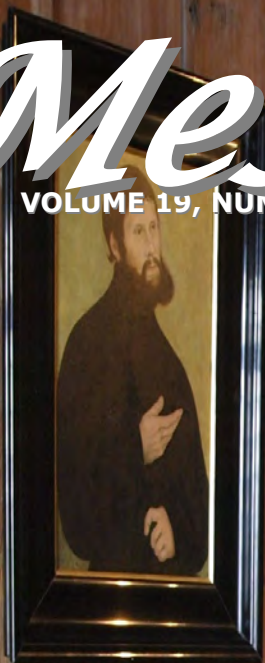


# *The Reformation* **Messenger**

VOLUME 19, NUMBER 4, APRIL 2012



**“He was daily accomplishing more than it seemed possible for one man to do. His pen was never idle. While his enemies flattered themselves that he was silenced, they were astonished and confused by tangible proof that he was still active. A host of tracts, issuing from his pen, circulated throughout Germany. He also performed a most important service for his countrymen by translating the New Testament into the German tongue. From his rocky Patmos he continued for nearly a whole year to proclaim the gospel and rebuke the sins and errors of the times.”** –*The Great Controversy*, p. 168 (About Martin Luther)



**WE BELIEVE:** The all-wise loving God created all things in the universe by His Son, Jesus Christ. He is the Owner and Sustainer. He met the challenge to His loving leadership and authority by reconciling the world to Himself through the life, death, and resurrection of His Son, the Word made flesh. The Holy Spirit, Jesus' representative on earth convicts of sin, guides into truth, and gives strength to overcome all unrighteousness. The Bible is the record of God's dealings with mankind and the standard of all doctrine, the Ten Commandments are the transcript of His character and the foundation of all enduring reform. His people, in harmony with God's word and under the direction of the Holy Spirit call all men everywhere to be reconciled to God through faith in Jesus. Bible prophecy reveals that earth's history will soon close with the visible return of Jesus Christ as King to claim all who have accepted Him as the world's only Redeemer and their Lord.

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# The Seven Last Plagues!



**And I saw another sign in heaven, great and marvelous, seven angels having the seven last plagues; for in them is filled up the wrath of God.” Revelation 15:1**

## VINDICTIVE WRATH

God has represented to His servant, Apostle John, in vision, in a wonderful manner, the awful introduction or preparation, and yet a glorious scene of the pouring out of the seven golden vials; a sight in heaven of those seven angels who were to have the execution of this great work, and with what acclamations of joy the heavenly hosts applauded the great design. God was about to pour out His seven last plagues, as the measure of Babylon’s sins was filled up.

They are to be poured out upon the whole fallen Christian empire and everything pertaining to it. They should now find the full measure of His vindictive wrath. The fall of antichrist shall be gradual; as Rome was not built in one day, so neither shall it fall in one day, but it falls by degrees; it shall fall so as to rise no more. But, “The world is fast ripening for the plagues.” —*Counsels on Stewardship*, p. 135

They are called the “last plagues” because there will be none to follow after the seven plagues have finished their work. Much counsel, however, has been given concerning the vital need of preparation necessary to stand in the evil day. It is important that we study and understand the significance of the outpouring of the seven last plagues, because we need to understand fully what it means to stand during that period without a Mediator in the heavenly sanctuary.

No intercessor is needed, however, because the faithful ones cannot sin anymore. Probation is over; the saints are sealed. Though everything was made ready before, yet nothing was to be put in execution without an immediate positive order from God, and this He gave out of the temple, answering the prayers of His people. We are taught to pray that the will of God may be done on earth, as it is done in heaven. The King of Kings steps out of the heavenly sanctuary to establish the Kingdom of God. He changes from His priestly garments to His kingly garments. The abhorrent plagues then follow! Like a contagious disease—it swoops down on the sensual hollow-hearted world! Hero-worshipping will come to a halt! “Reality Shows” will no longer be a reality! Prayer will no longer be an option!

## EGYPT’S PLAGUES AND THEIR SUN GOD

There were ten plagues that fell in Egypt. Their sins were alike and so was their punishment. The first three were uni-

versal, including the land of Goshen, while the seven last fell on the Egyptians only. Here is a helpful classification of those awesome plagues:

1) Loathsome—blood stained water, frogs, lice; 2) Painful—stinging flies, cattle plague, boils; 3) Appalling—hail, locusts, darkness; and; 4) The Overwhelming Plague—death of the first-born.

Not even the first nine plagues, as frightful as they were, could move the unregenerate and hardened heart of Pharaoh! The ten plagues were designed as visitations on the Egyptians and their gods at the same time. Thus the plague of darkness (Exodus 10:21–23) was directed against the sun god Ra, the most prominent of the Egyptian deities. We are not told how many plagues will visit the world as judgments from God in the last days, but the seven last will affect the wicked only, not the righteous; the “time of trouble.”—“the great tribulation” (Daniel 12:1–2). Then will follow the divined decree recorded in Revelation 22:11–12. After this, the plagues will fall upon those stamped with the mark of rebellion—THE MARK OF THE BEAST!

## 1. NATURE OF THE PLAGUES

These awesome plagues are the judgments of God that will be poured out upon the shelter-less heads of those who worship the beast and its image. When God shall bid His angels to loose the four winds, there will be a cataclysmic pandemonium—a scene of strife and trouble that no pen can picture. In these plagues will be poured out the wrath of God (Revelation 15:1). It will be the wrath of God unmixed with divine mercy (Revelation 14:1).

### The Merciless List is as Follows:

<u>Vial</u>	<u>Nature</u>	<u>Location</u>
No. 1	Grievous sores	Earth
No. 2	Blood	Sea
No. 3	Blood	Rivers
No. 4	Intense heat	Sun
No. 5	Darkness	Beast
No. 6	Euphrates dried up	Euphrates
No. 7	Great hail	Air

## 2. THE DURATION OF THE PLAGUES

The time will be a relatively short period. We have consid-

ered the time to be one year. This is based on the statement in Revelation 18:8; “Therefore shall her plagues come in one day.” One plague will fall after another; not like in Egypt. Using Ezekiel 4:6, the plagues will come in one symbolic day or one literal year. See Isaiah 9:14; 47:9. Isaiah 47:9 has a direct reference to ancient Babylon, but can also be used for mystical or antitypical Babylon. During this time Psalm 91:7–11 will be applicable.

The people of God will be protected. They will have the assurance of no plagues falling on them, although they will witness them! God will be our pavilion—no heat—but a cool breeze! There will be nothing to worry about! Jesus will descend on a white horse with His angels to gather His suffering believers. This is the good news; the gospel of the Kingdom, heralding their coming deliverance and reward (Revelation 14:12).

### 3. THE RECIPIENTS OF THE PLAGUES

These judgments will fall on the inhabitants of Babylon—only the wicked will be affected by them.

- a. Those who have the mark of the beast and worship his image. (Revelation 16:2)
- b. Those who have shed the blood of the saints and prophets. (Revelation 16:3, 6–7)
- c. Those at the headquarters (Rome) of the beast. (Revelation 16:10)
- d. Those who constitute Babylon. (Revelation 18:10–17)

### 4. THE SCOPE OF THE PLAGUES

These plagues are not universal or the inhabitants of the earth would be wholly cut off. Yet, they will be the most awful scourges that have ever been known to man. Man and animal will both suffer equally.

The plagues of Egypt were directed at idolatry and creature worship; they revealed the Creator as the only true God (Revelation 14:6–7). It was the age of nature worship and the exaltation of the creature above the Creator. They had placed man and animal on the same level—specism!

### THE SEVEN LAST PLAGUES

#### THE FIRST FIVE VIALS

On Earth, Sea, Rivers, Sun, Beast  
(Sores; Blood; Heat; Darkness)

Satan Plunges World Into Strife  
Sunday Observance Enforced  
Sabbath Keepers Oppressed  
Death Decree Passed  
Saints Given Time to Submit

#### THE SIXTH VIAL

The Euphrates  
(Waters Dried Up)

Evil Spirits Deceive  
Satan Accepted as Christ  
Saints Flee to Mountains  
Death Decree Enforced  
Kings of Earth Gathered

#### THE SEVENTH VIAL

The Air  
(Great Hail)

Final Clash of Nations  
Special Resurrection  
Deliverance of Saints  
Law of God Revealed  
Date of Advent Given

### 5. THE FIRST FIVE PLAGUES (Revelation 16:1–11)

#### a. The First, Second, and Third Plagues

Under the **first plague**: “and the first went, and poured out his vial upon the earth; and there fell a noisome and grievous sore upon the men which had the mark of the beast, and upon them which worshiped his image.” Revelation 16:2. “An evil malignant ulcer!” A malignant sore or ulcer is one that is dangerous to life, and one that is virulent. “Noisome and painful ulcers.” These running sores (superficial infected pustules or inflammatory nodules—most painful when attached to underlying structures—nose, ear, fingers, neck, affecting also breasts, face, buttocks, and producing great pain—they will be nauseating to the eye and smell (discharges, necrotic tissue, and sanguineous, purulent exudates). Deuteronomy 28:27, 35. There will be no cure, no remedy, no help; the nurses, the doctors, technicians, and scientists will all have it too! For one that has ever had hemorrhoids, it will be much more grievous!

These plagues are punishment upon the Papacy and the whole system of their religion, their false doctrines, their corrupt glosses, their superstitious rites, their idolatrous worship, their pedophilic practices, their pardons, indulgences, a great conflux of wicked inventions and institutions, by which they maintain a trade and traffic advantageous to themselves, but injurious to all who deal with them.

You see, God discovered not only the vanity and falsehood of their religion, say some, but the pernicious and deadly nature of it; that the souls of men were poisoned by that which was pretended to be the sure means of their salvation. Although surmised by some, this is very thought provoking—to awaken and arise, for it (The Seven Last Plagues) will soon begin (*Early Writings*, p. 64)

Upon some very learned men, upon their emissaries, and especially the Jesuits, who, like streams, conveyed the venom and poison of their errors and idolatries from the spring-head through the earth. What effect did it have upon them? It turned them “into blood” (blood thirsty; corruptive; demon-like); stirring them up, with others, upon those that had been the great incendiaries of the world, and had occasioned the shedding of the blood of armies, and of martyrs. God avenges those who shed the blood of saints and prophets—such martyrs. And also upon “believers who will be unprepared for such plagues” (*Early Writings*, p. 71), and a solemn warning to the wicked; “an outpouring of the plagues on all the ungodly who worship the beast and his image.” —*Early Writings*, p. 65



The **first angel** poured out his vial upon the wicked people, and especially upon the body of the Romish clergy, who are the basis of the papacy. They had marked

themselves by their sins, and now God will mark them out by His judgments.

“And the **second angel** poured his vial upon the sea; and it



became as the blood of a dead man: and every living soul died in the sea.” Revelation 16:3. This is the word of God!

This vial turned the sea into blood!

You see a “sea of blood.” Such is “an awful outpouring of God’s unmingled wrath” (*The Great Controversy*, p. 657); and all of its “terrible effects” (*Early Writings*, p. 289–290; *The Great Controversy*, p. 627–630)

These two plagues are similar to the first of the ten plagues that fell on Egypt. (Exodus 7:19–25). The great river of Egypt was worshiped as the “Nile god” and was identified with Ammon Ra. The very life of the nation depended on the Nile and its yearly overflow. In this commercial age of greed and selfishness, men fail to recognize that the temporal blessings of life are gifts from the Creator to be continued on the condition of obedience. See Deuteronomy 11:13–17

The soils of the land are rich sources of gold, silver, bauxite, iron, coal, oil, uranium, etc. Without water, the soil dries up, the cattle die from the drought, and seeds fail to sprout; wide spread in the world today. The blessings from God are cut off! The sea is dead, fish die; “every living creature in the sea died.” Man upsets the balance of nature. Moreover, justice is rendered for the blood of the prophets and God’s people brought upon by them who persecuted the saints.



