



The Reformation
Messenger

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WE BELIEVE: The all-wise loving God created all things in the universe by His Son, Jesus Christ. He is the Owner and Sustainer. He met the challenge to His loving leadership and authority by reconciling the world to Himself through the life, death, and resurrection of His Son, the Word made flesh. The Holy Spirit, Jesus' representative on earth convicts of sin, guides into truth, and gives strength to overcome all unrighteousness.

The Bible is the record of God's dealings with mankind and the standard of all doctrine, the Ten Commandments are the transcript of His character and the foundation of all enduring reform. His people, in harmony with God's word and under the direction of the Holy Spirit call all men everywhere to be reconciled to God through faith in Jesus. Bible prophecy reveals that earth's history will soon close with the visible return of Jesus Christ as King to claim all who have accepted Him as the world's only Redeemer and their Lord.

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In Light of Eternity

done for me,—until you can bear a living testimony, and tell of victories won.” —*The Review and Herald*, January 9, 1900

“For your soul's sake, my brethren, have an eye single to the glory of God. Leave self out of your thoughts as much as possible. We are nearing the close of time. Examine your *motives* in the light of eternity.” — *Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 5, p. 97

“Closely examine your own *heart* as in the light of eternity. Hide nothing from your examination. Search, oh!

“Human historians relate man's achievements, his victories in battles, his success in climbing to worldly greatness. God's history describes man as heaven views him. In the divine records all his merit is seen to consist in his obedience to God's requirements. His disobedience is faithfully chronicled as meriting the punishment he will surely receive. In the light of eternity it will be seen that God deals with men in accordance with the momentous question of obedience or disobedience.” —*This Day With God*, p. 352

“We need to study the working out of God's purpose in the history of nations and in the revelation of things to come, that we may estimate at their true value things seen and things unseen; that we may learn what is the true aim of life; that, viewing the things of time in the light of eternity, we may put them to their truest and noblest use. Thus, learning here the principles of His kingdom and becoming its subjects and citizens, we may be prepared at His coming to enter with Him into its possession.” —*Education*, p. 184

“God calls upon every one of you to take up life's burdens, to engage in the warfare as you have never done before. . . . Take your Bibles, and go to God in earnest prayer. Ask Him to teach you to know yourself, to understand your weakness, your sins and follies, in the light of eternity. Ask Him to show you yourself as you stand in the sight of heaven. This is an individual work. Every man is to build over against his own house. . . . In humility send your petition to God, and do not rest day nor night until you can say, Hear what the Lord hath

search, as for your life, and condemn yourself, pass judgment upon yourself, and then by faith claim the cleansing blood of Christ to remove the stains from your Christian character. Do not flatter or excuse yourself. Deal truly with your own soul. And then as you view yourself a sinner, fall, all broken, at the foot of the cross. Jesus will receive you, all polluted as you are, and will wash you in His blood, and cleanse you from all pollution, and make you fit for the society of heavenly angels, in a pure, harmonious heaven. There is no jar, no discord, there. All is health, happiness, and joy.” — *Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 2, p. 81

“When we realize that we are working for God, we shall have a higher sense of the sacredness of spiritual service than we have ever had. This realization will put persevering energy into the discharge of every duty. True religion is intensely practical. In the saving of souls nothing but earnest, whole-hearted labor will avail. We are to make our every-day duties acts of devotion, constantly increasing in usefulness because we look at our work in the light of eternity.” —*The Review and Herald*, December 9, 1902

“For your soul's sake, my brethren, have an eye single to the glory of God. Leave self out of your thoughts as much as possible. We are nearing the close of time. Examine your motives in the light of eternity.” —*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 9, p. 97

Ellen G. White



Presence of God

“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. For I the LORD thy God will hold thy right hand, saying unto thee, Fear not; I will help thee.”
Isaiah 41:10, 13

These are the words of God to Israel, His little flock. If God is with us, we have no reason for fear or worry.

How can we know that God is with us?

Some time ago in Brazil, a bus traveling at night went off the road and many passengers died in the accident. Who were these passengers? They were young people returning home from a religious conference. Was God with them?

In the last World War, in England, a bomb fell on a church, killing many worshippers. Also, in Italy, a church was destroyed in an earthquake, killing those inside. Was God with them?

Often Christians, even ministers and leaders are killed instantly in accidents. Why did God not protect these religious people? Why did the angels not save them from these accidents? How does this agree with Psalm 91?

“He that dwelleth in the secret place of the most High shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty. Thou

shalt not be afraid for the terror by night; nor for the arrow that flieth by day; A thousand shall fall at thy side, and ten thousand at thy right hand; but it shall not come nigh thee. There shall no evil befall thee, neither shall any plague come nigh thy dwelling. For He shall give His angels charge over thee, to keep thee in all thy ways. They shall bear thee up in their hands, lest thou dash thy foot against a stone.” Psalm 91:1, 5, 7, 10–12

Are we to be fearful, trembling as we enter traffic, in case we are involved in an accident? Or should we be confident that nothing will happen to us? Do we say, “I am a child of God and the angels will protect me”? Or when we are in an airplane, should we fear to enter the airplane just in case it may crash? Or should we trust God, that He will protect the plane so that no harm can come to us?

In the world we can expect trials and difficulties. Jesus left a legacy to His disciples. “In the world, ye shall have tribulation.” John 16:33

Paul also writes in Romans 8:28, “And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to His purpose.”

Now, we have to differentiate between discipline, correction, or a test to the child of God, versus the misfortunes and accidents which fall upon the ungodly, or hypocrites, the unfaithful Christians, because God has

withdrawn His protective hand from them.

“And ye have forgotten the exhortation which speaketh unto you as children, My son, despise not the chastening of the Lord, nor faint when thou art rebuked of Him: For whom the Lord loveth He chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom He receiveth. If ye endure chastening, God dealeth with you as with sons; for what son is he whom the father chasteneth not? But if ye be without chastisement, whereof all are partakers, then are ye bastards, and not sons. Furthermore we have had fathers of our flesh which corrected us, and we gave them reverence: shall we not much rather be in subjection unto the Father of spirits, and live? For they verily for a few days chastened us after their own pleasure; but He for our profit, that we might be partakers of His holiness. Now no chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous: nevertheless afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them which are exercised thereby.” Hebrews 12:5–11

In verse 10 we are told that it is for our profit, that we might be partakers of His holiness. And verse 11 tells us that the chastening may not be joyous now, but it will yield the peaceable fruit of righteousness. Troubles and trials are blessings in disguise for the people of God.

“[In] the terrible calamities that from week to week are taking place. . . . God’s purpose may be read. They are one of the means by which He seeks to arouse men and women to a sense of their danger.” –*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 8, p. 252

“[God] permits us to come in contact with suffering and calamity in order to call us out of our selfishness; He seeks to develop in us. . . . compassion and tenderness, and love.” –*Christ’s Object Lessons*, p. 388

Those who are unfaithful in tithes and offerings, “[God] let the curse fall upon them, permitting the spoiler to destroy their fruits and to bring calamities upon them.” –*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 6, p. 389

“All who in this world render true service to God or man receive a preparatory training in the school of sorrow.” –*Education*, p. 151

The weightier the trust, and the higher the service, the closer is the test, and the more severe the discipline.

David writes, “Blessed is the man whom Thou chastenest, O LORD, and teachest him out of Thy law.” Psalm 94:12

“Behold, happy is the man whom God correcteth: therefore despise not thou the chastening of the Almighty.”

Job 5:17

Yet, some Christians dare to say, “God has left me,” when trials surround them, when God is trying to help them, to draw them to Himself. This gives us a different picture of trials and sorrows. They are given in love.

We pray, “Our Father which art in heaven.” When we say, “Our Father” this shows that we are His children. Our Father is good, He is loving, He is kind and compassionate. Not one needless sorrow will He bring upon us. Not one trial without reason. In all His chastening, we see divine love towards us.

Wonderful is the relationship between the Father in heaven and His sons and daughters here on earth. There is mutual understanding between them—love and affection, which is above all worldly love; greater even than a mother’s love for her children.

“That they all may be one; as Thou, Father, art in Me, and I in Thee, that they also may be one in Us: that the world may believe that Thou hast sent Me.” John 17:21

The Father in heaven, Jesus Christ, and God’s children can be in perfect unity—as one. When we reach this relationship, then we are not afraid to enter into busy traffic, or board a plane, or wherever else we may go. He is always with us. If something happens to us it is only correction or discipline from our loving Father who was willing to give His Son to die for us.

Jesus said, “Come unto Me. . . and learn of Me; . . . and ye shall find rest unto your souls.” Matthew 11:28–29. Jesus also said, “Lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world.” Matthew 28:20

To be in the company of Jesus is the most wonderful experience man can have. Suddenly all is so peaceful, so wonderful. Sacred joy and happiness fill our souls. And Jesus promised to be with us all the time, not just sometimes. Our human eyes cannot see God, but we can sense His presence. We can feel that He is with us. And this sense of God being with us gives us confidence and security, better than all the insurance policies, police forces, and armies around us.

“As a shield from temptation and an inspiration to purity and truth, no other influence can equal the sense of God’s presence.” –*Education*, p. 255. It is a great privilege to mortal man, to live in the presence of God.

“By faith he forsook Egypt, not fearing the wrath of the king: for he endured, as seeing Him who is invisible.” Hebrews 11:27. Moses lived as seeing God. He had a

sense of His presence.

