



The Reformation **Messenger**

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“Many admire the broad, deep river which moves majestically in its onward course to the ocean. It is worthy of admiration; for it is doing its appointed work. But what of the thousand rivulets from the mountain side, which help to swell this noble stream? It is true that they are small and narrow; but they are indispensable, for without them the river could not exist. They are unitedly doing their appointed work in fertilizing the earth; their path through fields and meadows can be traced by the living green that lines their banks. Thus they are carrying out God’s plan, and adding to the prosperity of the world. The mighty river has worn for itself a channel through the everlasting hills; but in its place the brook is as necessary as the river. . . .

Each individual member is responsible for the prosperity of the church. The world is full of work for the Master. Every day brings its burden of care and responsibility; and if just one neglects the work assigned him, some sacred interest suffers.” –*Sons and Daughters of God*, p. 253

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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God's Love Letter

to Man

"For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life." John 3:16

These inspiring words, forming the heart of the gospel, have revived, encouraged, and rekindled hope in the hearts of men and women for hundreds of years. They tell God's and man's roles in the plan of salvation. Martin Luther called John 3:16, "the gospel in miniature."

The love of God is a concept that we cannot fully understand. We can only catch glimpses of it through His created works and through His miraculous re-creation of the human heart.

Yosemite National Park in California is one of the loveliest places in the United States. It has attracted millions because of its splendid scenic beauty. The spectacular sights are so breathtakingly beautiful they defy description. Several high waterfalls tumble hundreds of feet to the valley below, creating mist that waters luxuriant foliage and giant trees. The mist is not always white, for as the sunlight strikes the droplets of water, rainbows are formed. In the deep valley, the waterfalls start or join meandering rivers, clear as crystal and cold as ice. Here one experiences a touch of God's sense of beauty and originality and thanks Him for satisfying man's inner longing for relaxation and true beauty.

Everything beautiful was created for our benefit and happiness. Mountains and cliffs covered with stately evergreens rise above clear streams and are mirrored in crystal-clear lakes. Snow flowers and wild flowers

and animals delight the senses.

Even though the Creator shows His goodness in the beauties and bounties of nature, which are an expression of His great love, many people have doubts about Him. They accuse Him of being stern, vindictive, ruthless, and tyrannical and say He sits high in the heavens, sentencing man to be punished and tormented in endless misery somewhere below the earth's surface. What a distorted picture of our loving Father! Christians who have preached such falsehoods are doing the work of the devil, who is a liar and a murderer. Millions are spreading the erroneous teachings of Satan, making infidels of people and causing them to lose the reward God offers to those who believe in Him.

Fortunately, no one needs to be deceived, for the Bible gives a thorough description of God's character, and if we will read it, we cannot help but be attracted by His overwhelming love. "God is love," we read in 1 John 4:16. As we understand this primary characteristic of our heavenly Father, our fears and worries are swept away. We will not serve God because we fear His punishment but because He has loved us so deeply.

LOVED THE WORLD

God loves every individual who has ever been born. All nationalities and races are equal before Him. No one class of people is inferior or superior. God is no respecter of persons. "For there is no difference between the Jew and the Greek: for the same Lord over all is rich unto all that call upon Him." Romans 10:12

At the beginning of creation, God's purpose was to have man multiply and populate the earth. The first human pair was His ultimate delight and the crown of creation. But as a result of the transgression of the moral law, the world sank into a degraded condition, which we can see all around us today. Immediately God put into operation a plan for restoring the original condition of man and the world, and still today He is offering everyone the paradise that was lost and forfeited. He loves the inhabitants of this Earth who have gone astray and is calling them to return to Him by ceasing their wicked ways. All celestial beings are interested in the souls on this lost planet who want salvation. Great is the joy in heaven when one sinner repents!

GAVE HIS ONLY BEGOTTEN SON

God gave everything He could to fallen humanity; His Son was a living proof of His love when He walked on this earth and gave His life for us sinners. Thus God's love was not only written about in the Holy Scriptures but was also carried out in action. "Thanks be unto God for His unspeakable gift." 2 Corinthians 9:15. This gift was the only begotten Son of the Father.