“And the **third angel** poured out his vial upon the rivers and fountains of waters; and they became blood.” Revelation 16:4

When mercy is departed from this world, never to return, judgment without mercy will cut the blessings by which it is sustained. There will be no further

purpose in showing any favors to the wicked who have defied and insulted God and spurned every effort to help them. In fact the “wicked will be enraged by the Seven Last Plagues.”—*Early Writings*, p. 282

#### **b. The Fourth and Fifth Plagues (Revelation 16:8–10)**

Revelation 16:8–9 reads, “Men were severely burned” (as by fire) according to Weymouth’s translation.

Under the **fourth plague**, the sun’s heat is intensified, and to such an extent that men are scorched and burned. For many people, the sun, through the years, has been either

directly or indirectly, an object of worship. The object of their veneration will turn and rend or wrench them apart! See Joel 1:10–20. No sun screen or sun block will help!

What more consequences arise from this? That sun, furthermore, which before cherished them with warm and benign influences, shall now grow hot against these idolaters, and shall unmercifully scorch them. This is not merely acute sunburn



followed by blistering, chills, fever, weakness, shock, or as heatstroke or heat exhaustion and/or with secondary infections, but severe burning of greater levels than a second or third-degree burn—tissue is black, charred, and leathery, scorched—whereas the epidermis or dermis is destroyed resulting in disfiguring or disabling scars and bacterial invasion which can result in death.

Many in their excruciating anguish, but far from repentance, will curse God and look upward throwing out their blasphemous speeches against the God of heaven. They will be hardened to their ruin!

Many have succumbed to this perverse thinking and disbelief because of idolatrous practices. For one, Mithra, a Persian god, a Zoroastrian divinity, god of light, is an ancient sun god, identified with Sol Invictus, who was born on December 25. Mithraic Mysteries was a mystery religion practiced in the Roman Empire from the 1<sup>st</sup> to 4<sup>th</sup> Century A.D. The Vatican was built upon the grounds previously devoted to the worship of Mithra (600 B.C.).

The cultism of Mithraism believed Christ and Mithra were one. Mithra’s residence is in the sun, and Jesus is a reincarnation of Mithra! They believed in the immortality of the soul, held the Sunday sacred, and believed in the existence of Hell, peopled by the demons in the subterranean earth. The Egyptians, also worshiped Mithra, a pagan deity or god, the practice of which was named Mithraism, which contributed, along with other such deities, to their destruction. Today, Christianity is also worshiping, often unknowingly, or innocently, in such gods in essence and cults.

God, therefore, has taught and warned His saints to distinguish the true God, to have spiritual vision, to know who is who, so as not to be deceived; to know the truth, as the ten virgins were aware and waited for His coming, excepting five who were unprepared. The scorching heat mentioned, interfered with the means of making a living for those disobedient to God (Revelation 16:8–9; Joel 1:10–20). Those who are obedient to God enjoy the best living!

The wilderness Israelites had a canopy of a cloud by day and a pillar of fire by night—twelve miles square. As God was the

pavilion for the plagues, the same God will protect His saints—He does not change! (Isaiah 4:5–6)

Many today are rejecting God's call to keep His Sabbath, because they fear that the Sabbath will interfere with their means of making a living. It is poor living for those that walk in disobedience to God's will. Those who are obedient to God during the plagues will enjoy the best living. Those who are far-sighted and broadminded will choose some inconveniences now in order to be protected then. See Isaiah 4:5–6

The darkness that falls under the **fifth plague** (Revelation 16:10–11) is a darkness deep and intense. It is evidently more than physical darkness and is similar to that which affected the land of Egypt. This plague will affect the throne of the beast. The throne of Satan's kingdom under the seventh head is the Vatican in Rome. They have kept untold millions in spiritual darkness for hundreds of years. God will visit the papal kingdom with a darkness so intense that it will be painfully felt.



The **fifth vial** fell upon the seat of the beast—upon Rome itself, the mystical Babylon, the head of the antichristian empire. The whole kingdom of the beast was in distress and darkness. That very city, which was the seat

of their policy, the source of all their learning, and all their knowledge, and all their pomp and pleasure, now becomes a source of darkness, and pain, and anguish.

Darkness was one of the plagues of Egypt, and it is opposed to luster and honour, and so forebodes the contempt and scorn to which the antichristian interest should be exposed. Darkness is opposed to wisdom and penetration, and forebodes the confusion and folly which the idolaters should discover at that time. It is opposed to pleasure and joy, and so signifies their anguish and vexation of spirit, when their calamities thus come upon them.

They have caused untold numbers of martyrs to gnaw their tongues for pain on the rack and the stake. Now they suffer the terrible penalty by the eternal law of justice and retribution. Biting one's tongue can be extremely painful for those who know. The papists are judged as they judged. What they gave to others comes back on their own heads. The robber and despoiler of nations will be robbed of her glory and despoiled.

The center of duplicity, intrigue, pride, pretense, arrogance, craft, and hypocrisy will be filled with a darkness that no light can dispel. The children of Israel had light in Goshen! One side was shining brightly, but the sun was blocked out entirely on the other side for seven days! God's children will have

light! No fear! God will look after you!

## **FIFTEEN PROGRESSIVE ORDERS OF EVENTS DURING FIRST FIVE PLAGUES**

1. God's restraining influence withdrawn; angel's power over fire, earth, seas, wind—let go!
2. Satan has control of the world.
3. Satan plunges the world into trouble; all the elements of strife are let loose. The whole world will be involved in ruin more terrible than what came on Jerusalem in 70 A.D. when just over one million Jews were killed.
4. Nations activate deadly weapons; vessels on the sea with their cargos will be swallowed up by the sea; all with their cars, T.V's, cell phones, smartphones (i-Pads, BlackBerrys, Androids, iPhones, iOS, etc), clothes, etc.
5. Saints now live without an intercessor.
6. Satan has control of the apostate churches.
7. The wicked are incensed against the righteous.
8. Satan incites the wicked to greater hatred against the righteous, just as he did at Christ's crucifixion.
9. The decree to destroy the righteous is issued.
10. Anarchy, lawlessness, bloodshed, woe, and grief are everywhere.
11. Destructive power of nature will take place.
12. There is famine for the Word of God.
13. Spiritual darkness is followed by physical darkness.
14. Under strong delusion, men believe Satan is supreme.
15. Satan appears as Christ.

### **c. The Sixth Plague (Revelation 16:12–16)**

This is one of the most important plagues of the series!

#### **Important Features of the Plague:**

##### **1. Concerning the kings of the east**

- a) The vial on Euphrates.
- b) The waters dried up—Old Testament typology.
- c) The way of the kings of the east prepared.

##### **2. Concerning the kings of the earth**

###### **a) Promoters of the Gathering**

- (1) Primary Factors
  - (a) By Satan
  - (b) By Spirit of Demons
  - (c) By Unclean Spirits
- (2) Secondary Factors
  - (a) By the Dragon
  - (b) By the Beast
  - (c) By the False Prophet

###### **b) Process of the Gathering**

- (1) The approach—"To go forth unto the kings."
- (2) The deception—"Working miracles."
- (3) The gathering—"To gather them together."

###### **c) Purpose of the Gathering**

- (1) "To the battle of the great day of God."

- (2) "To the place called Armageddon"—mount of Megiddo
- (3) "To the battle of nations."

### 3. Concerning the people of God

- a) The assurance—"Behold I come quickly."
- b) The warning—"Lest he walk naked."
- c) The blessing—On him "that watcheth."

### THE EUPHRATES

The name "Euphrates" and its drying up are symbolic, because the drying up of a river has no significance in modern warfare. It dissects the North and the South of the Persian Gulf. The river Euphrates naturally means "waters." See Revelation 17:15. Water



means "people." Euphrates is symbolic of literal fulfillment—the drying up of the river means the destruction of the Turkish power and empire; it is a prophecy of the destruction of the Turkish monarchy (Ottoman empire).

The Apostle John sees the kings that come from the "sun rising" or, from the East, driven, as it were by satanic power to march to "the war of the great day of God, the Almighty—Armageddon." It refers to the dreadful statements in the Bible; "that unclean spirits of demons working miracles, go forth unto the kings of the whole world, to gather them together unto war." Revelation 16:13

### THE KINGS OF THE EAST AND EARTH

The demon-possessed kings, the rulers of the earth at the end of the age will all be demonized; the whole earth and of the world shall be gathered for the final conflict. The word "Armageddon"—"the place of the last decisive battle." *Oxford English Dictionary*. It will be a gathering of armies of nations in making warfare against each other. Many ancient battles have been fought there. See Jeremiah 25:30–32.

The present age of human history will be brought to its climax! This battle is to be taken literally!

The one and unanimous decision to destroy the righteous, the faithful Sabbath keepers, the anointed of God, was made earlier by the Sunday Law decree as the faithful dolorously passed through "Jacob's trouble." Now they are scattered in the mountains, some in prisons, others in isolated places, hiding; some alone, others gathered in small companies—the enduring remnant—faultless, without a blemish!

Satan, however, will give up without a fight. He knows he has lost the war. God will kill him! (Revelation 20:10). The people of God, the militant church on earth will have the final victory, crowned in glorious splendor before the Lord, and heirs to the church triumphant in Heaven! Remember—

we are on the winning side!

### d. The Seventh Plague (Revelation 16:17-21)

#### The Outline of Events

##### 1. Happenings from Heaven

- a) The voices.
- b) The thunders.
- c) The lightnings.
- d) The great hail.

##### 2. Happenings on Babylon

- a) It is remembered before God.
- b) It falls into three parts.
- c) It blasphemes God.
- d) It receives the wrath of God.

##### 3. Happenings on Earth

- a) The earthquake.
- b) The cities fall.
- c) The islands flee.
- d) The mountains disappear.

Here, the pouring out of the **seventh vial**, the wrath of God, is directed toward the **air** (Revelation 16:17); enemy territory! "The prince of the power of the air"—none other than Satan! (Ephesians 2:2)—and followed by lightnings, voices, thunders, and an earthquake (Revelation 16:18–19). It is in the "air" that the Lord Jesus will take up His faithful believers "in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air." (1 Thessalonians 4:13–17)

Finally, the actual coming of Jesus is not a plague. But, much will happen before the coming of Jesus! Under the **seventh plague** (Revelation 16:17–21), there will be a mighty commotion on earth; there will be an earthquake so great as never was before—ushered in by lightnings and thunders!



The great hail, whereby each hail-stone will be the weight of a talent (35 kilos, or 75 lbs.); the removal of islands with

their inhabitants, and the dislocation of mountains; major cities will fall (New York, Chicago, San Francisco, Los Angeles, Las Vegas, Washington D.C., Miami, Paris, London, Berlin, Athens, Rome, Tokyo, Caracas, Havana, Moscow, Beijing, Dubai, etc.); these are just some of the cities conjectured by some, that most likely will be the first to be destroyed.

Anderson Scott, an author in a remarkable chapter, on the "Abode of the Blest" has well said: "A city is first the ambition and then despair of man. . . . Men are proud of a city; they name themselves by its name; they sun themselves in its power and splendor, and yet in the hands of men, the city

has become a monster which devours its children. We can hardly dare to look at the spoil-heaps of outworn humanity out of which its wealth has been extracted, at the misery and vice on the top of which most of its comfort and splendor rest.

"All our effort, legislative, philanthropic, and religious, seems to fail piteously in the attempt to meet the evils inseparably connected with a great city. Yet, God prepares for us a city. The instinct to seek a common life, to form a complicated web of mutual sympathy and dependence, which is represented by a city, is after all, a true one, and the opportunity for its exercise, essential alike to man's true happiness and to the full development of his powers. "It is not good for man to be alone; neither is it good for a family to be alone, nor yet for a group of families; and this vision shows us this as realized in the corporate life of humanity, in a society so vast that none of God's children is left out of it—the far-off Divine event." *Book of Revelation*, p. 308–310. All these precede the actual coming of Jesus. Jesus will come during the **seventh plague**.