Joseph also felt God's presence when he said, "There is none greater in this house than I; neither hath he kept back any thing from me but thee, because thou art his wife: how then can I do this great wickedness, and sin against God?" Genesis 39:9

Moses met God in the wilderness—not in the temple or the sanctuary, but at the burning bush. "And Moses said, I will now turn aside, and see this great sight, why the bush is not burnt. And when the LORD saw that he turned aside to see, God called unto him out of the midst of the bush, and said, Moses, Moses. And he said, Here am I. and He said, Draw not nigh hither: put off thy shoes from off thy feet, for the place whereon thou standest is holy ground." Exodus 3:3–5

What made the ground in the wilderness holy? Was it not the presence of God?

God is great in majesty and in holiness. If our eyes would be opened to see Him in His glory, we would die. We would be consumed in a moment. Therefore, God has hidden His visible image from us. But yet, He is with us. We feel and sense His presence.

Jacob was terrified in the presence of God. "And Jacob awaked out of his sleep, and he said, Surely the LORD is in this place; and I knew it not. And he was afraid, and said, How dreadful is this place! this is none other but the house of God, and this is the gate of heaven." Genesis 28:16–17. The wilderness place became a house of God to him.

Moses, the man of God was terrified in the presence of God. "(For they could not endure that which was commanded, And if so much as a beast touch the mountain, it shall be stoned, or thrust through with a dart. And so terrible was the sight, that Moses said, I exceedingly fear and quake:)" Hebrews 12:20–21. "For our God is a consuming fire." v. 29

Adam and Eve did not want to face God after they had sinned, so they went into hiding. They feared being in His presence.

"And the kings of the earth, and the great men, and the rich men, and the chief captains, and the mighty men, and every bondman, and every free man, hid themselves in the dens and in the rocks of the mountains; And said to the mountains and rocks, Fall on us, and hide us from the face of Him that sitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb: For the great day of His wrath is come; and who shall be able to stand?"

Revelation 6:15–17

When Jesus comes, the mightiest men of war, the greatest and the least will say to the mountains and rocks, "fall on us." So terrible is the presence of God to them. So terrible is the presence of God to the sinner, to the dishonest, to the selfish, to the proud, to the adulterer, to the careless. An unfaithful Christian cannot tolerate the presence of God.

Yet, brothers and sisters, in our daily prayers we ask the Lord to be with us. We ask for His presence. Do we realize that the presence of God makes our home a holy place? Or the way that we walk on? Wherever we go, the sacred presence of God follows us there. Are we aware of His presence? Do we understand His holiness?

Isaiah writes, "For those things hath Mine hand made, and all those things have been, saith the LORD: but to this man will I look, even to him that is poor and of a contrite spirit, and trembleth at My word." Isaiah 66:2

"But the LORD is in His holy temple: let all the earth keep silence before Him." Habakkuk 2:20

With great reverence and awe, we are to show respect for His presence, He who made the heavens and the earth, the Creator, dwells in our company, in our presence.

How careful must we be in our words, in our thoughts, and in our behaviour, to show reverence that is due to the God of heaven who has come to us, and spends time in our company?

"He sent redemption unto His people: He hath commanded His covenant for ever: holy and reverend is His name." Psalm 111:9

Never should His name be spoken lightly or thoughtlessly, even in prayer; its frequent or needless repetition should be avoided.

The sense of God's holy presence is a safeguard against sin and temptation. We read in Hebrews 12 of Moses' experience on Mount Sinai. Then we read in the following verses, "But ye are come unto mount Sion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels, To the general assembly and church of the firstborn, which are written in heaven, and to God the Judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect, And to Jesus the Mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling, that speaketh better things than that of Abel." Hebrews 12:22

We have not come to Mount Sinai as did Moses; we have come unto Mount Zion, unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem. We have come to God, to the Judge of all, and to Jesus, the Mediator of the new covenant. How much more respectful should we be than Moses and the people of Israel were at Sinai?

Our church, made of wood and brick, becomes the house of God by His presence. Just as the ground in the wilderness at the burning bush was sacred, so also our church building becomes sacred with God's presence. It is a holy sanctuary where God has promised to meet us. It is a home where God's people find peace, safety and security as they enter into His presence. David said, "For a day in Thy courts is better than a thousand. I had rather be a doorkeeper in the house of my God, than to dwell in the tents of wickedness." Psalm 84:10

Yet, this same house of God becomes a judgment hall to the breakers of His law, to the sinner. The Jewish people could not stand the presence of Jesus. They were bothered by His presence. They felt uneasy in His pure and holy company, and so they left Him alone.

Can it be, brothers and sisters, that we have lost His presence, His company? If so, we have no safeguard against sin and temptation, no protection. Yet, how many Christians are walking alone—alone they venture to travel in this world of sin and evil. Alone they venture upon Satan's enchanted ground. Alone they face temptation, only to fall a helpless victim to the power of Satan.

If you have lost the company of Jesus, if you do not feel the sense of His presence, then find out the reason why. Could it be that there is sin in your life? For example, light, vain conversations, or evil thoughts, or love of the world, or indifference towards others? Whatever sin it may be, work out a reformation. Put away sin—

selfishness, human pride, and jealousy. Stay upon your knees in prayer until you find your Saviour again, until peace and sacred joy fills your heart once more. And when you find Him again, then jealously guard this wonderful privilege—you and God, together as one. Let nothing come in between anymore. Allow no sin to separate you from the presence of God.

Repeat constantly, "I am a Christian. I am a child of God. I must use every moment to His glory." Keep your eyes fixed on Jesus. Walk with Him as Enoch walked, daily, realizing the sacredness of His presence. When we do this, we will have nothing to fear in this life; we slowly become fit to spend eternity in the company of our Saviour, in the presence of God. Amen.

Adapted from a sermon by Timo Martin



"It is very natural for human beings to think that great calamities are a sure index of great crimes and enormous sins; but men often make a mistake in thus measuring character. We are not living in the time of retributive judgment. Good and evil are mingled, and calamities come upon all. Sometimes men do pass the boundary line beyond God's protecting care, and then Satan exercises his power upon them, and God does not interpose. Job was sorely afflicted, and his friends sought to make him acknowledge that his suffering was the result of sin, and cause him to feel under condemnation. They represented his case as that of a great sinner; but the Lord rebuked them for their judgment of His faithful servant." —*The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*, vol. 3, p. 1140



You may have already come across the following question, but because it is seriously burning in my heart, allow me to bring it forward to your attention. Take a moment to think: “What is the purpose of this earthly life?” I did not fully know the answer in practice, yet eventually, I was able to understand what Solomon meant when he wrote “Vanity of vanities, saith the Preacher, vanity of vanities; all is vanity.” Ecclesiastes 1:2. Did you know that in Hebrew culture, when a word is repeated in the same statement it shows emphasis? (Just as Jesus would repeat and say, “verily, verily”). So, take note of the repetition of the phrase “vanity of vanities” in the above verse. Blessed are those who fully understand in practical terms, or at least believe that all is vanity. The preacher, under divine inspiration, further challenged us by asking: “What profit hath a man of all his labour which he taketh under the sun?” Ecclesiastes 1:3. Imagine also the following: “All things are full of labour; man cannot utter it: the eye is not satisfied with seeing, nor the ear filled with hearing.” Ecclesiastes 1:8

He further tells us of his experience in the following manner: “I the Preacher was king over Israel in Jerusalem. And I gave my heart to seek and search out by wisdom concerning all things that are done under heaven: this sore travail hath God given to the sons of man to be exercised therewith. I have seen all the works that are done under the sun; and, behold, all is vanity and vexation of spirit.” Ecclesiastes 1:12–14. If all the works that are done under the sun are vanity then what is the pur-

pose of life? How hard, dear brothers and sisters, may this be to some, to take in? Not even the attainment of the highest of the highest earthly knowledge and wisdom can satisfy the purpose of life. This can only add sorrow to you, “For in much wisdom is much grief: and he that increaseth knowledge increaseth sorrow.” Ecclesiastes 1:18. A woman can marry the choicest man of her life. Likewise a man, the woman of his dreams; only to find that the heart still lacks that satisfaction. Solomon had a similar experience. He said “And whatsoever mine eyes desired I kept not from them, I withheld not my heart from any joy.” Ecclesiastes 2:10. He even called some of his attainment’s “joy”, yet he eventually found them to be “vanity and vexation of spirit” (see verse 11).

We are assured that Solomon spoke what he himself knew and understood from an experiential point of view. He states that you and I can never attain to anything more than he has already attained. “What can the man do that cometh after the king? even that which hath been already done.” Ecclesiastes 2:12. “I made me great works; I builded me houses; I planted me vineyards. . . . I made me pools of water, to water therewith the wood that bringeth forth trees: . . . I gathered me also silver and gold, and the peculiar treasure of kings and of the provinces: I gat me men singers and women singers, and the delights of the sons of men, as musical instruments, and that of all sorts. . . . Then I looked on all the works that my hands had wrought, and on the

labour that I had laboured to do: and, behold, all was vanity and vexation of spirit, and there was no profit under the sun." Ecclesiastes 2:4, 6, 8, 11–12

Having said all that, let us be reminded of the following important fact: To know the purpose of this life is to know the secret of being happy. Many of us have tried to drink from broken cisterns that contain no water. It is the experience of many that in their vain search for joy, they find that "Even in laughter the heart is sorrowful; and the end of that mirth is heaviness." Proverbs 14:13. Do not be cheated by the world. "That which it offers may please the eye and fascinate the senses, but it proves to be unsatisfying. The wine turns to bitterness, the gaiety to gloom. That which was begun with songs and mirth ends in weariness and disgust." –*The Desire of Ages*, p. 148. There is one true purpose of life which also brings true joy to one's life; and that is *Service*; service to God and service to man, as summarised in the Ten Commandments. Solomon confirmed this when he said "Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God, and keep His commandments: for this is the whole duty of man." Ecclesiastes 12:13

"Whoso keepeth the commandment shall feel no evil thing: and a wise man's heart discerneth both time and judgment." Ecclesiastes 8:5. "Great peace have they which love Thy law: and nothing shall offend them." Psalms 119:165. Let us carefully read the following text: "And all these blessings shall come on thee, and overtake thee, if thou shalt hearken unto the voice of the LORD thy God." Deuteronomy 28:2. Not only will the blessings *come* to us, but it has been portrayed that they will *overtake* us. Imagine what it means to be overtaken by blessings. Yes, that is the reward awaiting those who will fulfil the purpose of life.

