

The Reformation 

Messenger

Volume 7, Number 11

November 2000

International Missionary Society of S.D.A. Church Reform Movement



EDITORIAL

The year 2000 is nearing its end. This has been a very eventful year, especially in the religious field. The clear signs of the times have been fulfilled. The Sunday law has been mentioned several times by religious authorities. Satan has been very active in deceiving, if possible, the very elect. It is painful to see brothers and sisters who have stood faithfully by our side in this Reform Movement, suddenly lose their faith and join the ranks of the opposition. Yet God is also working and others will join the remnant and the work will not die.

Now is the time for us to wake up to see these things. The Reformation Messenger has had several important articles lately to encourage its readers to become active and work out their salvation with fear and trembling. If anyone has an inspiration to write articles to the Reformation Messenger please do so. We appreciate it very much. We will be very thankful also to hear news reports from different parts of the world.

The I.M.S. Publishing has been very busy lately. We printed 5000 Steps to Christ and also the Miracle Makeover and the new Church Manual. We are offering special discounts on orders of larger quantities. It has been very encouraging to see the members of the Streetsville Church give out thousands of flyers to the people lately. Even the small children have been doing their part in it.

The index of all the articles that have appeared in the Messenger in the past seven years is also available. If you are missing some back copies of the Reformation Messenger, they are still available in limited quantities.

About 100 years ago Sister White wrote, "The publications sent forth from our printing houses are to prepare a people to meet God. Throughout the world they are to do the same work that was done by John the Baptist for the Jewish nation. By startling messages of warning, God's prophet awakened men from worldly dreaming. Through him God called backsliding Israel to repentance. By his presentation of truth he exposed popular delusions. In contact with false theories of his time, truth in his teaching stood forth as an eternal certainty. 'Repent ye: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand', was John's message. (Matt. 3:2) This same message, through the publications from our printing houses, is to be given to the world today.... In a large degree through our publishing houses is to be accomplished the work of that other angel of (Rev. 18) who comes down from heaven with great power and who lightens the earth with his glory." Test. Vol7. 139-140.

Brothers and sisters, we are this Angel in the 18th chapter of Revelation and our work is to prepare the people for Christ's second coming the same way that John the Baptist prepared the way for His first coming. Let us therefore support our publishing houses with our means, with articles and by spreading our literature all around as the leaves of autumn.

May the Lord bless you all in this solemn time that none of us would be found wanting when the Lord calls each one of us to give an account of our stewardship.

AMEN

The Assyrian Enuma Elish Epic. Part II

The Week of Creation

By Idel Suarez

“In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.” **Genesis 1:1.**

The Enuma Elish story contains the Assyrian account of the week of creation. It is derived from the oral tradition of the ancients passed on from word of mouth from Adam to Noah, and from Noah to Nimrod, the founder of the Assyrian empire.

Of the seven clay tablets of the Enuma Elish epic recovered from the ancient palace library of the Assyrian emperor Asnappar, clay tablets I, IV, V, and VI describe with striking details a parallel account of creation as recorded by Moses in the book of Genesis. Some researchers refer to the Enuma Elish epic as the Creation epic. The similarities between the Enuma Elish epic and Genesis are more than coincidental. They serve as another irrefutable proof of the existence of an ancient oral Bible.

An Empty Earth

The book of Genesis and the Enuma Elish epic both start out with the same description of a formless, void, and empty world covered by water. Both accounts emphasize the terms “beginning,” “waters,” “abyss,” “deep,” “heavens,” and “earth.” However, the accounts are notably different in that the Bible relates how the world was made from nothing or “ex nihilo”. “Through faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God, so that things which are seen were not made of things which do appear.” **Hebrews 11:3-** Whereas, the pagan account recorded in the Enuma Elish epic relates that the world sprung made from the defeated body of Tiamat, the archenemy of Marduk.

The first tablet of the Enuma Elish epic says, “When on high the heavens were unnamed, (and) earth beneath a name had not received, then the abyss of waters was in the beginning their generator, the chaos of the deep (Tiamat) was she who bore them all. The waters were embossed together...” (1).

Similarly, **Genesis 1:1,2** states, “In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth, And the earth was without form, and void; and darkness was upon the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters.”

The original Hebrew text of Genesis is even closer to the Enuma Elish translation. In Hebrew, the text states the heavens” not “heaven” in **Genesis 1:1**. It also says “abyss” instead of “deep” in **Genesis 1:2**, although both abyss and deep appear in the Enuma Elish account (2).

The Creator

Clay tablet V of the Enuma Elish epic states: “After he {Marduk} [had appointed] the days [to Shamash] {sun god and god of justice}, [And had established] the precincts of night and d[ay], ... Marduk created... He formed the clouds] and filled (them) with [water]. The raising of winds, the bringing of rain (and) cold... Putting her head into position he formed the [re on the mountai]ns, Opening the deep (which) was in flood, He caused to flow from her eyes the Euphr[ates (and) T]igris,... (So) he created heaven and earth, . . . their bounds established. When he had designed his rules (and) fashioned [his] ordinances” (3).

According to the Enuma Elish epic, our world was created and did not evolve into being. A Creator was responsible for forming planet earth. The Creator is here called Marduk. Marduk is the pagan sun god which assumes in the Assyrian and Babylonian literature the characteristics of the Biblical Michael or Jesus.

The New Testament identifies Jesus as the Creator of all animate creatures and inanimate things. The apostle John writes, “All things were made by Him; and without Him was not any thing made that was made.... He was in the world, and the world was made by Him, and the world knew him not.” **John 1:3,10.** The apostle Paul, in his letter to the Hebrews, agrees with John on the creative power of the Son of God. “God... hath in these last days spoken unto us by His Son, whom He hath appointed Heir of all things, by whom also He made the worlds.” **Hebrews 1:1,2.**

The Infrastructure of Creation

The first three days of creation as told in the book of Genesis are cited in tablet V of the Enuma Elish epic. On day one, the “precincts of night and day” were established. Surprisingly, the text does not say “day and night,” but rather, “night and day.” This corroborates with the Genesis version of creation which also emphasizes each day of creation consisting of a “night and day” or “evening and morning” as two succinct parts of a 24-hour day.

Today, one might say “day and night.” But the ancients understood that a new day started with sundown and continued to the next sundown. The day’s borders were from evening to evening and not from midnight to midnight. The midnight custom of modern western folk is the heritage of Rome. The Romans changed the days, the months, and years as we commonly know them today.

Just read the first chapter of Genesis and “the evening and the morning” or “night and day” appears six times. Our world was first void, empty, and dark, and then, God created light and made the first day. He called the darkness night and the light day.

“And God said, Let there be light and there was light... and God divided the light from the darkness. And God called the light Day, and the darkness He called Night. And the evening and the morning were the first day.” **Genesis 1:3-5-**

The chronology between the book of Genesis runs quite close to the Enuma Elish epic. After the creation of night and day, the clouds were made. The Enuma Elish epic says, “He formed the clouds and filled them with water.” The firmament was created. The book of Genesis agrees. “And God said, Let there be a firmament in the midst of the waters, and let it divide the waters from the waters. . . And God called the firmament Heaven.” **Genesis 1:6,8-** Other Hebrew versions of Genesis known as “Bereishis” refer to the firmament as a “canopy” (2). The heavenly firmament was a canopy or floating water reservoir. Thus, the clouds provide shade, quench off the hot sun rays, and absorb the earth’s moisture. But most of all, the heavenly canopy provides showers which refresh and nourish our planet.

The lofty mountains, rivers, and springs were created next, according to both the Genesis and Enuma Elish accounts. Interestingly, both accounts specifically mention two rivers by name: the Euphrates and Tigris.

“And God said, Let the waters under the heaven be gathered together unto one place, and let the dry land appear: and it was so. And God called the dry land Earth; and the gathering together of the waters called He Seas: and God saw that it was good.” **Genesis 1:9,10.**

“And a river went out of Eden to water the garden; and from thence it was parted, and became into four heads. . . And the name of the third river is Hiddekel [Tigris]: that is it which goeth toward the east of Assyria. And the fourth river is Euphrates.” **Genesis 2:10,14.**

Apparently, the names of these rivers which were in Eden were used again after the flood by the postdiluvian inhabitants of the East. As the Genesis account asserts, the river Hiddekel, or Tigris, is on the East and the river Euphrates is on the West of Mesopotamia, the great valley of ancient Assyria. The Septuagint Greek version of Genesis does not even use the word Hiddekel, but says “Tigris” (4). The Septuagint version of the Old Testament was a Greek translation made by 70 Jewish scholars in Alexandria, Egypt, by order of the King Ptolemy Philadelphus in the third century before Christ. It later became the standard Bible of the Jewish synagogues in the time of Jesus Christ.

A Separation Allegory

During the first three days of creation, God was using a separation technique. First, He separated the light from the darkness in day one. Then on day two, He separated the waters into two parts: clouds and oceans. Finally, God separated the dry land from the oceans on day three. As a matter of fact, He uses the same separation method throughout the Torah. God calls Abraham and separates him from Ur of the Chaldees. He calls Israel and separates them from Egypt. He then calls the Levites and separates them from the 12 tribes of Israel. He calls Aaron and his family and separates them also from all the families of Israel. He separates just like a chemist separates his or her sample to purify it. This separation technique is known in the Bible as “sanctification.” It is a call to be separate from sin and from worldliness. It is a call to be separated from spiritual darkness and to live in His wonderful light. **I Peter 2:9.** It is a call to be separate from a mundane perspective and to live as if on high with a heavenly viewpoint of eternity in mind. **Ephesians 1:3,** It is a call to be separate from the waves of the sea which are tossed to and fro by winds of doctrine, and to stand firm on God’s eternal word by faith. **James 1:6.**

The entire gospel is but a new creation. It is a call to be holy, to be saintly, to be separate from sin by the workings of His Spirit in the heart, mind, and soul of the believer. Will you answer the call of God in His word to be holy, saintly, and separate? God’s purpose is to extract the blemished qualities of the soul so that the pure values of the Spirit may shine forth for eternity.

The Components of Creation’s Infrastructure

There are a few lines in tablet V and VI of the Enuma Elish epic which recount the events of the fourth, sixth, and seventh day of creation according to the book of Genesis. The creation of the heavenly luminaries, the formation of humankind, and the Sabbath rest are clearly described in the Enuma Elish epic. Tablet V of the Enuma Elish epic states, “He constructed stations for the great gods, Fixing their astral likeness as constellations. He determined the year by designating the zones: He set up three constellations for each of the twelve months... He founded the station of Nibiru [Jupiter] to determine their (heavenly) bands. . . The Moon he caused to shine, the night (to him) entrusting. He appointed him a creature of the night to signify the days: ‘Monthly, without cease, form designs with a crown. At the month’s very start, rising over the land, Thou shalt have luminous horns to signify six days, on the seventh day reaching a [half]-crown. At full moon [Sapattu] stand in opposition in mid month. When the sun [overtakes] thee at the base of heaven, diminish [thy crown] and retrogress in light...’” (5).

The reference to the “stations for the great gods” is clearly a pagan citation of astrology which the Holy Scriptures condemn. Astrology and astronomy were mixed and regarded as one science among the ancient pagan civilizations. The Hebrews were the first to clearly distinguish between the two and to reject the foundations of astrology.