And this downfall will extend, as mentioned, further than to the seat of the antichrist, and every island and every mountain, that seemed by nature and situation the most secured, will be carried away in the deluge of this ghastly ruin—and with billions of its inhabitants! This is the accomplishment of the downfall of Babylon, which is the final finishing stroke of God's wrath.

The fall of Babylon was divided into three parts, called "the cities of the nations" (Revelation 16:19); having had the rule over the nations, and taken in the idolatry of the nations, incorporating into her religion, something of the Papacy, something of the Pagan, and something of the Protestant religion; she was as three cities in one. God had not forgotten her idolatry and cruelty. Now He gives her the "cup of the wine of the fierceness of His wrath."

The solemn warning which God gives of this great and decisive trial is so as to engage His people to prepare; therefore Christians should be clothed, and armed, and ready for it, that they might not be surprised and ashamed. When God's cause comes to be tried, and His battles to be fought, all His people shall be ready to stand up for His interest and be faithful and valiant in His service.

Ah! But first bear in mind, that the interests of the antichrist are so interwoven with the civil interests of the nations that he could not be destroyed without a great shock to all the world; and the people of God would have but little rest and leisure to assemble themselves before Him, while this great work proceeds.

Furthermore, those who take note of the tendencies of modern civilization will not find it impossible to conceive that a time may come when throughout Christendom, the spirit of antichrist will, with the support of the State, make a final stand against a Christianity which is loyal to the person and

teaching of Jesus Christ.

For the present, their Sabbaths would be interrupted, ordinances of public worship intermitted (Sunday Law); and all thrown into a general confusion. "There will be terrible agony of God's people during the plagues." —*The Great Controversy*, p. 630

God Himself will be preaching to the church and to the world, by terrible things, in righteousness and wrath. But, when this work is done, the church of God would have rest and peace. The New Jerusalem will be opened, and the solemn assemblies gathered, edified, and multiplied in the celestial grandeur of deliverance. **The greatest deliverances of the church are brought about by awful and astonishing steps of Providence.**

The wicked that were not destroyed by the plagues will be destroyed by Christ. See 2 Thessalonians 1:8, 10. But, first, the wicked will curse God, with no respect whatsoever. They will blaspheme God in utter cacophony

From 1844 there will be a special resurrection of those in Jesus. See Daniel 12:1–2). They will be harvested from Babylon—the world—144,000 strong! See Revelation 7:1–4. They will know the day and hour of His return. Ah! But they must be changed first—"in the twinkling of an eye" (1 Corinthians 15:52), changing from mortality to immortality in that instantaneous "twinkling." This is that instant, almost imperceptible "change!" which, of necessity, occurs.

What a heavenly journey will then take place! Seven days to reach heaven—one day of rest! "Alleluia; Salvation, and glory, and honour, and power, unto the Lord our God." Revelation 19:1

**Remember! God will be on your side. He will be on our side. He is perfect love! "Angels will shield God's people during the plagues."** *The Great Controversy*, p. 629

### **WE ARE ON THE WINNING SIDE!!**

There is no need to be fearful—of **THE SEVEN LAST PLAGUES!** Search God's word carefully to know how to escape (*Early Writings*, p. 92).

### **Divine Promises**

a. **"The angel of the Lord encampeth round about them that fear Him, and delivereth them."** Psalm 34:7

b. **"He shall deliver thee....From the noisome pestilence."** Psalm 91:3

c. **"He shall cover thee with His feathers, and under His wings shalt thou trust."** Psalm 91:4, 7, 10

d. **"Bread shall be given him; his waters shall be sure."** Isaiah 33:16; 41:17.

Amen and Amen!

*John Theodorou,*  
**USA**





# Experience

I want to encourage you, who read this experience, that our loving Father in heaven bless you richly as we approach the end of time.

My grandmother grew up in a Sabbath-keeping Church. Her parents were members of the same church in Romania, but when she grew up she didn't want to follow Jesus in the truth and she left the church. Later on, she got married to someone who didn't love Jesus. He had never heard about our church, so she chose to live without Jesus—trying to forget everything that she had learned while she was with her parents. She lived in the world—adopting the traditions and customs of the world. She changed a lot in a negative way. This was the time when my grandmother got married and gave birth to a son, who is my father. My mother told me that she had never known someone like my grandmother. She behaved so badly—giving a negative testimony about anyone who knows the faith (but obviously not living it). She lived a tumultuous life, full of trials. My grandmother had three children, two boys and one girl, and she had to go through many trials with them. In those times they had money but their life was unhappy.

My grandfather was a truck driver and most of his time he spent outside of the home. One day something terrible happened. He told me that one night while he was driving it was foggy, and on a curve there suddenly appeared right in front of his truck, a wagon without any light on it—so the accident was inevitable. The man in the wagon was killed in the accident and my grandfather was taken to prison. Although he was found “not guilty” he had to stay for a while in prison, and after that he had to pay a pension to the family who lost their father in this tragic accident. I can imagine it was something dreadful, terrible for my grandfather, because he had to go through all these trials.

I want to say that there never was a good relationship between my grandmother, grandfather and their children. Why? We know when somebody forsakes the Lord there is not a good expectation in life, because Jesus said that separate from Him you or I can do, how much? Nothing. Their children grew up in the world, got married and never wanted to know anything about

the religion of Jesus. My grandmother finally turned to Jesus after so many years passed with her living in the world, although it was too late for her to influence her family for the Lord. Her husband died at only 66 years old. From her example, and her life, no one from her family wanted to hear about Jesus and her religion. In this time my mother became a member of the church, receiving Jesus as her personal Saviour. My grandfather never had respect for her faith or Jesus. Although he died at only 66, he didn't want to accept Jesus as his personal Saviour even when he was dying. For him, God didn't exist. I remember he died in the hospital when I was 14 years old. He died unexpectedly, for he appeared to be a tall and healthy man. I remember I went to the hospital with my mother to visit him just prior his death. My mother tried to present Jesus to him—she was telling him how much Jesus suffered for us in order to give us the possibility to be saved. I don't know if he received Jesus then; only God knows. But what I want to say with this experience is, if only my grandmother would have remained faithful to the Lord her whole life I believe my grandfather would have changed and maybe he would have become a Christian. Thus, their whole family could have known salvation in Christ.

Without Jesus, our Redeemer, there is no happiness, nor is there true, complete life—that is why I encourage you, brethren, to follow Jesus. I strongly encourage all mothers and fathers to do your duty before God and be responsible for your children, bringing them to Jesus daily in prayer, that they may have joy and happiness serving Him from now on, until He comes again. To forsake Jesus is not the solution; only with Jesus can we be overcomers. Our Lord Jesus says in John 16:33, “These things I have spoken unto you, that in Me ye might have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world.” And in 1 John 5: 2, 4: “By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God and keep His commandments. For whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world and this is the victory that overcomes the world, even our faith.”

I wish you God's blessings.

In Christ, **Alina Anca**



# Abundance of Grace

why he would do so, but he has. Therefore, George Wilson must die.” Wilson was hanged. Pardon, declared the Supreme Court, must not only be granted, it must be accepted. So it is with God’s grace. He offers it to us, but it can be experienced only if we accept it. Christ is the personification of God’s grace. To obtain the gift of grace we need only to claim God’s promises (2 Corinthians 8:9; Ephesians 2:5–7), pray for grace (John 14:13–14), and allow the Holy Spirit to speak to our hearts,

Grace is the English word translated from Latin, *gratia*, which in turn is translated from the Greek, *charis*, meaning “undeserved favour.” Love is the twin sister of grace (John 3:16; Ephesians 2:8). Christ is the personification of God’s grace, and that is why His death to save the human race is the utmost act of love. Jesus came to manifest grace and love, to rescue humankind from its condemnation and bondage to sin.

## WITHOUT GRACE

Because of sin, we are all without hope and deserving of death. But because of Christ, we can experience the abundance of grace, which results in salvation and life. Christ’s communication of grace and love exceeds and overrides the guilt and wrath caused by Adam and Eve’s sin. Beyond that, we are promised: Where sin abounded, grace much more abounded (Romans 5:20). This is a wonderful solution to the problem of sin: Christ freely gives His abundant grace to all who wish to cover themselves with His righteousness and mercy.

*Grace Needs to Be Accepted.* During the administration of United States President, Andrew Jackson, George Wilson, a postal clerk, robbed a federal payroll from a train and killed a guard. The court convicted Wilson and sentenced him to hang. Because of public sentiment against capital punishment, however, a movement began to secure a presidential pardon for Wilson (it was his first offense). Eventually President Jackson intervened with a pardon. Amazingly, Wilson refused it. The Supreme Court was asked to rule on whether a person could refuse a presidential pardon. Chief Justice John Marshall handed down the Court’s decision: “A pardon is a parchment whose only value must be determined by the receiver of the pardon. It has no value apart from that which the receiver gives to it. George Wilson refused to accept the pardon. . . . We cannot conceive

awakening us to the reality of our need (Ephesians 1:12–13; Psalm 51:1).

*Three Dimensions of Grace.* God’s abundant grace has three dimensions—past, present, and future. When we accept His grace we are made new, and our past is buried in Christ. As we walk with the Lord, our transformed lives are evidence of His abundant grace in us. Even if we sin His grace is, and as long as probation shall last, available to pardon us if we confess and repent of our sins.

## GRACE PRESERVES LIFE

The presence of sin in the human heart brought competition, division, discrimination, and differences between God’s creatures. Through His care for nature, God’s grace controls life on earth, because nature also suffers sin’s consequences (Romans 8:20, 22). God’s wonderful promises include the redemption of nature from sin and its consequences when sin is finally destroyed (Isaiah 35:1–2, 7; 55:13).

*Nature Portrays God’s Grace.* God’s grace is easily perceived in the maintenance of life on our earth. Sunshine and rain sustain life on the planet and cause the land to produce food. Seasons come and go, benefiting



human beings and nature itself. Everything in the universe testifies to a Creator and a Sustainer, despite the intrusion of sin and its consequences.

*God’s Grace on Our Planet.* Nature’s ecological equilib-

rium has been disturbed in some parts of the world, usually out of ignorance or because of limited vision and economical ambitions (many times in the name of development and progress), without consideration for long-term consequences. Despite the destruction imposed on our planet, we can see traces of God's wonderful work: the beautiful fields of Alberta, Canada; the Great Barrier Reef in Australia; the Norwegian fjords; the amazing, mysterious, and untouched nature in Africa; the magnitude of the Amazon rain forest; the numberless varieties of birds daily sustained by God's gracious hand; unimaginable kinds of animals peculiar to each region on our planet; countless types of trees with their fruits. Is there any reason to believe that any of these are here by chance? The evidence suggests the existence of a Creator and Maintainer of life. Those of us who have experienced God's abundant grace have a responsibility to do our part in preserving nature. God's grace protects and enhances life on our planet; and we, as His witnesses, are called to testify about this.

### **GOD'S GRACE EXTENDED**

God's grace is free to everyone regardless of ethnic, racial, social, gender, national, or tribal differences—mere human classifications. Christ came to destroy all human barriers or divisions that separate His children from God or each other. He came to reconnect humanity with God and establish a new order in which people live in peace and harmony when they choose to be transformed by His grace.

*God's Promises in His Word.* God makes no distinction between us in His dealings, because He accepts us just as we are. "Here there is no Greek or Jew, circumcised or uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave or free, but Christ is all, and is in all." Colossians 3:11, NIV. That means there is no male or female, Jew or Gentile (or Palestinian), Zulu or Xhosa, Serbian or Croatian, Hutu or Tutsi, White or Aboriginal, Black or White. We are all *one* before God (Galatians 3:28). The Bible is full of promises assuring us that God's grace brings salvation, hope, and life if we simply come to Him. There are no limits to what His grace can do to transform us.