I heard of an artist who, while performing on the stage,

just knelt down; on his lips was the question "where can I find peace?" He then died on the spot. Do you also ask the same question? Look not to fame as the answer, neither riches, nor worldly pleasures, high educational attainments nor gratification of the appetite and the lust of the eyes. All these without Christ are unsatisfying waters. You drink only to thirst again. Have faith in Jesus Christ—this is the root of holiness (see *The Great Controversy*, p. 256.) Then by His own grace maintain your connection with Him by keeping the commandments—this is the fruit of holiness (see also *The Great Controversy*, p. 256). Do not confine your service to yourselves. You will then know the joy and purpose of the life that now is. You will also have the hope of the life that is to come, because "...godliness is profitable unto all things, having promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come." 1 Timothy 4:8

At last, our Saviour's lamentation to us is, "O that thou hadst hearkened to My commandments! then had thy peace been as a river, and thy righteousness as the waves of the sea." Isaiah 48:18. Yet it is not too late! We can still reclaim our lost joys and be shielded from many a *heartache* today and onwards, by fulfilling the true purpose of life.

"Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money; come ye, buy, and eat; yea, come, buy wine and milk without money and without price. Wherefore do ye spend money for that which is not bread? and your labour for that which satisfieth not? hearken diligently unto Me, and eat ye that which is good, and let your soul delight itself in fatness." Isaiah 55:1–2. Amen.

Emmanuel Azariah Salamba

"The Lord is testing and proving His people. You may be just as severe and critical with your own defective character as you please; but be kind, pitiful, and courteous toward others. Inquire every day: Am I sound to the core, or am I false-hearted? Entreat the Lord to save you from all deception on this point. Eternal interests are involved. While so many are panting after honor and greedy of gain, do you, my beloved brethren, be eagerly seeking the assurance of the love of God and crying: Who will show me how to make my calling and election sure?" –*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 9, p. 97

God of Music



Originating in the heavenly court, music has been a huge blessing to humanity. It transcends cultural boundaries, defies linguistic limitations, and speaks to the depths of our souls in ways that words often cannot. Indeed, the allure of music is as timeless as it is universal, captivating hearts and minds across generations and continents. But what is it about music that resonates so deeply within us? Have you ever wondered why we are so attracted to music? What makes us enjoy and love music?

Three Elements of Music

To address our inquiry, let us delve into the three fundamental elements of music. Every musical piece comprises rhythm, harmony, and melody. These components are essential; without them, the essence of music diminishes. Rhythm dictates the temporal structure of sound, guiding its progression. Without rhythm, music cannot proceed beyond the first note. Then, there is the melody, which narrates the musical story. Without melody, it is nothing but ambient noise. Lastly, harmony evokes emotion, imbuing the composition with various moods such as joy, sorrow, clarity, mystery, or discord. Without harmony, music feels hollow, lacking depth and resonance.

Interestingly, this concept mirrors the three facets of our life. Firstly, our life unfolds along a timeline, like a rhythm. Various events and experiences occur at distinct points in time. This leads us to the second element, actions and occurrences, reminiscent of melody. Together, they compose the symphony of our lives. For instance, I was baptized when I was 12, started university at 22, got married when I was 26, etc. Today, I woke up at 6:30 in the morning, took the bus at 6:45, arrived at work at 6:55, and started work at 7:00, etc. Right now, I am writing this article and just typed this sentence. At every moment and time, we have different actions and events in our lives.

However, time and actions do not tell us everything. This is

not what our lives are all about. There is one thing missing—feeling. In every moment, we have a feeling. It might be happiness, sadness, peace, emptiness, complexity, or unpleasantness. Even if the feeling is not strong or expressive, it always exists in our hearts. Without feelings, we would be like a robot. In this way, time, actions, and feelings are three elements of our lives.

“To every thing there is a season, and a time to every purpose under the heaven: A time to be born, and a time to die; a time to plant, and a time to pluck up that which is planted; A time to kill, and a time to heal; a time to break down, and a time to build up; A time to weep, and a time to laugh; a time to mourn, and a time to dance; A time to cast away stones, and a time to gather stones together; a time to embrace, and a time to refrain from embracing; A time to get, and a time to lose; a time to keep, and a time to cast away; A time to rend, and a time to sew; a time to keep silence, and a time to speak; A time to love, and a time to hate; a time of war, and a time of peace.” Ecclesiastes 3:1–8

Therefore, we can see that music is very similar to our lives, sharing common components. This is why we are attracted to music. Music is a form of art that reflects and expresses our lives. It is the mirror of our lives. It is our story and testimony.

The Purpose of Music

My piano instructor in Japan used to tell me, “The whole point of practicing so hard is to let someone else listen to it.” The purpose of music is sharing. Musicians do not sing or play for themselves but for the audience. Through music, they convey the message, the story, and the feelings. It is the same in our lives. The purpose of life is to share the love of God we experience in our lives.

“A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another.

By this shall all men know that ye are My disciples, if ye have love one to another." "But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto Me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth." John 13:34–35; Acts 1:8

Whether intentional or not, we influence each other. Our life is a constant influence upon someone else, just as the music reaches our ears when we walk down a street in a city. It might be our family, friends, colleagues, church members, or even strangers on the street. Through our actions, words, and even our facial expressions, we influence others. The influence might be small or big. But one sure thing is that our music is constantly delivered to someone else. And unfortunately, without the Holy Spirit, our music is the one that leads to darkness, destruction, and death.

"As it is written, There is none righteous, no, not one: There is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God. They are all gone out of the way, they are together become unprofitable; there is none that doeth good, no, not one. Their throat is an open sepulchre; with their tongues they have used deceit; the poison of asps is under their lips: Whose mouth is full of cursing and bitterness: Their feet are swift to shed blood: Destruction and misery are in their ways: And the way of peace have they not known: There is no fear of God before their eyes." "Who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean? not one." Romans 3:10–18; Job 14:4

Then, how can our lives be hymns and praises? How can our music be a beautiful scent to God? How can our stories lead others to salvation? How can our influence be "the light of the world" (Matthew 5:14)?

Three Elements of Creation

In the realm of Physics, it is often posited that existence comprises three fundamental elements: time, space, and matter. If any of these is missing, nothing can exist. Even in the presence of space and matter, the absence of time precludes existence. Similarly, even if we have time and matter, if there is no spatial dimension to accommodate them, existence remains unattainable. Furthermore, in the presence of time and space, if there is no matter to fill them, existence remains an impossibility.

This principle is written in the very first verse of the Bible: "In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth." Genesis 1:1

In the beginning (time), God created the heaven (space) and the earth (matter). And here we see an amazing truth. God is not ruled by any of these physical laws. God created time, space, and matter. God is a supernatural being that exists beyond the principles of physics.

Astoundingly, these three elements of existence beautifully

resonate with counterparts found in music and life. Time in physics aligns with rhythm in music and time in life. Space is an outline of existence, ready to be filled. Therefore, it can be referred to as the melody of music and actions/events of life. Then what do we fill it with? Yes, harmony and emotions.

Now, let us think again about how God exists beyond these elements of physics. It is the same as music. Musicians make music. And, of course, musicians do not exist within music. They are not governed by rhythm, melody, and harmony. Instead, the musician exists outside of the music and "creates" rhythm, melody, and harmony.