Jesus Christ, from eternity, has been highly revered and adored by the angels; His life was the highest possible price—and the only price—that could redeem man from the condemnation of God's law. No one but the Father or the Son could ransom man from the penalty of death. Not even the angels were sufficient to sacrifice their lives for guilty man. Priceless was the sacrifice of Jesus Christ. He not only suffered physical pain but also bore the enormous burden of the world's sins.

Before His crucifixion, Christ was brought before Pilate to be mocked and scourged. After this cruel treatment,



Pilate symbolically washed his hands before the raging mob, declaring himself innocent of the blood of the Messiah. "The soldiers of the governor took Jesus into the common hall, and gathered unto him the whole band of soldiers. And

they stripped Him, and put on Him a scarlet robe. And when they had platted a crown of thorns, they put it upon His head, and a reed in His right hand: and they bowed the knee before Him, and mocked Him, saying, Hail, King of the Jews! And they spit upon Him, and took the reed, and smote Him on the head." Matthew 27:27–30. It is difficult for us to imagine the brutal mistreatment of the Saviour by the cruel rabble inspired by Satan himself.

WHOSOEVER BELIEVETH IN HIM

To believe, we must come to Christ and place full confidence in Him. A total surrender of the heart is the necessary requirement. "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved." Acts 16:31. Belief in Christ will lead one to honor God's law and obey His every commandment. One who truly believes, recognizes his unworthiness and lost condition, accepts Christ as His personal Saviour. The moment this fact is acknowledged, the sinner passes from unrighteousness to obedience in Christ. This gift of heaven is called justification by faith.

"Here is where thousands fail; they do not believe that Jesus pardons them personally, individually. They do not take God at His word. It is the privilege of all who comply with the conditions to know for themselves that pardon is freely extended for every sin." —*Steps to Christ*, p. 52



It is impossible for us to save ourselves. Thousands of dollars may be channeled into church activities through tithes and offerings. We may regularly attend Sabbath school and help orphans and widows. All of these actions will be the result of genuine faith; they will come naturally when the heart is filled with love. But works will never earn us a place in heaven.

"For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast." Ephesians 2:8-9

If we could buy our way into heaven, every millionaire would have an advantage, but there is only one way to eternal life, and that way is open to every single person. We are saved by faith alone. If we were saved any other way than by faith, there would be pride, self-sufficiency, and a feeling of superiority present in our hearts. Maybe we would say, "Lord, Lord, look at what I

have done. Last week I contributed a very large sum to the church. I don't smoke, drink wine, dance, or even curse. So now I am entitled to heaven." If such works could save us, we wouldn't need Christ. Our faith in Christ, however, produces fruits that are visible to everyone.

SHOULD NOT PERISH

God's desire is that none should perish; He wants all of humanity to be saved. Every individual has been predestined to have salvation freely. Although everyone is elected to be saved, only a minority will answer the call and, looking to Christ, keep His commandments. They will receive the gift of eternal life. Those who have chosen to be disobedient will receive their reward—eternal death—never to be remembered or lamented. This will occur at the end of the millennium, when God will perform "His strange work." Isaiah 28:21. God will reveal to the whole universe the results and the wages of sin. Everyone will be judged fairly; their sentences will be found to be righteous and fair.

BUT HAVE EVERLASTING LIFE

"And, behold, I come quickly and My reward is with Me, to give every man according as his work shall be."

Revelation 22:12. Those who have, by faith in Christ, overcome every sin will receive their reward—eternal life. This promise will become a reality when Jesus Christ comes back to earth the second time, and all indications are that it will be very soon. Beyond a shadow of a doubt, this wondrous expectation will be realized to the faithful in a very short time. Redeemed man will then live continually without experiencing death. The mind is not capable of grasping fully the thought of such endlessness!

How happy those will be who were crippled and diseased, for their new bodies will be free from every ailment. They will have perfect health. Throughout eternity people will never again be annoyed by Satan or fall into sin, for Satan will be destroyed and every sin will have been overcome. All through eternity the redeemed will receive new revelations of God's lovely character.

