel

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

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

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

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

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

Hiding Behind Apparent Conscientiousness

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

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

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

The Dream Fulfilled

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

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

Foolish Prayers—Fabulous Answers

An Astonished Deacon, Too

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

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

"It's a cigarette," Crawley replied.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

A Murmuring Hypocrite

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

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

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

A Subdued Deacon

Foolish Prayers—Fabulous Answers

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

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

A Different Nominating Committee

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

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

Jim Crawley's Resignation

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

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

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

Esau-like Repentance

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

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

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

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

Their Success Depends on Raising Doubts

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

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

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

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

Making Infidels

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

God Will Take Care of His Work

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

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

Last Interview with Crawley

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

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

Back to the Infidel Doctor

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

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

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

No Scientific Explanation

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

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

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

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

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

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

A Sick Boy

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

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

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

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

Dog Daisy

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

Foolish Prayers—Fabulous Answers

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

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

The Crisis

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

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

On His Knees

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Foolish Prayers—Fabulous Answers

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

Dying Daisy

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

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

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

With that he arose. Confidently he said to Mother,

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

Mr. Fox Deathly Ill

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

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

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

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

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

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

Foolish Prayers—Fabulous Answers

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

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

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

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

Triumphant Reception

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

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

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

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

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

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

Mother Who Prayed and Did Not Receive

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

Promise Claiming

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

23: Foolish to expect God to answer Superficial Prayers

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

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

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

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

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

No Victory Reported

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

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

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

God's Problems

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

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

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

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

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

Our Question to Carolyn

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

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

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

Jesus Smoking

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

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

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

It Would Be Beautiful

Foolish Prayers—Fabulous Answers

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

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

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

Pastor Smoking

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

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

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

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

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

What Made the Change?

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

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

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

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

God's Problem of Choice

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

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

Foolish Prayers—Fabulous Answers

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

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

Bill Cameron Chose

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

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

Bill's Astonishing Victory

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

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

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

A Wonderful Promise

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

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

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

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

The Buffalo Story

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

The Issue

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

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

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

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

Foolish Prayers—Fabulous Answers

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

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

Great Faith

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

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

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

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

A Wonderful Healing

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Foolish Prayers—Fabulous Answers

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Deeply Dedicated

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

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

His Buffalo—a Special Animal He Loved

Foolish Prayers—Fabulous Answers

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

A Witness of the True God

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Jai Ram Also Anoints

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

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

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

Students Join in the Prayer

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

Foolish Prayers—Fabulous Answers

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

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

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

An Immediate Answer to Prayer

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Elijah Faith

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

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

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

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

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

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

Foolish Prayers—Fabulous Answers

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Jai Ram's Land Case

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

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

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

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

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

A Faithful Tithe: "Prove Me Now"

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

25: Foolish prayer, visualizing a Worldwide Answer

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Foolish Prayers—Fabulous Answers

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

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

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

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

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

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

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