*Acceptance and Renewal.* When we experience God's overabundance of grace in our lives, the natural consequence is the transformation of our character. This in



turn leads to our acceptance of one another and the desire to live together as children of God. All intrigue, prejudice, or discrimination—so much a part of our sinful nature—will be changed by Christ's marvellous grace. This is the practical and visible evidence of God's overabundant grace to our society. The world cannot understand it, but it will marvel at it.

*God's Ideal Plan.* God's original plan involved face-to-face communication with His created beings in a setting in which they would enjoy His company eternally. This was temporarily obliterated by the intrusion of sin. The Bible employs the symbol of angels (messengers) commissioned with the task of proclaiming the plan of salvation to every nation, tribe, language, and people (Revelation 14:6, 7). The truth enveloped here is clear: God invites every person to be part of His kingdom regardless of his or her ethnic, racial, gender, social, national, or tribal differences.

### **A PRACTICAL GRACE**

God's grace is a gift to us. The conditions for receiving God's grace are a recognition of our need and a willingness to surrender ourselves completely to Him in order to be changed and made new by His grace.

*Grace and Obedience.* Boris Kornfeld was a Jewish physician who had fallen victim to Stalin's purges. We do not know his "crime" except that he was sentenced to a concentration camp for political subversives at Eki-bastuz. Kornfeld was an ardent Communist, a cultural Jew, and an atheist. Because he was a doctor, he lived a little better than the other prisoners—the prison authorities needed doctors to care for the prisoners who were constantly dying under the primitive conditions of their imprisonment. While in the concentration camp Kornfeld began to re-examine his beliefs in Communism. One of his patients was a Christian who witnessed to him of the transforming grace of Jesus Christ. He struggled over giving his life to God. One day as he worked to save the life of one of the prison guards who had been knifed, he was tempted to suture the severed artery in such a way that it would reopen shortly after the surgery. The guard would die, and no one would be the wiser. As his hands paused while tying the suture he suddenly became appalled by the violence and hatred in his own heart toward the guard and all those like him. He despised his persecutors. He could gladly kill them all. He then realized that he was trapped by the very evil that he despised. He began to retie the suture properly, and as he did, he found himself repeating the words he had heard from his fellow prisoner: "Forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who

trespass against us.” These were strange words for a Jew. But he continued to pray the Lord’s Prayer and recount other passages about God’s love and forgiveness.

One day he discovered an orderly stealing some of the food meant only for the patients. Orderlies were quislings, prisoners who had betrayed some other prisoner. The prison authorities used them to keep order, and turned their backs when they abused other inmates. Kornfeld reported this infraction to the prison commandant. The commandant placed the orderly in three days of confinement. Kornfeld knew that his life would not be safe once the orderly was released. But eventually he found he was not afraid. A remarkable peace had come into his heart. He wanted to share his new faith.

One afternoon he examined a prisoner who had been operated on for cancer of the colon. The eyes of this man were filled with sorrow, and his face was etched with years of misery. Kornfeld felt mysteriously attracted to him. Kornfeld shared what had happened to him, how God had transformed his life. The patient, drifting in and out of consciousness did not catch it all. But he heard enough to know that this man, this doctor, was different. The next morning the young patient awoke to the sound of running feet and a great commotion. That very night someone had bludgeoned Boris Kornfeld to death. But his testimony did not die. The patient pondered the testimony of the doctor and became a Christian. He survived that prison camp and went on to tell the world about it. His name was Alexander Solzhenitsyn. He is most famous for his massive exposé of conditions under Stalin in his book *The Gulag Archipelago*. Even though Kornfeld did not live long, he followed the path of the apostle Paul, who also was transformed by grace from a persecutor of Christians to a Christian himself. This story is condensed from Charles Colson’s, *Loving God* (New York: Harper Paperbacks, 1987), pp. 19–29.

“But we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord.” 2 Corinthians 3:18

Think for a moment about your greatest need—emotional and relational. The cry of humanity, the cry of every individual, is acceptance for who they are. We want to be loved, to be valued, and to be accepted just as we are. But also we have to take into consideration that **God always accepts you as you are but He never**

**leaves you where you are spiritually.**

When Adam and Eve took the forbidden fruit, they knew they had done something wrong. They were afraid that God would no longer accept them as they had become, so when God came looking for them, they hid. We have been hiding ever since. We are afraid that God will not love us. We find it difficult to confess our sins, our problems, and our difficulties, because we are afraid that others in the church will look down on us. We are afraid of rejection just as Adam and Eve were. Yet we need each other in order to grow in Jesus. So how do we find the power, the resolve, to lose our fear? How do we become transformed to be like Jesus and to conquer the sin in our lives? It comes from understanding the grace that transformed the life of Boris Kornfeld.

#### WHAT IS GRACE?

Grace begins with acceptance: “Wherefore receive ye one another, as Christ also received us to the glory of God.” Romans 15:7. What did we have to do for Christ to accept us? Nothing! Paul tells us that “But God commendeth His love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.” Romans 5:8. Christ does not wait until we are good before He accepts us. The Bible is clear that no one is good or will ever be good



enough (see Romans 3:10–12, 23). If no one is good enough and there is nothing that we can do that will make God love us, how then are we saved? “Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved” (Acts 16:30–31). Believing in Jesus means that you have come to the place where you recognize that you are helpless and there is nothing you can do to get to heaven. You realize that you are guilty and you deserve to die. You are sorry for your life of sin. So you place your full trust in Jesus. You accept as yours the perfect life Jesus lived, and you change from being dependent on yourself to being dependent on Jesus. When God gives you His grace, His pardon, He does not expect you to keep on living the same way as you lived before. Your surrender to Him allows Him to place the Holy Spirit in your life. He transforms you so that you desire to do

good things. You desire to follow Christ's commandments because you love Him (John 14:15). This is why the apostle Paul said that God had commissioned him to call the Gentiles to the obedience that comes from faith (Romans 1:5).

Boris Kornfeld knew when he became a Christian that he would change, and that his behaviour would change. When you accept Christ, your life will change. Remember, "God always accepts you as you are, but He never leaves you where you are spiritually." When you accept His gracious gift of salvation, He places all the resources of heaven at your request so that you can grow to become more like Jesus. What does a person who is growing like Jesus look like? Just because a person has accepted the seventh-day Sabbath, or changes how they dress, or returns tithes to God does not make them a Christian. A person can do all these things without surrendering to the lordship of Jesus. There is something more basic that Jesus wants.

#### BACK TO BASICS

At the Last Supper just before He died, Jesus explained how people would know who His followers were. He said that everyone would know them by how they loved one another (John 13:35). Ellen G. White endorsed what Jesus said when she stressed how God's people are to live in the last days: "Those who wait for the Bridegroom's coming are to say to the people [the world], 'Behold your God.' The last rays of merciful light, the last message of mercy to be given to the

world, is a revelation of His character of love." —*Christ's Object Lessons*, p. 415

"A loving, lovable Christian is the most powerful argument in favour of the truth." —*Manuscript Releases*, vol. 21, p. 25

#### A BICYCLE BUILT FOR TWO FUNCTIONS

I like to illustrate the connection between grace and transformation to a bicycle. A bicycle has two wheels. If we separate the wheels, we no longer have a bicycle, but it is important to distinguish the difference between the wheels. One steers the bike and the other powers the bike. Both are equally important and necessary.

Salvation is made up of two parts—**grace** and **transformation**. Both are necessary for heaven, and if we separate them we no longer have salvation. But just as with the bicycle, it is vital that we distinguish their unique functions. Grace is what saves us. Grace comes entirely from God. It is outside us and is given to us freely when we place our trust in Jesus. Transformation begins to take place the moment we receive grace. Transformation takes place inside us. We always look to grace for the assurance of our salvation, yet are always conscious that we are growing in obedience to God. As we cooperate with God He changes us into His image. Amen! To be continued.

In Christ,  
**Nicholas Anca**

## Montreal Youth Conference 2012

This past month, we were able to hold the first Canadian youth conference of 2012 here in Montreal. Throughout the course of the conference, youth and brethren alike were able to hear the voice of the Lord through sermons that spoke about the role the youth are to play in these final days of Earth's history. Hymns, specials, testimonies, and much more, accompanied each service, held and conducted by the missionary students visiting from Cedartown, Georgia, USA. Sabbath day services saw 26 attendees, from Toronto, Montreal and Granby, all of which stayed for the customary lunch after the divine service.

To God's glory and honour, each service implanted a special hope and zeal in each heart, a calling and appeal to be soldiers of Christ for His service, and His

service alone. Our desire and wish for the youth the world over would be that each and every one would make use of, and employ, his or her unique talent for the Master.

The apostle John admonishes *us* in his epistle "because [we] are strong, and the word of God abideth in [us], and [we] have overcome the wicked one." And it is only as we gather together to study His word that the Spirit of God will descend upon His people, so that they can proclaim His message to the fallen world with the necessary strength and power. Let us no longer delay; today is the day to proclaim and live His gospel.

**Johanna Munoz**

# You Can Forgive....But Can You Forget?

**“Thou wilt cast all their sins into the depths of the sea.” Micah 7:19**

When it comes to man and our duty toward God it goes without saying that we are forgetful creatures. For this reason so much is said in the Bible about remembering: Remember the Sabbath day, remember Lot’s wife, remember, and do all my commandments, remember the days of old, remember His marvelous works, remember now thy Creator, and on and on. We are forgetful creatures by nature of the things of God, but by nature there are certain things we do not forget.

“Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended: but this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.” Philippians 3:13–14

It is a great thing to learn how to remember, but it is an equally great thing to learn the art of forgetfulness. Many are in danger of losing sight of the fact that it is a duty sometimes to forget as much as it is to remember.

“One reason why so many fail to make advancement in the Christian life is because they have never learned how to forget. They think that one can forget only as the thing gradually fades from the mind, not realizing that they have to put forth positive effort in order to forget, as well as to remember. It will scarcely be questioned by anyone that scenes and acts of wickedness are to be forgotten. When the sin has been confessed and forgiven, then the mind should turn from it. True, the individual should never forget that he has been taken from a horrible pit or that he stands only by faith, having no strength in himself; but if he allows his mind to dwell upon the specific acts of sin, one of two things, and possibly both, will result. Either he will be led to doubt that he has been forgiven, or else he will be impelled by the force of habit and association, to the commission of the same things again. An impure thought cannot find lodgment in the mind without leaving a stain. We have known many persons to cheat themselves out of a great blessing that God had for them, simply by keeping their minds fixed on the sin, and letting that eclipse the love of God. It is a great thing to forget, even while retaining sufficient remembrance to appreciate at its true value the wonderful love of God in

pardoning sin.” —*Signs of the Times*, March 11, 1889

Have you ever or do you even now doubt your sins to be forgiven? Is there a stain in your life that you cannot overcome no matter how much mental exercise you exert? Personally, this statement is a great rebuke to me. There has been many a time and even recently where I, having gone over my past mistakes, am led to doubt that I have been forgiven; and there are times when trying to overcome objectionable habits, I have delved deeper into them by recalling in my mind the defeats of the past. We are robbing God by fixing our minds on our problems, our sins, when our minds should be fixed on our Saviour.