However, things change when it comes to our lives. We cannot control our time, events/actions, and feelings. We cannot change the past or future. We cannot decide what will happen to our lives tomorrow. So many things happen to us unexpectedly. "Whereas ye know not what shall be on the morrow. For what is your life? It is even a vapour, that appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away." James 4:14; Proverbs 27:1

Furthermore, we cannot control our actions or feelings either. "For that which I do I allow not: for what I would, that do I not; but what I hate, that do I." "For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh: and these are contrary the one to the other: so that ye cannot do the things that ye would." Romans 7:15; Galatians 5:17

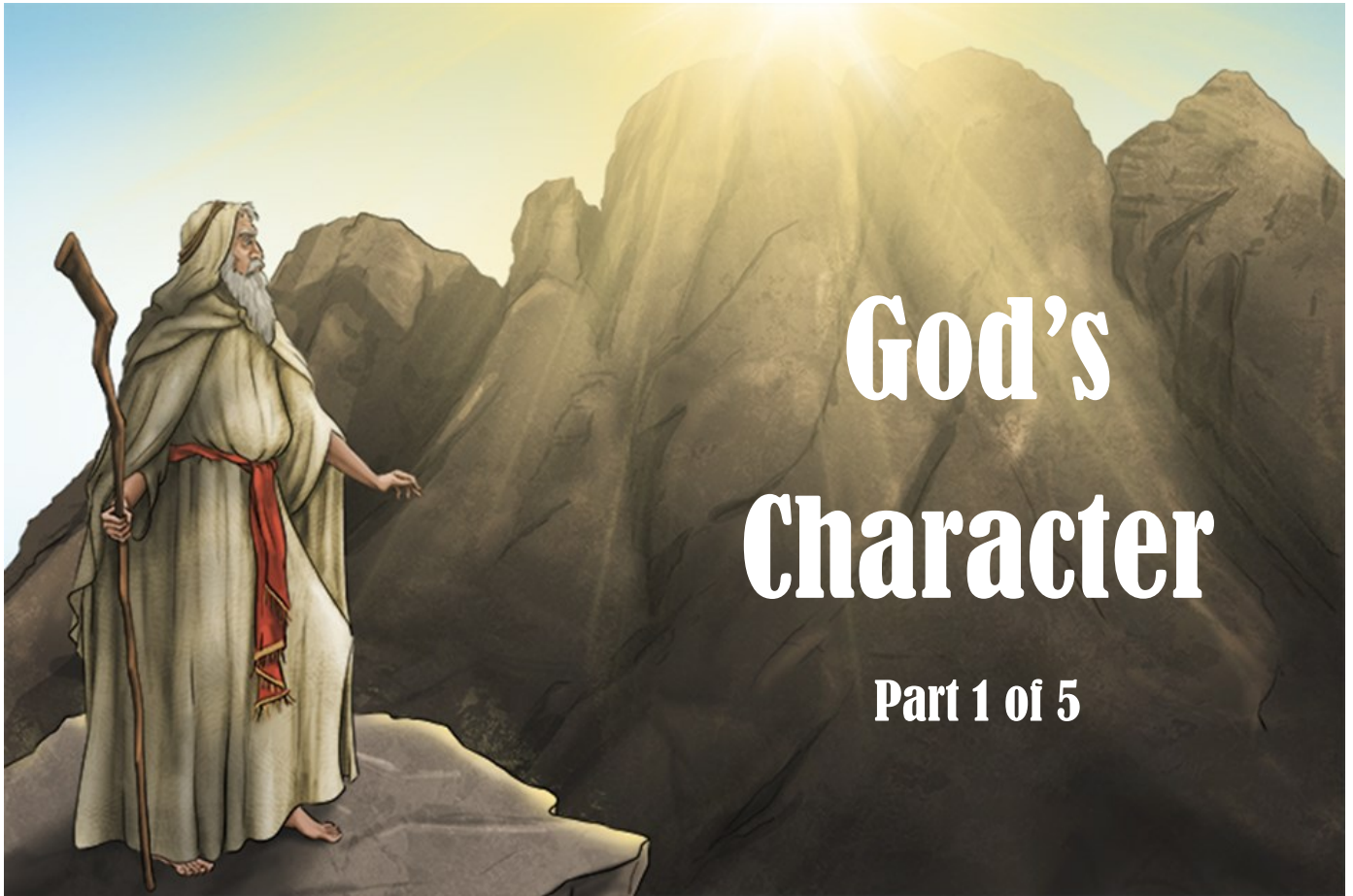
Unlike music or creation, we are governed by the elements. Musicians create music, and God creates the world, but we cannot create our lives. Therefore, we should ask someone who can exist beyond these components to be the composer of our lives.

Yes, the answer is God, the Creator. With the same hands that created time, heaven, and earth, He can choose the rhythm, melody, and harmony of our lives. The One who created music itself can also create the music of our lives. Our God is the God of music.

"Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new." "A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you: and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh." "Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me." 2 Corinthians 5:17; Ezekiel 36:26; Psalm 51:10

Let us entrust our lives to God. Then, He will make them into beautiful pieces of music that lead souls to life. The art of His creation that we see and the beautiful sound of music that we hear are all assurances of His power to compose our lives. May your life be a piece of music that testifies of His power of creation. Amen.

Makoto Matsumoto



God's Character

Part 1 of 5

There is a particular episode in the Old Testament that I find extremely fascinating. It is the one when Moses has a face-to-face encounter with the Lord in Exodus chapter 34. It is a well-known story; Moses had eagerly asked God to reveal Himself to him. The Lord, having compassion on his request, hid His servant in the crack of the mountain and showed Himself to Moses from the back (as a human, Moses was not able to bear the sight of God's full glory). As Moses was contemplating this scene of glory, he heard a voice saying: "The LORD, The LORD God, merciful and gracious, longsuffering, and abundant in goodness and truth." Exodus 34:6-7. Not only was Moses able to contemplate God's glory, he also had the opportunity to know God's true character.

The Spirit of Prophecy talks about this episode: "It is our privilege to reach higher and still higher for clearer revealings of the character of God. When Moses prayed, 'I beseech Thee, show me Thy glory,' the Lord did not rebuke him, but He granted his prayer. God declared to His servant, 'I will make all My goodness pass before thee, and I will proclaim the name of the Lord before thee.' Exodus 33:18-19

"It is sin that darkens our minds and dims our perceptions. As sin is purged from our hearts, the light of the

knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ, illuminating His word and reflected from the face of nature, more and more fully will declare Him 'merciful and gracious, long-suffering, and abundant in goodness and truth.' Exodus 34:6

"In His light shall we see light, until mind and heart and soul are transformed into the image of His holiness." -*The Ministry of Healing*, p. 464-465

In this article, which is the first of 5 parts, I invite you to meditate with me upon the true essence of God's character, focusing on each characteristic mentioned in Exodus 34:6-7.

The very first word used in this description of God is "merciful" or "compassionate". I find it very interesting, and here is why: the God of heaven, the Maker of the entire universe whose powers far surpasses our understanding, chooses to introduce Himself as a God who is merciful towards men—His creatures, insignificant little beings on planet Earth. It is truly marvelous. The word "merciful" is translated from the Hebrew word "rakhum", also known as "rakhumim". Both are closely related to "rekhem", the Hebrew word for "womb". So, compassion in the Hebrew Bible is centered in a person's core and the Word invites us to imagine a moth-

er's tender feelings for her vulnerable infant.

"Rekhem" is a word that conveys deep emotion and sometimes is also translated as "deeply moved". An example is that of King Solomon, who finds himself judging the case of two women who were each claiming the same baby as their child. To discern the truth, Solomon commands to cut the baby in two and give each mother a half; the baby's real mother is deeply moved: she would rather have the other woman take her baby than see her child die. "Then spake the woman whose the living child was unto the king, for her bowels yearned upon her son, and she said, O my lord, give her the living child, and in no wise slay it." 1 Kings 3:26. Her compassion ("rekhem") revealed that she was the true mother.

However, "Rakhum" is not just an emotional word, it also involves action. Interestingly, the word is used most often to describe God's actions motivated by His emotions. For example: there was the time in the Old Testament when the Israelites called upon the Lord for help, while they were held captive in Egypt. "And the Lord said, I have surely seen the affliction of My people which are in Egypt, and have heard their cry by reason of their taskmasters; for I know their sorrows." Exodus 3:7. God heard their cry and, out of compassion, He not only miraculously delivered His people, but also took care of them while they were wandering in the desert. He provided for them as He would His own child. He continuously proved Himself to be a merciful God, so it does not surprise us that the term "rakhamim" appears in His personal description delivered to Moses on the mountain. But despite Yahweh's continual "rakhamim", the Israelites turned away from Him time and time again. They rejected His compassion and instead gave

their allegiance to other gods. Rather than showing compassion to each other, they engaged in wars, they fought, and their rebellion resulted in them being sent into exile, scattered among the nations.

It is then in the darkest moment of Israel's history that we come to the book of Isaiah, where God compares Himself to a mother full of compassion for her newborn baby: "Can a woman forget her suckling child, that she should not have compassion on the son of her womb? Yeah, they may forget, yet will I not forget thee." Isaiah 49:15. God is full of motherly compassion, and He promises to rescue His people. The fulfillment of this promise arrives when Jesus comes on the scene: He IS Yahweh's deep compassion become human. The Greek word used for compassion" is "oiktirmos", and Jesus is its full embodiment. He takes care of the outcasts, He heals the sick, and He is deeply moved by human suffering and misery. Jesus even calls Himself a mother hen, who spreads her wings to shield her chicks from danger. In the ultimate expression of "oiktirmos", Jesus is moved by compassion to enter into humanity's suffering, into death itself, to rescue us and bring us near to God.

As Jesus' followers, we also are called to be merciful and to show compassion: "Be ye therefore merciful, as your Father also is merciful." Luke 6:36. Let us pray for the Holy Spirit to gift us with this deep Christ-like compassion for our fellow brethren who are in need. Let us strive to relieve each other's sufferings.

May the merciful God bless you greatly. See you in the next article. Amen.

Ylenia Gallo

May this prayer be ours also:

"During the hours of the night, while others are sleeping, I am praying that the responsible work committed to my trust may be so unselfishly and faithfully done that God will approve. The anxiety is not with me what others may think or what others may do, but What shall I do to glorify God? and Will my work bear the inspection of God? Is every high look removed from me? Is my heart in harmony with Jesus, the humble Man of Calvary? I am weeping and praying and working, trying my motives and feelings in the light of eternity, and if I am saved at last, it will be through the matchless love of my Redeemer." –*The Upward Look*, p. 120

Victory *in* Jesus

1 Corinthians 15:57



From August 2–4, 2024, many members and visitors from all across Canada and a few from United States and overseas, gathered at the Canadian Field headquarters for a spiritual feast at the annual Canadian Field Conference.

