

*The Reformation* 

# Messenger

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# THE END IS NEAR!

For 6000 years sin has prevailed in the world. For 6000 years people have suffered the results of sin. But now finally it is coming to its end. The Lord has been very patient with His people. Long has He waited for us to get ready. But now all the signs indicate that He will not delay His coming much longer. Actually for many Christians He will come too soon. They have not prepared themselves yet, and will be lost eternally. Sister White writes, "The end will come more quickly than men expect." G.C. p. 631

She asked a question once of a brother in the church, "if you knew that the Lord would come in a few years, would you do differently than what you do now?" He replied with all the things that he would do if the Lord's coming were so near. Then Sister White asked again, "would you live differently if you knew that the Lord's coming is not yet for 20 years?" The brother answered, "I think I would." (Last Day Events p. 41 - 42)

What would be our answer to this question? This may well be the reason why the Lord has not revealed to us the time of His coming. Many would delay their preparation to the very last. Enoch walked with God for 300 years. Others want to walk with Him so short a time as possible.

We hear of a terrible storm that is before us. We hear of the Sunday Law and persecution and of Jacob's trouble. Many are terrified at the thought of these future events. Yet these events will not change our destiny. Today is the time when we should be terrified because today we decide our eternal destiny. Today we prepare ourselves for the end or be lost. The judgment in heaven takes place when we least expect it. Jesus said, "Therefore be ye also ready: for in such an hour as ye think not the Son of man cometh." Matt. 24:44

When life seems yet normal and peaceful "one be taken, and the other left."

After the judgment that begins at the house of God, the church will be mightily shaken. All who did not receive the seal of God will be shaken out. The parable of Jesus and of the 10 virgins will be fulfilled. The foolish virgins will leave the company of the wise virgins. After this comes the more forceful Sunday Law, the persecution and the time of trouble.

"When probation ends it will come suddenly, unexpectedly — at a time when we are least expecting it. But we can have a clean record in heaven today, and know that God accepts us." 7 BC p. 989

The most important message to us as the church of God is to get ready now; soon it will be forever too late.

Sister White writes, "I saw that none could share the refreshing, unless they obtain the victory over every besetment, over pride, selfishness, love of the world, and over every wrong word and action." EW p. 71

The Spirit of Prophecy gives us clear guidelines for our daily life. The areas which we must watch especially are pointed out. "Pray without ceasing." "No man is safe for a day or an hour without prayer." GC p 530

"It would be well for us to spend a thoughtful hour each day in contemplation of the life of Christ. We should take it point by point and let the imagination grasp each scene, especially the closing ones." DA p. 83

"No renewed heart can be kept in a condition of sweetness without the daily application of the salt of the Word. Divine grace must be

received daily, or no man will stay converted." OHC p. 215

"Only those who have been diligent students of the Scriptures and who have received the love of the truth will be shielded from the powerful delusion that takes the world captive." GC p. 625

"Study the Word of God. Commit its precious promises to memory so that, when we shall be deprived of our Bibles, we may still be in possession of the Word of God." 10 MR p. 298

"We greatly need to encourage and cultivate pure, chaste thoughts, and to strengthen the moral powers rather than the lower and carnal powers. God help us to awaken from our self-indulgent appetites!" M.M. p 278

"Crowd all the good works you possibly can into this life." 5 T p. 488

"We should watch and work and pray as though this were the last day that would be granted to us." 5T p. 200

"The tithes are sacred, reserved by God for Himself. It is to be brought into His treasury to be used to sustain the gospel labourers in their work... Read carefully the third chapter of Malachi and see what God says about the tithes." 9T p. 249

"Many who are now only half converted on the question of meat eating will go from God's people, to walk no more with them." R.H. May 27, 1902

"They should set aside days for fasting and prayer. Entire abstinence from food may not be required, but they should eat sparingly of the most simple food." C.D. p. 188, 189

"Evening and morning join with your children in God's worship, reading His Word and singing His praise. Teach them to repeat God's law." EV. P. 499

"Among the most dangerous resorts for pleasure is the theater (television). Instead of being a school of morality and virtue, as is so often claimed, it is the very hotbed of immorality. Vicious habits and sinful propensities are strengthened and confirmed by these entertainments. Low songs, lewd gestures, expressions, and attitudes, deprave the imagination and debase the morals. Every youth who habitually attend such exhibitions will be corrupted in principle." 4T p. 652

If we follow these guidelines we will be ready for the Lord to come. To ignore them or to delay obedience will grieve the Holy Spirit and once the Holy Spirit leaves us, our salvation will be lost forever.

Sister White wrote, "Oh, how many I saw in the time of trouble without shelter! They had neglected the needful preparation; therefore they could not receive the refreshing that all must have to fit them to live in the sight of a holy God." EW p. 71

The end is near! Let us all, brothers and sisters in this Reform Movement prepare ourselves now. Soon it will be forever too late. AMEN

By: Timo Martin

It is not weakness to have a tender,  
Humble, sympathetic, pitying heart.  
Of this no one should be ashamed  
As if it were a weakness.  
It is strength derived from Christ."  
1888 Materials 1466

# A WAY OUT

**"Escape for your life! Do not look behind you nor stay anywhere in the plain. Escape to the mountains, lest you be destroyed." Genesis 19:17**

Lot lived in the corrupted city of Sodom where men had come to such a point of degradation due to their rejection of God that as a consequence they were given up to *"uncleanness, in the lust of their heart, to dishonour their bodies among themselves."* (Romans 1:24) In such an atmosphere it is impossible for a child of God to lead a healthy, peaceful, joyful life.

The angels came to destroy the impenitent city and told Lot: *"Escape for your life! Do not look behind you nor stay anywhere in the plain. Escape to the mountain, lest you be destroyed."* So, there is one thing man should do in order to be saved: escape, escape from corruption, from uncleanness, from depravation, from bad influence, from sin.

As we read the story we see that the first order the angels gave him is: *"Get out from this place."* But as they saw that he lingered they took him by the hand and let him out. Then he received the second order: "Escape!" We are not left to fight alone to come out of sin and perdition. The Lord knows that we are too weak to do it, but His angels, those *"ministering spirits sent forth to minister for those who will inherit salvation"* (Hebrews 1:14) lead us out by the hand. Our part is to follow the second order, to escape, to run away, not even to look back lest we may find something that is still attractive and lures us to go back, maybe a lost friendship, a position we held or our reputation.

Our sure way to salvation requires a complete separation from the world and turning our eyes away from it. The eyes are the lamps of the body and whatever we look

at will occupy our mind and contribute either to our liberation or perdition. To look back means either to invite temptation or to get discouraged. The world is an intricate net with many alluring baits and it may keep us hooked to it by just one of our weaknesses. But even if we are absolutely disgusted by it and fully determined to leave everything behind, when we look back we may be discouraged to see the role we played in it and consider it impossible to start anew.

*"Do not stay anywhere on the plain"* is the third command. Although plains are fruitful and provide a good supply for the maintenance of our body, they do not offer much to our spiritual life. *"Multitudes in the valley of decision"* see one of the prophets. Most people dwell on the plains, but their stay there should be temporary. Sooner or later they should take the decision to leave, to escape to the mountains, to leave the valley of sorrows and tears, of struggle and death. With the wings of faith they should fly to a height where the sun always shines, where there are no shadows, where the sky is nearer and from where one may have a broader look.

In the valley there is no spiritual growth, no high goal, no vast vision. When we remain in the valley we are attacked by apparently undefeatable giants, real Goliaths of lust, greediness, passions of all sorts. But that should not be a reason to get discouraged. Just as David defeated the proud and overwhelming giant with just one stone, so can we, with the stone that is Christ, destroy any apparently insurmountable passion and overcome every weakness. Battles are fought on the plains, but we are not left

alone. If the veil were removed from our eyes we would see, as Elisha's servant did, an enormous contingent of angels surrounding mountains ready to come down to the valley and fight for us.

The Lord makes a wonderful promise to His children who strive to get closer to Him on the holy day of rest and instead of doing their own pleasure call it a delight: *"I will cause you to ride on the high hills of the earth."* (Isaiah 58:14) It is on the mountains that we may meet God, it is only by climbing that we may reach a higher sphere. A ladder is thrown down to us from heaven, a ladder where angels ascend and descend, always willing to help us climb till we reach the top where the father Himself is. His temple is on Mount Zion, the highest goal of every Christian. His law was given on Mount Sinai. One special man noted for his humbleness had to climb to get it and bring it to the people in the valley who, tired of waiting, had turned back to idolatry. There is no salvation in the valley, only a temporary security that leads to the satisfaction of the flesh and a deadly conformism.

Lot did not follow all the heavenly commands but said: *"I cannot escape to the mountains, lest some evil overtakes me and I die."* He thought salvation was in his own hands, in his own limited physical strength. He did not trust the promise: *"He gives power to the weak, and to those who have no might He increases strength."* (Isaiah 40:29) He remained in Zoar, a small city in the valley. His weak faith which had not helped to lift up his family's spiritual life was a reason he lost his wife on the way and was a victim of his own daughter's unscrupulous behaviour.

It is practically impossible to live in the midst of corruption and to keep oneself absolutely undefiled. Joseph's and Daniel's lives do contradict this statement but we should remember that both were put in that

situation (the one sold to the officer of a heathen land, the other one taken into captivity) according to the Lord's plan. They did not - as it was in the case of Lot - choose the place to settle measuring only the material profit to be obtained from it and not his own moral and spiritual power.

*"The sun had risen upon the earth when Lot entered Zoar."* The Lord does not leave us in the darkness even when we make decisions that lead to a mediocre life. His light still shines in the valleys inviting us to climb to higher grounds. *"Finally, Lot went out of Zoar and dwelt in the mountains...for he was afraid to live in Zoar."* (Genesis 19:30) His experience had made him a little wiser. Life in the plains did not give him any sense of security any longer. Its prosperity did not attract him any more and he was afraid to dwell in the comfort of city life. At last he did what the angels had told him. He went to the mountains, but in his own strength. There, hidden in the darkness of a cave, he fell a victim to the obscure reasoning of his daughters and unwillingly was the father of two nations that became bitter enemies of God's people.

A wrong decision taken while we are still very young may have fatal consequences that even if not seen immediately are manifested in the long run. But our merciful God does not leave us to perish in the valley of our wrong doings. He stretches out His loving hand to pull us out and lead us to the mountains and our duty then, if we do want to be saved, is to follow His commands.

*"Escape for your life"*

*"Do not look behind"*

*"Do not stay anywhere in the plain"*

*"Escape to the mountains"*

May He grant us obedient hearts that trust His great power and love. AMEN

By: Teresa Corti



# UNITY

*"a threefold cord is not quickly broken." Ecclesiastes 4:12.*

There is much talk of unity in our world today. Political leaders want to unite with other Political leaders to create a stronger power base in order to protect themselves from an enemy who may try to attack them. The more allies a nation has, the stronger and more confident they will be, and unfortunately, as seen in the past, this has not always had a positive result. "Power corrupts and absolute power corrupts absolutely."

Religionists are also trying to unite under one banner. There has been much animosity and fighting due to differences in religious beliefs in the past and now they are trying to put this all behind them and unite with each other. Unfortunately here again is a problem in that they are not attempting to unite under the banner of truth. They are giving up the truth in order to unite on only points they have in common, which are not very many (spiritualism and Sunday sacredness are the main common issues). While unity is a good thing, if it is not used correctly it can corrupt one or both of the parties uniting as more often than not, at least one party is forced to change its way of thinking for the sake of unity. Unity in diversity is a foreign concept to the worldly mind. It is not possible, except with Christ in the centre of the organization.