“I have blotted out, as a thick cloud, thy transgressions, and, as a cloud, thy sins.” Isaiah 44:22

“I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more.” Jeremiah 31:34

“For I will be merciful to their unrighteousness, and their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more.” Hebrews 8:12

“When God calls a man a sinner, he is a sinner; and when He calls a man righteous, he is righteous in reality, as much so as if he had never sinned. There is no virtue in mere intellectual assent. God never declares a person righteous simply because he makes an acknowledgement of the truth. And there is an actual, literal change from the state of sin to righteousness, which justifies God in making the declaration.” —*The Present Truth*, August 16, 1894

If Christ remembers our sins no more which we have confessed, why then do we remember them? Because it is in our nature to always remember the bad. He makes free to us the robe of His Righteousness and when we have that robe we are righteous, if He does not remember our sins, then He considers us no longer sinners. You believe He made the firmament and caused the sun to shine for the day and the moon for the night, do you not? Then believe that when you are forgiven and your sin is remembered no more by Him, that it is gone, and so remember it no more.

“Let not him that wavereth think that he shall receive anything of the Lord. When persons begin to draw nigh to God, Satan is always ready to press in his darkness. As they look back over their past life, he causes every defect to be so exaggerated in their minds that they become discouraged, and begin to doubt the power and willingness of Jesus to save. Their faith wavers, and they say, ‘I do not believe that Jesus will forgive my sins.’ Let not such expect to receive anything from the Lord. If they would only exercise true repentance toward God, at the same time possessing a firm faith in Christ, He would cover their sins and pardon their transgressions. But, instead of this, they too often allow themselves to be controlled by impulse and feeling.” – *Historical Sketches of the Foreign Missions of the Seventh-Day Adventists*, p. 135

“When you lose your hold on Him, and fail of receiving the fulfillment of the promise, the bank of heaven has not failed; you have broken your covenant with God. He cannot fulfill His promises while you refuse to let Him take away your transgressions, because you suppose that by disobeying Him, you have placed yourself beyond help. The Lord says, ‘Let him take hold of My strength, that he may make peace with Me; and he shall make peace with Me.’ Then cease to worry over the troubles that you so often bring upon your selves; come like a penitent child to Jesus, confessing your sins. ‘Thus saith the high and lofty One that inhabiteth eternity, whose name is Holy; I dwell in the high and holy place, with him also that is of a contrite and humble spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite ones.’” – *Signs of the Times*, March 16, 1904

“Satan may whisper, ‘You are too great a sinner for Christ to save.’ While you acknowledge that you are indeed sinful and unworthy, you may meet the tempter with the cry, ‘By virtue of the atonement, I claim Christ as my Saviour. I trust not to my own merits, but to the precious blood of Jesus, which cleanses me. This moment I hang my helpless soul on Christ.’ The Christian life must be a life of constant, living faith. An unyielding trust, a firm reliance upon Christ, will bring peace and assurance to the soul.” – *Messages to Young People*, p. 112

The subject of our study is the necessity of forgetting. We have all experienced that it is in our very nature to always remember the bad, and this is not limited to the mistakes we have made; far greater remembrance is placed on those who have sinned against us. If we are honest with ourselves, is there now any barrier be-

tween brother and sister, parent and child, or husband and wife?

“But if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.” Matthew 6:15

“One of the most common sins, and one that is attended with most pernicious results, is the indulgence of an unforgiving spirit. How many will cherish animosity or revenge and then bow before God and ask to be forgiven as they forgive?” – *Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 5, p. 170

Shall we be surprised to find this among us? It is as common to man’s nature as righteousness is to God’s. And note that it has pernicious results, that it is extremely harmful in a very subtle way. Whose spirit is that?

We can often say we forgive others when they have wronged us, but what marks whether or not that forgiveness is genuine?

“Nothing is more deadening to spiritual life; for the fact that such things are not forgotten proves that they are not forgiven, and if they are not forgiven that is evidence that the soul is not rejoicing in the love of God. When God forgives us, he puts upon us his own righteousness in place of the sin, and then treats us as though we had never sinned; and if we obey the injunction to forgive one another even as God hath for Christ’s sake forgiven us, we shall treat the one who has offended as though he had always done us kindness instead of injury. Without this, the peace of God cannot rule in the heart.” – *Signs of the Times*, March 11, 1889

It is a hard thing for us to forgive, especially when we have done nothing to provoke wrong, especially when we have even loved the wrongdoer. It is easy for me to simply say, well, “look to Jesus,” but how does that practically deal with my hurt, my trust, my respect and even my anger? What exactly are we to look at? This is something that personally I have struggled to understand. The last few months I have been reading *The Desire of Ages* on my way to and from work, and a few weeks ago I was privileged to look at Jesus through the eyes of Peter.

“‘Did not I see thee in the garden with Him?’ ‘Surely thou art one of them: for thou art a Galilean, and thy speech agreeth thereto.’ At this Peter flew into a rage. The disciples of Jesus were noted for the purity of their language, and in order fully to deceive his questioners, and justify his assumed character, Peter now denied his

Master with cursing and swearing. Again the cock crew. Peter heard it then, and he remembered the words of Jesus, 'Before the cock crow twice, thou shalt deny Me thrice.' Mark 14:30.

"While the degrading oaths were fresh upon Peter's lips, and the shrill crowing of the cock was still ringing in his ears, the Saviour turned from the frowning judges, and looked full upon His poor disciple. At the same time Peter's eyes were drawn to his Master. In that gentle countenance he read deep pity and sorrow, but there was no anger there.

"The sight of that pale, suffering face, those quivering lips, that look of compassion and forgiveness, pierced his heart like an arrow. Conscience was aroused. Memory was active. Peter called to mind his promise of a few short hours before that he would go with his Lord to prison and to death. . . A tide of memories rushed over him. The Saviour's tender mercy, His kindness and long-suffering, His gentleness and patience toward His erring disciples,—all was remembered. . . He reflected with horror upon his own ingratitude, his falsehood, his perjury. Once more he looked at his Master, and saw a sacrilegious hand raised to smite Him in the face. Unable longer to endure the scene, he rushed, heartbroken, from the hall.



"He pressed on in solitude and darkness, he knew not and cared not whither. At last he found himself in Gethsemane. The scene of a few hours before came vividly to his mind. The suffering face of his Lord, stained with bloody sweat and convulsed with anguish, rose before him. He remembered with bitter remorse that Jesus had wept and agonized in prayer alone, while those who should have united with Him in that trying hour were sleeping. . . He witnessed again the scene in the judgment hall. It was torture to his bleeding heart to know that he had added the heaviest burden to the Saviour's humiliation and grief. On the very spot where Jesus had poured out His soul in agony to His Father,

Peter fell upon his face, and wished that he might die."  
—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 712–713

Can you imagine yourself in Peter's place? . . . because, essentially we are; and then can you not forgive? As you hold on to the hurt of other's wrongdoings toward you, you are essentially denying Christ because He sacrificed Himself just as much for the one that has wronged you.

"Do not for a moment pain the heart of the pitying Saviour by your unbelief. He watches with the most intense interest your progress in the heavenly way; He sees your earnest efforts; He notes your declensions and your recoveries, your hopes and your fears, your conflicts and your victories." —*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 5, p. 316

In order to forgive and to forget it comes down to a personal relationship with Christ. For a church to function, it comes down to one's relation to Christ, independent of anyone else. For any relationship, and especially dealing with hurt, we must apply the same.

"We should carefully consider what is our relation to God and to one another. We are continually sinning against God, but His mercy still follows us; in love He bears with our perversities, our neglect, our ingratitude, our disobedience. He never becomes impatient with us. We insult His mercy, grieve His Holy Spirit, and do Him dishonor before men and angels, and yet His compassions fail not. The thought of God's long-suffering to us should make us forbearing to one another. How patiently should we bear with the faults and errors of our brethren when we remember how great are our own failings in the sight of God?" —*That I May Know Him*, p. 181

"However sorely they may have wounded us, we are not to cherish our grievances and sympathize with ourselves over our injuries, but as we hope to be pardoned for our offenses against God, so must we pardon those who have done evil to us." —*The Youth's Instructor*, June 1, 1893

"Instead of looking critically upon our brethren we should turn our eyes within, and be ready to discover the objectionable traits of our own character. As we have a proper realization of our own mistakes and failures, the mistakes of others will sink into insignificance." —*That I May Know Him*, p. 181

Yes, I can forgive when I see myself in the sight of God, but forget? How can I relate to someone as though they had never sinned against me?



“But how shall we forget? Many would forget, but they do not know how. They take hold of the thing and resolutely attempt to force it out of their mind, but that only fixes it the more firmly. Well, the secret of forgetting is very simple. Forget one thing by thinking of something else. It is impossible for the mind to contemplate two things at the same time. Now if you wish to forget something bad, think of something good. Forget the things that are behind by looking toward the things that are before.” –*Signs of the Times*, March 11, 1889

“Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things.” Philippians 4:8

“If you would dwell on such subjects as Christ’s willingness to forgive sins, to receive the sinner, to save that which is lost, subjects that inspire hope and courage, you would be a blessing.” –*Selected Messages*, book 1, 177

We cannot look to the sinner to resolve the hurt; there may be a temporary resolve not to look to them, but often it is the case that we are later more disappointed when we do. Despite efforts, despite resolutions, we are essentially sinners and prone to sin; but the debt they owe you in your own mind will shrink into insignificance when you look at your own debt to Christ. Those wages we will remember that He paid for you and for me, while we were yet sinners.

Human nature tends to remember the bad, whether it is in ourselves or others; it also has a tendency to remember good when it is ourselves committing those good things. We have a built-in “pat on the back” mechanism called pride. There is a danger in remembering our good deeds that is scarcely less fatal than when we remember the acts of sin.

“Sometimes through the grace of God we are enabled to accomplish a really good work, which gives us great joy. But then, instead of thanking God that He has done something with us; we insensibly take to ourselves some of the glory, and congratulate ourselves over our success. Instead of going on in the same strength to gain other victories, we sit down and look at what has been done, or else, going on, we keep looking back, and so stumble and fail.” –*Signs of the Times*, March 11, 1889

“But God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified

unto me, and I unto the world.” Galatians 6:14

The apostle Paul knew full well what he was talking about when he stated this. There is a great risk in becoming self-sufficient the greater our sphere of influence or our position.

“The minister for God should, in an eminent degree, possess humility. Those who have the deepest experience in the things of God are the farthest removed from pride and self-exaltation. Because they have an exalted conception of the glory of God, they feel that the lowest place in His service is too honorable for them.

“The self-sufficient, satisfied with themselves, can well be spared from the work of God. Our Lord calls for laborers who, feeling their own need of the atoning blood of Christ, enter upon their work, not with boasting or self-sufficiency, but with full assurance of faith, realizing that they will always need the help of Christ in order to know how to deal with minds.” –*Gospel Workers*, p. 142–143

Should we fear success then? Perhaps take time to step back before going forward in the work? No, this does not need to be done.

“Let us not forget that as activity increases, and we become successful in doing the work that must be accomplished, there is danger of our trusting in human plans and methods. There will be a tendency to pray less, and to have less faith. We shall be in danger of losing our sense of dependence upon God, who alone can make our work succeed; but although this is the tendency, let no one think that the human instrument is to do less. No, he is not to do less, but to do more by accepting the heavenly gift, the Holy Spirit.” –*The Review and Herald*, July 4, 1893

How do we forget our good works when we are actively pursuing them? Again, what is your relation to Jesus?

“Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can ye, except ye abide in me. **I am the vine, ye are the branches: He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing.**” John 15:4–5

“Whoever abides in Christ brings forth much fruit; while separate from Him we can do nothing. Doing nothing is made equivalent to not bearing fruit. So then bearing fruit in the vine is identical with doing something. The more passive than the bearing re is nothing of fruit; and yet there is nothing in which more intense activ-

ity is shown than in a fruitful vine or tree. The tree can do nothing to make itself bear fruit, yet the bearing of fruit is a period of activity." —*The Present Truth*, July 13, 1893

Do you want to forget your good works as you move onward? Then keep your eyes indeed onward. Those fruits are Him working in you, and while you are ever moving, your movements are passive actions, like body parts moving in reference to the mind.