The theme was “Victory in Jesus.”

Brother Morris Lowe, the new Canadian Field President, welcomed everyone and gave the opening message. Only in Jesus can we have victory over sin in this life. You cannot fight my battle and I cannot fight yours. Jesus only has to fight our battles and gain the victory. If we look to ourselves, we see there is no hope of salvation, but if we immerse in Christ, there is no possibility of being lost. Victory is not in church membership, but in Christ alone.

Sometimes we are tempted to give up and quit, but no matter how many times we fail and fall down, we cannot give up. Those who come to Christ, He will never cast away. There is a guarantee of victory in Jesus. “Now thanks be unto God, which always causeth us to triumph in Christ.” 2 Corinthians 2:14

Brother Joseph Suganob followed by presenting a message on, “Our Example in all Things.” “For even hitherto were ye called: because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow His steps: Who did no sin, neither was guile found in His mouth.” 1 Peter 2:21–22. Jesus must be our exam-

ple—no church leader or elder. The whole chapter is summarized in these verses. Jesus was, “a living stone, disallowed indeed of men, but chosen of God, and precious.” Verse 4. And thus we are to be “lively stones.” Verse 5. Also, we are a, “chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people.” Verse 9.

The question is, how do we survive in life? Our salvation has nothing to do with others. We must individually decide to cast away our fleshly lusts and idols, whatever they may be, and glorify God in thought, word, and deed. Also, regarding our relationship with the government, we must copy Jesus’ pattern. He stayed away from politics, but yet, counselled us to respect the government as long as there is no violation of our conscience. He re-



mained silent in regards to politics. And finally, regarding social relationships, Jesus is our example as He was very social. We need to learn how to relate to people and make contacts. No man is an island. As we follow the example of Jesus, we will win the victory.

Following these words, Brother Errol Fletcher shared with us the theme, "Looking to Jesus." "Look unto Me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth: for I am God, and there is none else." Isaiah 45:22. He began by speaking about "fake news." Today we have AI which can produce almost any news a person wants, even if it is fake. In this age of advancement, we hear people say, "This is my truth and that is yours." If we believe that there is only one truth; only one foundation; one Saviour, we may be criticized by the world as being narrow minded—a cult. Pilate asked Jesus, "what is truth?" (John 18:38), but he did not wait for an answer. Jesus had spoken the truth, He had told the disciples the truth. Today the truth is that there is only one truth, and we must know what that truth is. That truth comes only from God.

In ancient times the heathen nations like Egypt had many gods, while Israel had only one. Is it easier to please multiple gods or just one? What distinguishes the true from the false? The true God can create. He created the heavens and the earth. Man may make a god out of wood and stone and worship it, yet the true Creator made man. It is not you doing the saving; you need a Saviour. Regardless of how you feel, if you believe that Jesus died and rose again and you look to Jesus, you will be saved. Today is the day of salvation. May we all open our hearts and be saved by looking to Jesus.

On Sabbath morning, our visiting minister from Jamaica, Brother George Gowie, shared with the congregation, the theme topic—"Victory in Jesus." Everyone is fighting a battle and sometimes we do not know who we are fighting. Sometimes we are fighting the wrong battle and we lose. Victory means defeating the enemy. In reality the battle was won over 2000 years ago. Satan claims this earth as his own, and Jesus came to the "enemy camp" to claim the victory. God created man upright, but he lost it all when he sinned. Sin and death are twin brothers. Our mother, Eve, was deceived and therefore death was passed onto all, but thank God the story did not end there. Jesus came as a man to deliver us from sin. Through Jesus we have victory over sin and death. Jesus has power over death because He has power over sin. He came to Satan's camp and bound him, so that we can have victory now—not tomorrow, but now. If you believe you are a sinner, you are on the right road. The Holy Spirit is working.

Victory is a gift and we must all accept it. When you are tempted, look to the devil and say, "I am not going to obey you today. I am on the side of Jesus." No one wants to die, but if we are faithful we have been promised eternal life. We need to claim the promise of Jesus, not of material goods, but of eternal life. Victory over sin and death comes only from Jesus. Sin=death; righteousness=life. Victory over sin and death comes from Jesus. You *can* live a holy life daily. You *can* tell Satan to leave you alone because you have a friend in Jesus. Some think that Christianity is difficult, but it is easy in Christ. He won the battle for us. Be steadfast, hold on and do not move because your victory is in Jesus.





pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world." 1 John 2:16. We are all made of clay, and no one is perfect. Satan is not an easy foe—he is the prince of darkness. We wrestle the rulers of darkness of this world (Ephesians 6:12). Satan studies each individual care-

The health message is a very important part of the sanctification process and Brother Elder Hernandez spoke about Emotional Health and Spiritual Maturity. Some people think that showing emotions is weakness, but we read that Jesus got tired and slept; He also wept. Good mental health is vital in maintaining physical health. Studies have been done to show how placebos still produce positive results if there is good mental health. Sin has broken and bruised people. Many have gone through traumatic experiences that scar them for life. They have faced lack of love, praise or tenderness, have been abused, abandoned, or criticized. Can we be sanctified in this state? Yes, in Christ we can. He came to heal the brokenhearted and bruised. After Elijah had the mountain top experience on Mount Carmel, a woman threatened to kill him and he got worried and ran for his life. He then laid down, exhausted, under a juniper tree. This is when the therapy started.

First, the angel came and touched him. When a loved one is in distress, a touch can provide comfort and security. The angel then told Elijah to eat and drink. A good diet is essential for good mental health and healing. Finally we see that Elijah walked 40 days. Exercise is very important also for a sound mind. We also need regular rest every night and a full day of rest once every seven days. And on the other side, we need to work, especially doing good to others. Helping others improves our mood tremendously. "Before sin created the need, God had provided the remedy. Every soul that yields to temptation is wounded, bruised, by the adversary; but whenever there is sin, there is the Saviour. It is Christ's work 'to heal the brokenhearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, . . . to set at liberty them that are bruised.' Luke 4:18." —*Education*, p. 113

Brother Morris Lowe presented a very serious topic, one that we should all be careful to watch out for. His subject was, "The Snare of Satan." "For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the

fully and with his hosts of darkness they lay snares for us which look attractive and harmless. Thankfully heaven also knows us very well and will do all in its power to try to win us to salvation.

The tool that Satan uses the most is the tool of discouragement. There are many great men in the Bible who became discouraged at times—Moses, Jeremiah, Elijah. We feel like quitting. "I try my best, but I have no success." Satan especially wants to attack the youth. Sometimes they feel they are wiser than their parents, but if they ignore their parent's advice, they often make shipwreck of their lives. The only thing we have to fear is that of offending God and disregarding His law. To gain the victory over sin and Satan is to know his strategy. If we are ignorant of his devices we are at a great disadvantage.

Today we are on the borders of the heavenly Canaan and what Satan was able to do to tempt Ancient Israel when they were on the borders of earthly Canaan, he is tempting God's people today. He hates those who are working at cross purposes with him. He is also especially targeting the leaders in the church. He has many snares that he uses, from appetite, an unforgiving heart, lack of prayer, cares of this life, and so on. He has something for everyone. If we are faithful, though, Satan cannot touch us. No matter what Satan tries to do, one word from the Lord will fell him. Never let Satan tempt you into thinking you have gone too far to come back. If you have made mistakes, run to Jesus and remain in Christ. You will then be assured of victory.

"Helping others overcome." "Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ." Galatians 6:2. This is a very important subject when it comes to gaining victory in our spiritual life. This topic was presented by Brother Nicholas Anca. One of the surest ways we can gain the victory is by helping others, and we can never truly help anyone unless we have genuine love for them. Love is a principle, not a feeling. Jesus said, "This is My

commandment, That ye love one another, as I have loved you." John 15:12. We not only need to have love, but we need to be strong in the faith if we wish to be able to help others. We need to love each other, but not in sin. We are to help others to overcome sin.

All of God's children are called to be servants, whether they are leaders, workers, or lay members; we are all called to be servants to lost humanity. Loving others also includes forgiveness, regardless of how we have been treated. The purpose of the gospel is to help us overcome and to become perfect in Christ. Do not be afraid if you fall. Do not quit, do not give up, but get up. We are all social beings and the Lord has put us on this earth to help others on the way to salvation. No man lives for himself. As we help others, we ourselves will gain the victory in Christ.

Brother Victor Handiya shared a very important subject that should be the goal of every Christian, "New by His Spirit." "But we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord." 2 Corinthians 3:18. Everyone in the church has a duty to do missionary work. The Lord has called us to present the Three Angel's Messages. When these messages are accepted and lived out, and we have a missionary spirit, we become new creatures in Christ. We must never let down the standards. Also, we must not just sit idly in church week after week with folded hands. "As the mind dwells upon Christ, the character is molded after the divine similitude. The thoughts are pervaded with a sense of His goodness, His love. We contemplate His character, and thus He is in all our thoughts. His love encloses us. If we gaze even a moment upon the sun in its meridian glory, when we turn away our eyes, the image of the sun will appear in everything upon which we look. Thus it is when we behold Jesus; everything we look upon reflects His image, the Sun of Righteousness. We cannot see anything else, or talk of anything else. His image is imprinted upon the eye of the soul, and affects every portion of our daily life, softening and subduing our whole nature. By beholding, we are conformed to the divine similitude, even the likeness of Christ. To all with whom we associate we reflect the bright and cheerful beams of His righteousness. We have become transformed in character; for heart, soul, mind, are irradiated by the reflection of Him who

loved us, and gave Himself for us." *-The Faith I Live By*, p. 150

Finally, to close out the conference, Brother George Gowie gave some final words of encouragement. The good news of the gospel is that through Jesus Christ you can turn away from your iniquities. There is forgiveness of sin in Christ. But we must be honest when we examine ourselves. We must see ourselves as sinners in need of salvation. How hard is it to say, "I am sorry, I am a sinner?" You cannot receive forgiveness through deception. If we confess and go to God as we are, He will forgive us.