Greater trouble comes to this earth when Political leaders try to unite with religionists. Constantine tried this many hundreds of years ago in order to obtain more allies so he could win the war. It worked. He became a "Christian" in order to bring the rest of the Christians into his army. With the combined forces of the Christians and Pagans he won the war. Unfortunately, Christianity became corrupted. This total political and religious unity will again exist on this earth in the near

future (as existed in the Dark Ages) and then God's people will be branded as rebels for they will have nothing to do with this unity.

But God wants unity within the borders of His church. This is the only way that the organization can run smoothly. However there are great warnings in the Bible regarding uniting with worldly-minded people and organizations. It is strictly forbidden.

When there is unity within the church of God, Satan knows that this unity brings strength that he cannot fight against. If we read the record of God's church from the beginning we can see how this unity brought great strength to God's people. Let's go back to Ancient Israel in the wilderness and their conquest of Canaan. They were a minority - a small people - however when they were united in the truth, God worked miracles for them that completely perplexed their enemies. When there was no unity in Israel and they all did as they pleased, serving their false gods of wood and stone, their enemies came in and caused them a lot of trouble.

Then we can read of the history of the church after the time of the Apostles — during the time prophesied by the seven churches. There was a continual rising and falling in the Christian church. When the church began to compromise and unite with the world, many departed from the faith and the spiritual strength of the church grew weaker. Eventually the majority left the purity of the truth in order to maintain this unity, however there was always a small remnant that would refuse to unite in this compromise situation and they were persecuted as rebels.

God's true followers have always

been a remnant. There has always been a small group that would not unite with the world, but as they remain united with Christ within the church, this small remnant had a great power with them that Satan and all his forces could not conquer. This small remnant has had a great influence in the world as the forces of evil could not quench their spirit while they remained united in truth.

Satan is mustering all his energies to destroy God's church in the last days of this earth's history. He knows that the best way he can conquer is to try to come inside and disrupt the unity. He has brought in men who were not converted to the truth and whose righteousness was only self-righteousness. They don't remain very long. God keeps His church pure as the faithful members pray for unity and do what they can on their part to keep this unity of truth together. It is very important to keep this unity.

## WHAT DOES TRUE UNITY ENTAIL?

"We are now to unify....But let us remember that Christian unity does not mean that the identity of one person is to be submerged in that of another; nor does it mean that the mind of one is to be led and controlled by the mind of another. God has not given to any man the power that some, by word and act, seek to claim. God requires every man to stand free and to follow the directions of the word." 8T, p. 212.

"We are in this world to help one another. In Christ's work there were not territorial lines, and those who attempt to make such lines in His work today might better pray: "Lord, give me a new heart." 7T, p. 240.

## FALSE DOCTRINES

When members within the church begin teaching false doctrines, they

have been known to act in one of two ways.

1) Some leave the church willingly and either go to another church, or create their own church, claiming that they have now received new light and are on a higher plane of existence than those remaining in God's church.

2) Others will remain in the church to try to convert the existing members to their own view of false doctrine - they don't want to leave - they would rather work on the church members. Unless they give up their false doctrines, the church has a duty to separate their membership from the church. They can't remain a member. Not even God would tolerate false doctrine in His midst and so there was WAR in heaven. God could not keep fallen angels in. They were finally disfellowshipped

### NECESSARY SEPARATION

Does God separate people from His church? He allows it to happen as in the case of rebellion. Separation is a part of God's permissive will, it is not a part of His perfect will. God wants everyone to be one happy united family, however sometimes a separation must occur - a shaking we call it, in order to keep His church pure. This is His permissive will.

1) Satan was cast out of heaven when he continued his rebellious activities amongst the angels in the heavenly courts.

2) **Korah, Dathan and Abiram** were killed with their families and followers when they rebelled against the authority that God had entrusted to Moses. They were, in reality, rejecting God.

As in the case of **Korah, Dathan and Abiram**, in 1951 a group of leaders rebelled against the authority of the

leaders in God's church. They refused to accept the leaders that God had placed in position so they left, and God allowed them to leave. "They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would no doubt have continued with us: but they went out, that they might be made manifest that they were not all of us." 1 John 2:19. They went out and created a new organization, however it is a counterfeit organization. As in the case of counterfeit money, it is often difficult to tell the difference between the real from the false, except for the trained eye, so also in the case of this counterfeit religious movement. To the untrained eye, they look the same.

**Adventists** have, on occasion, ridiculed the Reform church as all they can see is a schism in the church caused by the inability of leaders to get along. They cannot differentiate between the two. We need to be trained by the Holy Spirit and the truth will be clear.

There has been some talk about uniting the two churches, and 10 years ago it was spoken about quite seriously, however God has not allowed unity as a whole. He has not allowed the genuine to unite with the counterfeit.

As far as the group who departed in 1951 is concerned, they chose to leave and therefore how can we accept them as a whole? - "What therefore God hath joined together, let no man put asunder." Mat. 19:6. Could we not say the converse is also true - what God has separated, let no man try to put back together?

In heaven, before they were cast out, there was an individual call to each of the angels to make a decision to return and some of them did return. They simply could not be accepted back as a whole group.

The same is true with any false religious organisation. There are honest souls in other churches and it is our duty to preach the Loud Cry message telling them to, "Come out of her my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues." It doesn't say, "Let's unite our churches and throw down any barriers that separate us", no it says "come out" and where are they to come out to? To God's church of course.

Satan will always attempt to create rebellion in the midst of God's church, but we must believe that God is in control and He will take care to keep His church pure. Those that rebel, will be shaken out unless they repent. Even in heaven God could not keep rebellion from arising in His "church". There was war in heaven and therefore He drove the rebels out when they refused to repent. He gave much time, effort and love to try to win the rebellious ones back, but they refused so He had no choice but to remove them from His church. We can't always keep rebels in either - nor should we invite rebels back unless they repent. Yet we are still to try to reach them and warn them of the danger they are in. If they refuse to listen then finally let them go. Leave them in the hands of the Lord. Satan will cause rebellions to arise as he is constantly on the alert to try to destroy God's church, however the rebels will be separated to preserve the peace and unity within the church. Some feel that it is heartless to separate those that cause trouble and rebellion. But just look at the SDA church with every wind of doctrine arising in the past from people like **Brinsmead**, the **Shepherd's Rod** group, **Desmond Ford**. All these false theories and movements are tolerated and these people are allowed to remain as members. This is also true in many churches composing **Babylon** today

and it is a very difficult environment for a person to grow spiritually. In heaven God knew the result that would occur by allowing rebels to remain - those who consistently teach false doctrines or reject the authority of the leaders that He has appointed. Was God heartless in casting Satan and his host from heaven? Were they ever invited back? Satan's probation ended before that of his followers.

Of his followers it is said, "Many were disposed to heed this counsel, to repent of their disaffection, and seek to be again received in favour with the Father and His Son. But Lucifer had another deception ready. The mighty revolter now declared that the angels who had united with him had gone too far to return; that he was acquainted with the divine law, and knew that God would not forgive. He had declared that all who should submit to the authority of Heaven would be stripped of their honour, degraded from their position. For himself, he was determined never again to acknowledge the authority of Christ. The only course remaining for him and his followers, he said, was to assert their liberty, and gain by force the rights, which had not been willingly accorded them.

"So far as Satan himself was concerned, it was true that he had now gone too far to return. But not so with those who had been blinded by his deceptions. To them the counsel and entreaties of the loyal angels opened a door of hope; and had they heeded the warning, they might have broken away from the snare of Satan. But pride, love for their leader, and the desire for unrestricted freedom were permitted to bear sway, and the pleadings of divine love and mercy were finally rejected." PP, p. 40,41.

The fallen angels could never be have been taken back as a whole unit, however Jesus was

individually calling them to come back. Some of them did return but many still followed their new leader blindly. Rebellion is a difficult weed to uproot. They had rebelled against the authority of God.

"There is no union between the Prince of light and the prince of darkness, and there can be no union between their followers." GC, p. 45. While God is shaking the unconverted from His church today, He is at the same time calling for the honest in heart in false religious movements to come out of their organizations and fill the places of those shaken out.

#### **THE POINT OF NO RETURN**

When Satan and his host were cast out of heaven, they had reached the point of no return. When Adam and Eve sinned, the Son of God stretched out His arm to rescue man. "He left the fallen angels to perish in their rebellion, but stretched forth His hand to rescue perishing man. The angels who were rebellious were dealt with according to the light and experience they had abundantly enjoyed in heaven. Satan, the chief of the fallen angels, once had an exalted position in heaven. He was next in honour to Christ. The knowledge, which he, as well as the angels who fell with him, had of the character of God, of His goodness, His mercy, wisdom, and excellent glory, made their guilt unpardonable.

"There was no possible hope for the redemption of those who had witnessed and enjoyed the inexpressible glory of heaven, and had seen the terrible majesty of God, and, in presence of all this glory, had rebelled against Him. There were no new and wonderful exhibitions of God's exalted power that could impress them so deeply as those they had already experienced. If they could rebel in

the very presence of glory inexpressible, they could not be placed in a more favourable condition to be proved. There was no reserve force of power, nor were there any greater heights and depths of infinite glory to overpower their jealous doubts and rebellious murmuring. Their guilt and their punishment must be in proportion to their exalted privileges in the heavenly courts." *Confrontation*, p. 21.

Is it possible for mere human beings to reach the point of no return? Contrary to popular Christian theology where they believe that we serve a merciful God who will never cast off guilty sinners, yes, there is a point of no return. "There is an unseen line that crosses every man's path. The line between God's patience and His wrath." Yes, God is merciful but when His mercy and love is rejected by sinners who choose to travel their own path in rebellion against His authority in their lives, He will finally leave them to reap the harvest of the fruit they have borne. He will no longer protect them from the evil in this world.

#### **WHEN NOT TO SEPARATE**

In many Christian organizations in the Western world we see a separation occurring due to cultural differences and languages. We see a Spanish church, a Chinese church, or a French church. This is not God's will. Sister White addressed this issue at the European Union Council, in Basel Switzerland, September 24, 1885. "Since these meetings began, I felt urged to dwell much upon love and faith. This is because you need this testimony. Some who have entered these missionary fields have said: 'you do not understand the French people; you do not understand the Germans. They have to be met in just such a way'



"But I inquire: Does not God understand them? Is it not He who gives His servants a message for the people? He knows just what they need; and if the message comes directly from Him through His servants to the people, it will accomplish the work whereunto it is sent; it will make all one in Christ. Though some are decidedly French, others decidedly German, and others decidedly American, they will be just as decidedly Christlike....

"There is no person, no nation, that is perfect in every habit and thought. One must learn of another. Therefore God wants the different nationalities to mingle together, to be one in judgment, one in purpose. Then the union that there is in Christ will be exemplified." 9T, p. 179,180.

There are times when individuals decide to separate from God's church rather than groups. What must be done to bring them back again? They have severed their connection - or simply backslidden for a time. Should they be left alone to find their way back? "And when some were disposed to reject their counsel and separate from them, they would say: "Well, if they want to go off, let them go." While such a lack of the compassion, and long-suffering, and tenderness of Jesus was manifested by His professed followers. these poor, erring, inexperienced souls, buffeted by Satan, were certain to make shipwreck of faith. However great may be the wrongs and sins of the erring, our brethren must learn to manifest not only the tenderness of the Great Shepherd, but also His undying care and love for the poor, straying sheep. Our ministers toil and lecture week after week, and rejoice that a few souls embrace the truth; and yet brethren of a prompt, decided turn of mind may, in five minutes destroy their work by

indulging the feelings which prompt words like these: "Well, if they want to leave us, let them go." 2T, p. 18,19.

We must make earnest efforts to bring them back to the fold of safety within the borders of the church of God. We are all in the family of God and when one strays the rest feel the loss. Let us bind together in spiritual unity and reach out to the fallen and discouraged ones.

