

*The Reformation* 

# Messenger

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**Growth**  
Means  
Crawling  
From Our  
Cocoon  
To Show  
The World  
Our Colors.

## SPIRITUAL BLINDNESS

In our world there are millions of blind people. Day and night are the same to them. They cannot see the beauty of the world - the flowers, trees, sunsets. Their usefulness is limited because of their blindness.

But far more dangerous and terrible is spiritual blindness, which takes away eternal life from us.

A spiritually blind person does not know what he is doing. Eve became blinded by looking at the forbidden tree. Spiritual blindness overruled her knowledge. God had told her what would be the result of disobedience yet she went ahead and ate of the forbidden tree. This blindness could be compared to a condition of being hypnotized. The first step she took voluntarily by going to the forbidden tree to look at it. The second step she could not resist. Satan has learned how to lead people into sin by leading them just to look at it first. Television, videos, computers serve well for this purpose. Millions are lost eternally just by beholding evil, vanity and violence.

By beholding they are changed into the same image. Prophet Isaiah saw the world enveloped in darkness. "For behold, the darkness shall cover the earth, and gross darkness the people." Isa. 60:2. Sister White wrote the same. "The children of the world are called the children of darkness. They are blinded by the god of this world, and are led by the spirit of the prince of darkness. They cannot enjoy heavenly things." T. Vol. 1 page 279

People in the world enjoy the pleasure of sin. They live to gratify the flesh, and eternity is out of their reckoning. Our religion to them is foolishness.

We agree that the world is in darkness. But how are the Christians who visit churches and profess religion?

"I was amazed as I beheld the terrible darkness of the members of our churches. The lack of godliness was such that they were bodies of darkness and death, instead of being the light of the world. Many profess to love God but in works deny Him." Test. Vol 2 pg. 444.

How is it with us today? Are we the children of light or the children of darkness? This is an important question, because a blind person does not see his own spiritual condition. The Laodicean angel is satisfied with himself, saying, "I am rich and increased with goods and have need of nothing." Rev. 3:17. At the same time his true condition is "wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked."

By looking at the world we become blinded. Money becomes important to us. A comfortable, easy life becomes desirable. Amusements and entertainment become attractive.

This is what happened to Judas. We wonder, how could he betray Jesus? How could he be so foolish? Yet Judas did not see anything wrong in his act. He thought himself to be wise. Just for one hour's work he gained 30 pieces of silver. Judas was a member in the very church of God, in the company of Jesus yet he was a spiritually blind person.

Apostle Paul writes, "Because that, when they knew God, they glorified Him not as God, neither were thankful; but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened. Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools." Rom. 1:21-22

"This I say therefore, and testify in the Lord, that ye henceforth walk not as other Gentiles walk, in the vanity of their mind, having the understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God through the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their heart." Eph. 4:17-18.

"But he that hateth his brother is in darkness, and walketh in darkness, and knoweth not whither he goeth, because that darkness hath blinded his eyes." 1 John 2:11

By these verses we can see that it is possible to be members in the church of God and be blinded by Satan, by vanity and by hatred to a brother. Bitterness towards someone will blind and defile us. "Lest any root of bitterness springing up trouble you, and thereby many be defiled." Heb. 12:15. A person with bitterness in

his heart cannot be quiet but will speak to others of it and by so doing many will become bitter and defiled.

No one is so blinded and bitter as Satan. He was the most intelligent of all created beings and yet became the most foolish and blinded. Now he is the most miserable and unhappy person.

Sister White writes, "When the eye is blinded by the love of self, there is only darkness.... Every indulgence of sinful desire strengthens the soul's aversion to God, and leads us into deeper and deeper darkness." MB 92.

"Those who have great light and who have not walked in it will have darkness corresponding to the light they have despised." T.M. 163.

As the eye doctor examines the physical eyesight, we can also examine our spiritual eyesight.

2 Peter 1:2-9 brings an eye test to us. 10 different qualities are mentioned here.

1. Are we partakers of the divine nature?
2. Have we escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust?
3. Do we have faith? (to move mountains)
4. Do we have virtue, the moral excellence, and a balanced life?
5. Do we have knowledge of God and of His will?
6. Do we have temperance, the self-control?
7. Do we have patience - perseverance under adversity?
8. Do we have godliness? - are we like Jesus in our behaviour?
9. Do we have brotherly kindness? - do we love our church members?
10. Do we have charity (agape)? Do we love God above all and even our enemies?

Verse nine says, "But he that lacketh these things is blind, and cannot see afar off, and hath forgotten that he was purged from his old sins."<sup>1</sup>

The Spirit of Prophecy tells us what brings spiritual blindness upon a professed Christian.

1. Ignoring God's warnings. T. Vol. 3:266
2. Delay to obey. (Luke 9:59-62) "Today if you hear My voice harden not your heart."
3. Sin blinds us. Willful sin is most dangerous. By it we lose the sense of sinfulness of our wrongdoing.
4. Selfishness blinds us that we cannot see spiritual things
5. Neglecting our duty.
6. Lack of Bible study.

7. Neglecting prayer.

It is very difficult to help a spiritually blind person. We may waste hours arguing and debating about the points of truth and get nowhere. Jesus said to his disciples, "Let them alone, they be blind leaders of the blind." Matt. 15:14.

Apostle Paul said, "A man that is an heretic after the first and second admonition reject." Titus 3:10.

The only remedy for spiritual blindness is the eyesalve that the True Witness is offering to the Laodicean angel. Suddenly we may realize our foolishness like Peter and weep bitterly and then we can be the angel of light whose glory will lighten the earth.

"Oh, why will not God's people comply with the conditions laid down in His word? If they would do this they would not fail to realize the excellent blessing freely given of God to the humble and obedient." T. Vol. 2:444

Let us go to the Heavenly Merchantman, the True Witness, to the Laodicean church and buy the eyesalve. The price may seem high but the result will be spiritual health, salvation and fullness of joy and peace and in the end eternal life.

May the Lord bless us all in this. AMEN

Timo Martin

## WHO IS YOUR LEADER?

In the 1860's Sister White received a vision that it was time for God's people to organize. Previous to this time they had not wanted to create any organization, believing that all members are equal and one should not be elevated as the head. This original system worked for a short while, but as the followers of God increased it was time to set up an organization in order for things to run more smoothly.

"As our numbers increased, it was evident that without some form of organization there would be great confusion, and the work would not be carried forward successfully. To provide for the support of the ministry, for carrying the work in new fields, for protecting members, for holding church property, for the publication of the truth through the press, and for many other objects, organization was indispensable." TM, p. 26.

When Israel was in the wilderness and Moses was trying to do all the work himself, Jethro came and counseled him to set up an organization so that everything would run more smoothly and efficiently. For a time it was appropriate for Moses to do all the leading, but there came a time for a change. There also came a time for a change amongst God's true followers in the 1 SCO's. Now it was time to elect a president, treasurer, secretary and a committee. Who should they choose? Who was worthy for those positions? Were there some followers who were better than others? Some who were worthy of a higher rank? Unlike any worldly organization where you work your way up to a higher level as your knowledge and skill increases, God chooses a leader who is "subject to like passions" as the rest of the members. As long as he follows the Biblical guidelines for his life as written in 1 Timothy chapter 3, he is worthy. The Lord does not look for superior skill or intellect; He looks for humility of heart, and firmness to the principles of truth. Those that are qualified are brethren equal to the rest of the membership. Never are they to be exalted above their brethren. When this is done, he is sure to fall. So the Lord chooses leaders. Not always do the leaders remain faithful. We have the example of King Saul. The Lord called him to a holy office, but he did not remain faithful during his term as king, yet the Lord allowed him to continue in his office for many years after his initial apostasy. The Lord revealed His will, when it was time to remove him from office.

We can't base our faith on the experience of our leaders either. Sister White said, "Many a star that we have admired for its brilliancy will then go out in darkness." 5T, p. 81. But we must remember that the leaders are appointed by the Lord for a specific job and we need to respect them in this office. Leaders need our encouragement and our help and most of all our understanding.



Often we are tempted to choose a leader that we personally like more than other leaders who are equally qualified. We may even make extra efforts to go listen to our favorites preach, willing even to travel great distances to hear them, while for other leaders we don't make very much effort at all. We may praise one leader in our speech and conversation while ignoring another.

What is it that makes us do this? It is an unconverted human nature. If you find yourself preferring one leader over another, ask yourself why? This is not a new problem. In fact all throughout history this has been going on.

## PREFERENCE TO THE MORE COMPLIANT LEADER

### Moses and Aaron:

In the time of Moses, when Israel was in the wilderness at Mt Sinai, the Israelites preferred Aaron to Moses. Why is this?

Moses was in the mountain and in his absence, "the judicial authority had been delegated to Aaron, and a vast crowd gathered about his tent, with the demand, 'Make us gods, which shall go before us; for as this Moses, the man that brought us up out of the land of Egypt, we wot not what is become of him.'" The cloud, they said, that had heretofore led them now rested permanently upon the mount; it would no longer direct their travels. They must have an image in its place; and if, as had been suggested, they should decide to return to Egypt, they would find favor with the Egyptians by bearing this image before them and acknowledging it as their god.

"Such a crisis demanded a man of firmness, decision, and unflinching courage; one who held the honor of God above popular favor, personal safety, or life itself. But the present leader of Israel was not of this character. Aaron feebly remonstrated with the people, but his wavering and timidity at the critical moment only rendered them the more determined. The tumult increased. A blind unreasoning frenzy seemed to take possession of the multitude. There were some who remained true to their covenant with God, but the greater part of the people joined in the apostasy. A few who ventured to denounce the proposed image making as idolatry, were set upon and roughly treated, and in the confusion and excitement they finally lost their lives. Aaron feared for his own safety; and instead of nobly standing up for the honor of God, he yielded to the demands of the multitude." PP, p. 316,317.

When Moses returned he called for Aaron and sternly demanded, "What did this people unto thee, that thou hast brought so great a sin upon them?" While Aaron tried to cover for himself by blaming the people, in saying that he would have been put to death had he not complied with their wishes, Moses was clearly putting the blame on the shoulders of Aaron. Aaron was the substitute leader in Moses' absence and the leader is responsible for the spiritual welfare of his flock. Had Aaron stood firm, there would have been enough supporters on his side to protect him from the evil intentions of the unconsecrated multitude. He should have trusted in God for his protection. Never will it be permissible to commit a sin in order to preserve our lives. Moses looked at Aaron as the chief offender in this situation. "The fact that Aaron had been blessed and honored so far above the people was what made his sin so heinous. It was Aaron "the saint of the Lord" (Psalm 106:16), that had made the idol and announced the feast." PP, p. 320.

"If Aaron had had courage to stand for the right, irrespective of consequences, he could have prevented that apostasy. If he had unswervingly maintained his own allegiance to God, if he had cited the people to the perils of Sinai, and had reminded them of their solemn covenant with God to obey His law, the evil would have been checked. But his compliance with the desires of the people and the calm assurance with which he proceeded to carry out their plans, emboldened them to go to greater lengths in sin than had before entered their minds.

"When Moses, on returning to the camp, confronted the rebels, his severe rebukes and the indignation he displayed in breaking the sacred tables of the law were contrasted by the people with his brother's pleasant speech and dignified demeanor, and their sympathies were with Aaron. To justify himself, Aaron endeavored to make the people responsible for his weakness in yielding to their demand; but notwithstanding this, they were filled with admiration of his gentleness and patience. But God seeth not as man sees. Aaron's yielding spirit and his desire to please had blinded his eyes to the enormity of the crime he was sanctioning. His course in giving his influence to sin in Israel cost the life of thousands. In what contrast with this was the course of Moses, who, while faithfully executing God's judgments, showed that the welfare of Israel was dearer to him than prosperity or honor or life.