Many times we want to tell God how good we are, like King Hezekiah, when he was told to put his house in order because he will die. He turned to the wall and wept and told the Lord all the good things he had done (2 Kings 20:3). If he was truly good, then why was he told to put his house in order? When we acknowledge ourselves as sinners we are seeing truth the first time. Be honest with the Lord. Jesus says, "I have known this for a long time, now you can find forgiveness through My blood." You do not need to tell any man. Just tell Jesus. Trust Jesus. He will guide you when you are tempted and tried. Let us grow in the spirit and work while it is day. The night is coming when you cannot work. Be strong in the Lord. When you have Jesus, you have everything. We will win. We will gain the victory.

The highlight of the conference was being able to witness eight precious souls giving their lives to the Lord following His example in baptism. All heaven rejoiced with us on the shores of Lake Ontario. May their witness be an example for many more to follow in the future. Let us all do our part in going out into the highways and hedges to encourage souls to come into the fold of safety, so that one day they can also partake of the Marriage Supper of the Lamb. Amen.

Canadian Field Secretary





God's Minutemen

"I have been shown that the most signal victories and the most fearful defeats have been on the turn of minutes." –*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 3, p. 497

What is a minute man? This is a common term that many of us are familiar with. It originated in the USA military. In U.S. history, an American Revolution militiaman who agreed to be ready for military duty "at a minute's warning," is called a minute man.

These men wait, but they wait being ready. Ready to go on a moment's notice.

This is what we are to be as Christians. We are fighting a spiritual battle, (Ephesians 6:12) and we must be ready to answer the call of duty without delay, sometimes on a moment's notice.

We must not, however, run ahead and act before orders are given. Sometimes there is a need to wait. Wait, but be ready.

Moses felt ready to deliver the Israelites from Egyptian bondage at the age of 40, when living in the court of Pharaoh, but it was not the Lord's time. Moses had to wait another 40 years, tending sheep, before the Lord sent him. When it was time to go, Moses was instructed to go, and to go now. Although he was a bit hesitant when the Lord met him at the burning bush, nonetheless he went, and ever after was a minuteman for the Lord.

One time when King David went to fight the Philistines, the Lord told him to wait, and go hide behind some mulberry trees. "And when David inquired of the LORD, He said, Thou shalt not go up; but fetch a compass behind

them, and come upon them over against the mulberry trees. And let it be, when thou hearest the sound of a going in the tops of the mulberry trees, that then thou shalt bestir thyself: for then shall the LORD go out before thee, to smite the host of the Philistines. And David did so, as the LORD had commanded him; and smote the Philistines from Geba until thou come to Gazer." 2 Samuel 5:23–25. David had to wait. He had to be ready when the sound came at which point he had to act immediately.

Also, just prior to the day of Pentecost after Jesus' ascension, His disciples went back to Jerusalem and waited. (Acts chapter 1). They waited and prayed and then suddenly one day the Holy Spirit fell on them, and they acted immediately and went to preach the gospel message (Acts chapter 2).

Sometimes the Lord tells us to wait. It is not easy to wait when you have an idea of how things should be done. You want to get started immediately. But we must learn that sometimes it is God's will that we stop and wait. Some have run ahead of the Lord and gone their own way and made disaster of their faith. Waiting is difficult for the impatient person who is always in a rush to get somewhere, or who is late for an appointment.

While waiting, we need to be praying. "Stand in awe, and sin not: commune with your own heart upon your bed, and be still." Psalm 4:4. The Lord tells us sometimes to, "Be still and know that I am God." Psalm 46:10, and, "Wait on the LORD: be of good courage, and He shall strengthen thine heart: wait, I say, on the LORD." Psalm 27:14

To King Jehosaphat the Lord said, "Ye shall not need to fight in this battle: set yourselves, stand ye still, and see the salvation of the LORD with you." 2 Chronicles 20:17. There will be times when we have a plan, but God says, "no." King Jehosaphat was not to do any fighting. The Lord was to do the fighting. Also, King David wanted to build the house of the Lord, but the Lord said, "Thou shalt not build an house for my name, because thou hast been a man of war, and hast shed blood." 1 Chronicles 28:3. David was a man after God's own heart, but yet the Lord did not allow him to build the temple. His son was to build it.

Then when the time comes that we are to go, we are to act immediately.

The Apostle Peter acted immediately to go to the home of Cornelius when the Lord directed him (Acts chapter 10). Philip, the Evangelist, went immediately to speak with the Ethiopian when the Holy Spirit directed (Acts chapter 8).

How do we know when to go? And when to wait? It takes a lot of faith and prayer, and a very close connection with the Lord. "And thine ears shall hear a word behind thee, saying, This is the way, walk ye in it, when ye turn to the right hand, and when ye turn to the left." Isaiah 30:21. We need to hear that voice.

When it comes time to act, we need to act with no hesitancy. Abraham acted when he was told to go and sacrifice Isaac. He asked no questions, he just went.

Nehemiah saw a task that needed doing and made no delay in going to do the work. He did not sit down and try to figure out if he had enough material resources, or manpower to complete the job. He just went and trusted in the Lord.

"To defer work which needs immediate attention until a more convenient time is a mistake and results in loss. The work of repairing sometimes amounts to double what it would had it received attention in season. Many fearful losses and fatal accidents have occurred by putting off matters which should have received immediate attention. The season for action is spent in hesitancy, thinking that tomorrow will do; but tomorrow is frequently found to be too late." –*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 4, p. 452–453

"Often the Christian life is beset by dangers, and duty seems hard to perform. The imagination pictures impending ruin before, and bondage or death behind. Yet the voice of God speaks clearly, 'Go forward.' We

should obey this command, even though our eyes cannot penetrate the darkness, and we feel the cold waves about our feet. The obstacles that hinder our progress will never disappear before a halting, doubting spirit. Those who defer obedience till every shadow of uncertainty disappears, and there remains no risk of failure or defeat, will never obey at all. Unbelief whispers, 'Let us wait till the obstructions are removed, and we can see our way clearly;' but faith courageously urges an advance, hoping all things, believing all things." –*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 290

Ancient Israel hesitated to enter the Promised Land because they were fearful of the "giants" in the land. This hesitancy led to 40 years of wandering in the wilderness.

"Every moment is freighted with eternal consequences. We are to stand as minute men, ready for service at a moment's notice. The opportunity that is now ours to speak to some needy soul the word of life may never offer again. God may say to that one, 'This night thy soul shall be required of thee,' and through our neglect he may not be ready. (Luke 12:20.) In the great judgment day, how shall we render our account to God?" –*Christ's Object Lessons*, p. 343

"God requires promptness of action. Delays, doubtings, hesitation, and indecision frequently give the enemy every advantage." –*Gospel Workers*, p. 134

"Long delays tire the angels. It is even more excusable to make a wrong decision sometimes than to be continually in a wavering position, to be hesitating, sometimes inclined in one direction, then in another. More perplexity and wretchedness result from thus hesitating and doubting than from sometimes moving too hastily." –*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 3, p. 497

"Delays are virtually defeats." –*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 3, p. 500

"Arise, shine; for thy light is come, and the glory of the LORD is risen upon thee." Isaiah 60:1

May God help us to be His minutemen and women. There is a time to wait and to pray, and there is a time to move and act without hesitancy. How do we know what we should be doing? Wait on instruction from the Lord and when He tells you to act and to go, then do as He tells you without questioning or a moment's delay. We will then be victorious in the battles of this life and receive our crown of victory in heaven. Amen

Wendy Eaton

Only With the Help of God

Experiences from the Life of Johannes Altwein (Part 1)

INTRODUCTION

*“Come and listen, all you who fear God; let me tell you
what He has done for me.”*

Psalm 66.16

With this booklet I want to express some of my personal experiences with my God, whom I have learnt to respect and to love dearly through many circumstances and experiences, who was near to me throughout my life, no matter where I was, and no matter how old I was. I want to share with you, my dear reader, how my prayers were answered by Him.

I was born in Schwerin on the 4th of June 1931 and grew up in a Christian household. My parents were Seventh Day-Adventists of the Reform Movement.

My two brothers, two sisters and I became familiar with the biblical stories at a very early age, and I can say that my faith was strengthened by our daily worship. To this present day I am so thankful for the worship time my parents invested in us. Having experienced this myself, I wholeheartedly wish to recommend, to all parents, to never miss worship with their children.

Since the Church was prohibited when I was only a small boy, life was hard under the National Socialist Government. We were constantly living with the knowledge, that at any moment we could be taken away to Concentration Camps. Since my early child-

hood, I had to learn to fully trust in God and to put my life into His safe keeping.

My personal experiences with my God and the way He answered my prayers, often cannot be explained with human understanding. They are true miracles.

I very much wish for the reader to find true enjoyment while reading the following lines. May the sharing of my experiences also help each reader to strengthen his or her faith in our heavenly Father.