Dear reader, may God give you blessed insight to appreciate and embrace His love letter to you—John 3:16—is my wish and prayer.

Henry Dering

Never Alone, Jamais Seul, Nunca Solo

This year we held a Winter Conference here in Montreal. It was a highly spiritual meeting in which we not only had the joy of worshipping together as a family, but we also had the opportunity to listen to the Word of God brought to us through wonderful messages. The Holy Spirit used Brother Nicholas Anca and Brother Jerry Eaton, and their sermons touched our hearts. Hymns, special songs, testimonies and much, much more, accompanied each service and the beautiful songs by the children gave peace and joy to our souls.

We were 43 souls at the Sabbath day services, which were conducted by brothers and sisters from London, Toronto and Montreal. When Brother Renso Suarez asked, "What is our motto?" we answered with a loud voice, "Never Alone, Jamais Seul, Nunca Solo," because, no matter what language we spoke, we all felt the love of God.

My brethren and sisters, plead for the Holy Spirit; God stands behind every promise He has made. "With your Bibles in your hands, say: 'I have done as Thou hast said, I present Thy promise, "Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you.'" Christ declares: 'What things soever ye desire, when ye pray, believe that ye receive them, and ye shall have them.' 'Whatsoever ye shall ask in My name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son.' Matthew 7:7; Mark 11:24; 14:13." – *Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 8, p. 23

The Montreal church thanks everyone who participated in this amazing experience and may God bless you all.

Johanna Munoz



NO!

“And He said, Abba, Father, all things are possible unto Thee; take away this cup away from Me: nevertheless, not what I will, but what Thou wilt.” Mark 14:36

DEFINING MOMENTS

In every life there are, sooner or later, defining or shaping moments that you never forget.

My mother was lying in bed in a health-care facility in Greece, eyes closed, in a shallow state of breathing, and flanked by two attending nurses who attempted to allay my suspected fears. They tersely stated she was in a morbid state—in her last hour; only a time to pray and watch.

A woman strokes the soft gray hair of her beloved husband of fifty-two years who is in Intensive Care, all she can do is watch and pray.

A young couple decides to have a child. It takes a long time to find the courage, but, nevertheless, make the big decision. Only she doesn't get pregnant. After a gauntlet of fertility treatments, they find that there is nothing else to try. Nothing else, that is, except more prayer and watching.

A fatigued woman is stuck in a job that she bitterly hates. She has lost count of how many times she has asked God to get her out of this tedious, thankless job. But still, she just prays.

We are used to often hearing stories that start out like these. The odds, however, were against you. You, nevertheless, prayed your knees off—prayed earnestly! And in the darkest point of the seemingly hopeless struggle, God miraculously pulled through at the last possible moment and said “yes” to your prayers. You received your heart's desire. Those are wonderful stories to hear, and they happen all the time—or, ehh—do

they?!

But in my experience as a lay-leader in the church of Greece for over ten years, those are not really the defining moments of a life! Rather our lives are defined or shaped more by the times when God says—emphatically, “no!”

A UNIVERSAL EXPERIENCE

This sermon-paper is prompted by a universal experience. Many persons have offered up passionate and wrestling prayers and made continual requests which God has rigidly but graciously denied.

Still, there are many others; professed believers and even—the uncalled and the unborn—because they were still chosen of God from eternity, Christ has a right, by virtue of the Father's donation and His own purchase, a legitimate right to many a soul which Christ does not yet have possession. Thus He had too, “many people” in Corinth, when as yet it lay in “wickedness” (Acts 18:10).

They, too, have delicately asked God to come through, to rescue, to turn things around, to make something happen, only to end up stuck with something that isn't going to change. What do we do when we don't get what we want? What do we do when God doesn't come through as we'd hoped? What do we do when God says no, rather than yes? Read on!

DREAM WORLD

Think back for a moment on your greatest disappointment in life. Remember when it was clear that the disaster you wanted to avoid was unavoidable; when the

relationship you wanted so much fell apart, when those negotiations or that promotion you expected failed; when your dreams did not come true? Remember again, when in spite of all your fervent prayers—God said, “no?” Remember? But, did it ever occur to you that God’s “no” may indeed serve a good purpose?