"Of all the sins that God will punish, none are more grievous in His sight than those that encourage others to do evil. God would have his servants prove their loyalty by faithfully rebuking transgression, however painful the act may be. Those who are honored with a divine commission are not to be weak, pliant timeservers. They are not to aim at self-exaltation, or to shun disagreeable duties, but to perform God's work with unswerving fidelity." PP, p. 323,324.

So we see that the people loved Aaron more than Moses in this instance, because Aaron bent to their sinful desires while Moses rebuked their sins. If a leader is admired more because he will not rebuke us for our sins, then we are admiring a leader who is like Aaron; not doing the will of God. On the converse, if a leader is not appreciated because he *does* point out our plague spots in our character, then we are making a grave mistake, Human nature does not like to have its sins pointed out, but our human nature must die, and Christ's righteousness must cover our filthy rags. How much more should we appreciate the leader who is bold enough, and cares enough for our salvation, to help us see the plague spots in our character and encourage us to put them away.

### **SEEKING FALSE PROPHETS (OR RELIGIOUS LEADERS) BECAUSE THEY BRING A MORE PLEASING MESSAGE TO OUR EARS.**

*"For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears: And they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables. " 2 Timothy 4:3,4.*

#### **King Ahab:**

In the time of King Ahab, Ahab preferred his false prophets because they prophesied pleasing things to him. When he was about to go into battle with King Jehoshaphat against the Syrians, King Jehoshaphat, who served the true and living God, asked that a prophet of God be sought to seek counsel of him.

"Although Jehoshaphat, in a moment of weakness, had rashly promised to join the king of Israel in his war against the Syrians, yet his better judgment led him to seek to learn the will of God concerning the undertaking. "Inquire, I pray thee, at the word of the Lord today," he suggested to Ahab. In response, Ahab called together four hundred of the false prophets of Samaria, and asked of them, "Shall we go to Ramothgilead to battle, or shall I forbear?" And they answered, "Go up; for God will deliver it into the king's hand." PK, p. 195.

King Ahab brought a large group of prophets, who prophesied pleasing things. They were not prophets of Baal. King Ahab would not stoop that low as to bring Baal's prophets when his friend asked for a prophet of God. Yet, they were still false prophets and King Jehoshaphat was able to discern that they were false.

"Unsatisfied, Jehoshaphat sought to learn for a certainty the will of God. "Is there not here a prophet of the Lord," he asked, "That we might inquire of him"? "There is yet one man, Micaiah the son of Imlah, by whom we may inquire of the Lord," Ahab answered; "But I hate him; for he doth not prophesy good concerning me, but evil." 1 Kings 22:8." PK, p. 195.

The truth hurt and Ahab didn't like the truth. The truth is like a sword, cutting away all our sinful desires and propensities, and often we don't like that sword. Human nature doesn't like to be told its sins and failures, and therefore, more often than not, will take it out against the leaders of the church - those that brought the counsel, instead of listening to the counsel and rooting out the evil in their own hearts. Evil usually hates the good. Micaiah was hated by Ahab only because his words were not in line with the desire of Israel's wicked king, who wanted his own way, and wanted prophets who would prophesy accordingly.

"Jehoshaphat was firm in his request that the man of God be called; and upon appearing before them and being adjured by Ahab to tell "nothing but that which is true in the name of the Lord," Micaiah said: "I saw all Israel scattered upon the hills, as sheep that have not a shepherd: and the Lord said. These have no master: let them return every man to his house in peace." Verse 16, 17."PK,p. 195, 196.

True prophets from God receive their messages from God, whether they be in accord with other voices or not. They speak truth - not necessarily to please the majority. The good is not always that which appears good or that which men desire to hear.

Far better is the unpalatable truth than welcome untruth. True prophets cannot be bribed or forced to prophesy smooth things. When a course of evil is seen, a true prophet can only describe it as evil. What is needed is not a change in the message on the part of the prophet, but a change of course on the part of the listener.

"The words of the prophet should have been enough to show the kings that their project was not favored by Heaven, but neither ruler felt inclined to heed the warning. Ahab had marked out his course, and he was determined to follow it. Jehoshaphat had given his word of honor, "We will be with thee in the war;" and after making such a promise, he was reluctant to withdraw his forces. 2 Chronicles 18:3." PK, p. 196.

Jehoshaphat should have, right then and there, refused to go to battle and try to persuade Ahab also to not go, but he had given his oath and to save face, he chose to go. By his willingness to still go, he was encouraging disaster to come upon the two nations.

The prophets of Israel were giving a message that Ahab WANTED to hear. They did not stop to consider that perhaps this false message would bring death to their king. They were only seeking his honour

and respect. They were actually encouraging him to go on this foolish and disastrous mission. They were even using the name of Jehovah but they were not speaking for Him in reality. These prophets claimed to speak in the name of Jehovah, but were false prophets. The king of Judah was distinctly dissatisfied with the prophets of Israel. A true follower of the Lord will recognize a false prophet.

“So the king of Israel and Jehoshaphat the king of Judah went up to Ramothgilead.” 1 Kings 22:29. The outcome of the battle was as Micaiah had prophesied. Although Jehoshaphat did not lose his life in this disastrous battle, we saw the results of his disobedience. King Ahab did lose his life, along with many of the soldiers. It never pays to ignore a message from God’s true messengers.

King Zedekiah:

King Zedekiah, the final king of the nation of Judah, was torn between listening to Jeremiah and to the false prophets and princes serving in his court. He put Jeremiah into an awful dungeon for a few days and into prison for a time, to try and quiet his conscience, but his conscience gave him no peace. He had many private meetings with Jeremiah since he knew Jeremiah to be God’s true prophet. He knew what Jeremiah was saying was the truth and this troubled him. No matter what he did to Jeremiah, his conscience was still there. Unfortunately he chose to listen to his princes, who were bringing pleasing but false messages, instead of listening to God’s messenger. The end was disastrous, resulting in the nation of Judah going captive into Babylon.

King Ahaziah:

When King Ahaziah, (son of King Ahab), was ruling in Israel, he fell from an upper floor when a lattice gave out. He was bedridden and sick unto death. King Ahaziah was a young man when the Lord was working through Elijah in the nation of Israel (during his father’s reign) to bring about a reform. He saw the stubbornness of his father, the evil of his mother and the disaster it brought to the nation; yet he would not yield to the Lord. He knew what happened to his father. He had witnessed the wonderful works of God. He knew the ability of the Lord to help him and also the terrible judgments meted out against the transgressors. For him to turn to Ekron in his time of need, was to deny the Lord and invite these judgements upon himself. When he was ill, he refused to call upon the Lord for help. Instead he sent his messengers directly to seek counsel from Beelzebub, god of Ekron. He was definitely not ignorant of the workings of the Lord, but he had chosen his leader and it was not the Lord. He died shortly after, in conversation with Elijah, cursing and swearing against the God of heaven.

We must trust that the messages our leaders bring us are truly messages from the Lord. Some will leave the truth when they can’t endure the strong messages. “They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would not doubt have continued with us: but they went out, that they might be made manifest that they were not all of us.” 1 John 2:19. When Jesus brought a message that was difficult to accept, “Many therefore of his disciples, when they heard this, said, This is an hard saying; who can hear it? . . . From that time many of his disciples went back, and walked no more with him.” John 6:60, 66. It didn’t say that many of the common people left, but rather many of the *disciples* left Him; those that Jesus was preparing for leadership in the Christian church. Many times people have been shaken out of God’s church; people who we thought were strong and stable, but they could not endure the messages of the Lord. I have even seen it happen that when people leave they claim to have a higher spiritual experience in their new church family, than they ever had while a member of God’s church. Is this not what Eve thought after she ate the forbidden fruit? She felt as though she was entering a higher spiritual experience? The truth of the matter is that once Satan has them where he wants them (in a fallen church) they are no longer buffeted by him. He leaves them alone and they feel as though they are entering a higher spiritual experience; they are at peace. Can this be so, while they are violating the laws of God and/or supporting fallen organizations that God calls Babylon? Jesus said, “The servant is not greater than his lord. If they have persecuted me, they will also persecute you;” John, 15:20.

THE PARTY SPIRIT: PREFERRING ONE MINISTER ABOVE ANOTHER, BOTH OF WHOM ARE FAITHFUL.

Then there is the case of Paul, Peter, Apollos and Christ. All were missionaries for the Lord, but the people were taking sides. “Now this I say, that every one of you saith, I am of Paul; and I of Apollos; and I of Cephas; and I of Christ.” 1 Cor. 1:12.

“Paul had planted the seed of truth; Apollos now watered it. The success that attended Apollos in preaching the gospel led some of the believers to exalt his labors above those of Paul. This comparison of man with man brought into the church a party spirit that threatened to hinder greatly the progress of the gospel.” AA, p. 270. Is God divided? As far as Paul and Apollos were concerned, they were perfectly united.

Paul addresses the party that claimed to follow him. He shows no favour for this party. He is condemning them all for possessing this spirit. Comparison of one spiritual leader with another is contrary to the spirit of Christ.

As for Apollos, his personality, manner of labor, and the type of message he brought appealed to a certain class, who began to show him preference. Others refused to swerve from the loyalty they felt for Paul,



who was the first one to bring the gospel to them. Then there was Peter. “In the early Christian church there were some who refused to recognize either Paul or Apollos, but held (hat Peter was their leader. They affirmed that Peter had been most intimate with Christ when the Master was upon the earth, while Paul had been a persecutor of the believers. Their views and feelings were bound about by prejudice. They did not show the liberality, the generosity, the tenderness, which reveals that Christ is abiding in the heart. There was danger that this party spirit would result in great evil to the Christian church.” AA, p. 279, 280.

“Paul had sought to impress upon the minds of the Corinthian brethren the fact that he and the ministers associated with him were but men commissioned by God to teach the truth, that they were all engaged in the same work, and that they were alike dependent upon God for success in their labors. The discussion that had arisen in the church regarding the relative merits of different ministers was not in the order of God, but was the result of cherishing the attributes of the natural heart. “While one saith, I am of Paul; and another, I am of Apollos; are ye not carnal: Who then is Paul, and who is Apollos, but ministers by whom ye believed, even as the Lord gave to every man? I have planted, Apollos watered; but God gave the increase. So then neither is he that planteth anything, neither he that watereth; but God that given the increase.” 1 Corinthians 3:4-7-... To the Master Worker belongs the honor and glory that comes with success.” AA, p. 273, 274.

“Paul and Apollos were in perfect harmony. The latter was disappointed and grieved because of the dissension in the church at Corinth; he took no advantage of the preference shown to himself, nor did he encourage it, but hastily left the field of strife. When Paul afterward urged him to revisit Corinth, he declined and did not again labor there until long afterward when the church had reached a better spiritual state.” AA, p. 280.

“God’s servants do not all possess the same gifts, but they are all His workmen. Each is to learn of the Great Teacher, and is then to communicate what he has learned. God has given to each of His messengers an individual work. There is a diversity of gifts, but all the workers are to blend in harmony, controlled by the sanctifying influence of the Holy Spirit. As they make known the gospel of salvation, many will be convicted and converted by the power of God. The human instrumentality is hid with Christ in God, and Christ appears as the chiefest among ten thousand, the One altogether lovely.” AA, p. 275.