#### **HOW TO MAINTAIN UNITY IN THE CHURCH**

"Though we have an individual work and an individual responsibility before God, we are not to follow our own independent judgment, regardless of the opinions and feelings of our brethren; for this course would lead to disorder in the church. It is the duty of ministers to respect the judgment of their brethren; but their relations to one another, as well as the doctrines they teach, should be brought to the test of the law and the testimony; then, if hearts are teachable, there will be no divisions among us. Some are inclined to be disorderly, and are drifting away from the great landmarks of the faith; but God is moving upon His ministers to be one in doctrine and in spirit.

"It is necessary that our unity today be of a character that will bear the test of trial. .. We have many lessons to learn, and many, many to unlearn. God and heaven alone are infallible. Those who think that they will never have to give up a cherished view, never have occasion to change an opinion, will be disappointed. As long as we hold to our own ideas and opinions with determined persistency, we cannot have the unity for which Christ prayed.

"When a brother receives new light upon the Scriptures, he should

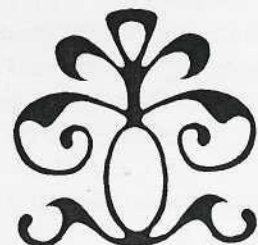
frankly explain his position, and every minister should search the Scriptures with the spirit of candour to see if the points presented can be substantiated by the Inspired Word." TM, p. 30,31.

"Strive earnestly for unity. Pray for it, work for it. It will bring spiritual health, elevation of thought, nobility of character, heavenly-mindedness, enabling you to overcome selfishness and evil sunnings, and to be more than conquerors through Him that loved you had gave Himself for you. Crucify self; esteem others better than yourselves. Thus you will be brought into oneness with Christ. Before the heavenly universe, and before the church and the world, you will bear unmistakable evidence that you are God's sons and daughters. God will be glorified in the example that you set.

"The world needs to see worked out before it the miracle that binds the hearts of God's people together in Christian love. It needs to see the Lord's people together in heavenly places in Christ. Will you not give in your lives an evidence of what the truth of God can do for those who love and serve Him? God knows what you can be. He knows what divine grace can do for you if you will be partakers of divine nature." 9T, p. 188.

The call goes out to all sincere Christians in the world to unite together under Christ's banner of truth. Let us be faithful to doing our part in cooperation with heavenly agencies and maintaining unity within the borders of God's church.

W. Eaton





## GUARDING THE AVENUES OF THE SOUL

"Selfishness girds many about as with iron bands. It is "my farm," "my trade," "my merchandise." Even the claims of common humanity are disregarded by them. Men and women professing to be waiting and loving the appearing of their Lord are shut up to self. The noble, the godlike, they have parted with. The love of the world, the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, the pride of life, have so fastened upon them that they are blinded. They are corrupted by the world and discern it not." They talk of love to God, but their fruits show not the love they express." 2T, p. 197.

"This age is one of peculiar temptation, especially to the self-sufficient ones, who feel no special need of guarding the avenues of the soul. Unless they heed the warnings God has given, they will most surely be drawn away from the principles of the truth. They will stand among those who dishonour the faith by giving heed to seducing spirits. They plead for the indulgence of appetite. They take no delight in contemplating the character of the Saviour. The rebuke of Christ is upon them, because in thought and action they are corrupt." RH, 12-04-00, par. 9.

- Ephesians**
- 6:13** Wherefore take unto you the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand.
  - 6:14** Stand therefore, having your loins girt about with truth, and having on the breastplate of righteousness.
  - 6:15** And your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace.
  - 6:16** Above all, taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked.
  - 6:17** And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God:
  - 6:18** Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints;

**"Complete Armour Essential** - God wants every one to stand with the whole armour on, ready for the great review.

**"The Breastplate of Righteousness** - We must put on every piece of the armour, and then stand firm. The Lord has honoured us by choosing us as His soldiers. Let us fight bravely for Him, maintaining the right in every transaction. Rectitude in all things is essential to the welfare of the soul. As you strive for the victory over your own inclinations, He will help you by His Holy Spirit to be circumspect in every action, that you may give no occasion for the enemy to speak evil of the truth. Put on as your breastplate that divinely protected righteousness, which it is the privilege of all to wear. This will protect your spiritual life.

**"Angels Near to Protect us** - If we have on the heavenly armour, we shall find that the assaults of the enemy will not have power over us. Angels of God will be round about us to protect us." 6BC, p. 1119.

"When thinking on the conflict, Paul writes to his Ephesian brethren exhorting them to "be strong," not feeble, not wavering, tossed to and fro like the waves of the sea. But in what are they to be strong? In their own might? No, "Be strong in the Lord, and in the power of His might." He says, "Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places." Eph. 6:10-13." HP259.

"The apostle sought to teach the believers how important it is to keep the mind from wandering to forbidden themes or from spending its energies on trifling subjects. Those who would not fall a prey to Satan's devices, must guard well the avenues of the soul; they must avoid reading, seeing, or hearing that which will suggest impure thoughts. The mind must not be left to dwell at random upon every subject that the enemy of souls may suggest." AA, p. 518.

**"How Satan Gains Entrance to the Soul.** - All should guard the senses, lest Satan gain victory over them; for these are the avenues of the soul.

"You will have to become a faithful sentinel over your eyes, ears, and all your senses if you would control your mind and prevent vain and corrupt thoughts from staining your soul. The power of grace alone can accomplish this most desirable work.

"Satan and his angels are busy creating a paralysed condition of the sense so that cautions, warnings, and reproofs shall not be heard; or, if heard, that they shall not take effect upon the heart and reform the life." AH, p. 401.

"The Holy Spirit loves to address the youth, and to discover to them the treasures and beauties of God's word. The promises spoken by the great Teacher will captivate the sense and animate the soul with spiritual power that is divine. There will grow in the fruitful mind a familiarity with divine things that will be as a barricade against temptation." COL, p. 132.

**"I will set no wicked thing before mine eyes: I hate the word of them that turn aside; it shall not cleave to me." Psalm 101:3.**

"All should guard the senses, lest Satan gain victory over them; for these are the avenues to the soul. Avoid reading and seeing things which will suggest impure thoughts. Cultivate the moral and intellectual powers.

"Among the most dangerous reports of pleasure is the theatre. Instead of being a school of morality and virtue, as is so often claimed, it is the very hotbed of immorality. Vicious habits and sinful propensities are strengthened and confirmed by these entertainments. Low songs, lewd gestures, expressions, and attitudes deprave the imagination and debase the morals. Every youth who habitually attends such exhibitions will be corrupted in principle. There is no influence in our land more powerful to poison the imagination, to destroy religious impressions, and to blunt the relish for the tranquil pleasures and sober realities of life than theatrical amusements.

"The love for these scenes increases with every indulgence, as the desire for intoxicating drink strengthens with its use. The only safe course is to shun the theatre, the circus, and every other questionable place of amusement." ML, p. 86.

"Nothing is more treacherous than the deceitfulness of sin. It is the god of this world that deludes, and blinds, and leads to destruction. Satan does not enter with his array of temptations at once. He disguises these temptations with a semblance of good. He mingles with amusements and folly some little improvements, and deceived souls make it an excuse that great good is to be derived by engaging in them. This is only the deceptive part. It is Satan's hellish arts masked. Beguiled souls take one step, then are prepared for the next. It is so much more pleasant to follow the inclinations of their own hearts than to stand on the defensive, and resist the first insinuations of the wily foe, and thus shut out his incomings. Oh, how Satan watches to see his bait taken so readily, and to see souls walking in the very path he has prepared! He does not want them to give up praying and maintaining a form of religious duties; for he can thus make them more useful in his service. He unites his sophistry and deceptive snares with their experiences and professions, and thus wonderfully advances his cause." MYP, p. 83.2

"There are many who do not understand the conflict that is going on between Christ and Satan over the souls of men. They do not realize that if they would stand under the blood-stained banner of Prince Emmanuel they must be willing to be partakers of His conflicts and wage a determined war against the powers of darkness." HP, p. 259.2

*For Satan to try to ensnare a soul he must first gain access to one's soul. The five senses of the Human body; sight, smell, hearing, taste and touch are the channels through which Satan can beset an individual and cause him/her to stumble. Influences such as an appetite for unhealthy foods, modern music, television and competitive sports lower our physical, mental and moral powers and must be shunned at all costs. If these idols are not cast out it will be impossible for our Lord Jesus to reign supreme in our every day lives.*

**"For whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world: and this is the victory that overcometh the world [even] our faith." John 5:4.**

**"Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good." Romans 12:21.**

**"Fear thou not; for I [am] with thee: be not dismayed; for I [am] thy God: I will strengthen thee; yea, I will help thee; yea, I will uphold thee with the right hand of my righteousness." Isaiah 41:10.**

Markus Dammasch,  
Australia

# Man's Broken Relationship Restored by God

**1 John 4:14-16** "And we have seen and do testify that the Father sent the Son to be the Saviour of the world. Whosoever shall confess that Jesus is the Son of God, God dwelleth in him, and he in God. And we have known and believed the love that God hath to us. God is love; and he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in him."

God's preoccupation in His universe is to have precious, warm and harmonious relationships - that's why He created us in the first place! Before there was any other intelligence in the universe, there was the Father, the Word and the Holy Spirit. These three enjoyed such a beautiful relationship that they couldn't keep it to themselves. They had to create others to enjoy what they enjoyed and so they did, right down to the last planet - this planet, earth. The focus of every creature of God should be to love God with all his heart, mind, strength and soul (as this is the first and great commandment that Jesus expressed).

Mark 12:30 "And thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength: this is the first commandment."

All who worship the Lord and follow this commandment will be personally wrapped with God. Those around them that do the same thing will be benefited. The love they then have to one another will be ignited by the love on which they are all focusing.

**Patriarchs and Prophets pg 35** "And while love to God was supreme, love for one another was confiding and unselfish. There was no note of discord to mar the celestial harmonies."

When you are young you open your heart to someone you think you can trust - someone you think won't let you down, but you soon learn (as you get older) that people will keep letting you down. The only place where you can release a confiding love is amongst those who look to Jesus with all their heart, mind, strength and their entire

being. If they are not doing this you can't confide in them because there's nothing holding them in a confiding love. They will sooner or later spill the beans, and gossip will start.

The beautiful love that God wants us to have is sadly, just an ideal we all harbour in our hearts and yearn for, but we keep on being disappointed. We keep on being shattered because we have all lost that important ingredient: to so love God with all our hearts, and to exercise our whole strength, mind, soul and body for the single purpose of focusing on Him and His way only. We've all lost that love and a relationship with God because of sin.

God knows the total incapacity of fallen man to love Him. He also knows that we have it as a wonderful dream, but that it is beyond our capability to put that dream into effect. Is He going to wave a magic wand and give us that special love? No, He is not an arbitrary activist. How then will He reach into our hearts to achieve this object?

**Phil 2:13** "For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure."

What does He actually do to create inside of us "the will" and the action? Follow the first step.

The Ten Commandments were especially adapted for sinners to show what standard must be kept, in order to have true happiness. God gave them, in all grandeur, from Mt Sinai. The people of Israel were so affected, and touched by God's greatness that they said in amazement, "All the Lord has said, we will do and be obedient."

The law was given to crush and destroy the pride of man. The very egocentrism of the Israelites (that is also in every sinner) spoke, saying "I will attain to the keeping of all the commandments". But God knew their inability. When He puts the law in front of us and says, "keep it", we in our human abilities try, but fall flat on our face every time. It's

amazing how long it takes for us to learn.

The Apostle asked the question, "What is the purpose of the law?" When we remember that the angels served God without even considering it a law, why was it verbalised and brought to our attention?

**Gal 3:19** "Wherefore then serveth the law? It was added, because of transgressions, till the seed should come to whom the promise was made and it was ordained by angels in the hand of a mediator."