At the commencement of this study we were exhorted by the Apostle that whilst we run the Christian race, there is a necessity to forget the things behind us—our faults, the faults of others, and even to a degree, our victories.

"Nobody can expect to make any **headway in a race** if he keeps looking back over his shoulder. If he does so, he cannot fail to stumble over some object lying in his path, or else his course will be very crooked. He who is running the Christian race should heed these words of the wise man:—Let your eyes look straight ahead, and your eyelids look right before you. Ponder the path of your feet, and let all your ways be established. Do not turn to the right or the left; remove your foot from evil. (Proverbs 4:25–27)." —*Signs of the Times*, March 11, 1889

Do you need to ask an athlete where he is to run in a sprint? When running a race an athlete knows where he is running—to the finish line. His eyes look neither behind him to the track he has already covered, nor to his competitors on either side; but his eyes are fixed straight

ahead on the goal. Do you want to forget your past mistakes? Then look ahead to Christ in the atonement. Do you want to forgive and forget the sins of others against you? Then look before you to Jesus, pleading for you before the mercy seat. Do you want to forget your past works and press on in dependence? Then look at Jesus in the vine.

"Let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith." Hebrews 12: 1–2

Lay down the weights of remembrance and look to Jesus, who is both the beginning and finish line. I know it seems too simple, but "look to Jesus and indeed, live."

"We must put on the heavenly graces, and, with the eye directed upward to the crown of immortality, keep the Pattern ever before us. He was a Man of Sorrows, and acquainted with grief. The humble, self-denying life of our divine Lord we are to keep constantly in view. And then as we seek to imitate Him, keeping our eye upon the mark of the prize, we can run this race with certainty, knowing that if we do the very best we can, we shall certainly secure the prize." —*Counsels on Health*, p. 47

It is my prayer that we both see the necessity of forgetting and forget not its necessity. Amen.

**Steve Caruana**



## My Will Or The Will Of God?

Jesus prayed earnestly, "O My Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from Me: nevertheless not as I will, but as Thou wilt." Matthew 26:39

It was not the will of Jesus to drink the bitter cup and to die upon the cross, but because it was the will of His Father, He consented to it.

Jesus, who was the Creator of the whole universe, would He not be wise enough to know what to do, but what did He say? "I can of Mine own self do nothing: as I hear, I judge: and My judgment is just; because I seek not Mine own will, but the will of the Father which hath sent Me." John 5:30. And the will of the Father was that He will carry His cross and suffer and die upon it.

Now what is the will of the Father concerning us? "Then said Jesus unto His disciples, if any man will come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me." Matthew 16:24. The key words in this verse are, "will" and the "cross."

Our will is the governing power in our nature. And this kingly power rules our thoughts, words, and actions. Will is not taste, nor inclination, nor feeling; it is above them all as a supreme ruler. As the cross was not the will of Jesus, it is not our will either, but there is one power that is above our will and that is the will of the Father, which functions through love; and if there is love to God, our cross becomes enjoyable even.

It is a fearful thing for man to set his will against the will of God, yet this is exactly what Satan did, and it caused his downfall. This is also what Adam and Eve did, and as a result, billions fell into sin and destruction.

Every sin that man commits is against the will of God, and that way man places himself above God and makes an idol of himself.

There is a small animal called the lemming, about five inches long, similar to the rabbit, very common in Norway. They travel in large companies from place to place, all following the leader. When the leader goes to the sea and drowns himself, thousands follow and drown also. We may think that these little animals are very foolish, but in reality, intelligent people do the same. The whole world is like these lemmings.

We read in the Spirit of Prophecy, "Satan leads them into a round of gaiety and pleasure-seeking, of eating and drinking. He fills them with ambition to make an exhibition that will exalt self. Step by step, the world is reaching the condition that existed in the days of Noah. Every conceivable crime is committed. The lust of the flesh, the pride of the eyes, the display of selfishness, the misuse of power, the cruelty, and the force used to cause men to unite with confederacies and unions—binding themselves up in bundles for the burning of the great fires of the last days—all these are the working of Satanic agencies. . . . The world, who act as though there were no God, absorbed in selfish pursuits, will soon experience sudden destruction, and shall not escape. Many continue in the careless gratification of self until they become disgusted with life that they kill themselves. Dancing and carousing, drinking and smoking, indulging their animal passions, they go as an ox to the slaughter." —*Evangelism*, p. 26

"My heart is pained, I can scarcely restrain my feelings, when I think of how easily our people are led away from practical Christian principles to self-pleasing. . . . The Lord abhors your selfish practices." —*Testimonies to Ministers*, p. 398

"But she that liveth in pleasure is dead while she liveth." 1 Timothy 5:6

Many professed Christians are committing spiritual suicide when they turn from self-sacrifice to self-pleasing.

When Lucifer spoke to the angels in heaven, inviting them to join with him in the rebellion against God, if he would have been truthful he would have said, "Join with me in the war against God and His people for six thousand years, and cause death for all mankind and in

the end we will die in the lake of fire." How many angels would have joined with him?

If Adam and Eve had believed God when they were about to eat of the forbidden tree, they would have said, "Let us eat of this tree and kill ourselves and also the billions who are born after us, and even Christ would have to die because of it. Shall we now eat of this tree?"

When you are about to do sin, if you are truthful, you will say, "I don't love you, God, I love Satan, he gives me pleasure of sin, and if I am lost, I don't care."

When you stay away from prayer meetings, you can truthfully say, "I don't want to go where Christ, or angels go. I am not interested to listen to God's words or prayers. When you neglect missionary work, being truthful, you would say, "I am not my brother's keeper, if their blood is in my garments, we perish together."

These may be small things but their results are far reaching. These are terrible decisions that we make daily. These are decisions for eternity, and how many make terrible mistakes in these decisions, following their own will and ignoring the will of God. If you want to know the will of God, then read the Bible through and the nine volumes of the *Testimonies for the Church*, and other books of the Spirit of Prophecy and attend all religious meetings.

In Hosea chapter 4: 6, we read, "My people are destroyed for the lack of knowledge." Yet the knowledge of God's will is freely offered to everyone. Also, the power to obey God's will is available to all honest seekers.

The will of God is that we deny ourselves and take up our cross and follow Jesus. Jesus said, "In the world ye shall have tribulation." John 16:33

Also we read, "We must through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of God." Acts 14:22

The will of God is to see us in heaven, glorified, reflecting the perfect image of Jesus, and having our faces shining happiness and fullness of joy. When we consider the end of the road, our destination, then let us all say, "Father, not our will, but Thy will be done in our lives." AMEN.

**Timo Martin**





# Serious Devotion

How many of us like to please? I'm sure most of us do; the only problem is we try to please everyone—we want to avoid offending God and at the same time indulge in the pleasures of this world. The values of this world and the values of God stand in violent opposition to each other. Yet we try to embrace both. Some of us may not be trying to purposely oppose God; we're just hoping that He will allow us to get into bed with the enemy. That metaphor may sound too graphic but James 4:4 calls it just that. It says "Ye adulterers and adulteresses, know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God? whosever therefore will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God." Allegiance to the world is an insult to the God who loves us. Why though, is God so exclusive? Because the world contains its own ideas, principles, and standards, all inspired by Satan, and all filled with corruption. In our own minds we like to think that there is a wide road between God and the world, a road on which we can walk and keep both happy, but not so. In between the two is a fine line, we are either entirely devoted to God, or we are entirely a part of this world. The ideas and values of each are so completely different that there is no such thing as middle ground. A coin cannot land on both heads and tails at the same time, likewise a Christian cannot be both on God's side and on the world's side.

When we do try to walk on both sides we betray God. Anything but complete devotion to God is betrayal to Him. When we choose things like money, possessions, careers or status over God we are, you could say, cheating on Him. God sent his Son to die on this earth so that we could be partakers of His sinless nature, so that we could be called His own. Many times throughout the Bible, Jesus is referred to as the Husband and the church, His wife. When we put things in human terms they become easier to understand, just like Jesus did with the parables.

So, imagine for a moment a husband that is good look-

ing, has a charming personality, is incredibly intelligent, and has plenty of confidence in everything that he does. And imagine that he selflessly devotes himself to his wife at every opportunity that he gets. He gives her expensive gifts, takes her to exotic vacations, and cooks for her every night. His affection for her is demonstrated at a considerable sacrifice to himself, but he loves her so it is not a burden to him. He is the perfect husband, and she the apple of his eye. Now imagine this lucky woman, demanding more of her husband, complaining when perhaps instead of pie for dessert there were muffins, and when she gets bored she sleeps with the other men in the neighbourhood. Basically, imagine her forgetting everything that her husband does for her on a daily basis and trading it for trash. To us this seems absurd; how could someone be so apathetic and ignorant? Most women would never choose to live in a slum; they wouldn't choose to divorce a goodhearted husband for an abusive one. But according to Micah that is exactly what Israel did, and what we are doing today. In Micah 6:3 God asks us "O My people, what have I done unto thee? and wherein have I wearied thee? testify against Me." We have a God who loves, which means we have a God who suffers. And in this text we can hear the heart-cry of God. He says to us "Why? What did I ever do to you? Haven't I given you everything you could possibly ever need? Don't you know what I have done for you? I laid down My life for you." But in laying down His life for us, as Brother Larry Watts has said many times, in laying down His life, He gave us the choice to reject Him. And it is only this amazing love that could be so steadfast in the face of such betrayal.

In the Bible God uses this exact comparison of a husband and wife when comparing Himself and Israel. Let us turn our Bibles to Hosea 1:2. "Go, take unto thee a wife of whoredoms and children of whoredoms: for the land hath committed great

whoredom, departing from the Lord.” We don’t have the time to read the entire story of Hosea, so I encourage you all to read it for yourselves, but the point I want to make here is that Hosea had a wife that was a harlot and often cheated on him. Now I imagine Hosea must have been a very kind husband, yet his wife still treated him thus. And through this prophet and his wife God was trying to show Israel that what they were doing was one and the same. Let us read Hosea 1:9. “Call his name Lo-ammi: for ye are not My people, and I will not be your God.” Israel’s adultery was a stinging insult to the Creator. He was Israel’s husband, He was a kind and loving husband, yet still He was treated in this way. The words He spoke here to Israel were words of deep pain. Sometimes it’s hard for us to attribute such pain to a God of perfect foresight. Yes, God knew ahead of time of Israel’s adultery. Yes, He wasn’t blindsided by their unfaithfulness. But the picture of the forsaken husband grieving for His beloved as she commits adultery is a picture given by God Himself. He wants His people to know: His foreknowledge doesn’t remove His pain. Like we mentioned before, we have a God who loves, therefore we have a God who suffers also.



Yet though God spoke words of deep pain and hurt, He still did not leave His people. In Hosea 3 we find words of hope and love. Let us turn to Hosea 3 and read from verse 1–3. “Then said the LORD unto me, Go yet, love a woman beloved of her friend, yet an adulteress, according to the love of the LORD toward the children of Israel, who look to other gods, and love flagons of wine. So I bought her to me for fifteen pieces of silver, and for an homer of barley, and an half homer of barley: And I said unto her, Thou shalt abide for me many days; thou shalt not play the harlot, and thou shalt not be for another man: so will I also be for thee.” Just as Hosea still loved his wife and bought her and rescued her from the life of adultery she was leading, so Jesus has done for us. He loves us and has bought us with His own blood that we might be saved from a life of sin.

Can you imagine doing what Hosea did? Can you imagine the person you loved being unfaithful over and over again, yet still looking out for them, still bringing them back, still being the best person you could be for them?

To forgive is even difficult for us sometimes, yet Hosea did much more than that. He went the extra mile.

What is one of the characteristics of being a good friend? Loyalty. So not only should we be faithful to God, to our spouses, but also to our friends.

I personally have made the mistake of betraying one of my closest friends, yet they forgave me. But it was a rare occurrence and I was very blessed to have such an amazing friend. But how sad would it have been for me to lose those friends, through a wrongdoing of my own. How sad would it be if God said to us one day “I know you not.”