“God’s servants are to work together, blending in kindly, courteous order, “in honour preferring one another.” Romans 12:10. There is to be no unkind criticism, no pulling to pieces of another’s work; and there are to be no separate parties. Every man to whom the Lord has entrusted a message has his specific work. Each one has an individuality of his own, which he is not to sink in that of any other man. Yet each is to work in harmony with his brethren. In their service God’s workers are to be essentially one. No one is to set himself up as a criterion, speaking disrespectfully of his fellow workers or treating them as inferior. Under God each is to do his appointed work, respected, loved, and encouraged by the other labourers. Together they are to carry the work forward to completion.” AA, p. 275, 276.

“It is not given to any human being to judge between the different servants of God. The Lord alone is the judge of man’s work, and He will give to each his just reward.” Ibid.

“He who sends forth gospel workers as His ambassadors is dishonoured when there is manifested among the hearers so strong an attachment to some favourite minister that there is an unwillingness to accept the labors of some other teacher. The Lord sends help to His people, not always as they may choose, but as they need; for men are shortsighted and cannot discern what is for their highest good. It is seldom that one minister has all the qualifications necessary to perfect a church in all the requirements of Christianity; therefore God often sends to them other ministers, each possessing some qualifications in which the others were deficient.” AA, p. 277,278.

“The church should gratefully accept these servants of Christ, even as they would accept the Master Himself, They should seek to derive all the benefit possible from the instruction which each minister may give them from the word of God. The truths that the servants of God bring are to be accepted and appreciated in the meekness of humility, but no minister is to be idolized.” AA, p. 278.

### **CHRIST ONLY - NO HUMAN TEACHER**

We have often met people in our ministry who do not want to connect themselves with any church. They believe that God will lead them into truth outside of any organization. They believe there is no necessity for organization. While we are not to idolize any minister or leader, and depend on their knowledge alone for our salvation, we are to learn from them and build upon the knowledge that they can impart to us. “In the apostles’ day there were some misguided souls who claimed to believe in Christ, yet refused to show respect to His ambassadors. They declared that they followed no human teacher, but were taught directly by Christ without the aid of the ministers of the gospel. They were independent in spirit and unwilling to submit to the voice of the church Such men were in **grave danger of being deceived. God has placed in the church, as His appointed helpers, men of varied talents, that through the combined wisdom of many the mind of the Spirit may be met.**” AA, p. 278,279.

**This sentiment has often been felt if the present leader appears to not be as faithful as expected. Yet still, even in this case, it is not our duty to withdraw our respect for the leader. The Lord sets up leaders and the Lord decides when their work is finished. If they have fallen into sin, or are not being as faithful to their office as they could be, the Lord will direct His church as to the time to remove them from office.**



When open sin is revealed it is time to take action. It may also be a simple matter as a leader becoming too elderly and a younger leader is called to replace him. Through His Spirit, God will direct the affairs of the church and give wisdom to the General Conference delegates when they are in session. The Lord is the ultimate leader of the church.

“We have been inclined to think that where there are no faithful ministers there can be no true Christians, but this is not the case.

God has promised that where the shepherds are not true He will take charge of the flock Himself. God has never made the flock wholly dependent upon human instrumentalities.” 5T, p. 80.

We must have God as our ultimate leader and respect the leaders God has chosen to lead His flock. It is not for us to choose which leader is better than another. If we find ourselves not getting along or liking a leader who has counseled us or pointed out some trouble spots in our character, perhaps we should examine our own hearts. Perhaps we are the problem and the leader is correct? Is it because of the message they bring? Is one bringing a message of reproof that is too close to our hearts? Is one bringing a message that does not touch our treasured sins? Do we only like those leaders who preach smooth things? Is it not time now to “Cry Aloud and Spare Not, lift up thy voice as a trumpet and show my people their transgression, and the house of Jacob their sins.”? Isaiah 58:1. This is the message for today. We are called to have the Elijah message for our time and Elijah was not quiet in his preaching. He did not preach smooth things. He was seen bringing a strong rebuke to the nation of Israel for their sins. It is not time to

preach smooth sermons, to rock the people to sleep -it is time to present the truth for this time, in its stark reality, the end of the world is coming, it is nigh at hand, Get ready, get ready, get ready. It is high time to awake out of our sleep and make sure of our salvation, and this means first and foremost making sure we are anchored to the Rock, Jesus Christ, allowing Him to direct our lives.

God has appointed leaders in His church. He authorized the organization of His church for a purpose and as long as the leaders and members follow the Lord’s plan, the church will prosper. Trees without fruit are cut down as cumberers of the ground. Whether they are leaders or lay members, God is no respecter of persons. It is not our duty to prefer one leader to another or to get into the party spirit that was plaguing the Corinthian church. We must respect all leaders as sent of God for our spiritual nourishment and counsel. Today is the day of salvation; tomorrow may be too late. The time is not far distant when the test will come to every soul. Will we be ready? Then we must all come into unity of spirit and truth with our brethren and leaders. AMEN

Wendy Eaton

## LOVE OF GOD MANIFESTED

This is the most controversial subject to many Christians. It is poorly comprehended or not understood, yet it is the very foundation of every living church of God. Christ prayed before he died. “Jesus answered them saying, The hour is come that the Son of Man should be glorified.” John 12:23. Again He spoke “Father glorify thy name”. Then came a voice from heaven, saying, “I have both glorified it and will glorify it again”. John 12:28.

“Now is the son of Man glorified and God is glorified in Him. These words spake Jesus and lifted up His eyes to heaven, and said, Father, the hour is come, glorify thy Son, that thy Son also may glorify Thee: And now O Father, glorify thou me with thine own self with the glory which I had with Thee before the world was.” John 17:1,5. It is a great request that Christ is asking His Father to glorify “Him. What is this glory? Because He said “I have manifested thy name unto the men which thou gavest me out of the world: thine they were, and thou gavest them me, and they have kept thy word.” In His walk of life whether He was in heaven or on this earth, Christ’s only concern was to manifest His Father’s name. He never requested that His name should be glorified, but at this moment He requested that His name should also be glorified. Let us pause and think why His name should also be glorified. In John 16:12-15 we read, “I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now”. It is surprising to hear these words. Why can’t they understand now? His disciples could not understand the very manifestation of Christ because of their spiritual condition. He states further, “howbeit when He the Spirit

of truth, is come, and He will guide you into all truth. For He shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever He shall hear, that shall He speak, and He will show you things to come. He shall glorify me; for He shall receive of mine, and shall show it unto you”.

Christ was visible in human form but because of their spiritual condition the disciples could not understand this beautiful message. But when their spiritual condition is fortified, the invisible Spirit of God will do His marvelous work of glorifying Him. in Early Writings, p. 145, “There was contention among the angels. Satan and his sympathizers were striving to reform the government of God. They wished to look into His unsearchable wisdom, and ascertain His purpose in exalting Jesus and endowing Him such unlimited power and command.” Satan didn’t understand why Christ was given so many privileges in heaven, even though He never claimed to be equal with His Father.

Philippians 2:5-8, “Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus. Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God. But made himself of no reputation, and took upon Him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men. And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.” Christ is equal with God, yet He is also humble. Because of His excellent character Satan became jealous of Christ, and started to question the wisdom of God. He began to penetrate into the unsearchable wisdom of God and to see things which are not revealed. For this reason this message was brought. The gospel of Christ is called the Mystery of His will. In Greek “mystery” means “held secret for ages.” “Having made know unto us the mystery of His will, according to His good pleasure which He hath purposed in Himself.” Eph. 5:9. In heaven Satan did not need to fight against God’s kingdom, neither did he need to fight against Christ. But he went against Christ and started to rebel against His Father because of His goodness and the benevolence of His nature. Satan understood and started to war against the throne of the Almighty.

GC, pg. 492 “Nothing is more plainly thought in scripture than that God was in no wise responsible for the entrance of sin. That there was no arbitrary withdrawal of divine grace, no deficiency in the divine government, that gave occasion for the uprising of rebellion. Sin is an intruder, for whose presence no reason can be given. It is mysterious, unaccountable; to excuse it is to defend it”. With these verses we understand that Satan did not need to create a rebellion in the kingdom of God. He originated and is the author of evil.

I will tell a story about the Father and the Son. Although we can not describe Him with our human imagination, yet we as humans try to explain in human form the divine government. Christ, in His earthly mission tried to explain the truths about the kingdom of God in a very simple manner. By parables and simple daily tasks He portrayed His Father’s kingdom. He used these concepts to teach us the great truths about his Kingdom. Because of our human nature He made divine things in human format for us to understand easily. We try to portray the Father and the Son in a similar format for people to understand this reality. It is hard to express the perfection of the Father and the

Son, but still He made it simple with our earthly tools to comprehend His nature. “There were two twin brothers, each a replica of the same person as they had the same genetic code. If you look at identical twins they are a perfect clone—matching each other perfectly. They are the same age, have the same height, the same face—in every way appearing the same; there is no difference.

In England there were two brothers who were children of the king. Their names were George and Jack. When they grew up, their father died. George became the king of England and his brother Jack became his assistant. The king made his brother his representative wherever he went. If people wanted to honour him they should honour Jack. Jack thought in his heart to please his brother so he became a servant of him. But one day the Prime-Minister became jealous of Jack because George gave so much power to him. So the Prime Minister rebelled against George and started a new kingdom for himself. He killed George’s brother Jack and many Englishmen followed the congress of the Prime Minister. But George was very wise. He fought with his Prime Minister and overthrew his kingdom.

The Prime Minister did not understand why so much power was bestowed upon Jack. In reality Jack never claimed anything although he had possessions of his own. The same is written concerning Christ. Heb 3:5,6 “And Moses verily was faithful in all his house, as a servant, for a testimony of those things which were to be spoken after. But Christ as a Son over his own house, whose house are we, if we hold fast the confidence and the rejoicing of the hope firm unto the end.” This statement describes Christ’s position. Why is it hard for people to understand this beautiful

message? “But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God for they are foolishness unto him, neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.”! Cor 2:14

Why did Christ choose to be a servant of God and take a lower position than His Father? Because He knew that two could not be king. If there were two kings, one would say to build, the other would say to stop. The smooth operation of things could never be accomplished. For this reason He chose a lesser position, and it is He who ordained that it should not be taken away for eternity. The eternal Father and the Son decided this from the foundation of the kingdom. That is how the kingdom existed. That is how Christ portrayed His divinity. He says in John, ch. 14, “If ye had known me ye should have known my FATHER also: and from henceforth ye know him, and have seen Him. Philip sayeth unto Him LORD show us the FATHER and it sufficeth us. JESUS saith unto Him, Have I been so long time with you and yet hast thou not known me, Philip? He that hath seen Me hath seen the FATHER.” How can he say such a statement? Because with the FATHER and the SON—there is no difference, same age, same purpose, same character, same knowledge, same power, same wisdom, etc., everything is the same. So why did CHRIST state in another verse in John 14:28? “If ye loved Me ye would rejoice, because I said, I go unto the FATHER: for my FATHER is greater than I.”

Why would CHRIST say that if you see me you have seen the FATHER? Then He says My FATHER is greater. It is contradictory. CHRIST never contradicts. It is true that His FATHER is greater than Him. In the throne before anything was created or called forth, CHRIST and the FATHER were equal. Philippians ch. 2 clarifies this. “Let this mind be in you, which was also in CHRIST who being in the form of GOD, thought it not robbery to be equal with GOD.” He took a lower position. He made His FATHER the sole decision-maker. Thus in the garden of Gethsemane, He prayed saying not my will but thine be done. The FATHER did not create Christ and like a boss make Christ die for us. This matter is clarified in Isa43:10. “Ye are My witnesses, saith the LORD and my servant whom I have chosen: that ye may know and believe Me and understand that I am He: before Me there was no GOD formed, neither shall there be after Me. I, even I, am the LORD; and beside Me there is no SAVIOUR.” CHRIST is saying these words, because everybody, even a child knows that the SAVIOUR is JESUS CHRIST. So CHRIST is saying that there was no GOD existing before Him nor after Him.