So the law was deliberately given (in all its beauty and grandeur) in a written form for the purpose of identifying transgression.

**Rom 3:19,20** "Now we know that what things soever the law saith, it saith to them who are under the law: that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God. Therefore by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight: for by the law is the knowledge of sin."

By the law we receive the knowledge of sin, and guilt becomes manifested. We quickly try to justify ourselves, and remove the sense of guilt - but we can't. We can try to hide behind all sorts of self-justifying fabrications, but we can't get rid of it. It eats away at the spring of life and if we don't deal with it God's way, it will destroy us at the end. The guilt is horrible and oppressive, but it is given to help us desire a relationship with Him.

We see a horrendous experience in **Rom 7:7-13**. "What shall we say then? Is the law sin? God forbid. Nay, I had not known sin, but by the law: for I had not known lust, except the law had said, Thou shalt not covet. But sin, taking occasion by the commandment, wrought in me all manner of concupiscence. For without the law sin was dead. For I was alive without the law once: but when the commandment came, sin revived, and I died. And the commandment, which was ordained to

life, I found to be unto death. For sin, taking occasion by the commandment, deceived me, and by it slew me. Wherefore the law is holy, and the commandment holy, and just, and good. Was then that which is good made death unto me? God forbid. But sin, that it might appear sin, working death in me by that which is good; that sin by the commandment might become exceeding sinful."

When we are pointed to the law, something happens inside of us. The law brings all the nastiness out of us. If you don't tell a child it's wrong, it will be nice to you, but if you tell a child its wrong, it will be nasty to you - this same principle occurs with regards to the law. When we are shown the law, we become negative, and often we don't even know it! Sin creates a reaction because of the law. We wouldn't have any trouble if the law wasn't there. For as Paul says, "I was alive without the law once but when the commandment came, sin revived and I died".

As humans, everything we do is with regards to 'self' - that's what we are taught in society. Even the good that we sometimes do can be motivated by total selfishness, because we are boosting our own egos. Yet we often wonder why everything goes wrong. If we only do things for 'self', we are gradually killing ourselves. This principle is also at work in nature. Plenty of water flows into the Dead Sea, but no water flows out as there is no outlet - and this causes stagnation and everything in it dies. So, when confronted with the law, we are told that sin revives, and "the commandment that was ordained to life, I found to be unto death. For sin taking occasion, ... deceived me, and by it slew me."

So, what did God have to do to regain a relationship with sinful humanity? He had to proclaim the Holy law and place it before the mind's eye so the sinful nature (which is totally unconscious of its estrangement from God) will sense more and more intensely its death-like state. That is what is referred to in many passages of scripture - people are "alive in sin", yet they are the 'living dead'. They are physically alive, but are spiritually dead and don't know it.

Therefore, the law was added (because of transgression) to show them their true condition.

The Apostle Paul only came to see his true condition after meeting Jesus and being blinded by His brightness. Paul had thought that he was a 'Pharisee of the Pharisees', the top man of all the Jewish fraternity. But then he had an encounter with Jesus, which caused him to realise his true state, and he cried, "O wretched man that I am." He was right at the very bottom of the pit, in his sense of knowledge about himself. We need to ask ourselves, 'have we had that experience'? If not, we need this message. We need to feel that self-abhorrence before God can move us onto the next point.

Once we feel totally wretched, miserable, crushed, and life isn't worth living, we think we've reached the end. God doesn't leave us there. He provides a way out for us because He loves us. In order to provide a way out for us, we must allow Him to work in us. So, what does God do next, having crashed the soul down to the very pits through His Holy Law?

**Gal 4:4** "But when the fullness of the time was come, God sent forth His Son, made of a woman, made under the law."

What does it mean to be 'made under the law?' Is that the horrifying experience I've been having? Isn't being under the law being in a state of condemnation and guilt? We all know that so well. Here I am crushed and lonely, yet I have a yearning desire for a relationship. With this crushed feeling I have no hope that I can ever have a warm joyful relationship ever again. That's when people take their life, but when we come to that point, we must never take our life. God is the one who gives us life and if we go along and short-circuit the plan, we have no future. If we won't short-circuit the plan, God has the next step in readiness. He sent Jesus Christ to come and be born into the exact same experience that I'm going through.

The person who feels crushed, guilty, condemned and cursed is in desperate need of a relationship with someone who knows what it is like: "Oh! If only

I had someone who understands me! If only I had someone, deep inside of me, deep in there who really understands me, who comes so close, under my skin, and really knows my inward experience. If only I had such a relationship." Is it possible? Does God deprive humanity of a relationship while they are in this condition? Does he mock our weird and horrible condition?

**ST, August 14, 1884 par. 5** "God is reasonable and compassionate. The sorrows of his people [who've been worked by Him - His law] touch his heart of love; and will he not hear our prevailing prayer? [When you really cry to God?] Will not our very urgency be regarded? His loving-kindness faileth not. As a kind Father, he does not mock the miseries of his children."

When He's crushed you through His Holy law and you see yourself as you really are, all hopelessly torn and bruised, He does not mock your bruised state. In fact, He has very gently tried to bring you to that experience. He now sees that your heart's cry is really powerful and it's urgent: "I'm going to lose my way Lord, Please, help me!" As the cry comes up before Him, in due time, He has sent His Son, born under the law.

**Gal 3:10** "For as many as are of the works of the law are under the curse: for it is written, Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them."

Here it is! Another punch line: Cursed! "I haven't kept all those laws. I'm a terrible curse and my heart condemns me."

**1 John 3:20** "For if our heart condemn us, God is greater than our heart, and knoweth all things."

What powerful words are in that one little statement. I'm under the curse for the law has condemned me. There's no relief from the curse, yet when our heart condemns us, we may know that He's greater than our heart - what a relief, that God doesn't look upon me as a cursed, hopeless being! He's greater than all, and knows all things, including our hearts. So, every time we

have a heart that condemns us, we should thank God, for if our heart doesn't condemn us, then we haven't got the touch of the law. So, the Lord is greater than our heart, but what can He do?

**Gal 3:13** "Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us: for it is written, Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree."

We are cursed and in a desperate state of loneliness. Our hearts condemn us, and we need fellowship and comfort in our sufferings. Jesus came in exactly the same experience. He was made a curse for us. He was made a curse to be able to experience with us and for us, our sufferings.

**2 Cor 5:21** "For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him."

God made Him to be sin for us? God made Jesus to be that? He came to enter into a relationship with us in that experience? So, when you feel God's law and God's perfection drawing near; when you feel condemned, remember how Jesus felt: 'He was made to be sin who knew no sin.' There was an occasion when He never knew sin like that, but now He comes and knows it with you.

**2 Cor 13:4** "For though he was crucified through weakness, yet he liveth by the power of God. For we also are weak in him, but we shall live with him by the power of God toward you."

Do you understand the relationship? He was weak with us and we are weak with Him. We suffered under the curse and He suffered with us. The sufferings of Jesus Christ were the sufferings that we suffer and as we take hold of this, we realise that our sufferings are actually Christ's sufferings. He is having a relationship with us, but the relationship doesn't stop there. What happened when Jesus came down and experienced our sin with us? He trusted in God, and said, "Father I'm in this terrible mess together with my brother, help me!"

Stop to think about it! As He was praying, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" what was He echoing? He was actually crying in fellowship with you as He cried, and it was God that lifted Him up. We are weak with him but we shall live with Him by the power of God. When your heart condemns you, don't worry. God knows that He has a wonderful way out for you. Every time you feel condemned, look back to this beautiful fellowship and you will have a fellowship of condemnation to lift you into a fellowship of Righteousness, a fellowship that is high and uplifted. It's one of the most beautiful meditations. The God of heaven bows so low and enters into an intimate relationship with a crushed human being. When you see that, doesn't your heart turn to Him? Don't you begin to love Him? Aren't you prepared to do anything He tells you to do? Now God is finished working in you both to will and do His good pleasure.

God used the Commandments to bring you down. But there is something higher than that law that condemns us. It is a relationship and it can only be with the One who is our Creator.

**Review and Herald Jan 9, 1883** "The Son of God came voluntarily to accomplish the work of atonement [At one-ment with me and my cursed condition. He came voluntarily]. There was no obligatory yoke upon Him, for He was independent and above all law . . . ."

We are under the law, but He was independent and above the law - the lawgiver Himself. He could activate things within Himself that no other being who was obligatory to the law could do. He had no yoke upon Him.

. . . . "The angels, as God's intelligent messengers, were under the yoke of obligation; [because they Were created by Him] no personal sacrifice of theirs could atone for the guilt for man. Christ alone was free from the claims of the law to undertake the redemption of the sinful race."

Here we see the activity of the law and something higher than the law. The law is there to bring me face to face to my obligation to God and shows me that I

have failed Him miserably. As I have failed my obligation, someone who is free of obligation came down and joined himself with me - in that misery. Why? So that I might enter into fellowship with his sufferings. When we pray, 'Lord please help me out of my sufferings' and He says, 'won't you join Me?' we realise that if we join Him, we will come out of our sufferings because He has suffered with us.

**Heb 2:17,18** "Wherefore in all things it behoved him to be made like unto his brethren, that he might be a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people. For in that he himself hath suffered being tempted, he is able to succour them that are tempted."

He came into an experience so that He can have fellowship with us and help us. When you are in a broken relationship, you need help. Now He's there, right beside you in fellowship, suffering every temptation that ever comes upon you. When you're cursed by the law and feel hopeless, and when life is meaningless then the temptation comes to you to take your own life. Jesus was even tempted to do that. If I have been tempted, then He was also - so that He can be a merciful and faithful High Priest. He knows exactly what I'm going through. However, unless you actually take hold of this, you will go through life as an orphan and be terribly cursed.

**Heb 2:11** "For both he that sanctifieth and they who are sanctified are all of one: for which cause he is not ashamed to call them brethren."

He is not ashamed of us because He came to save us. He's a brother with us in our terrible state. We all have the same beginning - birth.

**Heb 2:10** "For it became him, for whom are all things, and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings."

I can never come out of my sinful condition without suffering. That's a reality! To understand this, I need someone to come into a relationship

## Man's Broken Relationship Restored by God

with me. So Jesus comes and enters into a relationship with **me**, including the misery of it all. So He is one with me, my Brother, the Captain of my salvation, being made perfect by the things which He suffered.

**Heb 5:7-9** "Who in the days of his flesh, when he had offered up prayers and supplications with strong crying and tears unto him that was able to save him from death, and was heard in that he feared; Though he were a Son, yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered; And being made **perfect**, he became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him."

Here is the atonement. Therefore what will you and I do about it?

**Heb 4:15,16** "For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin. Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need."

He had real fellowship with us under the curse of the law and yet He was without sin. Why? It was because He committed himself unto Him that judges righteously. He committed Himself to God. This is the way out. Let God lift you up. He says, "Follow me! You are not alone in this battle." Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need. That is the answer.

**My Life Today pg 289** "What love, what matchless love, that, sinners and aliens as we are, we may be brought back to God and adopted into His family! We may address Him by the endearing name, '**Our Father**,' which is a sign of our affection for Him and a pledge of His tender regard and relationship to us. And the Son of God, beholding the heirs of grace, '**is** not ashamed to call them **brethren**.' They have even a more sacred relationship to God than have the angels who have never **fallen**."

What sort of relationship did Jesus have before He came down from heaven? It was a relationship, which was above the law. The angels were

obligated to the law, but what sort of a relationship will we enter into with Jesus Christ - something that angels who have never fallen have never experienced. Do you love him? Do you love Him enough? If you don't He'll keep on taking you through the pits because He works in us to will and to do. He wants to lift us to the relationship that Jesus had with His Father.

After you have contemplated this reality you will do what Apostle Paul did.