Johannes Altwein

(The complete booklet is available from IMS Publishing, upon request. In the Reformation Messenger we will print the book in several issues)

PERSECUTION BY THE NAZIS

As I remember, the Reform Movement of the Seventh-day Adventist Church was prohibited by the Nazi regime already in 1936. Difficulties and persecutions followed. As Seventh-day Adventists, we keep Saturday as a divine day of rest, we stop our daily work, and the children do not go to school on that day. That was the reason why we were persecuted by the Nazis. Since we children did not go to school on Saturdays, and we called Saturdays “Sabbaths”, our father was arrested and put into prison. After his arrest, my older brothers and sisters were regularly picked up by the police, every Sabbath, and taken to school by force. I was lucky. Since I was only five years old, I was allowed to stay

home. I remember it well. Each time the policeman appeared to pick up my brothers and sisters, I used our kitchen table as a hiding place, and from under the tablecloth, I could only see the policeman's huge black boots.

The policeman had also been commissioned to investigate our family's conduct. Upon inquiring about us in our neighborhood, he learnt for example, from the baker and the grocery store, that we did not owe any debts, but always paid for our supplies immediately and in full. This was very unusual in those days, since there was not a lot of money around. The police investigation did not find any bad reports about us.

Only many years later we learnt that the police officer favored our family. After the war was over, he told us, that due to his good conduct towards us, he was treated leniently by the Russians and was not beaten to death as many of his colleagues were.

We assume that this particular policeman must have stood up for my father, because my father did not have to stay in prison for long. This was very unusual, since the normal path led from normal prison to penitentiary (which was for people who committed serious crimes), and from there into the concentration camp, which was the end station for most people.

Many of our fellow believers, most of them men, were taken either into prison, the penitentiary or to concentration camps. Those who could flee tried to find shelter somewhere. My parents were hiding some fellow believers. It was not easy for us children, knowing the seriousness of it all, because nobody was allowed to find out about their stay. It would surely have meant death for all of us.

This is how brother Hanselmann came to hide at our place. After approximately two months, he thought it was safe for him to leave again, but my father said to him: "It is too dangerous, they are determined to catch you." But he could not see the seriousness of the situation and left, nevertheless. A short time later the Gestapo caught him and took him to a concentration camp. Unfortunately, he did not survive it.

Sometime later another fellow brother sought shelter in our home. My parents took in Alfred Münch for a while. He was a father of two daughters. Shortly after he had voluntarily left his safe hiding-place in our house, he too was picked up and taken away by the Gestapo. Unfortunately, he met the same fate as brother Hanselmann.

In order not to become too suspicious to the Nazis, my parents frequently changed their place of residence in the area surrounding Schwerin. In our new home they took in brother Herbert Wendt to protect him from the Nazi regime. Our living conditions were very constricted. For him there was no other possibility than to live and to sleep in my parent's bedroom. He, too, stayed with us for some time until he decided to continue his journey. Some weeks later we got the news that he also had been arrested by the Nazis. During a prisoner's transportation in a rail wagon both his eyes were injured during a bomb attack. He lost most of his eyesight in both eyes. Consequently, he was taken to a hospital in Hamburg. After some time, he was taken to Bielefeld in Lipperland to be interrogated by the Gestapo, to get some names of other believers out of him. But God gave him the strength not to speak. He did not betray any other believer. He was released after the interrogation on the grounds that through his blindness he had suffered sufficiently. He was set free.

I am convinced our family had come through the Nazi regime so well, because my parents were generously risking their own lives to help their fellow-believers in persecution. Therefore, God held His protective hands over my parental home. I am sure I would not have been able to write all my experiences on paper if my parents had not acted so unselfishly.

CHILD MURDERER SEEFELD

When I was still a small boy, we lived in Mueß on the edge of a forest, near Schwerin. The well-known child murderer Adolf Seefeld was preying on children in that area. He had killed numerous children, most of them boys. When visiting our grandparents, it was rather frightening for us kids to go through the forest alone, even by bike.



Adolf Seefeld

Every time I went into the forest, I got off my bike, laid it on the ground, knelt by the wayside and fervently asked my God and my Saviour to be with me on this dangerous way. I learned quickly that my only safety was in Him. After each prayer I felt totally free of fear because I was sure that my guardian angel would protect me. None of my brothers and sisters were caught by that child murderer. My confidence in our heavenly Father was strengthened through this experience and is maintained until the present day.

The murderer himself was caught and handed over to be dealt with by the courts in Schwerin in 1936. He was sentenced to death 12 times. My eldest brother was present at his execution.

DJ (GERMAN YOUTH), WHICH LATER BECAME HJ (HITLER YOUTH)

When I was ten years old, one afternoon some boys from the Hitler youth appeared at our home in their uniforms to pick me up for "duty". They asked my mother if I could come with them. My mother was accustomed to answering very cautiously. Had she said: "No, I don't want him to go", she could have been arrested. Thus, she said: "Why don't you ask Johannes directly?" To me, it was the greatest honor to be allowed to decide for myself, and I very firmly refused to accompany them. So, the boys left.

From then on, I had to be very cautious when I went into the village. Had any of the Hitler Youth seen me, they would have beaten me up, since it was compulsory to join the Hitler Youth. I remember one time when I had to quickly sneak into my brother's boat to hide from them. Fortunately, the boat was among some reeds at the edge of a lake, so no one was able to see me.

After my parents had changed their place of residence again, one evening two Hitler youth came to inform us about a "scouts' game" which was to take place the next day. As it was "just a game", my father generously agreed.

Since there were fewer players on my team, we consequently lost the game. Two hours of military exercises were supposed to be the punishment for the losers. We all had to lie down ... get up again ... run ... lie down again etc. etc, and this at a very fast pace. A Hitler youth leader supervised and commanded our team with constant yelling. Then I realized, this is not a game, this is more like a military drill. I didn't want any part of it. After a couple of minutes, I decided to make my way off the field. The problem was it was an open field. I had no place to hide behind a tree or anything else, but nevertheless, with the help of God I could disappear without being seen by anybody. If the Hitler Youth leader had noticed my disappearance, this would have had severe consequences for me, because even the Hitler youth was known to be merciless.

Next morning at school, the boys, especially my best friend who had stood directly next to me on the training ground, asked me how I could disappear without being

seen. They were baffled. Of course, it was God who took care of me, again.

LOST: BREAD RATIONING COUPONS

The day after the war had started, everyone in Germany received coupons that rationed the food, such as: bread, butter, milk, etc. Those coupons were intended to last for a whole month. Every time we bought something, one part of a coupon was torn off. Those coupons became more important than cash, for without them, we were not able to buy anything, even if we had the money.

It was about three kilometers from Schwerin to our baker in Neumühle, where we always bought our bread, and after we moved away, we intended to still buy it from there in the future. As an eleven-year-old boy I was entrusted with the task of buying bread for our whole family.

I remember riding my bike on a very stormy and rainy day from Schwerin to Neumühle, to buy the bread from the baker. My mother had given me bread rationing coupons for six people. When I returned home and gave all the bread to my mother, the first thing she did was to hold out her hand and ask: "Where are the remaining bread coupons?" And then she asked for the remaining money.

I was startled, because at that moment I realized that I had LOST the bread coupons! While cycling back home, the wind must have blown the coupons out of my pocket. That was the only time in my life my mother gave me a good spanking. Then my mother immediately sent me to go and search for the bread coupons. But how could I find them in the stormy, rainy weather, on the

whole stretch of three kilometers? But I knew, if I would not find them again, six people would be without bread for a whole month. So, I locked myself in the toilet



to be able to talk to my God and reliable Helper, undisturbed. After that I went on my way, peacefully trusting that He would somehow help me to find the bread coupons.

It was raining cats and dogs with a gale-force wind blowing, but I was on a mission, cycling through the

open countryside to find what I had lost. Shortly before I arrived in Neumühle, I came across a boy. He asked me: "What are you looking for?" When I told him that I had lost all the bread coupons he said to me: "Ahh, go to the second house, that's where I live, and ask my mother for them, because I found bread coupons a little while ago the field and took them to her."



my God from the bottom of my heart that He had heard my prayer and miraculously kept the bread coupons safe. That experience as a young boy, strengthened my faith again, to the extent that trusting in God became a part of my life.

I hurried to his house and was happy to realize that the bread coupons were still there, all of them, complete, and they had not even been damaged by the bad weather. After having expressed my thanks to the boy's mother, I hurried home as fast as I could and assured my parents that this would not happen again.

Before I did anything else, I went straight back into the toilet, went down on my knees again, where I thanked

*Praise the Lord, O my soul,
And forget not all His benefits:
He forgiveth all thine iniquities.
Who healeth all my diseases.
He redeems my life from the pit.
And crowns me with love and compassion.*

Psalms 103:2-4

Asleep in Jesus

George Radin was born in 1943 in the country of Yugoslavia and immigrated to Canada with his family when he was young. He successfully ran his own business in Canada when he grew up.

The Lord saw it in His mercy to give George a rest from his labours on August 30, 2024. It is hard to lose someone, especially a loved one. Life is hard and sometimes it seems as though it is not fair. The Lord has given us today—we are not promised tomorrow.

Time does not remove memories. George is always remembered for his positive outlook on life, no matter how many challenges he faced. He always had a smile on his face and trusted the Lord. On May 5 of this year, George and his wife, Dragica, were baptized into the church of God.



George is much remembered as being a very hard worker, and he was instrumental in the building of the Toronto Church (headquarters) in Canada. For this we are always grateful to him.

