

SOMETHING TO HOPE FOR

(Even in lockdown!)

“Prayer is the key to heaven, but faith unlocks the door.”

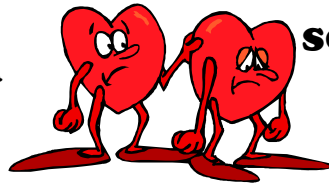
The endless universe is not boring; nor are the vast and hidden ocean depths; neither is the unlimited diversity of things on earth. Creation is not boring; far from it! Therefore, the God that created it all, and that *“inhabits eternity,”* (Isa. 57:15) does not have a boring heaven. No way!

ALL of us *can* go to heaven. God made it possible. He invites and calls us, tells us how to get there and will welcome us upon arrival. Yet, it takes action. No one goes to heaven “by accident,” but we can go *if we will*. Yes, the “will” is involved.

As God’s “proof of purchase” of us, He will give us His Holy Spirit to live within us. As love for a true lover pulls one toward the other, so the Holy Spirit will pull us ever-closer to God, to Christ, to heaven and to all things that God approves of or commands, starting right here on earth. What a *treasure!* What a *pleasure!* What a **HOPE** without *measure!* Yes, *even in lockdown!*



STEALING YOUR ELECTION! Jesus warned the ancient Philadelphia (“city of brotherly love”) church: *“Let no one take your crown!”* (Rev. 3:11). Charles Wesley (see page 3) wrote a song that encourages us to *“claim the crown through Christ, our own!”* We are *all* “ELECTED” by God! The prophet, Isaiah said *“Your ears shall hear A WORD behind you, saying, ‘This is THE WAY, WALK in it’ ”* (30:21). Jesus is called “The WORD” (St. Jn. 1:1-14). Jesus Himself said, *“I am the WAY, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me.”* (Jn. 14:6). God has a WAY, a WORD and a WALK, and allows no substitutes. You are elected. *“Let no one take your crown!” THAT IS ESSENTIAL!*



SOMEONE TO LOVE

The two sisters were busy! Jesus pointed out a big difference in their activity. Martha was busy preparing things for Jesus, their Guest. Yes, that was important and needed to be done. Mary was at Jesus’ feet in worship. Martha was annoyed. Jesus told Martha that Mary had chosen **the ESSENTIAL thing!** (Lk. 10:42).

We can and should show **LOVE** to *others* in various right ways. We can love *God* by *work* and also by *worship*. A constant walk with God makes a constant walk of worship.

Jesus said that loving Him means obeying Him. (Jn. 14: 15; 15:10). Yes, obedience is the test of true love for Christ and for God. God spoke of those who come close to Him *“with their mouths,”* but their hearts were far away from Him. (Isa. 29:13; Matt. 15: 7-9).

God made Man with love at their very core; to love *Him*; to love others. Why? *“God is love!”* (1 Jn. 4:8, 20; Matt. 22:35-40). **SOMEONE TO LOVE?** Yes, *even in lockdown!*

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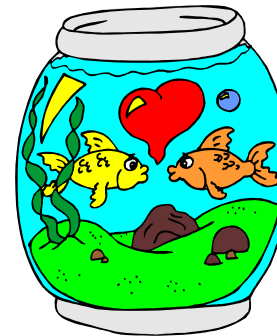
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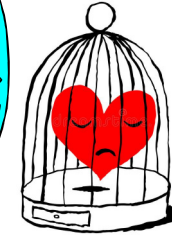
“Lift up a standard for the people.” Isaiah 62:10

Gabriel L. Mancino - Editor. Printing in London since 1983
421 Watford Way, Hendon London NW4 4TR Phone: 020-8202-0806
Website: www.londonchristianstandard.com

LOVE IS ESSENTIAL (EVEN IN LOCKDOWN!)



Gabriel L. Mancino



SOMETHING TO HOPE FOR SOMETHING TO DO SOMEONE TO LOVE

World-wide, people’s lives are horribly affected by Covid in the three areas listed above... and more. Yet, long before Covid came, those three areas were already suffering.



REVERSE QUARANTINE: The first “lockdown” was in the Garden of Eden. Man was locked **OUT**, not **IN**, his Garden home. Adam and Eve had already abandoned their *true* and *original* “Home:” God! Augustine well said that man is not at rest until he finds his rest in God. A wise woman in the Bible said *“God has made a Way to bring His evicted back Home!”* (2 Sam. 14:14). God doesn’t want us expelled from Him, so He made a **WAY** to bring us Home; that **WAY** is Jesus Christ. Come Home, then lock yourself **IN!** **IT IS ESSENTIAL!**

*A paper for all people everywhere...
and with a personal touch!*

To read, to apply and to share with others!

When God made “Man,” He put him in control of everything in “The Garden of Eden.” The Bible-names of rivers and locations there tell us how big that “garden” was! **Kew Gardens** is nothing in comparison. There in Eden, Adam and Eve had **SOMETHING TO DO.**

God gave Man more to do than tending to the breath-taking Garden of Eden. By the way, Eden didn’t have one speck of pollution! On top of *that*, imagine **regular visits** from God who had created it all and put it under their perfectly competent care.