Nevertheless, the above narrative parallels the creation of the sun, moon, and stars on the fourth day of the week of creation as recounted in the book of Genesis. These would be the two great lights in the firmament. One to rule by day and the other to rule by night. Both would let their light shine upon the earth. The stars would also let their light shine at night together with the moon.

“And God said, Let there be lights in the firmament of the heaven to divide the day from the night; and let them be for signs, and for seasons, and for days, and years... And God made two great lights: the greater light to rule the day, and the lesser light to rule the night: He made the stars also.” **Genesis 1:14,16.**

The same key words “light,” “night,” “days,” and “year” appear in both the Enuma Elish epic and the book of Genesis. A few other synonymous terms appear in both accounts. The Enuma Elish epic mentions “zones” of the “twelve months,” and Genesis cites “seasons.” The Enuma Elish epic mentions “astral likeness as constellations,” and Genesis cites “stars.” The Enuma Elish epic mentions “sun” and “moon,” whereas Genesis implies both but uses the terms “the greater light” and “the lesser light.”

What about the fifth day of the creation week according to the Genesis account? It is apparently missing from the pagan epic. Some of the clay tablet lines of the Enuma Elish epic are illegible and perhaps these obscured lines cite the creation of sea animals and fish.

The Creation of Humanity

Clay Tablet V of the Enuma Elish epic states, “Opening his [Marduk] mouth, he addresses Ea {Marduk’s father} to impart the plan he had conceived in his heart: ‘Blood I will mass and cause bones to be. I will establish a savage, ‘man’ shall be his name. Verily, savage-man I will create. He shall be charged with the service of the gods that they might be at ease!’” After capturing a conspirator, named Kingu, who rebelled with Tiamat, “They bound him [Kingu], holding him before Ea. They imposed on him his guilt and severed his blood (vessels). Out of his blood they fashioned mankind. He imposed the service and let free the gods. After Ea, the wise, had created mankind, {and} had imposed upon it the service of the gods” (3).

A different rendering of clay tablet VI reads, “I will make man who -hall inhabit (the earth) that the service of the gods may be established” (1).

Humanity was created and did not evolve, as per the Enuma Elish epic. God took a personal and collective interest in the creation of humankind. Interestingly, Ea takes an active role in the creation of man together with Marduk. Ea or Enki was “Marduk’s father”, and “lord of the underworld ocean or primeval deep” (6). Both Ea and Marduk consult each other in the creation of humankind. Both are said to have “created mankind.”

The book of Genesis also speaks of a plurality of God in the creation of mankind. God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit were present at Adam and Eve’s creation. “And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness: and let them have dominion. . . . So God created man in His own image, in the image of God created He him; male and female created He them.” Genesis 1:26,27. The phrase “let us make man” clearly implies the presence of more than one person or divine being. Like Marduk and Ea, Michael, or Jesus Christ, and God the Father took an active role in the creation of mankind.

Twice in the narrative, mankind is “charged with the service of the gods.” Although the first week of creation is not explicit on commanding Adam and Eve to “serve God,” it is implicitly referred to in Genesis and explicitly mentioned elsewhere in the Bible. In the book of Deuteronomy, which is the fifth book written by Moses in the Old Testament, the command to love God is explicitly indicated. “And thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might.” Deuteronomy 6:5.

Notice the vast difference between the pagan and the Hebrew concept of God. The pagan god was to be feared and appeased, whereas the Hebrew God was merciful and was to be loved.

The pagan philosophy also differs from the Hebrew teachings on how God is to be served. The Hebrew writings state that God is to be loved with all the heart, soul, and mind. It is a matter of the heart, mind, and soul—a lifelong commitment which entails the whole being. The emphasis is first on the **attitude** of worship rather than on the acts of service.

Jesus referred to this love-serving attitude toward God as the first and greatest commandment of all. “Jesus said unto him, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the first and great commandment.” **Matthew 23:37,38-**

The pagan emphasis is on “works” and on the “service of the gods that they might be at ease.” But the Hebrew and Christian emphasis is on serving God out of love not only for God’s glory, but for one’s own benefit—for the wonderful traits of character that develop from serving God and others altruistically.

Like the Enuma Elish epic, the Genesis account cites that man was created to inhabit the earth. Upon creating Adam and Eve, the Lord said, “Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it: and have dominion...” **Genesis**

1:28-

Up to here the Enuma Elish story parallels the Genesis account, but a new pagan element is introduced in the Enuma Elish epic. The source of man’s blood is from Kingu, the slain conspirator in Tiamat’s rebellion. From his blood vessels, blood for man’s blood vessels is sought.

In *the Genesis account, Adam was created from the soil of the earth, not from the remains of a slain demigod. Adam in Hebrew literally means “humanity,” and “red clay.” A chemical analysis of red clay’s mineral composition will reveal that it contains many minerals common both to humans and to clay. Twice is the clay concept emphasized in the early chapters of Genesis. “And the Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul.” “In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou return unto the ground; for out of it wast thou taken: for dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return.”

Genesis 2:7; 3:19-

Nevertheless, there is a story on the shedding of blood in the book of Genesis which was also in the Oral Bible. This story relates to how Cain slew his brother Abel, and Abel’s blood cried unto God for vengeance. Cain joined the rebellion of Lucifer on earth and made war against the followers of God—that is, Abel. Perhaps the Enuma Elish epic mixed the story of man’s creation with the story of Abel’s slaughter. “And Cain talked with Abel his brother: and it came to pass, when they were in the field that Cain rose up against Abel his brother, and slew

him. And the Lord said unto Cain. . . the voice of thy brother's blood crieth unto me from the ground." **Genesis**

4:8-10-Ritual Sapattu or Sabattum

The Enuma Elish epic makes reference to the Hebrew ritual Sabbaths. In Akkadian, the written language of the Assyrians and Babylonians, Sabbath is "Sapattu." According to E.A. Speiser, the "Akkadian sapattu [is] the prototype of the 'Sabbath' in so far as the injunctions against all types of activity are concerned" (5). Others have spelled "sapattu" as "sabattum." They cite how the Assyrians used to say "sabattum um nuh libbi" meaning Sabbath a "day of rest of heart" (8). Still others have interpreted the same phrase "um nuh libbi" as a "day of the appeasement of the mind" (9). This implies that the Sabattum or Sabbath was a matter not only of the heart but of the mind. In the Babylonian context, Sabattum involved a sacrificial offering to appease God and a cessation from labor.

Clay tablet V states that Ma-rduk commanded the Moon, "Thou shalt have luminous horns to signify six days, On the seventh day reaching a [half]-crown. At full moon [Sapattu] stand in opposition in mid month" (5). The moon would shine the brightest at mid month during its full moon phase. The word sapattu appears in the original text of the Enuma Elish epic. It was a prototype of the Hebrew ritual Sabbath day in which no work was to be done and which coincided with a full and bright moon.

Some have maintained that "the term sabattum has been found only 5 or 6 times in the Babylonian inscriptions and in none of them is it connected with the seventh day of the week" (9). Although the Babylonians did not observe a seventh-day Sabbath, they did have certain festivals of the moon called "sapattu." The above citation from the clay tablet V of the Enuma Elish epic proves that sabattum was held "at the full moon [sapattu] . . . [at] mid month." Sapattu appears in relation to the day of the full moon which occurs at the fifteenth day of the month, or at mid month. The new moon comes at the first of the new day of the month. The full moon comes around at the fifteenth day of the month. The Hebrew nation had special feast days and ritual sabbath days which coincided with the new moon or full moon.

"The Jewish month is based on the period between one new moon and the next, which is 29 days, 12 hours, 44 minutes, and 31 seconds" (7). In the King James version, new moon appears at least 21 times. Many of these citations occur in connection with the celebration of a solemn assembly, sacrificial offerings, and ritual sabbath days. Every new moon, the Jews or Hebrews were commanded in their law to celebrate a religious feast. The prince was to offer sacrifices and ten animals weresacrificially offered to God; one animal for each of the ten commandments. "And in the beginning of your months [each new moon] ye shall offer a burnt offering unto the Lord; two young bullocks, and one ram, seven lambs of the year without spot." **Numbers 28:11-**

The moon served to identify religious assemblies or feasts among the Hebrews. "Two of these were held at the full moon, the Passover [Unleavened Bread] and the Feast of Tabernacles; [and] one at the new moon, the Feast of Trumpets..." (9).

The first day of the Feast of Unleavened Bread also served as a ritual sabbath on which no servile work was to be performed. It was held on the fifteenth day of the month when the full moon occurs. "And on the fifteenth day of the same month is the feast of unleavened bread unto the Lord: seven days ye must eat unleavened bread. In the first day ye shall have an holy convocation: ye shall do no servile work therein." **Leviticus 23:6,7-**

The other full moon festival among the Hebrews was the Feast of Tabernacles. It was held on the fifteenth day of the seventh month when the full moon occurs. Like the Feast of Unleavened bread, it was also a seven day feast. And on the day of the full moon no servile work was to be performed because it was a ritual Sabbath day. "Speak unto the children of Israel, saying, The fifteenth day of this seventh month shall be the feast of tabernacles for seven days unto the Lord. On the first day shall be an holy convocation: ye shall do no servile work therein." **Leviticus 23:34,35-** Thus, both seven day feasts in Israel, which contained two ritual Sabbaths each, began with a full moon at mid month similar to the description in the Enuma Elish epic.

Therefore, parallel renderings in the Enuma Elish epic and the Hebrew Torah regarding sapattu and Sabbath suggest that the Assyrian and Babylonian forefathers knew about the existence of a day of rest known as Sabbath. They knew that the sapattu, or Sabbath, began at the time of creation, when the moon was created. Yet their sapattu or Sabbath celebration paralleled more the Hebrew ritual Sabbath than the weekly moral Sabbath. The Assyrians and Babylonians may also have known of ritual Sabbaths which coincided with the full moon at mid month established at the time of Israel's exodus from Egypt in 1491 B.C. In Hebrew, Sabbath [Strong's numbers 7676 and 7673] or more properly "Shabbat" literally means "rest," "repose," "interlude," "intermission," "interruption," "cessation," "desist," to "sit still,"—all of which denote a time of rest and cessation from common weekly labor (10). Hence, the same Hebrew Sabbath word was used to denote the moral code's weekly Sabbath and the ritual law's yearly feast days which often coincided with the moon's phases. The Assyrian sapattu, or sabattum, had the same religious connotation as the Hebrew ritual Sabbath coinciding with the full moon.

In the book of Genesis, the seventh-day Sabbath and not the ritual Sabbath appears. The seventh-day Sabbath keeps reappearing throughout the Bible starting from the second chapter of Genesis. "And on the seventh day God ended His work which He had made; and He rested on the seventh day from all His work which He had made. And God blessed the seventh day, and sanctified it: because that in it He had rested from all He had made." **Genesis 2:2-3.** The last mention of the seventh-day Sabbath in the New Testament occurs in epistles written by St. Paul to the Hebrews which quotes the book of Genesis. "For He spake in a certain place of the seventh day on this wise, And God did rest the seventh day from all His works.... There remaineth therefore a keeping of a sabbath to the people of God." **Hebrews 4:4,9 margin•**

The Hebrew Viewpoint of Creation

The Hebrews have a unique way of interpreting the first week of creation. In three days, God Almighty set the stage for the following three days of creation. He created a strong permanent infrastructure which

would be filled with animate creatures. Both actions attest to a clear pattern and purpose in creation by an intelligent supernatural being known as “Elohim.”