Because he and His FATHER exist as twins, forever they exist as one. He stated that His FATHER was greater and He took a lesser name to Himself, the SON; that is how He portrayed Himself. Because it originated in the throne it can never change. It is destined to be forever, for eternity. No being has the power to change it; it is ordained forever. Isa 45:11,12. “Thus saith the Lord, the Holy One of Israel, and his Maker, Ask Me of things to come concerning my sons, and concerning the work of my hands command ye Me. I have made the earth, and created man upon it: I, even My hands, have stretched out the heavens, and all their host have I commanded.”

Who is this Holy One? Isa 47:4 “As for our Redeemer, the Lord of Hosts is his name, the holy One of Israel.” Who is the Redeemer of the World? Jesus. And not only this, but He is also called Lord of Hosts and the Creator of heaven and Earth. Not only was the Father involved in creation, but Christ had equal power in creating this world. What did the devils call him? Luke 4:33-34. “And in the synagogue there was a man, which had a spirit of an unclean devil, and cried out with a loud voice, Saying, Let us alone; what have we to do with thee, thou Jesus of Nazareth? Art thou come to destroy us? I know thee who thou art; the Holy One of God.” Even the devil acknowledges Him to be the Holy One. Acts 3:14 “But ye denied the Holy One and the Just, and desired a murderer to be granted unto you.” And now Peter, after receiving the Holy Spirit explained the Scriptures and called Christ the Holy One. Nearly 100 times, the Bible talks about the Holy One, a special name Christ uses for himself. This statement clearly indicates that CHRIST was never created by His FATHER.

A great privilege was given to humankind when CHRIST was born a man and then died on the cross, crucified by His nation. He redeemed man so that He could grant all the privileges to man even though man was lost. A second chance was given to Adam. If they accepted the cross of Calvary, Adam and his children could live forever. Now here is a question? Why did GOD not grant this privilege to Satan or his angels? Why were they cast away? Why didn't He die for them? Why was salvation not granted to them? It is true that they knew the depth of GOD'S love when they were in paradise with GOD. In heaven Satan knew what GOD was like. He knew perfectly His character and the nature of His government. The love of GOD was always manifested to them. But humans didn't know the depth of GOD'S love. That is why CHRIST came to manifest the love of GOD to mankind.

When you read the Testimonies you will understand the message called, “the loud cry of the 3<sup>rd</sup> angel”. It is written, “The message has already began, in the revelation of CHRIST the sin pardoning Redeemer. This is the beginning

of the light of the angel whose glory shall fill the whole earth.” It is because of spiritual darkness that we can’t see GOD. Is GOD different yesterday, or in times past, or today, or in the future? He is the same forever. In times past he was gracious, today the same, and will be the same forever. His nature has not changed. It is only because our hearts are blinded that we cannot see this marvelous light. It is written in 2 Cor. 4:3,4. “But if our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost. In whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of CHRIST who is the image of GOD should shine unto them.” CHRIST speaks about this people in the Laodicean message, the Faithful and the True Witness who calls our attention to change. He warns the last generation of Christians who will be living prior to His coming: “Knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked.” This is one of the great rebukes that is given to the last generation. But none is heeding; everybody is lukewarm.

“One day four blind men approached an elephant. One touched the leg of the elephant and said the elephant was like a log. The other touched the trunk and said that it was like a lamppost. The other touched its trunk and said it was like a ceramic pole. The last touched the tail and said it was like a broomstick. All of them had a different view of the elephant, but which one was correct? Because all of them were blind, they could not see the real elephant. One man who was passing heard these men and was laughing and said, “what a shame to be blind.” The same is for all of us. We are blinded by Satan, therefore we cannot see the glory of GOD and his throne. But, the one who can change this is JESUS. And JESUS said, “for a judgment I come unto this world, that they which see not might see and that they which see might be made blind” John 9:39. Whosoever yields to His love will see GOD spiritually.

Every false religion is represented in this elephant. Like the blind men, everybody is seeing GOD from a different angle. But are they true? Are all these religions true? The greatest sorrow is that even GOD’S own church is in this state. For this reason CHRIST warned the Laodiceans regarding blindness. The blind is leading the blind because the churches have alienated themselves from CHRIST; they cannot see the grace of GOD. Every leader and minister is preaching a gospel of CHRIST. They themselves are blind. They cannot see the work they are doing; they are making even those who could see a little, more blind. And with the blind leading the blind, all will fall into a pit. Because the world is blinded they accept any falsehood, thinking that this is the message which will save us. What a falsehood, what a sorrowful existence for these Christians and the world. These Religious organizations praise their leaders to be holy and true; they worship them for their wisdom. And CHRIST as one who can see, looks at the people and says, “what blindness, what sorrow”. But when He touches your heart everything is changed. CHRIST said: “I am the way, the truth and the Life, no man cometh unto my FATHER but by Me.” Only by going to CHRIST can we see GOD in a real way. We are given our sight so that we may see clearly that everything is changed. This is different from what other religious people are proclaiming. So let us go further. The righteousness of CHRIST is the greatest truth about GOD’S love manifested.

This is a true story, which took place in India. “A heavy splash, followed by many ripples and then, apart from a stream of little bubbles which rose to the surface the water was still. A missionary stood on the pier in the Indian Ocean, his eyes riveted on the water. Finally a black head appeared from the water and a pair of bright eyes looked up, climbing onto the pier. An old pearl diver shook the water from his still supple body. “As nice a dive as I have ever seen, Sami!” remarked Hudson Taylor, the missionary, who had come to India to tell the people the good news of salvation through JESUS CHRIST. “Look at this one sir”, said Sami, taking a big oyster from between his teeth. Taylor pried it open and sure enough it held a beautiful shining pearl. “What a treasure, yes”, shrugged the diver, “rather good but some are better, much better. Look at these little flaws here. You know, yesterday you talked with me about God. I admit I have many faults and sins, just like that pearl. But I am and always will be a Hindu. We Hindus believe that we have to do a lot of things to come to God. I have to correct my faults and do penance for them.” “However, Sami, my friend, God offers full forgiveness to every sinner who confesses his errors and sins to him. Everyone who comes to him in repentance and accepts Jesus Christ as his Savior will be adopted as the Son of God. Do you understand?” “No sir, I often told you that it is too simple for me. Perhaps I am too proud but I want to do something to get a place in Heaven. I intend to go on a pilgrimage to Delhi for my sins. Also, I hope to earn God’s mercy.”

“But Sami,” the minister replied, “you won’t even manage this long journey. Today is the time of grace. Tomorrow may very well be too late. Apart from that, we cannot earn God’s mercy for he wants to give it to us freely. The Son of God, Jesus Christ, has suffered on the cross and accomplished all that is necessary for our salvation. God only wants us to confess our sins to him and then believe that his son paid all the debt. For those sinners who come to him. He is the only Saviour. Without him, there is no salvation.” Sami shook his head and went home. No matter how often Hudson Taylor talked to him it was of no avail. The diver would not accept Christ. Yet, the missionary



and the old pearl diver became friends.

One day, Sami came to see the evangelist. He carried a little box with him and said, "Sir Taylor, I have got something in here that I want to tell you about. I had a son who was also a diver. He was the best pearl diver along the Indian coast. He had the keenest eye, the longest breath and he could dive down to thirty meters. He was the delight of my heart. He always dreamt of finding a pearl better than any that had ever been found. Indeed, one day, he found it. However, the oyster was nearly inaccessible, so deep and so well attached in a rock crevice. He got it out, but he had stayed too long underwater. As a result, he strained his heart too much. Soon afterwards, he died." The old man bowed his head and for a moment his whole body shook. He was completely silent. "I have kept that pearl for many years. Now that I am leaving for Delhi, perhaps never to return, I want to give it to you, my best friend. Here you are." For awhile, the missionary gazed silently at one of the biggest pearls ever found in India. It glowed with a wondrous luster. "Sami, what a pearl." "That pearl is perfect," the Indian replied quietly. Suddenly, an idea flashed across the missionary's mind. Looking up, he said "Sami, let me buy this wonderful pearl, I will give you 500,000 pounds for it." "Sir", replied Sami in a severe tone, "this pearl is invaluable, no one can pay what this pearl is worth to me. I can only give it to you as a gift." "No Sami, as much as I want the pearl, I cannot accept it. Maybe I am too proud. To accept this pearl seems too easy for me. I want to pay or work for it." "Don't you understand, can't you see Sir. My only son gave his life to get this pearl. It is worth the lifeblood of my son. I cannot sell it. I can only give it as a present. Just accept it as a proof of my love to you." With tears, the missionary responded, "Sami, don't you see, that is just what you have been saying to God."

The diver gave the missionary a long searching look, as he slowly began to understand that God is offering salvation as a free gift. At no cost. It is so great and costly that no man would be able to pay for it. It cost God the life of his only son in order to open the entrance to heaven. Even through pilgrimages of a thousand miles, you could never earn God's grace. He deliberately gave up his beloved Son to the terrible death of the cross. God's love and deliverance of sinners like you and me can only be accepted as a gift of love. In faith and thankfulness God's light entered the old pearl diver's heart. "Now, I understand," exclaimed Sami. Then he turned and went deep into thought. A little later he came back and said, "I don't want to wait any longer, I want to come to God right now. Just as I am. I cannot earn God's mercy, the price is simply too high. As a lost person, I want to accept God's love though it is beyond my understanding. I want to thank God and his son Jesus Christ for it."

This story of the diver is a true story. It will always be true because man cannot atone for his sins. The only way to pay for our sins is to die a second death, completely eliminated from this universe. However, God did not do this. He wanted to save us. So, he died the second death, this terrible punishment that all mankind will go through in the second death. That is why it is called righteousness of Christ or justification by faith. "God is love. Righteousness is love. Love is the life and light of God. The righteousness of God is embodied in Christ. We receive righteousness by receiving him." **Like this pearl diver in the beginning, many are refusing this beautiful gift which Christ is offering to you and me if we freely come to him. "It is not God that binds the eyes of men or hardens their heart. He sends the light to correct their errors, and to lead them in safe paths; it is by the rejection of this light that the eyes are blinded and the heart hardened. Often the process is gradual, and almost imperceptible. Light comes to the soul through God's word, through His servants, or by the direct agency of His Spirit; but when one ray of light is disregarded, there is partial benumbing of the spiritual perceptions, and the second revealing of light is less clearly discerned. So the darkness increases, until it is night in the soul." DA 322.**

**"With amazement, the angels witnessed the Saviour's despairing agony. The hosts of heaven veiled their faces from the fearful sight. Inanimate nature expressed sympathy with its insulted and dying Author. The sun refused to look upon the awful scene. Its full, bright rays were illuminating the earth at midday, when suddenly, it seemed to be bolted out. Complete darkness, like a funeral pall, enveloped the cross. There was darkness over all the land unto the ninth hour. There was no eclipse or other natural cause for this darkness, which was as deep as midnight without a moon or stars. It was a miraculous testimony given by God that the faith of after generations might be confirmed. In that thick darkness God's presence was hidden. He makes darkness his pavilion, and conceals His glory from human eyes. God and his holy angels were beside the cross. The Father was with his Son. Yet his presence was not revealed. Had His glory flashed forth from the clouds, every human beholder would have been destroyed. And in that dreadful hour Christ was not to be comforted by the father's presence. He trod the wine press alone and of the people there was none with him." DA 754. He could not see that his Father was with him. All His divine power was taken away from him. He died as a human, like you and me, in order to purchase this great treasure without price.**

This priceless treasure called salvation is offered as a free gift to us. Does the Father have the same compassion that Christ has? Let us see what the Scriptures say. “Ye have heard that it has been said, Thou shall love thy neighbor, and hate thine enemy. But I say unto you, love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you; That ye may be children of your Father which is in heaven: For He maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust. For if ye love them which love you, what reward have ye? Do not even the publicans the same? And if ye salute your brethren only, what do ye more than others? Do not even the publicans so? Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect.” The Father is perfect, like Christ. In his heart originates all the love and mercy and grace for our redemption. The Father’s heart feels so much toward the sinner. Is Christ different? He prayed for his murderers, “Father, forgive them for they do not know what they are doing.” The Father and the Son have the same spirit. That is why Christ’s righteousness is the precious pearl that is beyond value that Christians possess.