**Phil 3:5-10** "Circumcised the eighth day, of the stock of Israel, of the tribe of **Benjamin**, an Hebrew of the Hebrews; as touching the law, a Pharisee; Concerning zeal, persecuting the church; touching the righteousness which is in the law, blameless. But what things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ. Yea doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ, And be found in him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of **Christ**, the righteousness which is of God by faith: That I may know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable unto his death."

Why did Jesus come to have a relationship with us? He took our sufferings and our death and if I could come to the knowledge of that, then that will be everything to me. Submit yourselves to the workings of God. The question is - are we touched so deeply, so inwardly, that we will respond to God working in us to will and to do? There is no magic wand, so follow Paul's example.

**Heb 13:5,6** "Let your conversation be without covetousness; and be content with such things as ye have: for he hath **said**, I will never leave **thee**, nor forsake thee. So that we may boldly say, The Lord is my helper, and I will not fear what man shall do unto me."

'I will never leave **you**' - what a fellowship! We have nothing to fear.

How are we justified? - not by any good works we have done. God is above the law - God doesn't refer to the law to save me. He refers to Jesus, whom He has sent. He knows our helplessness, so He sent Jesus in the likeness of sinful flesh and He will never leave me or forsake me. I love Him so much I will live only for Him.

**2 Cor 5:14,15** "For the love of Christ **constraineth** us; because we thus judge, that if one died for all, then were all dead: And that he died for all, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto him which died for them, and rose again."

The love of Christ constraineth us. That love is so great. He's won back a relationship with you. How did he do it? By coming your way. He says now that **I'm** with you. I'm suffering with you the condemnation and the guilt and the horror. Let me lift you.

**1 John 4:16-18** "And we have known and believed the love that God hath to us. God is love; and he that **dwelleth** in love dwelleth in **God**, and God **in** him. Herein is our love made **perfect**, that we may have boldness in the day of judgment: because as he is, so are we **in** this world. There is no fear **in** love; but perfect love **casteth** out fear: because fear hath torment. He that **feareth** is not made perfect in love."

We know God is love. We can have boldness because as He is, so are we. So, because we love God like **that**, we have no need of the law to keep us **in** check. The schoolmaster has finished his job. We have no need of the law because the love that we have experienced in this activity brings us to a higher relationship than that of the mere law, which was adapted to the human sinful **race**.

**Rom 13:10** "Love **worketh** no ill to his neighbour: therefore love is the fulfilling of the law."

By beholding we will be changed. He is my Saviour. I have nothing to fear.

John Thiel,  
Australia

# HEAVEN CANNOT WAIT!

## John 14:1-3; 3:16; Ephesians 2:4-7

Of the hundreds of occurrences of the word "heaven" in the Bible, practically all are translations of just two words - the Hebrew word "shamayin" and the Greek word "ouranos". The Hebrew word means literally, "the heights" and the Greek word has a similar meaning, "that which is raised up." However, the scriptures don't speak very much about heaven. Maybe it's because you can't put the sea in a teaspoon. Greece is surrounded by vast seas. You cannot describe something that's indescribable. You cannot describe heavenly truths with merely an earthly mind. Mortal cannot describe heaven. (8T 131)

Heaven is our home. It's the Christian's home. It's the home to which God's children are going. (8T 175) But even on earth heaven can be our home. "Home sweet-home." It can be the dearest most joyous place. Only heaven is God's home. It's the Father's house. God dwells in the highest heaven. (PK67) It's our real home; a home we'll never move again. Think of the number of times man moves in the course of a lifetime. In the USA it averages seven times!

Heaven is a home where love is spread in divine glory, and in heaven it's God's love that does this. It's a love that is enduring. It's the cohesive of the universe. It's the great binding agent that draws man together.

Is it conceivable that God just loved us a little? His heart just might have looked at our needs? That He might have had just sympathetic interest in the sons of the earth? BUT, NO! "For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever shall believe in Him shall not perish but have everlasting life." John 3:16 God gave heaven's dearest possession to save these men and bring them to His home. Never can we doubt about the reality of God's love. Jesus Christ's coming answered that. Jesus Christ came and demonstrated before a sinful world, the infinite love of God.

Yes, and from that day to this, all who have opened their hearts to this love have come to know its transforming power. But, the fall culmination of God's love awaits that day when all of God's children shall be gathered home. The house of God, (the church), on earth is the gate of heaven. (5T 491) But, there are people who think they can go to heaven as an independent company and alone. (1T 229) A frightening thought!

Not until we're all gathered in the Father's house will we understand fully how great is that affection of God's love for us. We have come to know something of the love of God here below in many ways. We have felt its transforming power as the burden of our sins rolled away. We have come to know the warmth of God's love as He has provided for us and protected us along life's way... a journey of faith.

But, all of these are nothing, wonderful, as they may now seem, compared to the sea of God's love that will come upon us when we reach home, our heavenly home. Heaven really starts here on earth. (SD 112) How? When? When we enter in rest through Jesus Christ our Saviour. (DA 331); when we accept that invitation of Jesus Christ, saying, "come learn of Me," we begin the eternal life. Yet, sadly, this world is all heaven that some people will have. (2T 100) Jesus' presence is heaven. When you have the presence of Jesus Christ, nothing of this world can make you sad. His presence is Joy. You will have a certain peace, a calmness, until it becomes natural in your life. The more you taste of it, the more you reflect the heavenly peace. As time goes on you will increase, and prosper in all things. (Ps. 31:8, 15:14, Josh 1:8)

When you walk with Jesus Christ in this life, we're filled with His love. We no longer walk in the shadows of darkness and fear, but in the light. We become satisfied, comfortable with His presence... safe and secure.

If you want to be a saint in heaven, you must first be a saint on earth (ML 277) Rev. 14:12 There's not many ways to heaven. (DA 663) Heaven is attained by all who comply with certain conditions. (4T 625): One needs to leave sin... to overcome sin. One needs to leave secret sin... to overcome it. Sin crucified Jesus Christ. One needs to be obedient to God's law. God's gifts are promised on this condition of obedience. (COL 145) Finally, men can reach Heaven only through faith. (4T 27)... linking your soul with Christ. (6T 148)

In one journey I made to the magnificent island of Patmos, where the Apostle John, the seer of Patmos, wrote the book of Revelation. I met up with a tourist wearing a T-shirt, "proclaiming", "Heaven can wait - I Love Patmos."

NO! HEAVEN CANNOT WAIT! AMEN

By: Br. John Theodorou  
Athens, Greece



# SPEAKING EVIL



"Keep thy tongue from evil, and thy lips from speaking guile." Psalm 34:13.

"All dissension, all differences and faultfinding, should be put away, with all evil speaking and bitterness; kindness, love, and compassion for one another should be cherished, that the prayer of Christ that His disciples might be one as He is one with the Father may be answered." 5T, p. 279.

"Speak not evil one of another, brethren." James 4:11.

It is very important that we do not speak evil of one another. Rather we should be "speaking to ourselves in Psalms and hymns and spiritual songs." By speaking evil of others we do not benefit anyone. Let us rather speak things to the benefit of others.

"Not one word is to be spoken unadvisedly. No evil speaking, no frivolous talk, no fretful repining or impure suggestion, will escape the lips of him who is following Christ. The apostle Paul, writing by the Holy Spirit, says, "Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth." Eph 4:29. A corrupt communication does not mean only words that are vile. It means any expression contrary to holy principles and pure and undefiled religion. It includes impure hints and covert insinuations of evil. Unless instantly resisted, these lead to great sin." COL, p. 337.

Evil speaking means that our hearts are not occupied with Christ and his love. In a heart where Christ lives no evil speaking will be found, for His love will settle arguments and differences.

"That which Satan plants in the heart - envy, jealousy, evil surmising, evil speaking, impatience, prejudice, selfishness, covetousness, and vanity - must be

uprooted. If these vile things are allowed to remain in the soul, they will bear fruit by which many shall be defiled. Oh, how many cultivate the poisonous plants that kill out the precious fruits of love and defile the soul!" AH, p. 195.

"Earnest workers have no time for dwelling upon the faults of others. We cannot afford to live on the husks of others' faults or failings. Evil-speaking is a twofold curse, falling more heavily upon the speaker than upon the hearer.

He who scatters the seeds of dissension and strife, reaps in his own soul the deadly fruits. The very act of looking for evil in others develops evil in those who look. By dwelling upon the faults of others, we are changing into the same image. But by beholding Jesus, talking of His love and perfection of character, we become changed into His image. By contemplating the lofty ideal He has placed before us, we shall be uplifted into a pure and holy atmosphere, even the presence of God. When we abide here, there goes forth from us a light that irradiates all who are connected with us." GW, p. 479.

"Blessed are the peacemakers; for they shall be called the children of God." Who calls them so? All the heavenly intelligences. Then do not encourage any tempted soul to tell you the grievances of a brother or a friend. Tell them that you do not want to hear their words of censure and evil speaking, because your Counsellor has told you in His Word that if you cease to stir up strife and become a peacemaker, you will be blessed. Tell them that this is the blessing you are craving." 2SM, p. 439.

"At the bar of God there will be opened before us

astonishing revelations of the results of evil-speaking. At that bar the deceitful tongue, the cruel tongue, that has been so unsparing in its accusing and denunciation, will receive from the Judge of all the earth the same judgment that it has passed up on others. Vain talkers will then be called to meet their work, to answer for the souls that have been turned from the truth by their wicked words." RH, 10-19-86, par. 12.

Every evil and frivolous word is written in the books of heaven, to be brought forth in the judgment day in heaven. Every person will be brought forth in that day to answer for every word they ever spoke.

"Let us guard against speaking words that discourage. Let us resolve never to engage in evil-speaking and backbiting. Let us refuse to serve Satan by implanting seeds of doubt. Let us guard against cherishing unbelief, or expressing it to others. Many, many times I have wished that there might be circulated a pledge containing a solemn promise to speak only those words that are pleasing to God. There is as great need for such a pledge as there is for one against the use of intoxicating liquor. Let us begin to discipline the tongue, remembering always, that we can do this only by disciplining the mind; for "out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh." (RH 05-26-04, par. 9)

"Let all bitterness and wrath, and anger, and clamour, and evil speaking be put away from you." Eph. 4:31.

"So speak evil of no man, ... showing all meekness unto all men." Tit. 3:2.

AMEN

Benjamin Dammasch,  
Australia.



# A Test of Faith

Ellen G. White

Gideon's courage was greatly strengthened by the tokens of divine favor vouchsafed to him. Without delay, he went out with his forces to give battle to the **Midianites**. But now another severe trial of faith awaited him. With the immense host of invaders spread out before **him--the** thirty-two thousand of the Hebrews seeming, in contrast, like a mere **handful--the** word of the Lord came to him: "The people that are with thee are too many for me to give the **Midianites** into their hands, lest Israel vaunt themselves against me, saying, **Mine** own hand hath saved me. Now therefore go to, proclaim in the ears of the people, saying, Whosoever is fearful and **afraid**, let him return and depart early from Mount **Gilead**."

It had been made a law in Israel that before they went to battle, the following proclamation should be sounded throughout the army: "What man is there that hath built a new house, and hath not dedicated it? let him go and return to his house, lest he die in the battle, and another man dedicate it. And what man is he that hath planted a vineyard, and hath not yet eaten of it? let him also go and return unto his house, lest he die in the battle, and another man eat of it. And what man is there that hath betrothed a wife, and hath not taken her? let him go and return unto his house, lest he die in the battle, and another man take her. And the officers shall speak further unto the people, and they shall say, What man is there that is fearful and faint-hearted? let him go and return unto his house, lest his brethren's heart faint as well as his heart." What a striking illustration is this of the tender, pitying love of Christ! He who instituted the relations of life and the ties of kindred, made special provision that these be not too widely broken. He would have none go forth to battle unwillingly. This proclamation also sets forth in a **forcible** manner the influence which may be exerted by one, man who is deficient in faith and courage, and further shows the effect of our thoughts and feelings upon our own course of action.