Notice the perfect pattern of creation’s first week as recounted in the book of Genesis. Each day has its own sister or counterpart. Since on the first day of the week, God created day and night. On the fourth day, He created the sun, moon, and the stars. Those heavenly luminaries would shine in the morning and in the evening, respectively. The sun would announce the beginning of a day and the moon and stars the beginning of the night.

“On the second day, the seas and skies were created; on the fifth day the fish and birds were created.

On the third day the dry land appeared; on the sixth day the animals that live on the land were created” (7).

The above Hebrew viewpoint is given in a form of a story contained in the Midrash. The Midrash, like the Talmud, is a vast commentary on the first five books of the law written by Moses, and known to them as the Torah. The Midrash contains many imaginary allegories and parables which frequently help explain Biblical texts or doctrines.

“There is a Midrash which describes how the Sabbath complained to God that each of the Six Days of Creation had a partner while it had none...

Thus each of the last three days of Creation served to complete the first three days. Only the Sabbath remained alone. How did God answer the Sabbath’s complaint? He said to it, ‘Kneset Israel’—the Jewish people—will be your partner!” (7).

Conclusion

The Enuma Elish epic states in clay tablet V, “He [Marduk created the heaven and earth..., their bounds established.” So likewise does the book of Genesis state both at the beginning and at the end of the creation narration that the heavens and earth were created and finished by God. “In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth.” And again, “thus the heavens and earth were finished, and all the host of them. And on the seventh day God ended his work which He had made...” **Genesis 1:1; 2:1,2-**

Thus, the Enuma Elish epic is another tangible example from the ancients showing a common denominator to the book of Genesis. Such parallel agreement is beyond coincidence. It is another example of a common origin to many ancient poems, myths, and legends with the Holy Scriptures, all of which were derived from an oral tradition delivered from father to son and known as the “Oral Bible.”

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[Enuma.II]

SAVED BY FAITH

We are saved by faith. We can move mountains by faith. Miracles are done by faith. Nothing shall be impossible to us if we have faith, even as the amount of a mustard seed.

Faith is an everyday word to a Christian. We hear sermons about it. The Bible and the testimonies speak about it. We sing hymns about faith. Yet why did Jesus say, "When the Son of Man cometh, shall He find faith on the earth?" Luke 18:8. It seems that there is very little faith among professed Christians.

The old Israel could not enter into the Promised Land "because of unbelief. Heb. 3:19.

The Lord said of them, "They are a very froward generation, children in whom is no faith." Deut. 32:20.

Sister White wrote, "I am alarmed as I see the lack of faith among our people." 1 S.M. 83.

"Many who, like ancient Israel, profess to keep God's commandments have hearts of unbelief while outwardly observing the statutes of God.... As a people we lack faith." Test. Vol. 4, p. 162.

How do we get the faith that is so important to a Christian?

"For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of ourselves: it is the gift of God." Eph. 2:8.

The fruit of the spirit is faith.

Then if it is the gift of God and we receive it by the Holy Spirit, why is not every professed Christian filled with faith? Especially when our salvation depends on it Paul writes that, "God hath dealt to every man the measure of faith." Rom. 12:3.

According to this, every person has received faith from God but we can lose it if we do not practice it.

"They profess faith, but it is not a living faith because it is not sustained by works. Faith without works is dead, being alone. Those who profess great faith, yet have not works, will not be saved by their faith. Satan believes the truth and trembles, yet this kind of faith possesses no virtue." Test. Vol. 2, p. 657.

To overcome one needs faith. Humanly we are weak. We cannot keep the law of God perfectly without the power of God which we receive by living faith in Him. Christ's righteousness is granted to us by faith. Sanctification is a direct result of faith in God.

A sinless life is possible by faith. On the other hand, every sin that a professed Christian commits is the result of unbelief. The most dangerous type of sin is one that we commit willfully after we have come to the knowledge of the truth.

This kind of willful sinning destroys our faith in God. I have seen people who once were faithful children of God lose their faith so completely that they do not believe in the existence of God anymore.

Sister White mentions several reasons which destroy our faith in God.

"Discouragements paralyze our faith, unfitting us for usefulness." Test. Vol. 2, p. 604.

"Disease tends to destroy our faith and courage." Test. Vol. 1, p. 185.

"Those who claim that their faith alone will save them are trusting to a rope of sand, for faith is strengthened and made perfect by works only." S.R. 289.

"Friendship with the world corrupts faith." GC388.

“The spirit of gossip and talebearing is one of Satan’s special agencies to sow discord and strife, to separate friends, and to undermine the faith.” Test. Vol. 4, p. 195.

“God gives sufficient evidence for the candid mind to believe, but he who turns from the weight of evidence because there are a few things which he cannot make plain to his finite understanding will be left in the cold, chilling atmosphere of unbelief and questioning doubts, and will make shipwreck of faith.” Test. Vol. 5, pp. 675-6.

There are many other reasons for the people who once believed, but then lost their faith.

Out of the whole world only Noah and his family had faith. The rest of the world perished in their unbelief.

The 1844 disappointment tested the faith of the Advent believers and only one in every thousand had faith to see the leading of God. In the First World War only two percent of the Adventists in Europe had faith in God which enabled them to stand the test. Before the test they all looked as good Christians, but the test of their faith revealed the true, faithful remnant.

The next question that comes up is how to increase our faith.

“The apostles said unto the Lord, Increase our faith.” Luke 17:5.

One way to increase our faith is prayer. Jesus said, “I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not.” Luke 22:32.

“Faith has been decreasing to a fearful degree, and it is only by exercise that it can increase.” Test. Vol. 3, p. 256.

The Lord brings us to circumstances where humanly we cannot see a way out but by faith in God we are saved from the difficulty and it increases our trust in Him.

Bible reading increases our faith.

“As the student of the Bible beholds the Redeemer, there is awakened in the soul the mysterious power of faith, adoration, and love.” ED. 192.

“If more praising of God were engaged in now, hope, courage and faith would steadily increase.” PK. 202.

To praise God in singing and prayer will make us strong in faith, “The joy in the Lord is your strength.” Neh. 8:10.

“When the enemy seeks to enshroud the souls with darkness, sing faith and talk faith, and you will find that you have sung and talked yourself into the light.” CT, 234.

Trials and difficulties increase our faith.

“That the trial of your faith, being much more precious than gold that perisheth.” 1 Pet. 1:7.

“Trials will come, but go forward. This will strengthen your faith and fit you for service.” PK 175.

We strengthen our faith by doing missionary work.

“Hope and faith will strengthen as the agent for God works with his talents and facilities that God has provided.” Test. Vol. 6, p. 44.

Apostle Paul gives us counsel, “Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith: prove your own selves. 2 Cor. 13:5

Living faith in God has divine power in it. Sin can be overcome and the soul temple purified from selfishness and worldliness. "Through co-operation with Christ, they are made complete in Him, and in their human weakness they are enabled to do the deeds of Omnipotence." GW113.

"As the will of man co-operates with the will of God, it becomes omnipotent. Whatever is to be done at His command may be accomplished in His strength. All His biddings are enablings." C.O. 2, p. 333.

"When he has learned meekness and lowliness in the school of Christ, he will reveal Christlike patience, an invincible charity, and an omnipotent faith in the grand work of saving souls for whom Christ has died." Publishing Ministry 132.

True, living faith is called by Sister White, "an omnipotent faith". With this faith we can move mountains. In other words, sin can be overcome.

Read Hebrews chapter 11 to see what living faith in God can do. We have no reason to remain in human weakness while saving faith is available to us.

We are saved by faith from sin, and with faith we can prove to the world that the law of God can be kept. It is still the standard of righteousness and the condition for eternal life. May the Lord help each one of us to have this gift of God - the living faith. AMEN

Timo Martin

THE LAODICEAN MESSAGE

"These things saith the Amen, the faithful and true witness, the beginning of the creation of God; I know thy works, that thou art neither cold nor hot: I would thou wert cold or hot. So then because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spue thee out of my mouth. Because thou sayest, I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing; and knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked: I counsel thee to buy of me gold tried in the fire, that thou mayest be rich; and white raiment, that thou mayest be clothed, that the shame of thy nakedness do not appear: and anoint thine eyes with eyesalve, that thou mayest see. As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten: be zealous

therefore, and repent." Revelation 3:14-19.

The Laodicean message, as written in Revelation 3, is a very strong message. It tells of spiritual lukewarmness and how detestable it is to God. This is a very accurate description of the time in which we live. The word Laodicea means: "People of the judgement" so we know we are living in the time of the final judgement. However, John goes on to describe the spiritual condition of the so-called Christians during this time period. We know that the SDA church is prophesied as the church during the Laodicean time period and the SDA Reform church is considered the remnant of Laodicea. While the SDA church has fallen away and become lukewarm in its condition, causing them to fall off the line of truth during the great crisis of World War I, is it possible that the spirit of Laodicea has affected some people in God's church? Have we ever seen backsliders in the church?

Yes, I am sure we have all met some backsliders in God's church, those who have become weak or discouraged. This Laodicean message is not for worldly people; it is not for those in fallen Christian organizations; this is a warning message for God's church. May God help us to heed this warning, and make sure we are not in this condition.

What is the cause of this spiritual lethargy? It is a very dangerous disease. Laodicean Message, what is its purpose? "I saw that this message would not accomplish its work in a few short months. It was designed to arouse the people of GOD, to discover to them their backslidings, and lead to zealous repentance, that they might be favored with the presence of JESUS, and be fitted for the loud cry of the third angel." 2SG, p. 224.

If the purpose of this message is to arouse God's people from their backslidings, was it a message only to the SDA church? It cannot be, as they are no longer God's church today. Perhaps this message is a warning for us to search our own hearts to make sure we are not in a backslidden condition.

CAUSES OF BACKSLIDING:

Backsliding does not happen suddenly. It is often a slow process and can be imperceptible at first. Slowly the conscience becomes hardened, little by little it becomes "seared with a hot iron;" 1 Tim. 4:2. Our conscience, therefore is not a trustworthy guide if it does not agree with the truth. We must test everything with the truth, and bring our conscience into accord with truth. It is therefore, very important to check our progress once in a while. Have we come closer to the Lord than we have in the past? Have we slipped slowly back into the world? Are we partaking in activities that we believed unacceptable in the past? It doesn't take much to undo the effects of the gospel. For the rich young ruler there was only one thing that he lacked, and this caused his spiritual departure from the Lord. (See Luke 18:18-25).

Misuse of money: "Your faith and simple trust in God began to wane as soon as means flowed in upon you. You did not depart from God all at once. Your backsliding was gradual. You ceased the morning and evening devotions because it was not always convenient. Your son's wife caused you trials of a peculiar, aggravating character, which had considerable to do in discouraging you from continuing family devotions. Your house became a prayerless house. Your business was made primary, and the Lord and His truth were made secondary. Look back to the days of your earlier experience; would these trials then have driven you from your family prayer?" T2 280, 281.

"Many are in danger of thinking that in the cares of labor, in writing and practicing as physicians, or performing the duties of the various departments, they are excusable if they lay down prayer, neglect the Sabbath, and neglect religious service.