It is the love of God manifested in this message that makes everything different now. Like Paul, we are changed from being Pharisees to perfect Christians. Henceforth, for a Christian, love is the motivation. Let us check what is written in the heart. Now love springs forth and enable us to do the will of God. That is what this message does to the perishing soul and converts it through the power of love. It can transform a human, a murderer, a thief, a prostitute, the worst criminal and the outcasts of society. They all can be transformed into the perfection of heaven. The power of love can do this. “Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? As it is written, for thy sake we are killed all the day long. We are counted as sheep for the slaughter. Nay, in all these things, we are more then conquerors through him that loved us. For I am persuaded that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our lord.” AMEN.

Augustus Ratneiya, Montreal

## EARTHQUAKE!

### CONCLUSION:

Life on this planet Earth today is increasingly and shakily fragile. We live every day under the threat of catastrophic environmental disasters and weapons of mass destruction.

In the ancient book of the Old Testament, the prophet Zachariah gives us a stabilizing perspective in these fear-filled times. Zechariah reminds us that even though there will be calamitous events in the last days, human history is not destined for accidental death and extinction. Rather we have the glorious hope, and can expect a merciful deliverance and the long-awaited kingdom of God’s promised Messiah. (Zech. 14:4) However, the hope of immortal blessedness at death has led to a widespread neglect of the Bible doctrine of the resurrection yet there is not a doctrine in the gospel on which more stress is laid.” (GC 547)

Zechariah writes, “and I will bring the third part through the fire, and will refine them as silver is refined, and will (test) them as gold is (tested); they shall call on my name, and I will hear them. I will say, It is my people; and they shall say, The Lord is my God.” (Zech 13:9) The condition, however, for the “joy of resurrection” is indeed obedience to the Lord...(Zech 6:15) Zechariah not only reveals a God who is able to protect His people, but a God who has given us many truths we need, to know His Messiah and His plan for the future... our strength in prophecy.

In any giant earthquake disaster there are always gripping and painful stories of valiant rescuers miraculously freeing victims buried for hours or days under tones of rubble. In the recent Taiwan quake a six-year old orphan

boy clung to life for more than three days in the dark wreckage of his home. His only questions as the rescuers spoke to him while frantically digging were, "I need water (of Life) and why am I here?" Appropriate questions for may today too. The boy had been entombed for more than 80 hours.

Another absorbing story was that of the recent Turkey quake in which rescuers pulled a woman alive from the rubble more than 108 hours after she was buried. She was "plucked" to safety a day after many foreign rescue teams pulled out of the quake zone saying cold weather made further survival all but impossible for anyone under the rubble. "And I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand." (John 10:28)

One of the most bitterly tragic consequences of an earthquake are the countless families clinging to hopes of finding missing loved ones still alive.

It is very strange, perhaps, how during the height of an earthquake many victims turn to God with bare and impassioned pleas for help, even as churches collapse with all bells helplessly ringing, once the glory for them as a shrine in spacious plazas where women gather and pray for mercy such as the Indians of Mexico did in a recent quake. Survivors believe, "God sent us this disaster in punishment for our sins." Thousands of children are orphaned needlessly and many will suffer dreams of the living nightmare. Among adults as well as children, in major quakes, psychic pain is profound. "People frantically call various hotlines, afraid that the quake was God's sign that they're doomed to hell", said one psychologist. Some cry out hysterically, "The end of the world is here!"

How much more is the need of spiritual counseling in a calamitous world full of strife, and fear, to "Say to those who are of a fearful heart. Be strong, fear not;...he will come and save you." (Isa. 35:4) and too, "fear not, little flock; for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom." (Luke 12:32)

The command from heaven, (Rev. 16:1) indicates that God's longsuffering is ended and His judgement can no longer be delayed. His glory demands that His name be vindicated.

"It is done!" announces the completion of the wrath of God upon those who have refused the cry from the cross, "It is finished!" (John 19:31) God's voice from both temple and throne is heard. His judicial action symbolized by voices, thunders, and lightnings, precedes the great earthquake, Ch. 18.

The gigantic earthquake is worldwide, Ch 10, and only one kingdom escapes, for it cannot be shaken (Dan 2:44); Christ's kingdom. "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 freeman, 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 wrath of the Lamb; for the great day of His wrath is come; and who shall be able to stand?" "The earth mightily shook as the voice of the Son of God called froth the sleeping saints. Then the living saints and the risen ones raised their voices in a long, transporting shout of victory. The living saints are changed in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, and caught up with the risen ones, and together they met their Lord in the air. Oh, what a glorious meeting!" (ER287)

"The coming of Christ is nearer than when we first believed. The great controversy is nearing its end. The judgments of God are in the land. They speak in solemn warning, saying "Be ye also ready; for in such an hour as ye think not the Son of man cometh." (Matt. 24:44) Oh, how many who have not sought their souls' salvation will soon make the bitter lamentation: "The harvest is past, the summer is ended, and we are not saved!" Let no none say in his heart or by his works, "My Lord delayeth His coming." (8T 252)

"God will not and has not revealed to us the time when this message will close, or when probation will have an end. It is our duty to watch and work and wait, to labor every moment for the souls of men that are ready to perish, and to keep walking continually in the footsteps of Jesus." (ISM 191)

In chapters 15-16 in the Book of Revelation, we read of the preparation for the final plagues in the sign of the Seven Angels and the seven golden vials (bowls). This sign (symbol) is called "Great and marvelous" because these angels have the seven last plagues and in them the fury of God is completed. Chronologically, the next event following the outpouring of the bowls is the coming of Christ in victory, Ch 39.

The third angel's message, embracing the messages of the first and second angels, is the message for this time.

We are to raise aloft the banner on which is inscribed: "The commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus." "The world is soon to meet the great Lawgiver over his broken law. God calls upon His people to magnify the law and make it honorable." (8T 197)

"By faith Christ was the victor on the cross. Never before had the earth witnessed such a scene, as the multitude so stood paralyzed, and with bated breath gazed upon the Saviour. There was a violent earthquake. The people were shaken together in heaps..., IN the surrounding mountains, rocks were rent asunder, and went crashing down into the plains. The dead were cast out of their tombs. Creation seemed to be shivering to atoms. Priests, rulers, soldiers, executioners, and people, mute with terror, lay prostrate upon the ground..."(DA 756)

This earthquake was the first earth sign of God's might and power unleashed in all its fury upon the early inhabitants of that age. God's last sign, again, will appear in an earthquake more terrible than the world has ever yet beheld in magnitude, at the Second Coming of Christ.

"For the time has come that judgement must begin at the house of God; and if it first begin at us, what shall the end be of them that obey not the gospel of God? And if the righteous scarcely be saved, where shall the ungodly and the sinner appear?" (1 Peter 4:17)

I ask those to whom the light of truth has come: What are you going to do during the year that is just new? Will you devote your time to strengthening the things that remain, that are ready to die? As surely as God's word is truth, He is thus soon to punish a guilty world. May it be ours, according to the promise, to have "Sure dwelling" and "quiet resting places" in that terrific hour. (Isa. 32:18, 19)

Today earthquake prediction on a scientific basis, unquestionably, does not yet exist, for this is still God's prerogative. The question is not whether the accurate place, time and magnitude of an event can be predicted, but whether warning the people is likely to be effective. But not only is the prediction and warning a problem but also the social and economic implications of forecasting natural disasters of this magnitude. False alarms and inaccurate timing could create more problems than already exist.

It is much the same with arbitrary man in his spiritual beliefs and awareness. Will man heed the obvious warning signs of God unfolding before us daily, and will they be effective in one's salvation? Will false prophets also, increasingly, enter the churches of God and create more internal problems than already exist?

With their motto "hope dies last", rescue teams from around the world in the Athens killer quake, worked relentlessly to release the living, and not just to remove dead corpses.

Brethren, let this be our motto too, that our heart's desire and prayer to God, is that we, by all means might save some of the living and the dead in their trespasses, for there is no restraint to the Lord to save by many or by few (1 Sam 14:6), and those such as be of a contrite spirit. (Ps. 34:18)

There was a fiery preacher in San Francisco, California that had a revival meeting daily for one week to a packed church of cultivated and conservative-like visitors. At the close of the soul-trying meeting the preacher concluded with the invitation by saying, "I'll give you 8 days to think about accepting Jesus Christ. Give me your answer next week." He admitted that it was the biggest mistake he ever made in his ministry. On April 18, 1906, at about 5:12 a.m., the San Andreas fault slipped over a long segment in causing a great earthquake of substantial destruction. Damage was severe in San Francisco and in other towns situated near the fault, some 120 miles away. Approximately 700 people were killed. The earthquake started a fire which did about \$400,000.00 in damage.

Sometime later the same preacher returned to the same church as a visiting pastor. He asked the congregation, "Twenty years ago I preached at this very same church. Is anyone here now that was present then?" No one answered! Sis. White has said, that "For those who think...'later', there is no hope." When the Bible says, today, don't say tomorrow. Don't harden your heart. Jesus Christ, today in the Most Holy, as High Priest, is making atonement for our sins. Jesus Christ today is reconciling sinners with God and has to make decisions for everyone personally; a terrible



decision, life or death... eternal life or death.

“The great day of His wrath is come, and who is able to stand?” Before that day comes with its fearful scenes, we pray you, reader, give your most serious and candid attention to your salvation.

Many now despise the institution of prayer, but at one time or another all men will pray. Those who will not now pray to God in penitence, will then pray to the “rocks” and mountains in despair; and this will be the largest prayer meeting every held.

Ah! Better far  
To cease the unequal war,  
While pardon, hope, and peace may yet be  
found;  
Nor longer rush upon the embossed shield  
And all your weapons of rebellion ground  
Better pray now in love, than pray erelong in  
fear Call ye upon Him while He waits to hear;  
So in the coming end,  
When down the parted sky  
The angelic hosts attend  
The Lord of heaven, most high,  
Before whose face the solid earth is rent,  
You may behold a friend omnipotent,  
And safely rest beneath His sheltering wings,  
Amid the ruin of all earthly things.  
(Dan & Rev. 451)

Sitting at my desk and concluding this paper, another minor tremor jarred us mindfully, as my pen conclusively slashed to one side. Strangely, I quickly glanced above to the porcelain vase still lying safely on its side. It quietly rolled again to one side and stopped at the book shelf railing with a tinkling thump, a haunting stern reminder of a sacred heart-searching experience, yet, bitter-sweet... “Hope dies last”! AMEN

By: Br. John Theodorou Athens, Greece

## CURRENT SCENE

### MYSTICAL SINAI MOMENT

From *Reuters News Service*

“The highlight of the pope’s visit to Egypt, the first of two tours in the footsteps of Moses and Jesus, comes Saturday when he will pray at the base of Mount Sinai. He said his visit to the desert mountain, where God is said to have given Moses the Ten Commandments, would be ‘a moment of intense prayer for peace and inter-religious harmony/

“The pope’s reference to past examples of conflict or violence being used in the name of religion indicated once again that he believes the Catholic Church too, erred in the past. The pope is expected to issue a landmark document on past church errors next month as part of a Catholic “request for forgiveness.” It may include an apology for Church-sanctioned violence during the Inquisition and the Crusades.