You were never the same again. You were crushed. You came to a heart-shaking crash—hollow and dull!

That is why it was a—defining moment! We only learn when we hurt!

Ah! But yet we are promised that the fervent prayers of the righteous availeth much (James 5:16). We are not told here that we receive what we want! But, sometimes “no” avails more than “yes!” You see, what “no” makes to us is the fuller experience of the grace of God, which shapes our lives more than do our dreams.

DROPS OF BLOOD

Not even Jesus received everything He asked for in prayer. Our text heading finds him in the Garden of Gethsemane, just hours away from the cross. He knows what is ahead. He has known it from the moment He identified with us sinners in His baptism. He has repeatedly warned the disciples that this day would come. But now that it is here, Mark tells us that Jesus is “distressed and agitated. . . deeply grieved”(Mark 14:33–34). Luke tells us, furthermore, that His sweat became like great drops of blood (Luke 22:44).

Here we have Jesus in His agony. He began to be sore amazed (GR: *ekthambeisthai*); a word that bespeaks something like that horror of great darkness which fell upon Abraham (Genesis 15:12); or, rather something much worse, and more frightful!

Jesus retired for prayer. He appoints His disciples to withdraw, while He goes to His Father upon an errand peculiar to Himself. Our praying with our families will not excuse our neglect of secret worship. When Jacob entered into his agony, he first sent over all that he had, and was left alone, and then there wrestled a man with him (Genesis 32:23–24).

GOING TO A CROSS

Sometimes the defining moments in life come, not because your life is interrupted by something unforeseen, but because you’re finally having to do what you have been dreading for a long time; you come face to face with the facts. Yes, you’ve prayed to get out of it, to escape this thing, to deny it, but to no avail. You’re going to have to confront an alcoholic or drug addict that is destroying the family. Or, an unbeliever that is caus-

ing dissension in your ranks. Or, a gnawing sickness that is prevailing in your life. Or, as a weary care-giver for your aging, enfeebled parents.

You’re going to have to let your son or daughter marry someone you know might be bad for either one. You attempted to talk either out of making what seemed—an unwise move. You even prayed to God to prevent it—rather than relying on His will. But, God didn’t. He graciously but utterly said, “no!”

Or, maybe you have to move to another city—or another country! Or, maybe return to your country of origin; another movement you have been trying to avoid. Or, maybe your immigration documents have been unduly delayed—or denied. You can’t believe you are going to lose your life again—to start all over again. When these unavoidable crisis moments come into your life, it feels like you are—“going to a cross!”

ALONE!

Jesus, while in the garden, took Peter, James, and John with Him to a place of prayer. When you’re almost—about to face a cross, you don’t want to be alone. No, you call on your friends, loved ones, or brethren to pray with you. Christ is here entering upon His sufferings, and begins with those which were the sorest of all His sufferings—those in His soul! Ah! But the text makes it clear that Jesus eventually went ahead without them in prayer. It doesn’t matter how many friends or brethren you have; when you are up all night wrestling, you know this is now between you and God—and God only. Many, however, have a victim mentality. They become morose, and don’t believe there is an escape; or that there is a choice. Any wisp of hope fades. They may feel abandoned—alone—a cruel dilemma!

Alone in the garden, Jesus fell on His face and began to pray. “Abba, Father, for You all things are possible; remove this cup from Me” (Mark 14:36). Can you imagine how this prayer must have broken the heart of God? It was but a little before this, that in prayer He reverently lifted up His eyes (John 17:1). But here His only Son is lying face down on the ground, begging, in agony, in humiliation and teaching us thus to abase ourselves before God, “Abba, Papa, please don’t send me to the cross.” But the Father said, “no.” It also breaks God’s heart on those dark nights when you are praying face down, in total humility and submission. You’re out of strategies and plans and are now reduced simply to pleading; “Please, don’t let this relationship end in separation.” “Please, deliver me from this cancer that is

sucking my life away." "Please, help me cope with a wildly demented loved one."

WHY?