Sacred things are thus brought down to meet their convenience, while duties, denials, and crosses are left untouched. Neither physicians nor helpers should attempt to perform their work without taking time to pray. God would be the helper of all who profess to love Him, if they would come to Him in faith and, with a sense of their own weakness, crave His power. When they separate from God, their wisdom will be found to be foolishness. When they are small in their own eyes and lean heavily upon their God, then He will be the arm of their power, and success will attend their efforts; but when they allow the mind to be diverted from God, then Satan comes in and controls the thoughts and perverts the judgement." T4, p. 560.

Diet: Some think that diet is not a big issue - it is not so important that you follow the health guidelines that are laid out in the Spirit of Prophecy so strictly. It is ok, to bend a little here and there - to indulge occasionally. "The greatest want of the world is the want of men - men who will not be bought or sold, men who in their inmost souls are true and honest, men who do not fear to call sin by its right name, men whose conscience is as true to duty as the needle to the pole, men who will stand for the right though the heavens fall." Ed. p., 57.

Let's see the disastrous results of the indulgence of appetite. "Some are indulging in lustful appetite which wars against the soul and is a constant hindrance to their spiritual advancement. They constantly bear an accusing conscience, and if straight truths are talked they are prepared to be offended. They are self-condemned and feel that subjects have been purposely selected to touch their case. They feel grieved and injured, and withdraw themselves from the assemblies of the saints. They forsake the assembling of themselves together, for then their consciences are not so disturbed. They soon lose their interest in the meetings and their love for the truth, and, unless they entirely reform, will go back and take their position with the rebel host who stand under the black banner of Satan. If these will crucify fleshly lusts which war against the soul, they will get out of the way, where the arrows of truth will pass harmlessly by them. But while they indulge in lustful appetite, and thus cherish their idols, they make themselves a mark for the arrows of truth to hit, and if truth is spoken at all, they must be wounded." IT. p. 548.

Dress: "I have been shown that the main cause of your backsliding is your love of dress. This leads to the neglect of grave responsibilities, and you find yourselves with scarcely a spark of the love of God in your hearts." 4T, p. 647.

Inactivity in God's cause: "Inactivity and indolence in the cause of God would result in backsliding from God themselves, and by their example they would hinder others from going forward." 4T, p. 285.

"Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall." 1 Cor. 10:12. "None are in greater danger than he who feels that his mountain standeth sure. It is then that his feet will begin to slide. Temptations will come, one after another, and so imperceptible will be their influence upon the life and character, that, unless kept by divine power, he will be corrupted by the spirit of the world and will fail to carry out the purpose of God. All that man has, God has given him, and he who improves his abilities to God's glory will be an instrument to do good; but we can no more live a religious life without constant prayer and the performance of religious duties than we can have physical strength without partaking of temporal food. We must daily sit down at God's table. We must receive strength from the living Vine, if we are nourished." 4T, p. 560.

For those in a backslidden condition, it is not always God who punishes the sinner, "Thine own wickedness shall correct thee, and thy backslidings shall reprove thee: know therefore and see that it is an evil thing and bitter, that thou hast forsaken the LORD thy God, and that my fear is not in thee, saith the Lord GOD of hosts." Jer. 2:19. Many times it is the results of the persons' own sin that come back upon them. The smoker will more than likely develop lung cancer, the meat eaters have a greater risk of receiving tumors and cancers. The lazy person loses his spiritual strength that only God can provide. Those that leave the presence of the Lord are left to the results of their own evil course. The Lord has withdrawn His protecting hand.

“If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me.” Ps. 66:18. Any sin that is held onto can nullify all the effects of the gospel. I have met several people in the past who have cherished one sin and ended up giving up the faith. For one lady it was dress reform. She loved the truth when it was brought to her. She embraced it with joy and thankfulness. She loved the Sabbath rest and the health message, however there was one point of truth that she had difficulty giving up - only one. It was the dress reform issue. She felt she must dress very lightly hi the hot part of the summer and she dressed quite immodestly. She could not fathom the idea of being modest and still be comfortable in the hot summer. She ended up turning her back on the whole message. She gave up the Sabbath and the health reform. All that was beautiful to her hi the past, was now an unnecessary yoke in her eyes. I saw the same thing happen to a lady who could not give up her cosmetics. She turned her back and is no longer walking with us. It was only one point, but it was enough to undo the effects of the gospel. “And for this cause God shall send them a strong delusion, that they should believe a lie.” 2Thess. 2:11. It is God who sends the delusion, not Satan. Jesus says if you do not gather with me, you scatter abroad. We must be 100% with the Lord or we are none of His.

OUR DUTY

TOWARDS BACKSLIDERS:

We do have a duty when we see those hi a backslidden condition. We are not to leave them alone to work out their own salvation, and struggle alone. We are hi a church, the family of God, so that we can help one another. When we see a brother straying we do have a duty. “Some of the church had no special anxiety to have Brother A return. They cared not enough to unbend from their dignity and pride and make special efforts to help him to the light. They stood back on their dignity and said: “We will not go after him; let him come to us.” Viewing the feelings of his brethren toward him as he did, it was impossible for him to do this. Had they regarded the lesson taught by Christ, they would have been willing to yield their dignity and pride, and go after the wandering ones. They would have wept over them, prayed for them, implored them to be faithful to God and the truth, and to abide with the church. But the feeling of many was: “If he wants to go, let him go.” 2T, p. 218,219.

“Hunt up the backsliders, those who once knew what religion was, and give them the message of mercy.” CH, p. 533.

Not every one will accept correction. Once lukewarm backsliders have entered the downward pathway, they will continue hi that direction. Even if they have not gone into apostasy, they may be lukewarm church members, who will come to church only to sit and listen every week. They have no interest hi any missionary endeavours of the church, taking part hi the meetings or any activities and extra meetings of the church. Either way, both are drifting slowly in the wrong direction. “But thou shalt say unto them, This is a nation that obeyeth not the voice of the LORD their God, nor receiveth correction: truth is perished, and is cut off from their mouth.” Jer. 7:28. This is a fearful condition to be hi, when any encouragement and reproof is refused. Often the person drifting is blind to their own condition.

It is not an easy task to go and tell someone that they have wandered away from the Lord. There is always the fear that the message will be rejected and this had led some to ignore the backslider and turn the other way. “Some ministers who profess to be called of God have the blood of souls on their garments. They are surrounded with backsliders and shiners, and yet feel no burden for their souls; they manifest an indifference in regard to their salvation. Some are so nearly asleep that they seem to have no sense of the work of a gospel minister. They do not consider that, as spiritual physicians, they are required to have skill in administering to souls diseased with sin. The work of warning shiners, of weeping over them and pleading with them, has been neglected until many souls are past all cure. Some have died in their sins, and will in the judgement confront with reproaches of their guilt those who might have saved them, but who did not. Unfaithful ministers, what a retribution awaits you!” 2T, p. 506.

Perhaps a person may not have hardened their heart towards the truth, but have backslidden due to discouragement; they feel as though they have lost hope. “There is no hope: no; for I have loved strangers, and after them will I go.” Jer. 2:25. This is the condition of some and we have to bring to them the message of love that Jesus has for His people today. There is still time. While there is life, there is hope.

JUDAH VS. ISRAEL

The nations of Israel and Judah are good examples for us. If we see others who are punished for their backslidden condition, we should take heed that we do not do as they have done. In the time of Israel and Judah, Israel went into captivity some years before Judah because of their departure from God. Judah saw all the punishments yet they refused to repent. This was the Lord’s reaction to the sad condition that Judah found herself in. “And I said after she had done all these things, Turn thou unto me. But she returned not. And her treacherous sister Judah saw it. And I saw, when for all the causes whereby backsliding Israel committed adultery I had put her away, and given her a bill of divorce; yet her treacherous sister Judah feared not, but went and played the harlot also.” Jer. 3:7,8.

Judah actually had greater privileges which made her guilt worse. “And the LORD said unto me, The

backsliding Israel hath justified herself more than treacherous Judah.” Jer 3:11. And Judah went about trying to justify her course of action. When we wander away and are brought reproof by our brethren to encourage us to come back, we should never try to justify ourselves or make excuses as to why we are going the way we are. Sin is sin; the simplest solution is to simply confess our sin and return to the Lord. There is no excuse for sin ever, under any circumstances.

As I mentioned above, Judah’s guilt was worse than Israel’s due to the greater advantages they had been blessed with.

Judah’s advantages included:

“1) An unbroken succession of kings descended from the house of David. During all the years of her existence as a kingdom, but one dynasty ruled. As a result she was spared the political upheavals that plagued her northern neighbor. 2) The presence within her boundaries of the Temple and the visible manifestation of God’s presence in the Temple. 3) The presence within her boundaries of the majority of the priests and Levites, official representatives of the worship of Jehovah. 4) The warning example of Israel’s downfall for a hundred years.. . In the face of these advantages Judah became faithless, hypocritical, and intolerably proud. Hence, Israel, in spite of her open apostasy, was less guilty than Judah.” BC, vol. 4, p. 366.

The nation of Judah prided themselves that they were the sons of Abraham, having the royal line of David as kings, and thus they were favoured of God. The temple also was in their capital city so God must be with them. They were looking towards outward things for their salvation, as do many Christians today. Their faith is in their church buildings, their preachers, their schools, hospitals and sanitariums. “It was not enough that the ark and the sanctuary were in the midst of Israel. It was not enough that the priests offered sacrifices, and that the people were called the children of God. The Lord does not regard the request of those who cherish iniquity in the heart; it is written ‘he that turneth away his ear from hearing the law, even his prayer shall be abomination.’ Pro. 28:9.” PP, p. 584.

Yet, Judah compared herself to Israel and assured herself that she was not as bad as Israel. Her apostasy was not so great in her own eyes, however in the eyes of God it was worse due to then- greater privileges. “Neither hath Samaria committed half of thy sins; but thou hast multiplied their abominations more than they, and has justified thy sisters in all thine abominations which thou hast done.” Ezk. 16:51. Shamefully the chosen nation had “walked in the counsels and in the imaginations of their evil heart, and went backward, and not forward.” Jer. 7:24. “She obeyed not the voice; she received not correction; she trusted not in the LORD; she drew not near to her God.” Zeph. 3:2.

What a sad condition to a great nation; a nation that was God’s church at that point in time. May God help us not to be as Judah, comparing ourselves with Israel and assuring ourselves that we are okay, since our sins don’t appear as grievous. We would then be in danger of having the Laodicean spirit and in need of nothing.

INDIFFERENCE TO ONE’S OWN BACKSLIDDEN STATE:

“The knowledge of the state of the backslider from God seems to be hidden from him.... I call upon all who are resting unconcerned in their present state of spiritual deadness, to arouse and arise from the dead, and Christ will give them light. Many rest content as though the cloud by day and the pillar of fire by night were sheltering and guiding them. Many profess to know God, and yet deny Him in their works. They reckon themselves among God’s peculiar, chosen people, who have a special, solemn message entrusted to their keeping to sanctify their lives and to give to the world, and yet the power of the truth is scarcely felt or manifested in our midst in zealous work for God. How great is our darkness and we know it not! The light has not diminished, but we walk not in its rays.” TM, P. 451.

“What greater delusion can deceive the human mind than that in which individuals flatter themselves that they have the truth, that they are on the only sure foundation, and that God accepts their works because they are actively engaged in some work in the cause of God, when they are sinning against Him by walking contrary to the expressed will of God? They work mechanically, like machinery; but preparation of heart, the sanctification of the character, is wanting. Sacred and holy things are brought down to the level of common things, and commonness, a cheapness, is working itself into our churches. The service is degenerating into little else than form.” TM, p. 451.