“The pope, beginning the 90th foreign tour of his papacy, praised [President] Mubrak’s efforts to advance Middle East peace.

“”All reasonable men and women appreciate the efforts made so far and hope goodwill and justice will prevail, so that all the peoples of this unique area of the world will see their rights respected and their legitimate aspirations fulfilled/ he said.

“Salaam aleikum (Peace be unto you)/ the Pope said, in the single phrase he uttered in Arabic during his arrival address.

”This is my greeting to you all. This is the prayer I offer up for Egypt and for all her people. May the most High God bless your land with harmony, peace and prosperity/

“About 800 Christian and Muslim school children waved flags and shouted ‘Vive Jean-Paul Deux’ (long live John Paul II) as the Pope’s heavily guarded motorcade left the airport.

“The pope’s visit has created a bond between Christians and Muslims. It’s a nice feeling. There is no difference between Christians and Muslims/ said Islam Abdel Moneim, 11, a Muslim,

“It’s a festival for Egypt, a great thing for Christians and Muslims alike/ said Gamal Nady, a 13-year-old Copt.”

Inspiration tells us that the Beast would have an image that all the world would worship. The Papacy’s changes to the Ten Commandments, and the acceptance of these commandments by everyone who is not written in the Lamb’s Book of Life is rapidly becoming a fact. Pope Jean-Paul II is so immensely popular that everything he says is being accepted as gospel truth when actually it is leading all the world to the mark of the beast, Sunday worship as enforced by every government—whether “islamic republic” or “western democracy/”

## **SCHOOLS VIDEO TELLS CHILDREN TO TRY GAY SEX**

January 30 2000 BRITAIN Rosie Waterhouse and James Clark *London Sunday Times*

“A video that encourages schoolchildren as young as 14 to experiment with gay sex has caused outrage among MP’s and family campaigners. The film, now available in 180 schools, also asks pupils aged 14-16 to discuss whether a fictional 15-year-old boy, Michael should have unprotected gay sex with his boyfriend. The Department of Health faced furious calls last night to step in and block the teaching pack, which was paid for by Avon health authority using public money.

“The pack—called *Beyond a Phase: A Practical Guide to Challenging Homophobia in Schools*—is being cited by campaigners as a prime example of why [the] Labour [government] should abandon plans to scrap section 28, the law that forbids the promotion of homosexuality in schools.

“The 4-minute film would be a clear breach of the law if health authorities were not exempted from section 28. In it a young college student called Karl tells his audience of school pupils that to obtain sexual satisfaction they should ‘try experimenting with both boys and girls to see who you feel most comfortable with’.

“Valerie Riches, of the Family and Youth Campaign pressure group, said: ‘This puts concepts and activities into the minds of youngsters they would not normally think about/

“Last night Liam Fox, the Conservative health spokesman, said few parents would want their children ‘exposed’ to the film and said he would demand that the Department of Health investigate.”

How few and weak are the voices standing for truth and morality in these strange days--the last in the history of this dying planet. As more and more voices are “pro-choice” in everything about personal standards of morality—how little value a human life has today when everything is “relative.” Unless we acknowledge the absolute morality of God’s law and His goodness and purity, then the “world, flesh and devil” will appear as the best way to go. (Much research suggests that when any species is overcrowded then behavior such as homosexuality, crime and other bizarre behavior becomes commonplace. More facts to back up Inspiration on the topic of Jiving outside of the cities, home or church schooling and raising our children without these kind of influences.)

## CATHOLIC PRIESTS ARE DYING OF AIDS, OFTEN IN SILENCE

By Judy L. Thomas—The Kansas City Star Date: 01/29/00

“Hundreds of Roman Catholic priests across the United States have died of AIDS-related illnesses, and hundreds more are living with HIV, the virus that causes the disease. The actual number of AIDS deaths is difficult to determine. But it appears priests are dying of AIDS at a rate at least four times that of the general U.S. population, according to estimates from medical experts and priests and an analysis of health statistics by *The Kansas City Star*. In Missouri and Kansas alone, at least 16 priests and two religious-order brothers have died of AIDS since early 1987.

“The deaths are of such concern to the church that most dioceses and religious orders now require applicants for the priesthood to take an HIV-antibody test before their ordination.”

How sad that these poor, ensiaved-by-the-system men and women are dying so often without the truth or a true hope; their cases “swept under the rug” because of a failure to acknowledge the truth and expose the reality of the Roman system. What a travesty of the truth that God intended for the home and family, especially since the “bishop should be the husband of one wife.” 1 Timothy 3:2

### **Adventist Sunday church**

From the *Pacific Union Recorder*

“It’s early Sunday morning Nov. 7, and more than a dozen members of the Las Vegas Mountain View church are busy mixing pancake batter, setting out dishes and other tableware, preparing breakfast in a local public elementary school auditorium.

“Outside, signs posted earlier on street corners and in the parking lot point the way to the Higher Grounds Community Church. By 10 a.m. the smell of frying pancakes greets the first visitors from the surrounding community as they approach the school, many of them for the first time. They’ve come as a result of a mass mailing of invitations to homes in the local postal zip code to attend Sunday morning religious services,

“As the crowd grows and enjoys pleasant conversation around two dozen small tables scattered throughout the auditorium, members of a music group follow Pastor Tim Dunfield to the platform and begin taking their places. While the visitors finish their breakfast Dunfield welcomes the growing crowd of almost 50 people by this time for the first meeting in their new location. Led by Brad Reed and Waily Hanson, the band provides accompaniment for singing for the next 20 minutes.

“It’s a high tech ‘seeker-style’ service, not designed for Adventists, but for Anglo Boomers and Gen X who may not be acquainted with the inside of any church,” explained David Gemmel, pastor of the nearby Las Vegas Mountain View church which is sponsoring this creative evangelism project.

“Most Adventists would not be comfortable in this service with its contemporary band and laid-back style/ he remarked. ‘But this type of service has already proved highly successful with three other rapidly growing churches in Las Vegas/

“If the thesis holds true/ Gemmel wrote in requesting evangelism endowment funds last year, ‘by the end of the 52-week evangelistic campaign, there will be a regular attendance of about 600 at the weekly evangelistic meetings. Of those 600 at least 20 percent will have officially been baptized and will be worshipping with their Adventist brothers and sisters on Sabbath.’

“Sunday morning evangelism may sound unconventional or even radical/ Gemmel said. ‘Yet the concept has roots in solid theology. Jesus did not confine his ministry to Sabbath services at the temple. Some of his greatest ministry opportunities occurred in secular times and places with worldly people/ Gemmel’s project proposal said.

“Sunday morning Evangelistic Project will bring the gospel to unchurched people at a time when they are most receptive to religious things. . . This project will not be a worship service for the believers, but instead will be an evangelistic meeting that believers can bring their unchurched friends to.

“The seekers will be gradually drawn into a home ceil church where they can begin to grow in

their walk with Christ and their understanding of the fundamental beliefs of the Adventist faith/ “Deeply committed members of the 600-member Mountain View church launched their experiment on Easter weekend at a school in the rapidly growing Summerland area of the city. Their initial invitation went by mail to 30,000 homes and drew 150 people that Sunday.

“Each Sunday Dunfield presents a clearly Adventist message which is aimed at people who don’t know how to talk church, people whose lives have fallen apart with divorce or terms in prison. ‘We want to be seen as having something they will want/ Dunfield said. ‘Each one is invited to participate in a small group to build friendships with other new people who come to the service/

“Gemmeil and Dunfield see a bright future for Higher Grounds Community Church because Las Vegas is growing at the rate of 5,000 a month. **They hope that this model can be replicated in other cities across the country.**”

This latest in a long line of SDA compromise with the world to seek worldly favor and get friends with the “mammon of unrighteousness” (Luke 16:9) shows the SDA degeneracy in a clear light. Though “most SDA’s would not be comfortable with the contemporary band and laid-back style of worship” still an increasing number of SDA’s are choosing this type of worship service. (Witness that at least about 1/3 of Adventists now are attending what they define as a “celebration service”—exactly that same type of contemporary music and laid-back style of worship.) And as this type of evangelism is bound to be hugely successful, the SDA leaders will tout it as the way to get fantastic “church growth.” Of course, if all we value is numbers, whether of people or dollars, then we have left the Truth, the Way and the Life far behind. How long can it be before these same SDA leaders put huge pressure on their members to go along with the crowd and keep Sunday in the interest of “church growth.” Unfortunately, most SDA members will succumb to that pressure because of a lack of prayer, study and sharing the truth with others. In short, if they have been leaning on their leaders, they will fall with those same leaders.

“To lower the standard in order to secure popularity and an increase in numbers, and then to make this increase a cause of rejoicing, shows great blindness. If numbers were an evidence of success, Satan might claim the pre-eminence; for in this world his followers are largely in the majority.” 6T 143

“A congregation may be the poorest in the land. It may be without the attraction of any outward show; but if the members possess the principles of the character of Christ, they will have His joy in their souls. Angels will unite with them in their worship. The praise and thanksgiving from grateful hearts will ascend to God as a sweet oblation.” COL 298

“Success does not depend upon numbers. God can deliver by few as well as by many. He is honored not so much by the great numbers as by the character of those who serve Him.” PP 550

May the Lord help us to point others to the standard of God’s law, by thought, word and action. We cannot and must not make any compromise with the world, especially in the very point that is the most controverted -the Sabbath.

By Jerry Eaton



## CHILDREN'S CORNER

### My Day in the Hospital

It was late at night, February 27, 2000, and I was to have surgery the next day. It had been scheduled for a few months. I was very nervous and despite praying several times, I had no peace of mind. My mind kept going over the possibilities or the problems. I tried to get some rest, but it was impossible. At around 11:30 P.M., I went to sleep in my mother's bed since I couldn't fall asleep. She tried to assure me and read lots of Bible verses and some encouraging words from the *Testimonies for the Church*. Eventually I got to sleep. The next morning we woke up at 5:30 A.M. and left for the hospital at 6:00. I was very nervous. When we got there we went to the admissions desk and they told us to just wait in the cafeteria. We waited there for around 45 minutes, and then we were led off to the ward. They assigned all of us to our rooms at that point. During the next few hours they came asking numerous questions and taking my temperature and blood pressure. A few minutes before my surgery, I again read the Bible, and I felt a lot better. At 10:00 A.M., they came and wheeled me in my bed to go to the Surgery Theater. I was in this special room, just before going into the Surgery Theater, Amazingly this time, just before the surgery, I felt extremely happy and peaceful, the most unanxious I had felt about the surgery, for the whole time. In a couple of minutes they wheeled me in to the theater.