"As a man **thinketh** in his heart, so is he." The thoughts and feelings cherished give direction to the conduct, and thus determine the character. A strong, well-balanced character is built up by faithfulness in all the smaller as well as the greater acts of life. A man is measured, not by the power put forth in some one great effort, but by the zeal and integrity which he brings to the daily round of cares and responsibilities.

True Christian character is marked by a singleness of purpose, an indomitable determination, which refuses to yield to worldly influences, which will aim **at** nothing short of the Bible standard. If men will permit themselves to become discouraged in the service of God, the great adversary will present abundant reasons to turn them from the plain path of duty to one of ease and irresponsibility. Those who can be bribed or seduced, discouraged or terrified, will be of no service in the Christian warfare. Those who set their affections on worldly treasures or worldly honors, will not push the battle against principalities and powers, and spiritual wickedness in high places.

All who would be soldiers of the cross of Christ, must gird on the armor and prepare for conflict. They should not be intimidated by threats; or terrified by dangers. They must be cautious in peril, yet firm and brave in facing **the** foe and doing battle for God. The consecration of **Christ's** follower must be complete. Father, mother, wife, children, houses, lands, everything, must be held secondary to the work and cause of God. He must be willing to bear patiently, cheerfully, joyfully, whatever in **God's** providence he may be "called to suffer. His final reward will be to share with Christ the throne of immortal glory.

Because of the weak condition of the armies of Israel, in contrast with the numbers of the enemy, Gideon had refrained from making the usual proclamation. He was filled with astonishment at the declaration that his force was too large. But the Lord saw the pride and

unbelief existing in the hearts of this people. Aroused by the stirring appeals of Gideon, they had readily enlisted; but when they saw the multitudes of the Midianites, their courage failed. Yet, had Israel triumphed, those very men would have ascribed the victory to their own skill and valor, rather than to the mercy and power of Jehovah. As a people, they had little faith in God. Many were suffering the reproaches of a guilty conscience.

Instead of being too many, the Israelites felt that their numbers were too few; but Gideon made the proclamation as the Lord had directed. With sinking heart he saw twenty-two thousand, or more than two-thirds of his entire force, depart for their homes.

Again the word of the Lord came to his servant: "The people are yet too many; bring them down unto the water, and I will try them for thee there; and it shall be, that of whom I say unto thee, This shall go with thee, the same shall go with thee; and of whomsoever I say unto thee, This shall not go with thee, the same shall not go."

The people were led down to the water-side, expecting to make an immediate attack upon the enemy. A few hastily took a little water in the hand and sucked it up as they went on, but nearly all bowed upon their knees, and leisurely drank from the surface of the water. Those who took of the water in their hands, were but three hundred out of the ten thousand; yet these were selected, and the great body of the army were permitted to return to their homes.

Here we see the simple means by which character is often tested. Those who in a time of great peril were intent upon supplying their own wants, were not the men to be trusted in an emergency. The men of God's choice were the few who would not permit their own wants to hinder them in the discharge of duty. Not only did they possess courage and self-control, but they were men of faith. They had not defiled themselves by idolatry. God could direct them, and through them he could work deliverance for Israel. The Lord designed to show his people that he was their source of strength. By the simplicity of the means employed, he

designed to rebuke their pride and self-exaltation.

As with ancient Israel, so it is with the people of God at this age of the world. The Lord can do but little for the children of men, because they are so ready to esteem themselves wiser than their Creator. If blessed with a measure of success, many become elated and self-confident, and forget their dependence upon God. There is too much reliance upon human plans and methods, and too little faith in the mighty God of Jacob; too much machinery, and too little of the life-giving Spirit and power of the Most High.

Christ is the light of the world. All wisdom and all knowledge flow from Him who is the fountain of wisdom. He bids his followers, "Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in Heaven." It is when reflected in his disciples, that the divine loveliness of Christ is revealed to the world. Those who depart from the simplicity of the gospel, have gone on in advance of their Leader; but Christ says, "Follow me."

All who indulge pride and self-importance, "vaunting themselves against God," he will separate from his work; and, in their stead, will choose those who will walk in the path of humility and obedience, acknowledging that all their success comes from God.

All the wonders which God has wrought for his people, have been performed by the most simple means. When the people of God are wholly consecrated to him, then he will employ them to carry forward his work on the earth. But we should remember that whatever success may attend us, the glory and honor belongs to God; for every faculty and every power is a gift from him.

God will test, to the utmost, the faith and courage of those to whom he has intrusted responsibilities in his work. Appearances will often be forbidding. Although God has given repeated assurance of his help, yet faith will almost stagger. "Thus saith the Lord," must be our firm reliance, independent of human reasonings, or apparent impossibilities.

The experience of Gideon and his army, was designed to teach a lesson of simplicity and faith. The leader whom God had chosen occupied no prominent position in Israel. He was not a ruler, a Levite, or a priest. He thought himself the least in his father's house. Human wisdom would not have selected him; but God saw in Gideon a man of integrity and moral courage. He was distrustful of self, and willing to listen to the teachings of God; and carry out his purposes. The Lord is not dependent upon men of high position, of great intellect, or extensive knowledge. Such men are frequently proud and self-sufficient. They feel themselves competent to devise and execute plans without counsel from God. They separate themselves from the true Vine, and hence become dry and fruitless, as withered branches.

The Lord would put to shame the vaunting of men. He will give success to the feeblest efforts, the most unpromising methods, when divinely appointed, and entered upon with humility and trust. God will not test our faith beyond endurance. He will give us sufficient evidence, that we may, in our weakness, lean upon the arm of his strength, and trust wholly in his power. Talents, education, and influence, may, under the sanctifying power of the Holy Spirit, be employed in the service of God; but Satan is more often served by them, than is Jesus Christ.

The Majesty of Heaven walked among the children of men with the dignity of a king; yet he preserved the simplicity of a little child. He was never known to boast of superiority, to exalt his own power, ability, or attainments. Christ was the Creator of the earth; he was the king of glory; yet his life of meekness and humility put to shame the proud boasting of men. He was the embodiment of wisdom, the fountain of knowledge. Let those who would pride themselves upon their superior abilities, learn of the great Teacher. Jesus invites all, "Learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart, and ye shall find rest unto your souls." He said to his disciples, "Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of Heaven."

How does God look upon men who cherish pride, and boast of their superiority, when they are dependent upon him for every breath they draw, for the food they eat, the clothing they wear, and, above all these, for the precious gift of reason,—the power of thought? Let the hand of God be laid upon man, let the mind be clouded, and what then would he have whereof to boast?

Success does not depend upon strength or numbers. God can deliver by few as well as by many. A large church is not necessarily a strong church. Some of its members may be cherishing selfishness, pride, or unbelief; some may be dishonest, others corrupt in heart and life. All these are a source of weakness to the church. They bring the frown of God upon his people, and the great adversary will work through them to advance his own cause.

Anciently, those whose worldly interests would draw their hearts from the work of God, were bidden to return to their homes. It were better for the cause of truth to-day, if those whose attention is absorbed with their own private interests, would separate from the work of God, and give themselves to the things in which their hearts delight. Then they would not, by their wrong example, exert so dangerous an influence upon others.

God is honored, not so much by the great number, as by the character of those who serve him. He appreciates moral worth. He draws the dividing line between those who bear his name by profession, and those whose character shows them to be his children. Those who have the fear of God will listen to his counsels, and obey them. They will not be content with spurious theories, nor build upon false principles to secure the friendship of the world. Yet, at the same time, they will cherish and exemplify those virtues that promote the happiness of the family, the church, and the community.

Many who occupy responsible positions in the church of God, are sacrificing their integrity to secure the favor of the ungodly. A strong current is sweeping downward, and they decide that it is easier to float with the tide than to row against it. Like the children of Israel, they

sacrifice the blessings of God by their indolence and spiritual sloth. Many set up idols in their hearts,--idols of selfishness, idols of pride, and love of display. Eternal things lose their value. Withdraw the influences which God has provided to preserve and strengthen our spirituality, and it decays and dies. We must be continually seeking to draw near to God, and to learn his will. We must become more unlike the world, and more like Christ in character.



## MY TESTIMONY

I was brought up in a staunch Roman Catholic family, and, at the appropriate time, I entered the seminary to train as a priest. After some years, I had become quite disturbed, as I had noticed too many attitudes by some priests and students that seemed to be in variance to the scriptures. It was then that I started to look around for a Christ centered church, one based on 1 John 3:11, "Love one another..." How could Jesus be "the same yesterday, today and forever" (Hebrews 13:8), if by the some whimsical wish or pontifical proclamation, some, if not all things could be changed, and, in the name of Jesus. The decision was made. I left the seminary.

After much searching, I settled on the Pentecostal Church. As time progressed, I found myself pasturing a small church outreach of six members. I often had to remind myself that "when two or three are gathered in my name, I am there in the midst of them" (Mat. 18:20). There was a dramatic increase in church membership to just under 100 in number. A second church was started to cater for those who had been rejected and hurt by "church." Little did I know that there was such a desperate need for such a church. Later, two rehabilitation Houses for troubled youth were started. In a three year period, in excess of 70 of these young people were introduced to our Lord and Saviour and baptized accordingly.

What went wrong, I don't really know? I can however clearly recall the judge saying, "ten years, stand down".

I went through a period of about two years whereby I was bitter as a result of what had happened. And then, I was introduced to members of the Seventh Day Adventist Reform Movement. As time went by, and truth-by-truth was unveiled, I came to realize just how much I had previously not understood. To the glory of God, in April of this year, I was baptized and given the right hand of fellowship. What a joyous occasion that was.

I find life as a "Reformer" to be exciting, refreshing and humbling as I witness a new approach to spreading the truth of God's word.

Praise God that He has set me free, and, to this end, I claim the following promise daily, "If you abide in My word you are my disciples indeed, and you shall know the truth, and, the truth shall make you free. Therefore, if the Son shall make you free, you shall be free indeed" (John 8:32,36).

Jesus is the same yesterday, today and forever. It is I who have changed and to the glory of His name.

Together we waik with the Father. AMEN

Adams Les  
New Zealand



# EXPERIENCES IN THE NEW FIELD OF SURINAME

As my days of service in the field of Suriname come to an end, I find myself looking back in retrospect over the past two years and there rests for me no other alternative than to praise the name of God for the great and marvelous works the Lord has done up to this moment for me and for this country.

One of my greatest fears in accepting the challenge to work as a pioneering missionary in Suriname was of course, my age and my lack of experience in the administrative, evangelical and pioneering areas. I always feared that I would not be able to accomplish what was expected of me, and this caused me much anguish and filled me with insecurity many times. Only through much prayer was I able to obtain surety in the Lord.

There have been many experiences but I shall try to mention those that stand out the most during my stay in this country. I have unforgettable memories that begin from the moment I arrived.

As a Colombian, I needed a visa in order to enter this country, something which I did not have and felt sure I did not need, since I had been told in Mosbach that it was not necessary. Furthermore, the country found itself in very dire situation and had recently experienced a considerable labour setback which had caused the International airport to close. On that 12<sup>th</sup> of August, 1999 I had to spend the night in the airport after the Immigration Bureau was assured by brother Ernest Huur that the following day he would fix my visa directly with the Ministry of Exterior Relations. Otherwise, I would have been sent back to Curacao where the closest representative of Suriname resides. Suffice it to say, it was not a very pleasant night. The mosquitoes wouldn't let me sleep and at times bats would fly so low, I imagined that any minute they would land on my head.

On the following morning they opened the door and I had to wait, without having any breakfast,

for brother Huur who finally came to pick me up after twelve that day.