“We are not safe for one moment in cherishing indifference and carelessness in regard to our soul’s salvation. Many will have to arouse and change their course of action if they are saved. The perils of the last days are upon us. Connection with divine influence through a strong, living, working faith, can alone make us to be laborers together with God. Those who would shun the self-denying, self-sacrificing part of religion, will never be partakers with Christ in His glory. There must be prayerful study and determined effort on the part of all who shall win the crown of life.” 2SM, p. 212.

Some refuse to come back, no matter how earnestly the Lord calls. “Why then is this people of Jerusalem slidden back by a perpetual backsliding? They hold fast deceit, they refuse to return.” Jer. 8:5. Yes, their great sin was not only in disobeying the voice of the Lord, but they refused to return when corrected. There is great danger in not listening to counsel and encouragement given from our brethren. “When duty is presented

of cleansing themselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God, they are offended. They see that they cannot retain these hurtful gratifications and yet secure heaven, and they conclude that since the way to eternal life is so strait, they will no longer walk therein." PP, p. 181.

"Oh LORD, are not thine eyes upon the truth? Thou hast stricken them, but they have not grieved; thou has consumed them, but they have refused to receive correction: they have made their faces harder than a rock; they have refused to return." Jer. 5:23. ". . . they are wise to do evil, but to do good they have no knowledge." Jer. 4:22.

Sister White wrote many testimonies to the believers living in her days. Many were heeded, but many were ignored. It is a fearful thing to ignore the voice of the Lord brought by His servants to help and encourage us.

A CALL TO RETURN:

"Return, ye backsliding children, and I will heal your backslidings. Behold, we come unto thee; for thou art the LORD our God." Jer. 3:22.

The Lord is calling all those who have backslidden to come into line. He wants everyone to search their own hearts to see if there is any dark corner of sin left. If we find something that should not be there, the Lord, in His mercy, will welcome every repentant sinner. Today there is still time to come back to the Lord. Tomorrow may be too late.

Even with all the love that the Lord has showered upon people, many refuse to come to the Lord. When the Lord has withdrawn His protection and prospering hand, even then some have hardened their hearts, as did Pharaoh in Egypt. His nation was his slaves but he still stubbornly refused to acknowledge the God of heaven. In the time of Jeremiah, it was God's people who were the stubborn, hard-hearted ones. "Therefore the showers have been withholden, and there hath been no latter rain; and thou hadst a whore's forehead, thou refusedst to be ashamed." Jer 3:3.

Often when a crisis comes in a person's life they will react in one of two ways; they will call to God or they will curse God. God will often allow a crisis to come to reveal to us what is really in our hearts and if we find some evil hidden there, evil that we were not aware of before, it is a fearful thing to harden our hearts and to not be ashamed of our sin. Sin is a terrible thing in the eyes of God and not something to be trifled with. Affliction made no impression on the hearts of the people in the nation of Judah. May the Lord help each one of us to see God's leading hand in our afflictions.

"Go and proclaim these words toward the north, and say, Return, thou backsliding Israel, saith the LORD; and I will not cause mine anger to fall upon you: for I am merciful, saith the Lord, and I will not keep anger forever." Jer. 3:12.

"Let those who have become sleepy and indifferent, awake. We are called to be holy and we should carefully avoid giving the impression that it is of little consequence whether or not we retain the peculiar features of our faith. Upon us rests the golden obligation of taking a more decided stand for truth and righteousness than we have taken in the past. The line of demarcation between those who keep the commandments of God and those who do not is to be revealed with unmistakable clearness. We are conscientiously to honor God, diligently using every means of keeping his covenant relation with Him, that we may receive His blessings - the blessings so essential for a people who are to be so severely tried. To give the impression that our faith, our religion, is not a dominating power in our lives is greatly to dishonor God. Thus we turn from His commandments, which are our life, denying that He is our God and we His people." 9T, p. 251.

"The time has come when we must know for ourselves why we believe as we do. We must stand for God and for the truth, against a reckless, unbelieving generation. That man who has once known the way of life, and has turned from the convictions of his own heart to the sophistry of Satan, will be more inaccessible and more unimpressible than he who has never tasted the love of Christ. He will be wise to do evil. He has bound himself to Satan, even against light and knowledge. I say to my brethren: Your only hope is in God. We must be clothed with Christ's righteousness if we would withstand the prevailing impiety." 4T, p. 596.

We are living in a solemn and fearful time. Each one of us must daily search our hearts to make sure we have not become lukewarm. The warning of Laodicea is for us today. Let us pay heed to that warning.

AMEN

Wendy Eaton

AN UNEXPECTED TEMPEST

‘Now when He got into the boat, His disciples followed Him, and suddenly a great tempest arose in the sea, so the boat was covered with the waves. But He was asleep.’

Matthew 8:24

Jesus is the Prince of Peace. Whichever house He stepped into He brought peace. He often visited the houses of the sick and healed them, thus removing every motive of sorrow and grief. He brought the promise of His kingdom to those who would accept the invitation and a peaceful joy would take possession of those who believed and received the gift of salvation. He still knocks at people’s hearts and peace overflows as we open the door and bid Him welcome.

“Now when He got into the boat, His disciples followed Him, and suddenly a great tempest arose.” This scene seems to contradict our previous declaration. Here Jesus enters a place, gets into a boat, and a tempest arises. Suddenly, the peaceful sea becomes turbulent, a threatening place; the soft wind that would gently push the boat to its destination turns into a whistling gust that threatens to tip the boat and its human cargo into the deep blue sea. How can this be possible?

If we take the fishing boat as a symbol of our life sliding smoothly over the sea, following a certain route and seeking a certain goal, heading toward a certain harbour after having had a certain catch, and we allow Jesus to step into it, we shall soon understand the spiritual meaning of this verse. *“A tempest arose on the sea.”* The elements become enraged at Jesus’ presence, the new set of principles He brings, the new goal He sets before us. The new demands He has stir up the fleshy nature in us or in those who surround us and we risk being swallowed up by the waves that beat against the fragile wood of our human frame. That wood has not yet been overlaid with gold because, although it knows and accepts the law of God as the utmost expression of His love for humanity, it has delayed its preparation to contain it. It hasn’t yet followed the faith fully. These things only will have the power to hide the wooden structure under a layer of pure gold—a material that can suffer no harm, a material that if it is beaten will not offer resistance but will endure and humbly bend to the strikes of the hammer, a material that, if put on the fire, will melt and flow and give the Master Artisan the freedom to do with it whatever He wants.

“The disciples followed Him “, they observed Him from close up, admired Him, felt secure and protected in His presence, but they did not yet live His life so they lacked the strength to have faith against the elements which *“suddenly”* arose against them—the wind and the sea, symbols of war and multitudes. Only Jesus knows how fragile a human being may feel before a ravenous mob asking for His crucifixion, and He is the only ONE who can rebuke the wind and bring great calm.

Tempests often arise suddenly, but they have had a long time of preparation and incubation. Before an earthquake shakes the foundations of the ground where we stand, the different layers of earth and subterranean rocks have broken and shifted under a certain pressure. There are forces constantly at work underneath the surface that mold the outer layer of the earth. The same thing happens with tempests in our lives, with war, with persecution, with accusations. Tongues and ears have been busy for a long time preparing the foundation for a storm, for an earthquake. Sometimes we are surprised that in a wonderful spring morning, when the sun shines brightly, fluffy white clouds like flakes of cotton cleave the skies, and a flock of birds flies to and fro delighting our eyes and at the same time awakening in our heart the desire of being so free and above the ground, suddenly the earth moves under our feet. We were not aware of what was going on in secret. We were not naive to thank the Lord every evening for the calm around us and the apparent peace and harmony, and *“suddenly”* this unexpected storm. We turn to Him but He does not seem to hear us, He is asleep. We are absolutely alone in the middle of the storm and we know we are not handling things right because He rightly says: *“Without me you can do nothing.”* Then we look for human help, exchange opinions, ask for advice, try to find solutions, but nothing works.

“Then the disciples came to Him and awoke Him, saying: Lord save us! We are perishing!” (Matthew 8:25)

Completely aware that every human attempt for improvement is a guaranteed failure, we go to Him without any fear of disturbing Him, because we know quite well that even if He is able to getting quite angry at our unbelief,

He will never pay a deaf ear to the call of one of His children who is sunk in loneliness and helplessness. We have enough experiences with Him to know that He is always ready to enfold us in his loving arms, and suddenly, in the same way that the tempest arose, peace comes into our heart and life. It is because again, as it happens in the underground preparation for an earthquake, a secret process takes place in our spirit that was once touched by His, and like the pieces of a puzzle, past experiences, remembrances of His faithfulness, His personal promises made to us, very special moments come all together in our subconscious world and bring, as a result a deep joyful peace and a hymn of gratitude to our lips.

Thank you Lord that you allow trials that bring us back to you after long periods of wandering on our own and dwelling on earthly and carnal demands trying to look for a solution without you! Thank you that you make us once again take time to lift our eyes to heaven, early in the morning, as the day breaks, and see how the moon shyly and humbly watches the magnificent awakening of the sun in a sky tinted in different hues, to disappear finally and let the source of light master during the day. Thank you for teaching us, through this object lesson how you expect us to depend on you so that we may hold our peace! Thank you Lord, thank you Prince of peace!

“My brethren, count it all joy when you fall into various trials”” (James 1:32) and remember *“that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose.”* (Romans 8:28)
AMEN

Teresa Corti Greece

VICTORY AT THE CROSS PART II

There is hardly a church or congregation I've spoken to where people haven't felt rejected.—rejected by their children, children rejected by their parents, wives rejected by their husbands. Do you feel rejected and filled with sorrow? Did the Lord overcome rejection and sorrow? “He was a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief. He was despised and rejected of men.” Isa. 53:3. Yet, many souls led by the Man of Sorrows came to know Christ. (MB 10).

Some of you may have cried into your pillow last night. Our Lord wept with you. He knows your sorrows. Some of you are lonely. “He came into his own and His own received Him not.” He knew the meaning of loneliness. He was alone when He died with our sins upon Him. He was alone in the Garden of Gethsemane.

There is nothing that comes to us emotionally, mentally, spiritually or physically that our Lord has not known. We have dealt with pain. Pain is not the Lord's way. It is the product of the devil and our Lord defeated pain. He defeated pain in His hands and feet. On his head was a crown of thorns pressing down on him. He defeated pain and He defeated death. He came to destroy him that had the power of death, that is the devil. Heb. 2:14, 15.

The greatest mistake this prince of evil ever made was to take the Prince of Life into the kingdom of death. Why? Because He would break out. Even if mountain was piled upon mountain, nothing could stop Hun from coming out because the strength of death is in sin and He who knew no sin was made to be sin for us. Now let us go back to the cross and see Hun there. Before the Lord died on the cross He gained two special

victories that we often miss. In speaking from the cross, the Lord said, "I thirst". Some women there offered him vinegar to drink. Now it wasn't so terrible. They thought it was an act of kindness. The word "vinegar" is an old French word vin=wine.. winery, egre=bitter or bitter wine; alcohol.