They were quite nice in the theater. And then, before I knew it they were putting me asleep. It took about five seconds and I was out. Next thing I knew I was slowly, groggily waking up in the recovery room. As I was waking up, there was a lot less pain than I expected. It still hurt a little though. I asked the nurse if the surgery was actually done. And she said, "Yes, your four teeth are out." Then I told her it hurt and that I needed a painkiller. She said, "Of course it hurts, you just had an operation."<sup>1</sup> Then I asked again for a painkiller. She said, "No, not until the bleeding in my mouth had stopped". In a few minutes I was wheeled back to my room. For the next four hours, I lay in bed snoozing and having some gauze in my mouth. Every few minutes the nurses came and checked my vital signs. After about three hours, I was feeling amazingly better. I thanked the Lord for making it so easy for me. At 5:00 P.M. I ate my meal and changed back into my own clothes and I was finally out of the hospital. When I came out I felt great. On the way home I was very talkative. That night I slept very well. By the next day, I was pretty well better. Now it is four days later and I haven't had to take any pain killers at home yet. I talked to my aunt (who is a nurse) the day after my surgery, and she was amazed that I was not in any pain. She had recently had a wisdom tooth pulled and she was in pain for two weeks. I will always thank the Lord for giving me peace of mind about it just at the right time when I needed it the most, and for taking most of the pain away.

This is just a little example of what we will experience in the time of the end. We may be called to suffer for the truth, but we do not need to be anxious about it before hand because when the time comes, the Lord will be with us to give us peace of mind, just when we need it the most.

Richard Eaton

NOTE: For those of you who do not know the nature of Richard's surgery, I will briefly explain. He had two large baby teeth pulled from his lower jaw, teeth that were missing their corresponding permanent teeth; these were extracted. On his upper jaw, were two permanent teeth, which were growing so crookedly (as seen on the x-ray) that they would have erupted through the roof of his mouth. The surgeon had to peel back the roof of his mouth, extract those teeth, and sew up the roof of his mouth again. He had the stitches in his mouth for 10 days afterwards. Other than having difficulty eating for a few days, Richard was blessed with a pain free recovery.

Wendy Eaton

## HE SANG FOR JESUS

He was really too big to cry. He was married, and was almost old enough to vote. But Philip Bliss was crying because he did not have enough money to attend a six-week summer course in music at Geneseo, New York.

His sorrow was noticed by Betsy Allen, the grandmother of his wife, Lucy. "What makes you so unhappy, Philip?" she asked.

"About thirty dollars." It sounded like a fortune to him.

"Come to think of it," continued the grandmother, "I've been putting some pieces of silver into a stocking. Wonder how much is there?" She got the stocking and examined the contents. The nickels, dimes, pennies, quarters, and an occasional half-dollar totaled more than thirty dollars. "It's all yours, Philip," she said.

And there was no doubt in his mind that he had a truly wonderful grandmother-in-law.

Philip Paul Bless attended that summer course in music, and there he became determined to teach and to write music. During the winter months he was already teaching elementary school, and working on a farm during the summers.

He was not unused to farm labor, having started at age eleven for a salary of nine dollars a month. His father was a Christian farmer, as was Lucy's. Philip did his share of work on both farms. At age twelve he was thoroughly converted to Christianity at a revival meeting that was held in a country school building.

Philip Bliss's first musical composition was a secular song, "Lora vale." It was bought by Root and Cady, a publishing firm in Chicago. His first hymn was "If Papa Were Only Ready," which was also published by Root and Cady, in 1867. This song was about a little boy who was concerned because his father had no time for God. It ended by stating that father was too busy at the store to be interested in the welfare of his soul.

Young Bliss wrote more hymns and other secular songs. The publisher recognized his usefulness and hired him to come to Chicago to participate in musical conventions. At those conventions he sang songs to advertise them to dealers and individual buyers. The purpose was to sell sheet music and songbooks. For his services he received \$150 a month and living expenses.

While Philip Bliss was in Chicago, by chance he heard some people singing at an outdoor church service on a courthouse lawn. He thought the efforts were not as enthusiastic as they could be, so he added his strong voice to the singing.

A man who looked as though he might be a merchant or a banker sat on the courthouse steps and listened to the newcomer whose singing ability became so readily noticeable. It did not take this man, Dwight L. Moody, long to become acquainted with Bliss. And in his most persuasive manner he insisted that God needed such a voice to sing full time for Him.

Although Philip thoroughly enjoyed singing hymns, he was not completely sure he could be a successful song evangelist. He prayed much about the decision. His pastor, Darwin Cook, had encouraged him to compose hymns, assuring him he had unusual musical talent. But young Bliss wanted to be sure God desired him to become a singing evangelist before he would agree to it.

Philip Bliss and D.W. Whittle, a lay preacher, both put out a "fleece," like Gideon of old, in Waukegan, Illinois, to determine the advisability of entering full-time Christian service. They agreed that if in the three days' services at Waukegan unusual results were achieved they would both become full-time workers for God, but if nothing much worth while happened they would take it as an indication that they should continue serving on a part-time basis.

D.W. Whittle preached, and Bliss sang "Almost persuaded," which he had composed. About thirty people came to the altar, and comparable results occurred at the other meetings they held there. So those two men became full-time servants for God, fully determined to give all to Him. The singer was thirty-six at that time.

He spent about two highly successful years as a singing evangelist, composing numerous hymns in the meantime.

Then tragedy struck. Philip and Lucy spent Christmas, 1876, with her parents in Rome, Pennsylvania. On December 29 they boarded a train bound for Chicago, where he was scheduled to sing in a Dwight L. Moody revival. All went well until the train approached Ashtabula, Ohio. There a bridge that spanned a creek collapsed. The complete train, except the engine, crashed into the frozen water below. Nobody was drowned, but about eighty people perished beyond recognition because of fire ignited from oil lamps in the passenger cars. Philip and Lucy were among those people.

Mr. Moody asked Christians all over the land to contribute a thousand dollars to buy a monument for the Blisses. About eleven thousand dollars was given. The remaining ten thousand was used as an educational fund for the two orphaned children. The monument was grand, and Moody himself made the dedicatory speech. Many people have seen the monument and think of Philip Paul Bliss, but a greater monument was built with his pen when he wrote such hymns as "Whosoever Will," "Let the Lower Lights Be Burning," and "Wonderful Words of Life." The number of Christian people who have blended their voices to music written by P.P. Bliss is incalculable. The next time

you take out your Church Hymnal, see if you can find any songs written by P.P. Bliss and then remember the life he lived for the Lord. Remember his tragic death, and most of all, give your heart to the Lord today because you never know when the end of your life will be. Will you live to an old age? Or will you die a young man, like Philip Bliss? Only God knows. Although Philip Bliss seemingly died a tragic death, his death was really a victory for him because he had given his heart to serve the Lord. He died with peace in his heart, looking forward to the resurrection day when Jesus will come again to take His faithful followers home to be with Him

## WHAT CAUSES BRAIN DAMAGE?

### (CONTINUATION)

#### INTOXICATING LIQUOR

“The use of liquor or tobacco destroys the sensitive nerves of the brain, and benumbs the sensibilities. Under their influence crimes are committed that would have been *left* undone had the mind been clear and free from the influence of stimulants or narcotics.” Te., p. 59.

“Indulgence in intoxicating liquor places a man wholly under the control of the demon who devised this stimulant in order to deface and destroy the moral image of God.” Te., p. 32.

“The man who has formed the habit of using intoxicants is in a desperate situation. His brain is diseased; his will power is weakened. So far as any power in himself is concerned, his appetite is uncontrollable. He cannot be reasoned with or persuaded to deny himself” Te., p. 37.

“Drinking houses are scattered all over the cities and towns. . . The traveler enters the public house I with his reason, with ability to walk in an upright manner; but look at him as he leaves. The luster is gone from his eye. The power to walk uprightly is gone; he reels to and fro like a ship at sea. His reasoning power is paralyzed, the image of God is destroyed. The poisoning, maddening draft has left a brand upon him. . . . Body and soul, he is in slavery, and he cannot distinguish between right and wrong. The liquor dealer has put his bottle to his neighbor’s lips, and under its influence he is full of cruelty and murder, and in his madness actually commits murder.”<sup>1</sup> Te., p. 37.

#### WINE, BEER AND CIDER

“Persons may become just as really intoxicated on wine and cider as on stronger drinks, and the worst kind of inebriation is produced by these soiled milder drinks. The passions are more perverse; the transformation of character is greater, more determined and obstinate. A few quarts of cider or wine may awaken a taste for stronger drinks, and in many cases those who have become confirmed drunkards have thus laid the foundation of the drinking habit. For some persons it is *?* no means safe to have wine or cider in the house. They have inherited an appetite for stimulants, which Satan’s continually soliciting them to indulge. If they yield to his temptations, they do not stop; appetite clamors for indulgence, and is gratified to their ruin. The brain is Benumbed and clouded; reason no longer holds the reins, but they are *aid* on the neck of lust. Licentiousness, adultery, and vices of almost every type, are committed as the result of indulging the appetite for wine or cider. A professor of religion who loves these stimulants, and accustoms himself to their use, never grows in grace. He becomes gross and sensual; the animal passions control the higher powers of the mind, and virtue is not cherished.” CDF, p. 433.

“Some are never really drunk, but are always under the influence of cider or fermented wine. They are feverish, unbalanced in mind, not really delirious, but in fully as bad a condition; for all the noble powers of the mind are perverted- A tendency to disease of various kinds, as dropsy, liver complaint, trembling nerves, and a determination of blood to the head, results from the habitual use of sour cider. By its use many bring upon themselves permanent disease. Some die of consumption or fall under the power of apoplexy from this cause alone. Some suffer form dyspepsia Every vital function is deadened and the physicians tell them that they have liver complaint, when if they would break open the cider barrel, and never replace it, their abused life forces would recover their vigor.

“Cider drinking leads to the use of stronger drinks. The stomach loses its natural vigor, and sometimes stronger is needed to arouse it to action. . . . We see the power that appetite for strong drink has over men; we see how many of all professions and of heavy responsibilities - men of exalted station, of eminent talents, of great attainments, of fine feelings, of strong nerves, and of good reasoning powers - sacrifice everything for the indulgence of appetite, until they are reduced to the level of the brutes, and in very many cases their downwards course commenced with the use of wine or cider.” CDF, p. 434.

“There is danger to health in the use of even sweet cider as ordinarily produced. If people could see

what the microscope reveals in regard to the cider they buy, few would be willing to drink it. Often those who manufacture cider for the market are not careful as to the condition of the fruit used, and the juice of wormy and decaying apples is expressed. Those who would not think of using the poisonous, rotten apples in any other way, will drink the cider made from them, and call it a luxury; but the microscope shows that even when fresh from the press, this pleasant beverage is wholly unfit for use.

“Intoxication is just as really produced by wine, beer and cider, as by stronger drinks. The use of these drinks awakens the taste for those that are stronger, and thus the liquor habit is established. Moderate drinking is the school in which men are educated for the drunkard’s career. Yet so insidious is the work of these milder stimulants, that the highway to drunkenness is entered before the victim suspects his danger.” CDF, p. 436.

### OTHER STIMULANTS AND NARCOTICS

“Under the head of stimulants and narcotics is classed a great variety of articles that, altogether used as food or drink, irritate the stomach, poison the blood, and excite the nerves. Their use is a positive evil. Men seek the excitement of stimulants, because, for the time, the results are agreeable. But there is always a reaction. The use of unnatural stimulants always tends to excess, and it is an active agent in promoting physical degeneration and decay.” Te., p. 73.

“Never be betrayed into indulging in the use of stimulants: for this will result not only in reaction and loss of physical strength, but in a benumbed intellect.” Te., p. 73/74.