I found myself in a country completely different than mine. As we traveled from the airport towards the capital, there was nothing to see but the jungle, something which frightened me in that particular moment, because I was not sure what to expect from this country knowing that I would have to stay and work here for two years.

Due to the economic crisis and the continual labour setbacks there was little variety of food in the supermarkets, something that seemed terrible to me since I was used to having everything in my country.

One of the hardest things to bear was the thought that I would have to stay all by myself, as brother Roderick Stubb's arrival from Jamaica was still uncertain. Moreover, brother Ernest Huur would be returning home to his family in Holland and to his work. Luckily, three days after my arrival, brother Roderick found the house where we would be staying after an endless number of experiences and the wrong address. I can say that the taxi driver was able to bring him to the right house only through divine help.

I was never given any time to settle in and adapt to the country much less have someone to guide us and give us a tour of the city. We had to do everything on our own. That first week was used to put in order all our legal documents and staying permit because soon we'd be all by ourselves and there would be nobody to help us. As if this were not enough, my return ticket got lost. It must have stayed in one of the many places we visited since I could not find it amongst my things. After reporting my missing ticket to the police I receive a new one. It was not an easy beginning, since we knew no one and had absolutely no idea in which direction lay the center of the city, what bus to take, where to get off and how to return.

I also found out that I would have to perfect my culinary skills, something which I had never attempted to do. I had always liked to make bread and pancakes but I had never cooked before. I was forced to remember all those "home recipes" and the way my mother had explained to me how certain things were cooked. Another thing which troubled me was accounting. I had forgotten to note down immediately certain expenditures I had made and then I'd forgotten about them. On top of that I was unsure of how to enter some of the expenses in the accounting books. This was something that took up quite a bit of my time.

After six months of work, for personal reasons, brother Roderick had to leave. Another Colombian, brother Oscar Oviedo and a very good friend of mine with whom I've shared many childhood experiences including the trip to the Missionary School in Hungary, and the return trip to Colombia, took his place.

Suriname, a coastal country, is known for its humid, jungle-like climate and its rainy season, so much that it is considered to have nine months of rain and three months of drought. It is also very prone to floods as it is found below sea level; something that prevented us from canvassing at the beginning and still continues to do so. Something that impressed me greatly in this country was the diversity of ethnic groups and the peace in which they live together. For instance, in Paramaribo, one can appreciate the fact that a Jewish synagogue resides beside a Moslem Mosque. One can also travel through certain sections of the capital and it will seem as if you're in the middle east or in the center of India, while other areas resemble Europe and still others appear to be the heart of Africa, surrounded by all its cultures. Businesses are run by Hindus and Jews while 90% of supermarkets are owned by the Chinese.

Ironically, one will often hear the complaint that people don't have enough money to live, while in the center of the city, one can find a great concentration of the latest models in cars and an increase in the construction of buildings and businesses. In conjunction to the many different cultures, one can also find an equal amount of religious creeds, superstitions and beliefs such as: spiritualism in all its forms, Hinduism, Buddhism, voodoo, Satanism etc. As a matter of

fact, Christianity has been greatly influenced and infiltrated by the former. People will assure you that they have given their lives to the Lord while during the week or in difficult times they turn to "boenoemen" or spiritual witch doctors in search of relief and an answer to their problems.

In this situation, we found the need to research all these subjects so that we would be able to have an answer for all the disturbing questions and problems of the village. Our first encounter with this type of experience was realized when we visited the interior of the country in the Amazon Jungle. With apprehension I had heard of the experiences of those possessed by the enemy but I had never witnessed such a thing. We were able to see the hand of God and the manifestation of His power in that moment as these people found rest from these satanic attacks in the Lord.

Long afterwards, after thoroughly researching this subject, I found out that we had made a few mistakes but that the Lord had worked with us according to our faith. With the help of God we have been able to help many people who suffered from demon-possession and the honour and glory belongs solely to the Giver of life. Recently, I have prepared an article about this subject and I hope that it will be of help and a blessing to the brethren around the world. From what I have heard, it will be published but before this comes to pass, it is necessary to alter it and make certain changes and modifications.

The devil never rests still for a single moment. Our lack of residence is an example of this. Accordingly to what I have heard, somebody told the immigrant police that we were teaching erroneous theories, which is why we were refused a residence from the beginning. The official interview was postponed for so long that this delay was the reason for my return to Colombia after working here for an entire year. Nevertheless, the Lord caused this to work in our favour and it was a blessing for the brethren in this country, with whom I was able to share my experiences and findings, concerning the belief of demon-possession. In this manner I was thereby able to help. As I am writing this, I still do not have in my possession this official permit, yet may the glory be given to God because I expect to receive it within the next few days. It was necessary to give a detailed

explanation of our principles of faith to the authorities before they would grant us an official interview.

Another example of Satan's diligent ways was the time when the car we'd been given to further the missionary work was stolen and the attack made on the house during the stay of brother Reinaldo Porras, my father, in this place. All of Satan's plans went awry through the Lord's intervention because the car was eventually found and the 12 young men responsible for this crime are being detained behind bars. During my father's visit, two people were baptized and the group in Suriname was organized.

Not long after this incident, we had the opportunity to rent a beautiful house where we are still living at the moment, not too far from our previous location and in a more central area. It was here that my friend suffered a terrible accident while he was washing the exterior of the house. He fell from a ladder from the height of approximately two meters, landing head first, then shoulders and finally the rest of his body. Once again, we saw the hand of God and we were able to take him to the hospital where he had to stay for a few days. Unfortunately, after they let him go, he fell once again during the middle of the night when he could not fall asleep and woke up dizzy. He fell from the second floor onto the first and without a doubt, the angels helped him out and guided him to my bedside so that I could find out what had happened to him and be able to act on time.

Once again brother Oscar was hospitalized for two weeks until he left for Colombia to receive better medical attention and to recuperate his health with the help of his family.

There has to be a love for souls and for the Lord's work in order to surrender yourself completely to the work of salvation of souls without thinking about the cost.

Suriname has been for me a place where I have been able to mature both physically and spiritually and it is here that I have learnt that you don't need the manifestation of great miracles in order to perceive the presence of God in your life. I have also seen the incredible manner in which He guides us and shows us His

will as soon as we submit the direction of our lives in His hands and ask Him daily that His will be done and not our own.

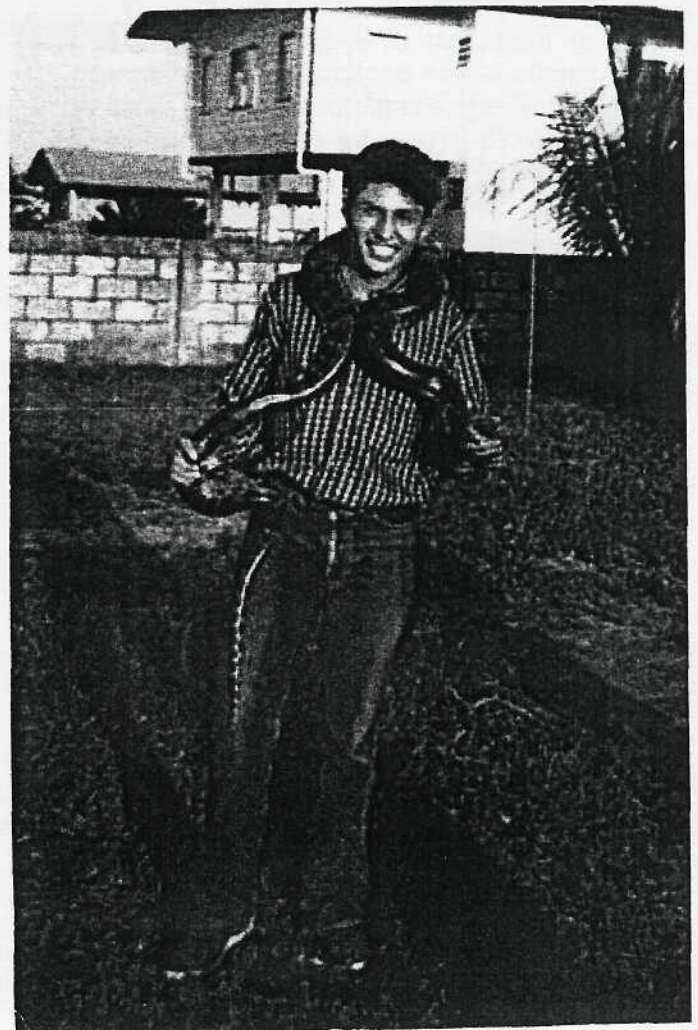
We are merely instruments in His hands and the only thing left for us to say is "Woe is me! For I am undone; because I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips: for mine eyes have seen the King, the Lord of hosts." Isa. 6:5

Something which I have seen fulfilled before my very eyes and which lately I have understood to a greater extent are the words of God in Zechariah 4:6, "Not by might, not by power, but by my spirit, saith the Lord of hosts.

I hope that we may all be meek in spirit and always willing to sacrifice everything for the salvation of souls.

This is my wish in the Lord,

Gabriel Porras



Gabriel Porras holding  
An Anaconda snake





# THE MANY-SIDED CHRIST

What think you of Christ? Who say you that He is? This Christ challenges the attention of the world by His many-sidedness. He meets the needs of all classes and conditions of men. As deep answers unto deep, so does He respond to the movings of each soul of mankind. If we were to call the roll of the world's workers this morning and ask them, "What think ye of Christ?" their answers would be something like this, and they would amaze us by their revelation of His many-sidedness:

To the artist He is the One Altogether Lovely.  
To the architect He is the Chief Corner Stone.  
To the astronomer He is the Sun of Righteousness.  
To the baker He is the Living Bread.  
To the banker He is the Hidden Treasure.  
To the biologist He is the Life.  
To the builder He is the Sure Foundation.  
To the carpenter He is the Door.  
To the doctor He is the Great Physician.  
To the educator He is **the** Great Teacher.  
To the engineer He is the New and Living Way.  
To the farmer He is the Sower and the Lord of the Harvest.  
To the florist He is the Rose of Sharon and the Lily of the Valley.  
To the geologist He is the Rock of Ages (and it is more important to know the Rock of Ages than the age of the rocks).  
To the horticulturist He is the True Vine.  
To the judge He is the Righteous Judge, the Judge of all men.  
To the juror He is the **Faithful** and True Witness.  
To the jeweler He is the Pearl of Great Price.  
To the lawyer He is the Counselor, The Lawgiver, the Advocate.  
To the newspaper man He is the Good Tidings of Great Joy.  
To the oculist He is the Light of the Eyes.  
To the philanthropist He is the Unspeakable Gift.  
To the philosopher He is the Wisdom of God.  
To the preacher He is the Word of God.  
To the sculptor He is the Living Stone.  
To the servant He is the Good Master.  
To the statesman He is the Desire of **All** Nations.  
To the student He is the Incarnate Truth.  
To the theologian He is the Author and Finisher of our Faith.  
To the toiler He is the Giver of Rest.  
To the sinner He is the Lamb of God that **taketh** away the sins of the world.  
To the Christian He is the Son of the Living God, the Saviour, the Redeemer, and Lord. -Melvin E. Lederer.

## IS THERE A PURPOSE FOR YOUR SUFFERING?



Maria was 12 years old when she first noticed it. Strange spots were appearing on her skin, and no matter what she did or how long she waited, they did not go away. In fact, as time went on they became more tender and began to turn into sores.

For a long time her parents did nothing about it. Then one day a doctor examined her, and broke the dreadful news. Maria has leprosy! Not just a light case that could be easily treated, but also the very worst type.

Maria's heart was broken. She did not want to leave home and go to a leper colony. She wanted to stay with her brothers and sisters and her parents. It did not matter to her that they were poor. She loved her home, and she could not bear to think of ever being separated from her family.