So every time you place something above God, every time that you ignore His word, every time you forget all His blessings and are tempted to complain; remember the picture of the forsaken husband grieving. Remember the story of Hosea and his wife. But most of all remember our God loves us and wants us to be faithful only to Him, and because He loves. He also what? He suffers. So it is my wish and prayer that we remain faithful and bring not suffering upon Jesus. AMEN.

*Nidia Romero*

## LOOKING FOR YOU...

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# The Answer Is God

Why don't you go teach in a public school? I don't remember how many times I've been asked this question. Well-meaning friends and family, wondering why I would want to waste my time and talents at Small Cloud Christian School when I could have a much "better" job in a public school. And, sadly, some of the people who have asked me this question are members of my own church!

Often their questions are based on some very logical points. (1) I could make more money. Currently, although all my needs are provided for, I don't make anywhere near the \$60,000 average California teacher's salary. (2) I would get regular medical benefits, and perhaps my husband wouldn't have to work so hard. (3) I could teach more students. Currently, my classroom consists of four students and two tag-alongs (my twin two-year-olds). And the list of logical points goes on and on.

Finally, after my most recent conversation regarding the matter, I decided it was time to let my voice and God's voice be known on why I have chosen my current teaching position at Small Cloud.

What is education? "Christian education means the acceptance, in sentiment and principle, of the teachings of the Saviour." *Counsels to Parents, Teachers, and Students*, p. 36. "Godliness—Godlikeness—is the goal to be reached." *Counsels to Parents, Teachers, and Students*, p. 24. "The most essential lessons for teachers and students to learn, are those which point, not to the world, but from the world to the cross of Christ" —*Counsels to Parents, Teachers, and Students*, p. 11, emphasis mine

As I child, I longed to be a teacher. So, unlike some of my peers who didn't know what to do with their lives, I knew exactly where I was headed. And I believe God chose me, right then

and there, to work for Him.

I attended Pleasant Grove Elementary School and then moved on to Joseph Kerr Middle School. Partway through my seventh-grade year, I learned that my mom's good friend (Evelyn Holmstroem) had decided to homeschool my friends—her children. Homeschooling? What's that? But I decided that I wanted to be homeschooled, too. I could already see that the middle school I attended was a very inhospitable place for a girl who wanted to serve God.

Even as I began my first day of homeschooling, I started to see a marked difference in a godly education versus a public school education. At home, I studied the Bible daily, planting God's Word in my heart. Each of my subjects centered on God: His providence and intervention throughout history, His wisdom and creativity in science, His orderliness and consistency in math, His desire for my communication skills to be perfected for His service, and so on. Instead of six hours of "no God" influence, I was being impressed and touched by Him each hour of every school day.

It is no wonder then, as my godly education continued, that my goals were being shaped as well. I was fascinated with Bible and Spirit of Prophecy counsel on education, while at the same time I wondered why our church had no schools in the United States. My goal enlarged from "I want to be a teacher" to "I want to open my own Christian school."

God led in miraculous ways (too numerous to recount here), and Small Cloud Christian School was established in 1996. For years, however, I had nagging thoughts egged on by the devil. "You can't do as good a job as the public school!" "Your school is so small." "What have you accomplished anyhow?!" Those thoughts, however, changed completely as I started realizing more and more



what God wants from His people.

“The highest class of education is that which will give such knowledge and discipline as will lead to the best development of character, and will fit the soul for that life which measures with the life of God.” *Counsels to Parents, Teachers, and Students*, p. 45. As a teacher, I make this my goal—to help develop in my students godly characters and to prepare them to spend an eternal life with their Creator. Any teaching, short of this, is a waste! The question is: could I do this in a public school?

Could I pray with my students—asking God to soften their hearts to receive truth, to open their minds to receive knowledge, and to help them through each difficulty that life sends their way? Could I include God in each and every subject—showing His awesomeness and love? Could I encourage each student to have a character like Christ’s—exhibiting patience, thoroughness, diligence, efficiency, and the like? Could I encourage them to memorize Scripture? I couldn’t.

Instead I would be teaching the ways of the world. I would be required to teach that my students and I evolved from some less complex species. I would be required to specifically share the contributions of gays, lesbians, bisexuals, and transgender Americans. I would be required to teach literature that would shame a true child of God.

No, in a public school I couldn’t teach what God wants me to teach. But I praise God that here in Wilton, CA, at Small Cloud Christian School, I can!

It is true that I would make more money in a public school. But money wouldn’t satisfy my longing to share with children and youth the hope and joy that God has given me!

Would medical benefits help relieve some of the financial burdens of our home? Perhaps, but God provides more benefits than any earthly employer could ever hope to. Daily, He provides for our family. And, at the same time, He teaches us to depend on Him.

What about students? Could I teach more



of them in a public school? Yes, but I couldn’t get to know them as I have gotten to know my Small Cloud students. And what good would it be to have more students if I were shackled—not able to share with them what I really need to? Numbers aren’t everything.

So you see, I don’t feel sorry for my job here at Small Cloud. I don’t long, like the proverbial cow, for fields that are greener. I am in a lush, green field of God’s providence and grace. I’m where God wants me to be!

**Sandy Nelson, Wilton, CA**

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**“In the Teacher sent from God all true educational work finds its center. . . .**

**In the presence of such a Teacher, with such opportunity for divine education,**

**what worse than folly is it to seek an education apart from Him—**

**to seek to be wise apart from Wisdom;  
to be true while rejecting Truth;  
to seek illumination apart from Light,  
an existence without the Life;  
to turn from the Fountain of living waters,  
and hew out broken cisterns, that can hold no  
water!” –Education, p. 83**





## CHILDREN'S CORNER

# Martin Luther- Man of Faith

Martin Luther was born on November 10, 1483 in the country of Germany, in the small town of Eisleben, close to modern-day Berlin. His parents, Hans and Margarethe Luther, were middle-class peasant labourers, who practiced the Roman Catholic Religion. His father, a miner, worked hard to ensure a proper education for his son, and by age 21, Martin Luther held a Master of Arts degree from the University of Erfurt. Following Hans' dream for his son to become a lawyer, in 1505 Martin began to study law. But later that year, while traveling through a terrible thunderstorm, Martin had an experience that would change the course of his future. Fearing for his life when a lightning strike narrowly missed him, Martin cried out, making a vow to God. If he lived he promised to become a monk. And so he did! His parents were very disappointed when Luther entered the Augustinian Monastery at Erfurt in less than a month's time.

Martin Luther's religious life was tormented by fears of hell and God's wrath. He felt a desperate need to gain the assurance of his own salvation by his own works. Even after his ordination in 1507 he was haunted with insecurity over his eternal fate. Around this point in time he also became disillusioned by the immorality and corruption he witnessed among the Catholic priests he had visited in Rome. In 1511 Luther moved to Wittenburg to earn his Doctorate of Theology.

As Martin Luther immersed himself deeply in the study of Scripture, especially the letters written by the Apostle Paul, God's truth broke through. One day while he was climbing the stairs of St Peter's cathedral on his knees, the truth suddenly came to him that he was "saved by grace through faith" alone (Ephesians 2:8). After he completed his studies and began teaching bib-

lical theology at the University of Wittenburg, his new found enthusiasm began to spill over into his lectures. He also had many discussions with the other staff members. He spoke passionately about Christ's role as the only mediator between God and man, and that by grace and not through works, are men justified and forgiven of sin. Salvation, Luther now felt with all assurance, was God's free gift. It did not take long for his radical ideas to get noticed. Not only did these revelations of God's truth change Luther's life, they would forever change the direction of church history.

In 1514 Luther began to serve as a priest for Wittenburg's Castle Church, and people flocked to hear God's Word preached like they had never heard before. During this time Luther learned of the Catholic Church's unbiblical practice of selling indulgences. Those who paid good money for these indulgence documents were promised total forgiveness from all sin, and for the sins of departed loved ones. Luther publicly objected to this dishonest practice and abuse of church power.

On October 31, 1517 Luther nailed his famous *95 Theses* to the University's bulletin board—the Castle Church door — formally challenging the church leaders on the practice of selling indulgences and outlining the Biblical doctrine of justification by grace alone. This act of nailing his Thesis to the church door has become a turning point in Christian history, symbolic of the birth of the Protestant Reformation.

Luther's criticisms of the church were seen as a threat to papal authority, and he was warned by the Cardinals of Rome to recant his position. Luther refused to change his stand unless someone could point him to scriptural evidence where he was teaching error.



In January of 1521, Luther was officially excommunicated by the Pope. Two months later, he was ordered to appear before Emperor Charles V in Worms, Germany for a general assembly of the Holy Roman Empire, a convention known as the "Diet of Worms". On trial before the highest Roman officials of the Church and State, again Martin Luther was asked to renounce his views. And just as before, with no one able to prove to him from the Bible where he was teaching error, Luther stood his ground. As a result, Martin Luther was issued the Edict of Worms, banning his writings and declaring him a "convicted heretic." Luther escaped in a planned "kidnapping" to Wartburg Castle where he was kept protected by friends for almost a year.

During his seclusion, Luther translated the New Testament into the German language, giving ordinary people the opportunity to read God's Word for themselves. The Bible was distributed among the German people for the first time ever.

After he had completed the translation, under the threat of arrest and death, Luther courageously returned to Wittenburg's Castle Church and began to preach and teach there and in the surrounding areas. His message was a bold one of salvation in Jesus by faith alone, and freedom from religious error and papal authority. Miraculously avoiding capture, Luther was able to organize Christian schools, write instructions for pastors and teachers, compose hymns (including the well-known "A Mighty Fortress is Our God"), put together numerous leaflets, and even publish a hymnbook during this time.

Shocking both friends and supporters, Luther was married on June 13, 1525 to Katherine von Bora, a nun who had abandoned the convent and had taken refuge in Wittenburg. Together they had three boys and three girls and led a happily married life in the Augustinian monastery.

As Luther aged, he suffered from many illnesses including arthritis, heart problems and digestive disorders. Yet he never quit lecturing at the University, writing against the abuses of the church, and fighting for religious reforms.

In 1534 he completed translation of the Old Testament in German. He also wrote many other religious books that were distributed all over Europe.

During an exhausting trip to his hometown of Eisleben, on a mission of reconciliation to settle an inheritance dispute between the princes of Mansfeld, Luther succumbed to death on February 18, 1546. Two of his sons and three close friends were at his side. His body was taken back to Wittenburg for his funeral and burial at Castle Church.



The work of Martin Luther impacted the Protestant Reformation more than any other. He was a man of faith, who boldly stood for God amidst great opposition. His life shows the impact of one faithful servant of God.

Very soon, each one of us may need to stand alone against the mighty men of this earth and answer for our faith as did Martin Luther. Today is the time we need to earnestly study our Bibles in preparation for the future.

May God help each young person to have the boldness and courage of Martin Luther. Then the work of God will come to a speedy conclusion and we can go home to be with Jesus.

**Note:** the picture on the front cover was taken in Wartburg Castle. It is the room where Martin Luther translated the New Testament into the German language. The picture on the back cover is Wartburg Castle from the outside, where Martin Luther was held captive by his friends.

# Canadian Field Workers' Seminar

## January 25<sup>th</sup> to February 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2012

The workers' seminar, 2012 was a time of spiritual, mental and physical encouragement and blessings. We have been blessed by the Lord, studying together and learning from each other. It was a privilege to be able to have Br. Henry Dering with us there at this occasion, studying from the book *Evangelism* by Ellen G. White, and sharing with us some other skills we need in our missionary work. I believe each one of us felt the blessings the Lord bestowed upon us as we studied, prayed, and shared our personal testimonies. We also want to thank each brother and sister for their support and prayer in order to have this successful seminar. The place rented for this work retreat was a wonderful one, in a beautiful landscape, good accommodations and during a beautiful season; winter for me personally is something that gives me joy and a nice remembrance from my childhood in Romania. I would like, at this time, to thank, in the name of all the workers there, the Canadian Committee for their support and prayers. I strongly encourage our brethren to make possible to have similar meetings each year, because our Lord Jesus wants us to come closer and rededicate our life and talents in His vineyard, gaining new souls for Him.