George has left us a legacy. It is today that we need to make things right between us and the Lord. We each have a choice to make regarding eternity. We can choose to live for self or for Christ.

He leaves behind his beloved wife, Dragica, and other family members. Dragica is now having to live alone without the companion of her beloved George with whom she was married to for 46 years.

Let us keep her in our prayers as well as all of the rest of George's immediate and extended family. We look forward to meeting George once again on the resurrection morning, where there will be no more tears and death cannot separate us anymore.



Epilogue to the Poem: Story of David



David, the youngest son of Jesse was the God-chosen king of ancient Israel. But before the crown was upon his head, he had to go through many years of hardship, disappointments, persecution, unjust dealings by those who were close to him.

The beauty God saw in the young sheep keeper was his uprightness of heart.

David was of the fabric God could work with.

It was all providential to mold, shape and strengthen his character to become the king God desired for His people. Because of David's love for God and absolute trust in Him even in his young years, he had no fear to approach the giant Goliath, of whom all Israel was sore afraid of. It was David's desire to glorify the power and name of Israel's God to the enemy and his own nation.

He became a man of war with astonishing victories, for God was with him. This wrought envy and jealousy in the present King Saul, who in time made David's life miserable with relentless, senseless persecution, making him his personal enemy.

David's refuge was to seek the LORD who blessed him with the heavenly gift of prophecy, the talent of composing the most heartfelt, deep spiritual psalms, exalting the glory and power of God the Creator, to whom he could pour out all his sorrow, struggles and agony of heart and soul. In certain psalms like 22, 69 and others, he was inspired to express, describe the sufferings of the Messiah, mingling them with his own.

It is this marvelous gift of prophetic insight that made David so great a poet and writer, that set him apart from all other kings in Israel, and that through his line the Messiah would come, calling the Son of God the Son of David.

He was no pretender or hypocrite, but an open book to God for David was spiritually minded, a great observer of nature, the works of God, compassionate, not offended when rebuked, but genuinely repented of his sins, tried sincerely to make up where he failed, in short, a human being of integrity, a man as the Bible says, "after God's own heart."

It was not given to David to build the temple in Jerusalem. But unknown to him his Psalms helped countless souls who gave their heart and life to Jesus Christ, in time face perplexing trials and temptation, in prayer crying out their despair, helplessness to the Saviour the very words written in the Psalms, hoping, trusting God will hear them and then praise Him as David did.

Therefore the Psalms are such a blessing, a powerhouse to strengthen the faith of God's people, persevering in severe conflicts to the end, becoming living stones, a temple, a living sanctuary where God dwells in the heart, His great desire for every soul.

May all, especially the young believers take courage to fight the good fight of faith, loving, obeying our God and Creator that has the great and wonderful reward to spend eternity with our precious, glorious Saviour and King, Jesus Christ! Amen.

Edda Tedford, Canada

CHICKPEA POTATO CURRY DISH

Ingredients:

2 Cups chickpeas, raw
2 large potatoes, peeled and cubed
½ tsp. curry powder, mild
1 tsp. paprika, sweet
Salt to taste

2 to 3 medium onions, chopped fine
3 cloves garlic, minced
1 tsp. turmeric
6 Tbsp. ginger root, grated (more if preferred)

Soak the chickpeas in cold water overnight in the refrigerator and then cook. When cooked you will have 6 to 7 cups of chickpeas. When I buy my ginger root, I freeze it. It is then easy to shred.

Directions:

Sauté the onions, garlic and ginger root until almost done. Add the curry powder, turmeric, and paprika.

Stir and simmer for about 1 minute.

Add chickpeas

Add cubed potatoes and 3-4 cups of water and stir well together.

Cover and let simmer until done, keeping an eye on it in case you need to add a little water. Add salt according to your liking. You can make this dish as thin or thick as you like. Delicious!

Note:

Chickpeas are a great source of magnesium and potassium which may support heart health by helping prevent high blood pressure which is a major risk factor for heart disease. The soluble fiber in chickpeas has been shown to reduce bad cholesterol. The fiber also helps to improve digestion, supports colon health and aids in preventing constipation. Chickpeas help to reduce the risk of type 2 diabetes and support brain and nervous system function. They also contain iron and protein and many more positive nutrients for our health.



Franziska S. Pedersen

“Some of our people conscientiously abstain from eating improper food, and at the same time neglect to eat the food that would supply the elements necessary for the proper sustenance of the body. Let us never bear testimony against health reform by failing to use wholesome, palatable food in place of the harmful articles of diet that we have discarded. Much tact and discretion should be employed in preparing nourishing food to take the place of that which has constituted the diet of many families. This effort requires faith in God, earnestness of purpose, and a willingness to help one another. A diet lacking in the proper elements of nutrition brings reproach upon the cause of health reform. We are mortal, and must supply ourselves with food that will give proper sustenance to the body.” –Counsels on Diet and Foods, p. 92

Cameroon



Calgary, Canada

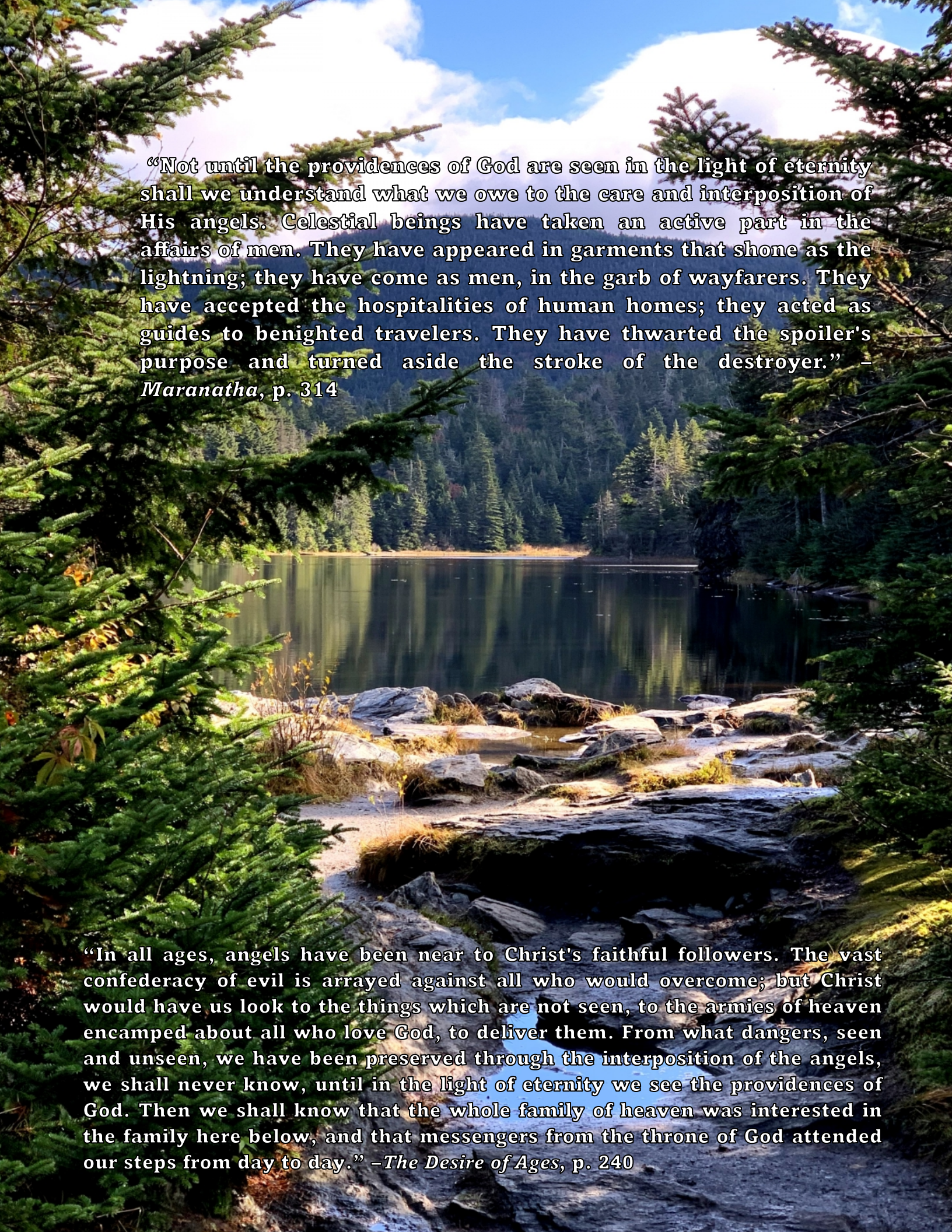


Tahiti



Tonga





“Not until the providences of God are seen in the light of eternity shall we understand what we owe to the care and interposition of His angels. Celestial beings have taken an active part in the affairs of men. They have appeared in garments that shone as the lightning; they have come as men, in the garb of wayfarers. They have accepted the hospitalities of human homes; they acted as guides to benighted travelers. They have thwarted the spoiler's purpose and turned aside the stroke of the destroyer.” – *Maranatha*, p. 314

“In all ages, angels have been near to Christ's faithful followers. The vast confederacy of evil is arrayed against all who would overcome; but Christ would have us look to the things which are not seen, to the armies of heaven encamped about all who love God, to deliver them. From what dangers, seen and unseen, we have been preserved through the interposition of the angels, we shall never know, until in the light of eternity we see the providences of God. Then we shall know that the whole family of heaven was interested in the family here below, and that messengers from the throne of God attended our steps from day to day.” – *The Desire of Ages*, p. 240