When I saw this I began to understand the victory of our Lord. One of the last things He did before He died was to gain victory over alcohol. In Matthew 27:34, alcohol is referred to as "gall". Gall was an opiate, a narcotic. It was used to deaden pain. This was yet another act of kindness from the women at the cross. But when the Lord refused vinegar wine, which contained gall, at that point on the cross, one of the last things that He did was to gain victory over all drugs. He gained a victory for all the drug addicts that day on the cross.

If only we understood that the cross is not just an emotional symbol, but to see it as an experience. We need to experience it and understand it, grasp hold of it and know that the victory our Lord gave, He gave to you and me because without Him we could not accomplish them. Because without Him we can do nothing.

Let us go back to the cross. What was the crucifixion? There are many answers to that question. I wish to share several of the answers with you.

The crucifixion was a demonic attack on the body of Jesus Christ, the devil attacked Him emotionally and mentally all during His ministry. He felt sure that if he could get hold of the Lord's body he would defeat Him. What did our Lord do? Our Lord surrendered His body

What was the devil doing at the cross? I want you to intensify your thinking for a moment. He was tempting Jesus! Tempting him to come down. I want you to look at that temptation. He was tempting Jesus on the most basic human emotion... hate.

If there is one word that describes the character of God it is "love". If there is one word that describes the character of Satan it is "hate". The devil said to Jesus, "Look over there at your hand. Do you see that nail? Look over at your other hand? Do you see that nail? That is how much they appreciate you. Consider that you opened the blind eyes. There is the letter of gratitude. You straightened a twisted limb, you touched the lepers, you touched the untouchable and unlovable. You loved them. They are not worth it. Look at what they are doing to you. Turn on them. Turn against them. Hate them. Look at your feet. The weary miles you walked to see the Seraphonecian woman, to see the man of Gadara, to cross the lake and see the gatherings, all the weary miles you walked. This is their gratitude. They are not worth it. They are dogs. Let them die."

Demons, fallen angels were at the cross that day. Every demon kept their eyes on His face, for every grieving moment. They were waiting for His eyes to narrow, waiting for His jaws to clench. But He never did. He was love. If he would have reacted with hatred, all would have been lost. Because at that point the character of Satan and Christ would become one. Instead He looked down from the cross and said, "Father, forgive them for they know not what they do." (Lk. 23:24).

I have good news for you. In the previous Bible verse the Lord made forgiveness possible for the whole human race. None of us know what we are doing. We think we know what we are doing. We are arrogant and proud of our opinions. Why did the Lord offer to forgive the human race? Because He could see behind the men who drove the nails and planted the thorns. There were powers that were manipulating the men. They were tools of a powerful foe.

Dear Brethren, I believe that the Lord can forgive us and He does forgive us if we repent. Many times we may be unaware that we are being manipulated. But by the grace of Jesus Christ we can be free of that manipulation.

So, what was the cross? It was the great battle of love against hate. It was the devil's last effort to turn the love to hate against the human family.

Do you have troubles with these works of Satan? Do you have trouble with fear, worry, anxiety, violence, hatred? Do you have trouble with alcohol or drugs? I have good news, brothers and sisters. There is victory through Jesus Christ. Claim it for yourself. It is the gift of God for eternal life. All we have to do is to reach out and take hold of His nail pierced hands.

Can you see that everything we need, without exception, is found in our Lord Jesus Christ? I wish to close this

message with a few sentences.

He bled from His hands that He might atone for the things we have done, we should have never done. He bled from His head that He might atone for the thoughts we have thought and that we should never have thought. He bled from His side that He might atone for the feelings that we have felt and that we should never have felt.

Do you have a problem with hatred, anger, pride, fear, worry, stress, tension, discouragement, despondency, loneliness, rejection, feelings of being unwanted, unloved? Jesus will take it all away. He has promised to give you the comfort of His presence. He will accept you if you go to Him. He will be with you always even to the end of the world. The infinite resources of God in Christ Jesus our Lord are available to you.

Ask and it shall be given you, seek and you shall find, knock and it shall be opened, all in His name. AMEN.

John Theodorou Athens, Greece

THE GODHEAD AND THE HOLY SPHUT

How do we believe whether is He a person or a force?

In the Bible it is clearly stated that there is a 3rd Person in the Godhead. This is confirmed in the Spirit of prophecy. The first verse in the Bible states "In the beginning God" (Elohim), which means Diety is a plural noun meaning "strong one" or "Almighty". The word God refers to the Godhead, but when this word was translated they just translated God; but the real meaning is Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit where all three are referred to by this word. There are five different names for God found in the Old Testament. The very first verse in the Bible states that all three persons or the Godhead were involved in the creation of this planet Earth. This same translation occurs 2500 times in the Old Testament.

Again before His ascension to heaven, Jesus confirmed them saying "Go ye therefore, and teach all nations baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost". This indicates that all three are involved in the salvation of man. In Romans 1:20 "For the invisible things of Him from the creation of the world are clearly seen being understood by the things that are made even His eternal power and Godhead so that they are without excuse". If people don't want to accept this truth about the Godhead they cannot be excused or forgiven. "Again and again we shall be called to meet the influence of men who are studying sciences of satanic origin through which Satan is working to make a nonentity of God and Christ.

The Father and the Son each have a personality. Evan. p. 613. Because of falsehood and misrepresentation, Sis. White confirmed in the Spirit of prophecy stating, "I am instructed to say, the sentiments of those who are searching for advanced scientific ideas are not to be trusted. Such representations as the following are made: The Father is as the light invisible: the Son is as the light embodied; the Spirit is the light shed abroad. The Father is like the dew, invisible vapor; the Son is like the dew gathered in beauteous form; the Spirit is like the dew fallen to the seat of life. Another representation: The Father is like the invisible vapor; the Son is like the leaden cloud; the Spirit is rain fallen and working in refreshing power.

"All these spiritualistic representations are simply nothingness. They are imperfect, untrue. They weaken and diminish the Majesty, which no earthly likeness can be compared to. God cannot be compared with the things his hands have made, these are mere earthly things suffering under the curse of God because of the sins of man. The Father cannot be described by the things of earth. The Father is all the fullness of the Godhead bodily, and is

invisible to mortal sight.

“The Son is all the fullness of the Godhead manifested. The Word of God declares Him to be the express image of His person...

“The Comforter that Christ promised to send after He ascended to heaven is the Spirit, in all the fullness of the Godhead making manifest the power of divine grace to all who receive and believe in Christ as a personal Saviour. There are three living persons of the heavenly trio; in the name of these three great powers the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit—those who receive Christ by living faith are baptized, and these powers will cooperate with the obedient subjects of heaven in their efforts to live the new life in Christ.” Evan. 614, 615.

Some of the Christian churches believe, i.e. the Jehovah’s Witnesses that there is no trinity existing and that it all started after the counsel in Nicaea in 300 A.D. where Emperor Constantine constructed the theory of the Godhead. But the Bible and the Spirit of prophecy is clear that it did not occur in A.D. 300 but in the very first Bible verse that confirms the truth about the Godhead. Some of the Christian churches even believe that God created Christ. All these satanic theories only undermines the truth.

Now if we look further regarding the Holy Spirit, is He a person or a force? The very second verse in the Bible talks about His involvement in creating the earth. “And the earth was without form, and void; and darkness was upon the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters.” Gen. 1:2. When in creation there was nothingness in the earth and the surface matter was in a fluid state, the word “moved” is “merachepeth”, which can be more accurately translated. The real meaning “brooded or to tremble or to shake” is the right meaning. In Deut. 32:11 it is used to describe the fluttering of an eagle over its young. The eagle does not brood over the living young but hovers watchfully and protectingly over them. The work of God’s Spirit must have some connection with the activity that was presently to be initiated, an activity bringing order out of chaos. Thus is stated in the very beginning that the Spirit of God was involved in creation.

How do we imagine the Holy Spirit? How can we distinguish personality? In our earthly lives sometimes we encounter people who are born blind or without hands or feet but still some of them leave a legacy of a great life or a great personality. Then we come to a conclusion saying that personality doesn’t depend on physical characteristics. It is based on three basic elements 1) A mind ^capacity to think, ability to acquire knowledge, and the ability to reason. 2) Feeling or emotion. 3) The will = the power of decision.

Let us investigate the first element, the mind. “But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost whom the Father will send in my name, HE will teach you all things. HE is called a teacher. To teach you need to have knowledge. In 1 Cor 2:10, 11, it states “for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea the deep things of God. He is the One who goes and searches the mind of God. He looks deep inside the Father and the Son and reveals it to us. In Romans 8:26,27 “Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities for we know not what we should pray for as we ought but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered. In this verse clearly we can see He is pleading with the Father on our behalf and praying for us. He is also an intercessor like Christ pleading in behalf of man. In this statement we can see He has a mind of His own in order to do this.

Now let us look at the second element, feeling and emotion. In Eph:4:30. “And grieve not the Holy Spirit of God whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption. How can you grieve or hurt a person if he doesn’t have feelings or emotions?

The third element is the will. In iCor 12:11. “But all these worketh that one and the selfsame SPIRIT dividing to every man severally as He will.” In this statement He is the one who decides what part or role we have in salvation and in the work of God. He has His own will to do this.

So, now we can see clearly that the Holy Spirit has qualified or fallen into the criteria of a person. If any person or being has this qualification we call them a person. Now let us see what the Spirit of prophecy states. “We need to realize that the Holy Spirit who is much a person as God is a person, walking through these grounds. The Holy Spirit is a person for He beareth witness with our spirits that we are the children of God. When this witness is borne, it carries with it its own evidence. At such times we believe and are sure that we are the children of God. The Holy Spirit has a personality, else He could not bear witness to our spirits and with our spirits that we are the

children of God. He must also be a divine person, else He could not search out the secrets, which lie hidden in the mind of God. 'For what man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of man which is in him? Even so the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God.'" Ev. 616,617. With these statements we come to the same conclusion like the Bible and the Spirit of prophecy, which proves the existence of the third Person of the Godhead even the Holy Spirit, a person. AMEN.

Current Scene

Ecumenical News International, News Highlights Sept. 5, 2000

Protestants react as Ratzinger proclaims that not all churches are equal

'The Vatican has dealt a blow to Catholic Protestant relations by reaffirming its doubts about the validity of Protestant churches and by officially ordering Catholic bishops not to use the term 'sister churches' in reference to them. An official 'note' by Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger, prefect of the Vatican's Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith [Inquisition], warns that describing Protestant churches as 'sister churches' can cause 'ambiguities.' Another document, *Dominus Iesus*, on the Unicity and Salvific Universality of Jesus Christ and the Church, also published today by the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, [Inquisition] declares that churches that do not have a 'valid Episcopate [bishops] and the genuine and integral substance of the Eucharistic mystery are not Churches in the proper sense'. The two documents suggest a distinction between, on the one hand, the Roman and Orthodox churches which, according to Rome, are closely related, and, on the other hand, the Protestant communities. Both documents pointedly avoid using the word 'church' when referring to Protestants, adopting instead the noncommittal word 'ecclesial communities.'

"Protestant churches contacted by ENI today were politely critical of the Vatican statements, although they pointed out that the documents contained nothing that had not been said before.

"Cardinal Ratzinger's note on the expression 'Sister Churches', dated 30 June 2000, was published this week by *Audits*, a Catholic publication in Rome. Cardinal Ratzinger has also sent a separate letter to the heads of Catholic bishops' conferences around the world warning that bishops should not use the term 'sister churches' when speaking of 'the Anglican communion and non-Catholic ecclesial communities.