Maria could not understand why this had to happen to her. Had she not, since she was very young, prayed earnestly to the Virgin Mary, made offerings, and burned many candles? Why had not the Virgin heard her? And now she must go away. Maybe she would never see her parents again. For the rest of her life, probably, she would be among strangers.

Although Maria was 12 years old she had studied only to the third grade. In that section of the Amazon, country schools were scarce, and often there wasn't a

teacher available. The priest had taught the little village school for a few years, and from him Maria had learned to read and write. Although she was a sickly child, she had a brilliant mind, and early in life she had discovered that she could write poetry. Now she put all her sorrow into verse, which she hid with her dearest possessions.

One day an official came and took her to a government hospital. She was examined and told to wait in the hospital with other people who had leprosy, and later would be taken to the leper colony. It was a sad time for Maria, but she was brave and prayed continually to the Virgin that she would be cured and not have to stay away too long.

Finally, the unhappy lepers were transported down the river in a big government launch to their new home. The countryside was beautiful. Set amid the lush growth of the tropical jungle along the banks of the mighty Amazon, the whitewashed buildings of the leper colony looked lovely and inviting. But isolated from all other habitations, the stillness seemed complete and ominous. Birds of bright plumage swooped from tree to tree or sang in the bushes near the water's edge. Tall white herons stood like statues against the background of green marsh grasses. Maria thought the place exceptionally beautiful as she viewed it from

the deck of the riverboat. Not until she got inside was she aware of the suffering and the deformed human beings, which quite changed the picture. In the blue sky above, the big, black vultures circled, ever circled, over this city of living death.

Maria was led down a long, cool corridor to a room. Her meagre possessions were unpacked, and she was at home, the only home she would have for the rest of her life.

Maria was naturally cheerful. She smiled, and her black eyes were merry, even though she had nothing to look forward to. But time passes slowly in a leper colony. For Maria the only break in the monotony came on Sunday, when she rose early and made her way to the great white church at the other end of the colony. Here she said her prayers, burned her candles, confessed her sins, and gained strength to meet the weeks of suffering.

As the years passed, Maria's fingers slowly wore off and her toes became tiny stubs. Then her sight began to fail, and she knew that the dreaded disease was making her blind. But Maria had made many friends. She had comforted others who were not as bad off as herself. She had written poetry to sustain them in their darkest hours. Now two of the women took her to their cottage so that they could wait upon her. Here she lived, a leper

among lepers, for eighteen years. Flowers bloomed in the yard, but Maria could not see them. Children scampered along the sidewalks, but Maria could not view their happy faces. She could only sit in her chair and wait - and smile.

Then one day the course of Maria's life was changed. A lovely white boat anchored at the wharf and two men in white stepped ashore. With them they brought a young girl who had leprosy. Her skin was hideous, her fingers were gone; but there was something about her that made her stand out among all the lepers.

Somehow Theodora was different. She did not go to the church to pray to the Virgin. Instead she read a Book she called the Bible, and from it she received the strength she needed. Others noticed the difference and they began asking her about her religion. And Theodora told them. She visited the ones who were worse off than herself. She comforted them and prayed for them. She visited those who were not so ill as she. She helped the time of their stay to be more pleasant. And she visited Maria.

Maria had always been of an inquiring mind and was deeply spiritual. As she listened to Theodora, something began to stir in her soul. She listened long hours while Theodora read to her and explained to her the lovely Bible truths. Happiness such as she had never known flooded her heart. She wanted to hear more and still more.

Then, in answer to Theodora's requests, Adventist missionaries began to make visits to the colony. An Adventist man who

was a nurse joined the staff. He and Theodora and the missionaries held Bible studies among the lepers and the employees. In due time twenty-eight people were baptised. Maria was one of the first to step into the warm waters of the Amazon River to be baptised into a new life. She knew now why she had had to endure such suffering and the long separation from her loved ones. Without it she never would have found the greatest happiness of her life.

She said of her experience: "I am only a poor, sick, mutilated body, blind and without the possibility of even reading for myself. For twenty-two years other's hands have had to help me. However, I understand the excellency of the faith that I have accepted, and my joy is great, because now I know the love of Jesus. It is in this love that I find my greatest pleasure, and my whole life and being is dedicated to honouring God for the Holy Word He has given me."

Now, you may think that Maria with all her handicaps would just sit and enjoy what she could of life, wouldn't you? But not Maria. She could not do much, but she used the one talent that she did have - her voice. She had long enjoyed writing poetry. Somehow it was very easy for her to make verses, and she decided that in that way she could let her light shine. No longer were the verses she dictated centred around herself and her troubles, as they had been in years past. Her poetry gradually took on a quality of comfort.

Maria's favourite theme for her poems was the second coming of Jesus. Indeed, that was what

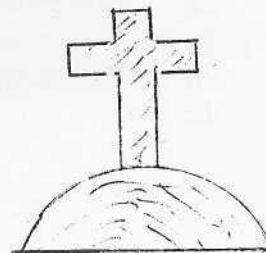
she thought about most of the time. She looked forward to the wonderful events that will take place on this earth. In her blindness, she thought how glorious it would be to see the beautiful world once more! How wonderful to be able to walk about, feasting her eyes.

Maria now rests in the little cemetery just outside the gates of the leper colony. The waters of the Amazon flow peacefully beside her grave. The bright coloured parrots wing their way above the treetops and the black vultures still circle overhead. But Maria sleeps, waiting for Jesus to call her and give her a new body and eyes.

When that time comes, I am sure Jesus will have a special greeting for Maria, the happy leper. If it had not been for her illness, Maria may never have found the truth. So if you have to go through some suffering, God may be allowing it for your eternal good. Just pray and thank God that He still loves you and will be with you in your trials.

**"Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened unto you: But rejoice, inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ's sufferings; that, when His glory shall be revealed, ye may be glad also with exceeding joy."**

1 Pet. 4:12, 13.



# IN LOVING MEMORY OF VIDA WILLIAMS FONDLY CALLED "TIDA"

## Proverbs 31:10-31

- 10 Who can find a virtuous woman? For her price is far above rubies.
- 11 The heart of her husband doth safely trust in her, so that he shall have no need of spoil.
- 12 She will do him good and not evil all the days of her life.
- 13 She seeketh wool, and flax, and worketh willingly with her hands.
- 14 She is like the merchant's ships, she bringeth her food from afar.
- 15 She riseth also while it is yet night, and giveth meat to her household, and a portion to her maidens.
- 16 She considereth a field, and buyeth it with the fruit of her hands she planteth a vineyard.
- 17 She girdeth her loins with strength and strengtheneth her arms.
- 18 She perceiveth that her merchandise is good: her candle goeth not out by night.
- 19 She layeth her hands to the spindle, and her hands hold the distaff.
- 20 She stretcheth out her hand to the poor yea, she reacheth forth her hands to the needy.
- 21 She is not afraid of the snow for her household: for all her household are clothed with scarlet.
- 22 She maketh herself coverings of tapestry her clothing is silk and purple.
- 23 Her husband is known in the gates, when he sitteth among the elders of the land.

24 She maketh fine linen and selleth it and delivereth girdles unto the merchant.

25 Strength and honour are her clothing and she shall rejoice in time to come.

26 She openeth her mouth with wisdom and in her tongue is the law of kindness.

27 She looketh well to the ways of her household and eateth not the bread of idleness.

28 Her children arise up and call her blessed her husband also, and he praiseth her.

29 Many daughters have done virtuously, but thou exceilest them all.

30 Favour is deceitful, and beauty is vain, but a woman that feareth the Lord, she shall be praised.

31 Give her of the fruit of her hands; and let her own works praise her in the gates.

Sunrise: August 14, 1933

Sunset: June 19, 2001

Who can find a virtuous woman?  
"Tida" was a virtuous woman.

By: Khandi Stewart  
U.S.A.



Four dear souls  
Were baptized  
In Manado by  
Brother H. Y.  
Karinda



Funeral of Albert  
Goni. He passed away  
April 18, 2001. He was  
Buried April 22,  
Which was also his  
Birthday.

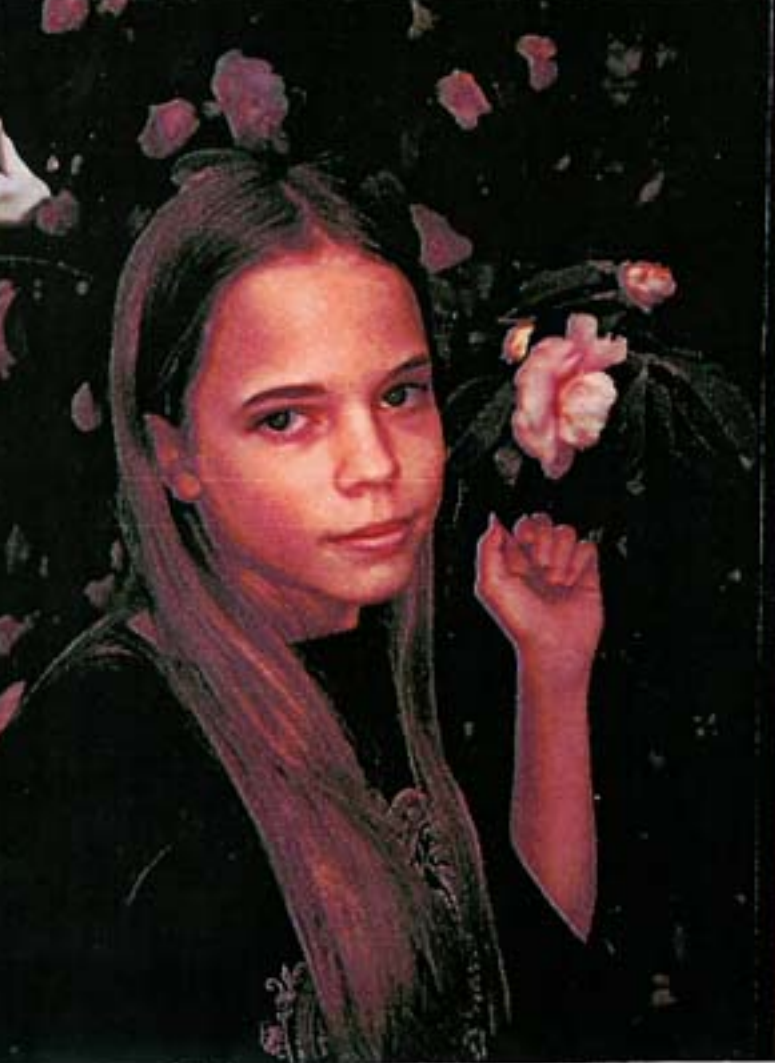


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Brother and Sister  
Albert Goni. He joined  
The Church 1976.  
He was the Field  
Leader in Indonesia.



Sharon from Australia



Two Friends



Children at U.S. Conference

## On Reading the Bible

They read the *Journal* and the *News*,  
The *Green Book* and the *Red*,  
They kept the serials of the month  
Securely in their head;  
They went through books both old and new,  
Best sellers too, they thought;  
They read the jokes and studied styles;  
No item went for nought.

They read the sporting page; they knew  
Each athlete by his name;  
They read of baseball, football, golf,  
Familiar with each game.  
They looked the funny paper through;  
They watched the mails to seize  
The magazine they liked the best,  
Whose columns most did please.

But in their home there was a Book  
With pages never turned,  
Whose messages of truth and hope  
Were still by them unlearned-  
The Book that tells of Him who came  
To earth that we might know  
The beauty of a sinless life,  
Lived here so long ago.

What pity 'tis they do not know  
This Man of Galilee,  
Who healed the lame, the blind, the deaf,  
Beside the sapphire sea!  
And still they read and laugh and cry  
O'er stories of the hour;  
And let the Book, dust-covered, lie  
Unopened in its power.