According to our schedule we started our first class with our dear Brother Elder Hernandez. He presented some skills and principles on how to work with other religious denominations in order to win them for Jesus. He shared with us topics such as: how to study with Jehovah's Witnesses, Muslims and Mormons.

Brother Jerry Eaton followed with topics as to how to work with SDA groups and other independent movements. He shared with us some important topics in the light of the Bible and testimonies about "Rebellion and Apostasy." At the end of his presentation we had a test.

Br. Henry Dering shared with us from his experience how to approach people from other denominations, how to preach, canvass, and to give Bible studies. He gave a power point presentation about cults and their impact over people. The book, *Evangelism*, was the center of our study and its application in our missionary work. He shared his personal testimony with us, encouraging us to work heartily and faithfully for the perishing souls, and to be effective for the church. We thank him for his knowledge and experience that he shared with us and for the blessed time spent together.

Sister Johana Munoz and Brother Renzo also spoke. Sister

Johana presented her subject about literature, and how to improve the literature for the Canadian Field. She brought some good ideas on how and what can be improved in our books in order to have good, presentable books for canvassing work. We decided to improve the design of the cover of the magazine, "Road to Health." Besides all these good ideas she brought before us, I want to thank her for the good food she prepared for us and the time she spent in the kitchen for us. Also, we thank Brother Renzo for the wonderful music he played and for sharing with us his testimony and skills in winning souls to Christ.

Myself, I presented from the book, *The Acts of the Apostles* by Ellen G. White the first five chapters which speak about God's purpose for His Church, the Training of the Twelve, the Great Commission, Pentecost and the Gift of the Spirit. We learned how God used people in the past and how He can use us to be more effective in winning souls for Jesus. The focus was unity, consecration, and work, in order to be used by the Holy Spirit, just as the disciples and other Christians were used in the day of Pentecost. Also, I talked about the end time events prior to Jesus' second coming.

Brother Oscar shared with us some important skills about missionary work and witnessing through technology. We live in a time in which the Gospel can be preached around the world in many ways. His main objective was to teach us how to work with Adobe Pictures, Excel, Word and Google Mail. He also presented some power point presentations regarding "2012, The End of the World, Is it in God's Calendar?" Also, "What the Future Holds" and, "Current World events in Bible Prophecy."

Let us pray for the work here in Canada to be successful and blessed by the Lord Jesus; time is short and God can only use people ready to give of themselves their best, and a complete surrender. Let us give glory to Jesus in sharing the cross with others. Jesus said in John 12:32 "And I, if I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all peoples to Myself." At the cross Jesus showed His infinite love for sinners. We have the privilege to represent Jesus; we are His ambassadors, so let us stand up and be what He expects us to be because He will come soon to take us home. I wish you all God's blessings.

In Christ,

**Br. Nicholas Anca**

**Youth  
Conference,  
Germany  
(in front of  
Wartburg  
Castle)**

**Photo by  
Jens Müller**



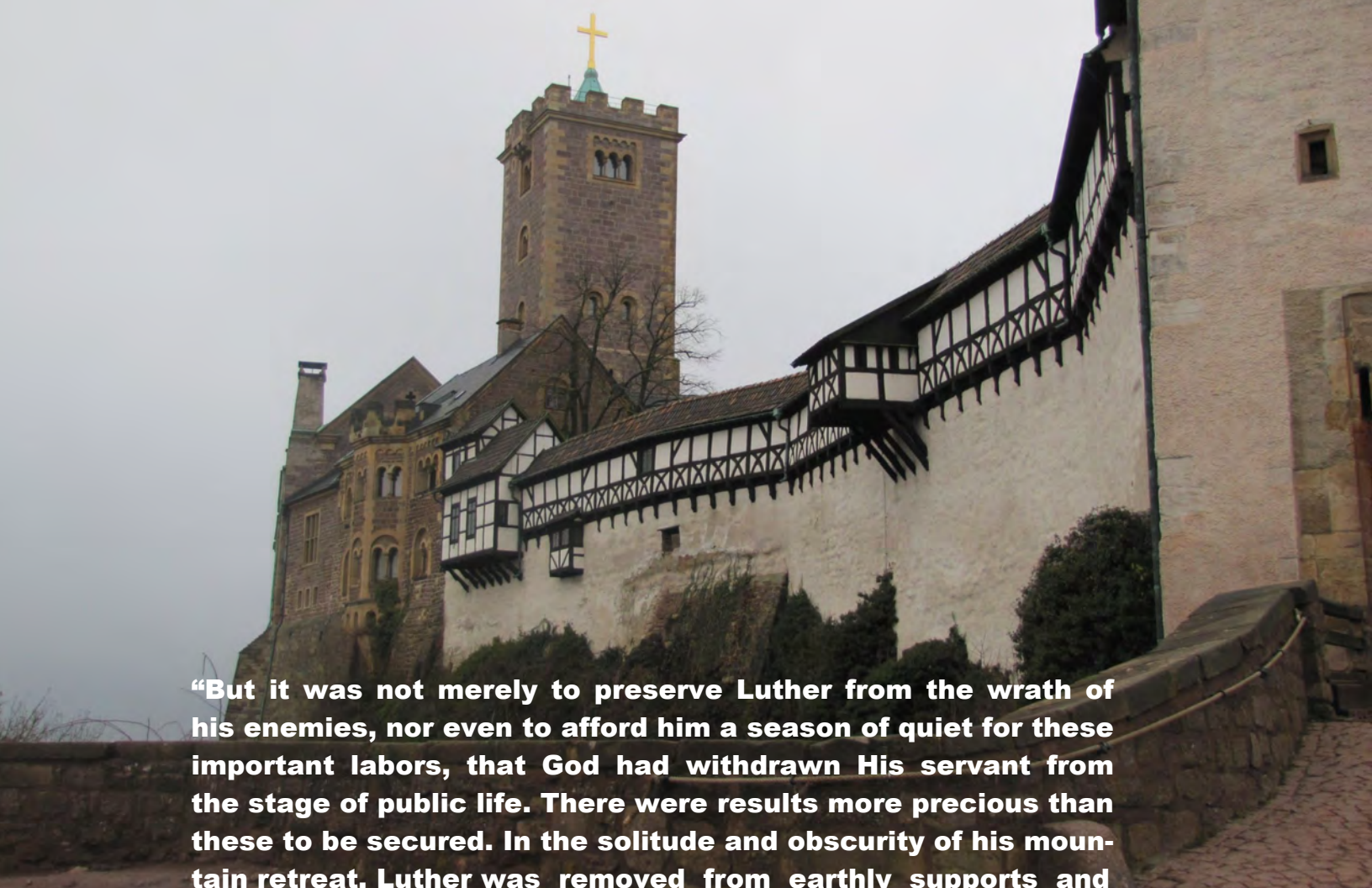
**Believers in Australia**



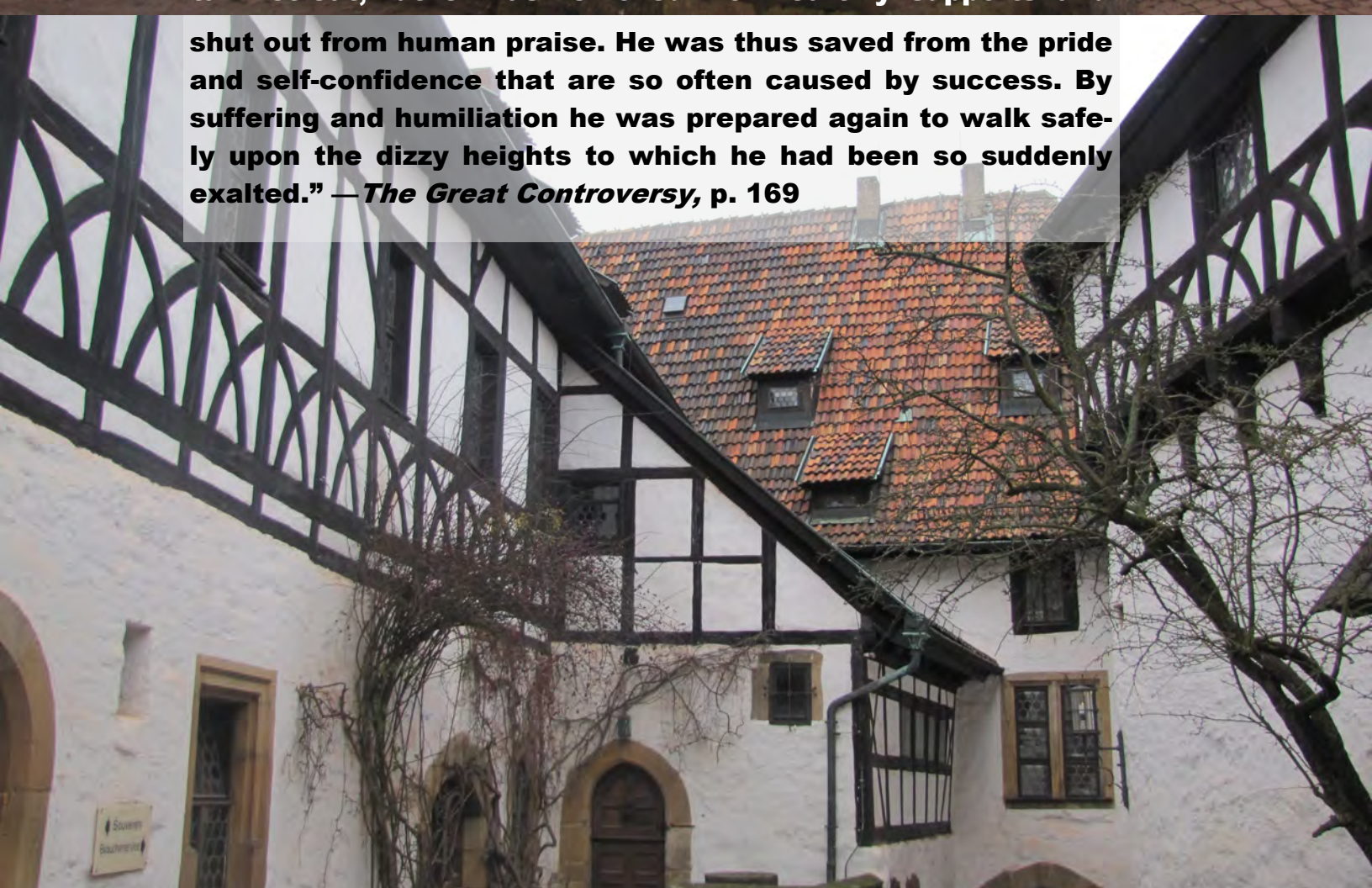
**Above: Believers in  
Lagonoy church,  
Philippines**



**Canadian Field Workers' Retreat:  
(L to R) Brother Renzo, Sister  
Johanna, Brothers Elder, Jerry,  
Oscar and Nicholas. In back,  
Brother Henry Dering**



**“But it was not merely to preserve Luther from the wrath of his enemies, nor even to afford him a season of quiet for these important labors, that God had withdrawn His servant from the stage of public life. There were results more precious than these to be secured. In the solitude and obscurity of his mountain retreat, Luther was removed from earthly supports and**



**shut out from human praise. He was thus saved from the pride and self-confidence that are so often caused by success. By suffering and humiliation he was prepared again to walk safely upon the dizzy heights to which he had been so suddenly exalted.” — *The Great Controversy*, p. 169**