"The cardinal's 'note,' approved by Pope John Paul on June 9, is 'to be held as authoritative and binding,' according to Cardinal Ratzinger's letter to the bishops' conferences.

"The four-page note gives a detailed history of the use of the term 'sister churches,' explaining that it was used in reference to the Orthodox churches with which Rome was in communion for many centuries. However, even on this point, Cardinal Ratzinger claims Rome's superiority to other churches, stating: 'In this connection, it needs to be noted that no Roman Pontiff ever recognized this equalization of sees or accepted that only a primacy of honour be accorded to the See of Rome' - meaning that Rome has superior authority.

"Cardinal Ratzinger adds that in modern times, the expression 'sister churches' was used by the late Ecumenical Patriarch of Constantinople, Ahtenagoras I (patriarch from 1948 to 1972), who 'often expressed the hope of seeing the unity between the sister churches re-established in the near future.' Pope Paul VI and Pope John Paul II have also used the expression in reference to Orthodoxy, the note adds.

"But the cardinal adds: 'It must always be clear, when the expression 'sister churches' is used in this proper sense, that the one, holy, Catholic and apostolic Universal Church is not sister but 'mother' of all the particular Churches.' He also states that 'one cannot properly say that the Catholic Church is the sister of a particular church or group of churches. This is not merely a question of terminology, but above all a respecting of basic truth of the Catholic faith: that of the unicity of the Church of Jesus Christ. In fact, there is but a single Church, and therefore the plural term churches can refer only to particular churches.'

"The other declaration published today -*Dominus Iesus* - is largely a reprimand of Catholic theologians who

‘have argued that all religions may be equally valid ways of salvation.’ According to the declaration, the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith [Inquisition] is concerned about the ‘rapid spread of the relativistic and pluralistic mentality’ among theologians. It points out that Catholics must ‘firmly believe’ in the **‘unicity’ (unique nature) of the Catholic Church and ‘in a historical continuity between the church founded by Christ and the Catholic Church.’** The declaration adds further that while there can be ‘many elements of sanctification and truth’ in other churches and ecclesial communities, ‘they derive their efficacy from the very fullness of grace and truth entrusted to the Catholic Church.’

“The world’s leading ecumenical organization, the World Council of Churches (WCC), also based in Geneva, reacted to *Dominus Iesus* by affirming in a statement ‘the importance of genuine ecumenical dialogue, and of common Christian witness on the problems facing the world today.’

“Dr. Tom Best, a theologian and WCC staff member, said in the WCC statement: ‘All churches have gained enormously from the recent entry - through the Second Vatican Council in the 1960s - of the Roman Catholic Church into the ecumenical movement. Within the framework of the WCC, and in the wider ecumenical movement, many sensitive conversations are underway about the relationships of the churches to one another. What a loss if these were hindered - or even damaged - by language which precludes further discussion of the issues. In addition, one would hope for an acknowledgement of the many positive developments in common Christian confession, witness and service which have happened within the ecumenical movement over the past 100 years.’

“By restating the long-held view of the Roman Catholic Church on the position of other Christian churches, this document breaks no new ground,’ Archbishop Carey said. ‘But neither does it fully reflect the deeper understanding that has been achieved through ecumenical dialogue and co-operation during the past 30 years.’

“The idea that Anglican and other churches are not ‘proper churches’ seems to question the considerable ecumenical gains we have made.’

“Arun Kataria, Archbishop Carey’s spokesman, told ENI: ‘*Dominus Iesus* is not part of the ecumenical dialogue. The Canadian meeting earlier this year was very productive. As far as we’re concerned, it’s business as usual.’

“*Dominus Iesus* meant that in Rome’s view the churches of the Reformation were at the ‘lowest level of the order of ecclesiastical precedence’, and that Rome had rejected the principle of equal treatment ‘with a clarity that leaves no room for doubt.’

“Despite this, he added: ‘The future of the church will be an ecumenical one as promised by Jesus Christ and as required for the witness and service of the church.... We cannot let ourselves be put off by the Congregation for Doctrine of the Faith [Inquisition].’ “

Please read Rev. 17:5 to see who is the mother of harlots - The Roman Catholic Church. She openly states that she is the mother of all churches, and as such fills out this description very well of Mystery, Babylon the Great.

This latest coup by the Vatican shows quite clearly who has been doing all the compromising all along in the Ecumenical Movement - the Protestants, who have gone so far away from the truths of the Reformation as to not even notice that they are in deep apostasy. What about the “Eucharist”, which according to the Pontiff is the literal body and blood of Christ? Jesus said that the flesh profits nothing, the words that He spoke to us, they are spirit and they are life. John 6:63. The whole purpose of “the church” is to bring the truth to the world, if the truth is left out of the equation, then obviously, the organization is superfluous.

Indeed, the Protestant churches will have “business as usual” in the ecumenical movement since they have long since committed to political power at any price, compromise truth and all.

It is interesting to note the timing of this document, because now it is apparent the Vatican must have everything in place for the final push, once the right disaster comes along. They are showing who will have the final say, and who is really calling the shots in the ecumenical movement - the Roman Catholic Pontiff.

Thank God, though, that Jesus said “He is the way, the truth and the life” and that the gates of hell would not prevail against His church, the pillar and ground of the truth. God will have the final word, truly, for truth is guarded by Him and His people. Only those who learn to stand stiffly for the truth against

apostasy, compromise and error will be enabled to say, "The great day of His wrath has come, and who shall be able to stand?" Rev. 6: 17 Edited by Jerry Eaton

ASUCCESSFUL MSSIONARY WORK REPORT AND EXPERIENCES IN KENYA/UGANDA UNION IN YEAR 2000

Our work plan for the year began with the reorganization of the fields. This involved almost every Union committee member. Actually we saw the hand of our Most High working, because our first trip was to the South Kisii field. We held a seminar concerning leadership and management principles. We thank God that this field, South Kisii, which was formed out of North Kisii some nine years ago with their field office at Suneka (Nyangena). God has blessed us to give birth to another field known as the Central Kisii Mission Field. South Kisii moved their offices to Nyaronge near Brother Nathan's place, who was the former Union leader and one of the pioneers of the work of Reformation in this region.

"As our members increased, it was evident that without some form of organization, there would be great confusion, and the work would not be carried forward successfully." Test, to Min. & Gospel Workers, p. 26.

After ending with a wonderful service on 22nd of January, 2000, we divided ourselves into our various fields. Brother Momanyi, the vice-president of the Union and Brother Peter Omwoyo who is the Union Treasurer went to the Lake Victoria Field. I, with Br. Onesmus, the Union Secretary proceeded to this Western Kenya Field and the North Kisii field later. In both these fields we had more seminars and reorganization meetings.

A Joyful Day for Uganda Field

From the North Kisii Field, we made another trip to Uganda. We received assistance from the Highways fund to purchase a plot of land in Uganda for the Mission Headquarters. Though it was hard for us to trace where our brethren Mutinyeh, the former leader of the field, and Mukhooli, the former secretary of the same field, and current secretary of the mission in Uganda; we thank God we managed to meet Mukhooli after travelling to different areas where our members are in this country. Our members were very happy when they received the good tidings that their longstanding prayers had been answered through the Highways donors. They gave thanks in prayer to those who contributed to support the project. Though we took about two weeks trying to get either a building or a plot of land for the purpose, we did not succeed by then. We left the matter in the hands of the field.

"To everything there is a season and a time to every purpose under heaven." It was just after our return from Uganda when I went home to see my family, whereby I found my wife very ill. I took her to the hospital where she was admitted for three days. Thanks to God and His intervention with this serious problem she is now okay. During the same time when I was busy in the hospital, my father became seriously ill and died on the 24th, Thursday after the discharge of my wife from the hospital.

We buried him on Sunday 27th. On Monday I travelled to Nairobi to meet Brs. Larry Watts, Rudi Guldemeester, and Mathews Tutu who came for the Youth Seminar.

Youth Seminar

"Let the youth remember that here they are to build characters for eternity, and that God requires them to do their best. Let those older in experience watch over the young ones; and when they see them tempted, take them aside, and pray with them and for them." Youth Instructor, Nov. 21, 1911.

Wonderful and happy was the day when we received our visitors from the General Conference. B r s . Rudi Guldemeester, the Treasurer of the General Conference, Larry Watts, Youth Department leader of the General Conference, and Mathew Tutu from Franco visited us from March 29th to 5th April. My executive committee

had a two-day meeting with Br. Rudi, the Treasurer and Highways Director of the General Conference, where we discussed various matters concerning workers' welfare and management principles. Brother Watts was busy training the youth leaders who came to attend this wonderful seminar. Many youth, when visited in their fields still remember the glass and the water, also the quotation that "Use what you have, not what you don't have." Sabbath April 4th was very interesting as the joyous were rewarded. In the afternoon we arranged for a tour into the Kenyan Wildlife to see nature. The youth saw how God created different animals and beasts. I thank God for this wonderful experience. Brothers Watts and Mathews left on Monday, April 6th, and Br. Rudi left on Thursday. Arrival is joy but parting is sorrow. I remember the way we shared a Bible puzzle when we escorted our brothers to the airport in Nairobi. Surely it was a day that I cannot forget. My prayer is that we would all pray for the work of God in every country, hoping that, with historical events quickly unfolding, that our Lord Jesus Christ will come soon. Let us prepare ourselves spiritually and physically to meet Him.

AMEN.

Your brother, Wycliffe Luvita Union Leader (Kenya)

CHILDREN'S CORNER

THE CHRISTIAN SCIENTIST

Is it possible to be a Christian and a scientist at the same time? Some think it is difficult as there are not very many Christian scientists. Many of them believe in false scientific theories such as Evolution because that is what they are taught in school. Here is the story of a truly great scientist who had great faith in God. The more he studied about science, the more he saw that God is the true author of science.

"Young Michael Faraday will never get anywhere in life, his father being only a poor blacksmith."

"Yes, he'll never be able to go to University; too bad!"

This was the opinion of many people about a boy who became one of the world's most brilliant scientists. In the Encyclopedia one writer wrote that, "Faraday was possibly the greatest experimental genius the world has ever known."

"He smells the truth," said Professor F.W. Kohlrausch. And Albert Einstein said that Michael Faraday's contributions to science were greater than anyone's since Galileo.

Faraday was the first person to make liquid from gas. He discovered many useful principles of the dynamo and electric motor.

He also worked out new laws governing relationships between electricity and magnetism. And he discovered how to separate benzene from fish oil by distillation. This was a very practical achievement because benzene is the basis of many dyes, high explosives, and perfumes.

When Michael was thirteen years old, he worked as an errand boy in a London bookshop. At that point in his life it seemed as though he would not get very far in life. But he was a very diligent worker and soon he became an assistant bookbinder and had opportunities to read many books. He was especially interested in books about science. He would go home after work and often perform experiments, with inexpensive equipment.

As well as reading a lot, young Faraday enjoyed going to listen to scientists and philosophers lecture. He felt especially fortunate to hear many of Sir Humphrey Davy's lectures. He took very detailed notes and once sent Mr. Davy three hundred eighty-six pages of his notes! Mr. Davy was so impressed that he hired Michael Faraday to work in his laboratory at the Royal Institute for Diffusing of Knowledge. The Royal Institute was at that time one of the best schools of science. Michael's job was to care for scientific instruments and help the lecturers prepare and deliver their materials.