### TEA AND COFFEE

“The stimulating diet and drink of this day are not conducive to the best state of health. Tea, coffee, and tobacco are all stimulating, and contain poisons. They are not only unnecessary, but harmful, and should be discarded if we would add to knowledge, temperance.

“Tea and coffee do not nourish the system. The relief obtained from them is sudden, before the stomach has time to digest them. This shows that what the users of these stimulants call strength is only received by exciting the nerves of the stomach, which convey the irritation to the brain, and this in turn is aroused to impart increased action to the heart and short-lived energy to the entire system. All this is false strength that we are the worse for having. They do not give a particle of natural strength.” Te., p. 75

“What Tea Does - *Tea. . . enters into the circulation and gradually impairs the energy of body and mind. It stimulates, excites, and quickens the motion of the living machinery, forcing it to unnatural action, and thus gives the tea drinker the impression that it is doing him great service, imparting to him strength. This is a mistake.*

“Tea draws upon the strength of the nerves and leaves them greatly weakened. When its influence is gone and the increased action caused by its use is abated, then what is the result? Languor and debility corresponding to the artificial vivacity the tea imparted.

“When the system is already overtaxed and needs rest, the use of tea spurs up nature by stimulation to perform unwonted, unnatural action, and thereby lessens her power to perform and her ability to endure; and her powers give out long before heaven designed they should. Tea is poisonous to the system. Christians should let it alone. . . . The second effect of tea drinking is headache, wakefulness, palpitation of the heart, indigestion, trembling of the nerves, with many other evils,” Te., p. 76.

*Coffee is a hurtful indulgence. It temporarily excites the mind, . . . but the aftereffect is exhaustion, prostration, paralysis of the mental, moral, and physical powers. The mind becomes enervated, and unless through determined effort the habit is overcome, the activity of the brain is permanently lessened.*

“The action of coffee and many other popular drinks is similar. The first effect is exhilarating. The nerves of the stomach are excited; these convey irritation to the brain, and this in turn is aroused to impart increased action to the heart, and short-lived energy to the entire system. Fatigue is forgotten; the strength seems to be increased. The intellect is aroused, the imagination becomes more vivid.

“By this continual course of indulgence of appetite the natural vigor of the constitution becomes gradually and imperceptibly impaired. If we would preserve a healthy action of all the powers of the system, nature must not be forced to unnatural action. Nature will stand at her post of duty, and do her work wisely and efficiently, if the false props that have been brought in to take the place of nature are expelled.” Te., p. 77.

“The continued use of these nerve irritants is followed by headache, wakefulness, palpitation of the heart, indigestion, trembling, and many other evils; for they wear away the life forces. Tired nerves need rest and quiet instead of stimulation and overwork. Nature needs time to recuperate her exhausted energies. When her forces are goaded on by the use of stimulants, more will be accomplished for a time; but as the system becomes debilitated by their constant use, it gradually becomes more difficult to rouse the energies to the desired point. The demand for stimulants becomes more difficult to control, until the will is overborne, and there seems to be no power to deny the unnatural craving. Stronger and still stronger stimulants are called for, until exhausted nature can no longer respond.” Te., p. 78

“Through the use of stimulants, the whole system suffers. The nerves are unbalanced, the liver is morbid in its action, the quality and circulation of the blood are affected, and the skin becomes inactive and



sallow. The mind, too, is injured. The immediate influence of these stimulants is to excite the brain to undue activity, only to leave it weaker and less capable of exertion. The aftereffect is prostration, not only mental and physical but moral. As a result we see nervous men and women, of unsound judgement and unbalanced mind." Te., p. 78/79.

"Al! should bear a clear testimony against tea and coffee, never using them. They are narcotics, injurious alike to the brain and to the other organs of the body." Te., p. 79.

"Tea and coffee drinking is a sin, an injurious indulgence, which, like other evils, injures the soul. These darling idois create an excitement, a morbid action of the nervous system." Te., p 80.

## CAFFEINE

The effects of caffeine are detectable in whatever form it is taken.

"It is debatable whether or not caffeine is dangerous. It is known that it stimulates the central nervous system. It can make one irritable, cause sleeplessness and, in some cases, trigger ventricular fibrillation (irregular heartbeat) which can cause heart attack. Caffeine is a drug, not a nutrient, so you do not need to consume caffeine to be healthy. You should be aware of the caffeine in other products besides coffee.

Chocolate, colas, tea, and cold remedies are but a few of the products that contain caffeine. Children, as well as adults, can consume too much caffeine. For optimum health, one should learn to identify products that contain caffeine and reduce intake. If a person cannot give up coffee, he or she should switch to a good decaffeinated type to reduce intake of caffeine." *Personal Fitness and Nutrition*, International Correspondence Schools, Australia, page 49.

"Whether you are a coffee drinker, cola guzzler, tea sipper, or you do not drink anything but water, it is hard to consume caffeine. The obvious place to look is, of course, coffee, but caffeine is found also in chocolate bars, cola drinks, stay-awake pills, cocoa, tea and cold remedies. A parent should not assume caffeine is only an adult consideration; it is a problem for children, too. Beware! Caffeine will show up in the most unexpected places." Ibid, p. 50.

"Tobacco, in whatever form it is used, teils upon the constitution. It is a slow poison. It affects the brain and benumbs the sensibilities, so that the mind cannot clearly discern spiritual things, especially those truths which would have a tendency to correct this filthy indulgence. Those who use tobacco in any form are not clear before God. In such a filthy practice it is impossible for them to glorify God in their bodies and spirits which are His. And while they are using slow and sure poisons, which are ruining their health, and debasing the faculties of the mind, God cannot approbate them. He may be merciful to them while they indulge in this pernicious habit in ignorance of the injury it is going them, but when the matter is set before them in its true light, then they are guilty before God if they continue to indulge this gross appetite." Te., p. 55.

"If tobacco is used, . . . the healing power of nature is weakened to a greater or less extent.

"Among children and youth the use of tobacco is working untold harm. The unhealthful practices of past generations affect the children and youth of today. Mental inability, physical weakness, disordered nerves, and unnatural cravings are transmitted as a legacy from parents to children. And the same practices, continued by the children, are increasing and perpetuating the evil results. To this cause in no small degree is owing the physical, mental, and moral deterioration, which is becoming such a cause of alarm.

"Boys begin the use of tobacco at a very early age. The habit thus formed, when body and mind are especially susceptible to its effects, undermines the physical strength, dwarfs the body, stupefies the mind, and corrupts the morals.

"There is no natural appetite for tobacco in nature unless inherited." Te., p. 56.

"Tobacco is a poison of the most deceitful and malignant kind, having an exciting, then a paralyzing influence upon the nerves of the body. It is all the more dangerous because its effects upon the system are so slow, and at first scarcely perceivable. Multitudes have fallen victims to its poisonous influence. They have surely murdered themselves by this slow poison. And we ask, What will be their waking in the resurrection morning?" Te.p. 57.

"Tobacco inebriates are multiplying. What shall we say of this evil? It is unclean; it is a narcotic; it stupefies the sense; it changes the will; it holds its victims in the slavery of habits difficult to overcome; it has Satan for its advocate. It destroys the clear perceptions of the mind that sin and corruption may not be distinguished from truth and holiness. This appetite for tobacco is self-destructive. It leads to a craving for something stronger - fermented wines and liquors, all of which are intoxicating." Te. p. 58.

"The infant lungs suffer, and become diseased by inhaling the atmosphere of a room poisoned by the tobacco user's tainted breath. Many infants are poisoned beyond remedy by sleeping in beds with their tobacco-using fathers. By inhaling the poisonous tobacco effluvia, which is thrown from the lungs and pores of the skin, the system of the infant is filled with poison. While it acts upon some infants as a slow poison, and affects the brain, heart, liver, and lungs, and they waste away and fade gradually, upon others, it has a more direct influence, causing spasms, fits, paralysis, and sudden death." Te. p.59.

"By fastening upon men the terrible habit of tobacco using, it is Satan's purpose to palsy the brain and confuse the judgment, so that sacred things shall not be discerned. When once an appetite for this narcotic has been formed, it takes firm hold of the mind and the will of man, and he is in bondage under its power. Satan has the control of the will, and eternal realities are eclipsed. Man cannot stand forth in his God-given manhood; he is a slave to perverted appetite.

“Those who claim that tobacco does not injure them, can be convinced of their mistake by depriving themselves of it for a few days; the trembling nerves, the giddy head, the irritability they feel, will prove to them that this sinful indulgence has bound them in slavery. It has overcome will power. They are in bondage to a vice that is fearful in its results.” Te., p. 60/61.

## **DRUGS**

“By the use of poisonous drugs, many bring upon themselves lifelong illness, and many lives are lost that might be saved by the use of natural methods of healing. The poisons contained in many so-called remedies create habits and appetites that mean ruin to both soul and body. Many of the popular nostrums called patent medicines, and even some of the drugs dispensed by physicians, act a part in laying the foundation of the liquor habit, the opium habit, the morphine habit, that are so terrible a curse to society.

“Drugs given to stupefy, whatever they may be, derange the nervous system.” Te. p. 83

“People need to be taught that drugs do not cure disease. It is true that they sometimes afford present relief, and the patient appears to recover as the result of their use, this is because nature has sufficient vital force to expel the poison and to correct the conditions that cause the disease.

Health is recovered in spite of the drug- But in most cases the drug only changes the form and location of the disease. Often the effect of the poison seems to be overcome for a time, but the results remain in the system, and work great harm at some later period.” Te. p. 86.

“God’s servants should not administer medicines which they know will leave behind injurious effects upon the system, even if they do relieve present suffering. Every poisonous preparation in the vegetable and mineral kingdoms, taken into the system, will leave its wretched influence, affecting the liver and lungs, and deranging the system generally.

“Years ago the Lord revealed to me that institutions should be established for treating the sick without drugs.” Te. p. 87.

## **CONCLUSION**

In this part of “The Function of the Brain” we see how intoxicating liquor, stimulants and narcotics, as well as milder intoxicants have a negative influence on the brain and other organs of the body. All these have an influence on the function of the brain. The Bible says we should be sober in order to hear His voice when He bids us to advance. He imparts to every mind information for the brain to follow but too many follow information from beneath.

So let us follow God’s instruction and not abuse our bodies because they belong to God. He purchased us with His own blood. If we want good health, we have to obey the laws of our being which are the laws of God. I believe health is the best treasure which we can possess

Nada Stefanovic, Australia

## O PILGRIMS

*O pilgrim, as you journey,  
Do you ever gladly soj,  
In spite of heavy burdens and the roughness  
Of the way:*

*That it does not surely matter, - all the  
Strange and bitter stress,  
Heat and cold, and toil and sorrow,  
-Will be healed with blessedness.*

*For the road leads home?  
Home! The safe and blissful shelter  
Where is glad and full content  
And companionship of kindred;  
And the treasures early rent  
From your holding shall be given  
Back more precious than before.  
O, you will not mind the journey  
With such blessedness in store  
When the road leads home!*

*O, you will not mind the roughness  
Nor the steepness of the way,  
Nor the chill, unvested morning  
Nor the dreariness of the day;  
And you will not take a turning  
To the left or to the right,  
But go straight ahead, nor tremble  
At the coming of the night  
For the road leads home.*

*And often for your comfort you will  
Read the guide and chart:  
It has wisdom for the mind and sweet  
Solace for the heart:  
It will serve you as a mentor,  
It will guide you sure and straight  
All the time that you will journey,  
Be ending soon or late -  
And the road leads home.*

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