God’s “qualifications” far exceed the excellence and achievements of all of history’s greatest individuals put together. **What a Regular Visitor!**

(continued inside)

(continued from front page)

Not even angels can comprehend the love of God toward Man. Yet, Eden's "regular Visitor" took... and He still takes... personal interest in us! God gave Man **SOMETHING TO DO**. But in that true story, God also gave Man **SOMEONE TO LOVE**. Adam and Eve chose to **DO** and to **LOVE** the wrong thing.

Let's "fast-forward" to 2021. The Bible uses various ideas, illustrations and examples to help us to understand. For example, it pictures our life and walk with God as if we were a farmer, a soldier, an investor, an Olympic athlete, a house and even a garden! There we are, back to a garden!

If we are "God's garden," and He puts us in charge of it to care for it, then each of us are "in the same boat" as our "first parents," Adam and Eve. You may not like **cultivating a garden**. Perhaps you prefer **cultivating your mind** with interesting and useful research. **That's a type of gardening**. The greatest "garden" is the garden of our hearts and minds, *spiritually*. Samuel Chadwick prayed, "O Lord, make us intensely spiritual, but keep us perfectly natural and thoroughly practical."



SLEEPING IN THE GARDEN

Sleeping can be good or bad. In the Garden of Eden, God made Adam sleep VERY deeply when He created Eve. What an amazing creation! But something happened.

Temptation visited Eve in Eden. Temptation is not sin; *yielding to it* is. Eve yielded, and so sinned. Sin ruined *her*, and then *Adam*. Eve slept *spiritually* and lost "her first husband," for Adam was not the same man anymore. Eve changed, too.

Adam and Eve lost Eden, their physical home, by "falling asleep" in the garden. But they also lost their greatest "Home:" God. They didn't feel "at home" with God anymore, so they hid when they heard Him coming. It messed up the whole world; not just human beings. (Rom. 8:22; Jer. 12:11).

Here is a prayer from the Bible: "Look attentively and answer me, O Jehovah my God! Lighten my eyes so that I do not sleep the sleep of death." (Psalm 13:3).

Adam and Eve fell asleep on the job, and humanity has been asleep ever since. **God is trying to wake us up**, calling out like this...

* "Awake, you who sleep, arise from the dead, and Christ will give you light." (Eph. 5: 14)



- * "And do this, knowing the time, that now it is high time to awake out of sleep" (Rom. 13:11)
- * "Awake to righteousness, and do not sin; for some do not have the knowledge of God. I speak this to your shame." (1Cor 15:34)
- * "Therefore let us not sleep, as others do, but let us watch and be sober." (1Thess. 5:6)

Here is a true-life account in the life of St. Peter. **He was not asleep spiritually, but he was asleep in prison.** He wasn't in a **garden**, but was sleeping between two soldiers that were "**guard'n**" him! The local authorities were trying to stop Peter from telling people about salvation through Christ. **Suddenly, swiftly and silently something happened!**

"Now behold, an angel of the Lord stood by him, and a light shone in the prison; and he struck Peter on the side and raised him up, saying, 'Arise quickly!' And his chains fell off his hands." (Acts 12:7)

It was a God-ordered jailbreak!

Charles Wesley wrote 6,000 hymns (church songs). Earlier in his life, Wesley knew the Bible, but he didn't know God. He and his brother, **John**, had gone to America in the failed plan "to convert the heathen." John later wrote: "**but who shall convert me?**" At that point, those brothers were like the person in the Bible who said, "*They made me the keeper of the vine gardens, but my*

own vine garden I have not kept."- (Song of Sol. 1:6). What of *us*?

Immediately after Charles Wesley experienced "The New Birth" (Jn. 3:3; 2 Cor. 5:17) on **21 May, 1738 near London's Aldersgate Street**, he wrote a hymn to commemorate the great event. John's conversion was three days later; also at Aldersgate Street. Charles used St. Peter's miraculous release from prison to illustrate his own release from "the prison-house of sin," writing...

*Long my imprisoned spirit lay
Fast bound in sin and nature's night;
Thine eye diffused a quick'ning ray,
I woke, the dungeon flamed with light;
My chains fell off, my heart was free;
I rose, went forth and followed Thee.*

(Definitions from song, above:)

"Fast bound:" tightly tied up or fastened.
"diffused:" to spread over a wide area.
"quickening:" life-giving; reviving.
"Thine" and "Thee:" Your. (Old English words referring here to God.)

Jesus told a story of a farmer who planted good seeds in his **garden**. (Matt.13:24-30). "**While men slept**," an enemy planted bad seeds; making that man's gardening work harder than ever. The world is in trouble. While people have been "sleeping," the Devil has been busy planting bad seeds. Trouble comes at harvest time.

Solomon spoke of such sleeping twice (Prov. 24:30-34; 6:6-11); both times illustrating disaster. The world is a garden. Man is a garden. Both are in disaster, for people are asleep in the garden. God has given us **SOMETHING TO DO**. God help us to do it...*HIS way!*

A LOVING AND HOPE-FILLED MESSAGE:

- 1) All people **need** to be saved.
- 2) All people **can** be saved.
- 3) All people can **know** they are saved.
- 4) All people can be saved "**to the uttermost**" (completely).

From Wesley and the early Methodists