In 1813, when he was just twenty-two years of age, he was privileged to accompany Sir Humphrey Davy and Lady Davy on an eighteen month tour of Europe. During this time he met and talked with several of the world's greatest scientists. It was indeed an education within itself. And Faraday always learned all he could from others.

Wherever this man went or worked he always had an all-powerful Partner with him - God. "There is One above who worketh in all things," Michael Faraday often said. While many scientists denied God, Faraday could see His handiwork in all creation and in every scientific law.

God was also an ever-present guest in his home. In June 1821, he married Sarah Bernard, a devoted Christian. "We are bound up together in one hope, and in faith and love which is in Jesus Christ," said this Christian man.

He was an elder in the church that he attended regularly. Often he read aloud from the Bible there. He also prayed and preached. "When he quoted Scripture," said another elder, "his face shone like the face of an angel."

"Faraday seemed to be filled with energy that shone from his eyes. He had learned in the school of Christ to become as a little child, and he loved not the world, because the love of the Father was in him," said Dr. Gladstone, one of his friends.

Although the Faradays had no children of their own, they dearly loved young people. For nineteen years consecutively this Christian man of science delivered a series of six lectures for children during the Christmas season. Those speeches, composed of simple, interesting language and material, glorified Jesus and helped many children to love Him more.

During fifty-four years of devoted Christian and scientific service Michael Faraday received more than one hundred honors, including medals and other types of awards. Every important educational institution in the world was eager to honour him. Yet he sought no personal honour. He refused knighthood, declined when offered the presidency of the Royal Society. He was a very humble, religious person, feeling always that God, rather than man, should be glorified. He wanted only to be plain Michael Faraday, servant of God and humanity.

Yet he was quite human, like everyone else. When he was a boy he rode bicycles with the other boys in his village. He played a flute, and hit a wroiiig note once i..i a while. But he practiced the golden rule seven days a week. "There were no shabby places or ugly corners in his mind," said a friend.

Professor Jean Dumas, a great French scientist, spoke of Michael Faraday and said, "Fidelity to his religious faith, and the constant observance of the moral law constitute the ruling characteristics of his life. Doubtless his firm belief in that justice on high which weighs all our merits, in that sovereign goodness which weighs all our sufferings, did not inspire Faraday with his great discoveries, but it gave him the straightforwardness, the self-respect, the self-control and the spirit of justice which enabled him to combat evil fortune with boldness, and to accept prosperity without being puffed up."

These are fine words spoken about a fine God-fearing man. He believed that God inspired his great discoveries, and he so often said, "There is One above who worketh in all things."

Although Faraday was earnest and sincere, he did have a sense of humor. Occasionally he changed his voice when calling to someone in another room, then chuckled when that person failed to recognize his voice.

Once when he entered a classroom at the end of Professor Daniell's lecture and smelled sulphurated hydrogen, he said, "A savory lecture, Professor Daniell!" At another time, when there was some ammonia left in a jar over mercury, Faraday asked Daniell to tell him what it was. And when Daniell put his head down to see more clearly, Faraday blew some of the harmless but smelly gas into his face.

The world will long remember Michael Faraday for his important contribution to science. But Christians have been even more impressed and inspired by a statement he made shortly before he died. At age seventy-six, as Faraday sat calmly in a rocking chair, he was asked, "What are your new thoughts on science now?" He answered, "I have none, but I thank God I am not resting my dying head on guesswork. 'I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day.'"

Many brilliant people have made comments about Michael Faraday over the years, but probably no commentator has expressed the truth about him more clearly than did Dr. Gladstone in his book about the life of Michael Faraday:

"The genuineness of his religious character is acknowledged by all. We have admired his faithfulness, his amiability of disposition, and his love of justice and truth. How far these qualities were natural gifts, like his clearness of intellect, we cannot precisely tell; but that he exercised constant self-control without becoming hard, ascended the pathway of fame without ever losing his balance, and shed around himself a peculiar halo of love and joyousness, must be attributed in no small degree to a heart at peace with God, and to the consciousness of a higher life."

Surely it is comforting to know that the same God who directed Michael Faraday is just as real and powerful today with all the latest scientific discoveries being made—some of which have led to disasters such as the atom bomb. We must remember that God is in control. We need a willingness to accept and know, constantly Michael Faraday's "One above who worketh in all things," his best friend, Jesus.

Michael Faraday found God in every point of science that he studied and discovered. We, too, should look for God as we study science, because He is there at the centre of it all.

THE HAPPY CHRISTIAN

"Happy *is that* people, that is in such a case: yea, happy *is that* people, whose God *is* the LORD." Psalm 144:15.

Some people only come to church, pay tithes, and give offerings grudgingly, because they think they should. God will not accept grudgingly given offerings. He will only accept it if we do it, not because we think we should, but because we want to.

"Every man according as he purposes in his heart, so *let him give*; not grudgingly, or of necessity: for God loves a cheerful giver." 2 Corinthians 9:7.

"All happiness, peace, joy, and success in this life are dependent upon genuine, trusting faith in God." MYP, p. 410.

If we truly trust in God then we will have success. True joy also comes through giving. I would like to tell you the story of a man who lives in a neat, but humble, cottage. Every year he spends hundreds of dollars on shoes, socks, food and toys, and loads them into his car. Driving down to the poorer section of town he distributes them among needy families. To children he gives clothing or toys; to parents he may give groceries or money. He is not rich. He could, if he chose, spend the money on his house or his own pleasure, but he has chosen to spend it in giving to others and has in that way found happiness and joy. It has been said, "You cannot throw mud without

getting some on yourself.” The same is true for happiness. You cannot hand out happiness without absorbing a good amount yourself.

“We should never give to the world the false impression that Christians are a gloomy, unhappy people. If our eyes are fixed on Jesus, we shall see a compassionate Redeemer, and shall catch light from His countenance. Wherever His spirit reigns, there peace abides. And there will be joy also, for there is a calm, holy trust in God.” MYP p.404. If we trust in God He will send His spirit, and where His spirit is there is happiness, joy, peace and love.

“Our happiness depends upon this cultivation of love, sympathy, and true courtesy to one another.” AH, p. 15. If we cultivate love, joy, peace, and courtesy we will have true happiness. Amen.

Benjamin Dammasch, 13 years old Australia

Variations on bean theme

Here’s a brief guide to soy products.

- **Tofii-** Also called soybean curd, tofu is made from curdled soy milk drained and pressed. The firmness of the tofu depends on how much water has been pressed out. Tofu comes in soft, regular, firm and extra-firm varieties.
- **Soy milk-** The non-dairy beverage is made of water and soy beans. It has a nutty flavour and highly nutritious. It can be substituted for cows milk.
- **Soy sauce-** This condiment and seasoning is made by fermenting soybeans with roasted wheat or barley. There are many soy sauces, from thin to thick, light to dark and sweet. There is also a low-salt soy sauce.
- **Edamame-** This is the Japanese name for fresh soybeans that come in bright green pods. They are available cooked and frozen in the produce section of some supermarkets and health food stores. They are available fresh at some farmers markets from late spring to early fall. Edamame can be eaten alone or served in salads.
- **Miso-** Fermented soybean paste comes in a wide variety of flavours and colours. The Lighter misos are used with delicately flavoured foods, and the darker varieties go in more strongly flavoured dishes. Miso can be found in health food stores, Japanese and Chinese markets and some supermarkets.
- **Soy beans-** Fresh soybeans can be found in the produce section of some supermarkets and health food stores. They are also available in the dried form. Fresh soybeans make good snacks and salad toppers when roasted.
- **Soy sprouts-** Germinated soy beans can be found in the produce section of some supermarkets and health food stores. They are great on sandwiches and in salads and can be stir-fried.
- **Soy protein powder-** Flavourless, this can be stirred into juices,

yogurt and smoothies or added to cereals.

- **Soy flour**- This high-protein, low-carbohydrate flour is best used with other flours rather than alone. It can be used in baking and sauces.
- **Soy oil**- Soy oil is low in saturated fats and has a high smoking point. It fries foods with a very “clean” taste.
- **Textured Vegetable Protein** - TVP is made of soy flour and processed into granules or chunks. It has a texture somewhat similar to ground meat or stew meat when rehydrated.
- **Tempeh** - A smoky, dense, fermented soy bean cake, tempeh can be grilled or added to soups and casseroles.

If you're a sprouts fan, try soy sprouts. Look for them at farmer's markets and some grocery stores. Use them in salads and sandwiches as you would other sprouts.

SENSATIONAL SESAME SEEDS

The Seed Itself

- Sesame seeds are a common ingredient in the cuisines of China, Japan, India and the Middle East.
- Most Canadians get their sesame-seeds from baked goods. They are a common topping on buns, bagels, challah bread, crackers, bread sticks and many other breads.
- Sesame seeds come in black and white. The black ones (found in Japanese, Indian and health food stores) have a more pungent and slightly bitter taste.
- Most commonly, sesame seeds are hulled. Unhulled sesame seeds are more nutritious with higher levels of fibre and minerals. Find them in bulk and health food stores.
- Sesame seeds and sesame paste are a source of protein, calcium, iron and phosphorus. Like many seeds, they contain Vitamin E.

Sesame Oil

- o There are two kinds of sesame oil.
- The most common type is actually toasted sesame oil. However, it is often labelled simply as “sesame oil”. This oil is pressed from toasted seeds, creating a rich, deep, amber-coloured oil with a distinctly nutty fragrance.
- Toasted sesame oil is used widely in Chinese and Japanese cooking. It has a low burning point and is usually combined with other oils for cooking purposes.
- The “other” sesame oil is a clear, light oil pressed from raw sesame seeds. It is a polyunsaturated oil, not unlike sunflower or safflower oil, with a light, subtle taste and no fragrance.

Sesame Paste

Tahini (a.k.a. sesame butter) is a paste made from raw, crushed sesame seeds. It has a grayish-white colour and is used to make humus, babaghanoush, tahini sauce and other Middle Eastern preparations.

- Asian sesame paste is made from toasted and crushed sesame seeds resulting in a golden brown paste with a deep fragrance.

Storing Sesame

- **Sesame seeds are 50 per cent oil. As a result, sesame seeds, oil, and paste can all turn rancid quickly when exposed to air and heat. For best results, buy seeds, oil and paste in small quantities and refrigerate.**

Sesame Uses

- **A sprinkling of toasted sesame seeds adds a crunchy, nutty taste to foods. Try them on cold noodles, steamed vegetables and salads.**
- **To toast, toss the seeds in a dry frying pan on medium-high until golden brown. Or bake in a 350F oven for three to five minutes, checking and shaking the pan constantly. A toaster-oven does the job well, too.**

THE BETTER WAY

*I walked the broader way of life
Yet no one seemed to care:
To tell me where the pitfalls were
Or what I might have to bear,
My life grew oh, so troublesome
I knew not where to turn;
I had to drink the bitter cup
But how was I to learn?*

*It took a lot of heartache
Before I learned it well,
The real meaning of life is this
And I would like to tell:
That there are many weary roads
For all to travel by;
But Jesus paved them for us
And then He told us why:*

*He said I gave My life for you.
It was the only way,
Won't you follow in my footsteps now
It won't be much to pay!
For I will fill your heart with joy
As you walk this road with Me,
And peace will mark your days ahead
For all the world to see.*