Why now, would Abba Father ever say "no" to these prayers? Why do we sometimes have to go to the cross? Ah! Because it is there that we meet Jesus, the Saviour. It is there that we get to know Him better! It is here at the cross that He is able to wondrously "work" on us!

You see, your life is not defined or shaped by the things you want. Nor by the things you want to avoid. Your life is defined and shaped, and molded by living in the hands of a Saviour who finds you at the cross, where He also had to go. Finding you there, embracing it restively and sternly, He then raises you to a new and radiant life that far exceeds your fondest expectations! The gospel at the heart of this message is that "no" may bring us closer to God than "yes." Rabindranath Tagore, the Bengali poet, also spoke of being saved by God's "hard refusals."

This is not a sermon or paper about fatalism or resignation! I am not intending that you merely sit tight, bear through it all, or sulk over your state of life—or to stoically accept whatever comes your way. Even if you have to unbearably face the cross, and really bad things happen to you, you are not necessarily a miserable or powerless victim. Victims assume they don't have a choice or options, and many suffer from denial, and others self-pity. Ah! But as Jesus illustrates, you can always choose your response, even to God's "no"! Well, how? Read on.

NEVERTHELESS

Victor Frankel, who survived the Holocaust of WW II, claimed that in the Nazi concentration camps he learned that the last of all human freedoms, the one that can never be taken away, is the freedom to choose your response to anything. It's an inalienable right of man! No matter how small the ration of bread he received, Frankel always chose to give some of it away to another starving prisoner. In so doing that, he chose to remain a human being; one with identity; one with dignity. He righteously and unrestrictedly chose not to be a victim, or to have a victim mentality!

Jesus, you can see, too, is clearly not a victim, because He makes the most heroic choice possible, even though Jesus did not receive everything He asked for in prayer.

"Nevertheless," He says, "not what I want (will), but what You want (will)" (Mark 14:36). Ah! That "nevertheless" is the greatest synonym for faith we have. "Abba Father, You know this is not what I want; I can't see how I will survive it; I can't even see the good that will come out of it; nevertheless, I want what You

want." (Mark 14:36). When we do likewise, we put ourselves in the position to see God's power at work. It's an invitation to embrace the moments when God says "no." Such moments bear tremendous potential for growth in faith. Choose to say "nevertheless" whenever God says "no."

When you say, "nevertheless, I want your will, God," you are placing your life in the hands of a God who can raise the dead. He can raise dead relationships, dead dreams, dead ideals, and even dead bodies. You can't see that now. All you can see is the cross. But the new life is waiting, if you choose to live in the hands of God. You've got to choose to believe that. It is your choice—cherish it! It is the only way—yes, the only way your soul will survive the cross.

REFORMERS—NEVERTHELESS

When Martin Luther went to the ecclesiastical trial in Worms that he prayed to avoid, it was a defining moment; a state much like—sweating blood—profusely, horribly thinking his use to the church was over. Ah! But, because Martin Luther said, "nevertheless," he was raised up to lead the Reformation.

When John Calvin went back to Geneva to lead the Reformation, he was painfully terrified. They had already thrown him out once, and he knew that in returning they might savagely kill him!

If John Calvin, an able combatant in the fields of theological controversy, had not said "nevertheless," he could not have helped to lay the foundation of churches that were to yield fearless witnesses for the truth—"Christ, and Him crucified." 1 Corinthians 2:2

What about you? As you perplexedly stare at the cross that now defines your future, as you hear God's undeniable "no" to the request to avoid it, what will your response be? You can choose to be a victim and sink into despair and oblivion. Or, you can choose to have hope—exciting hope! You can choose to believe that nothing, not even death, can separate you from the love of God and God's future filled with hope (Romans 8:38–39).

There is no cross without the resurrection. There is no resurrection without the cross. Amen <><

**John Theodorou
U.S.A.**



The Church of God

(The Lord's Doing)

If we take a pencil or a stick and place our finger on its center it will balance on our finger. It is the same as taking the religion of the Bible and making it stand on its center—that center is Jesus Christ. The whole Bible, both the Old and the New Testament is about Jesus Christ. When sin entered, the Lord made the first covenant with Adam; He specifically told him to take a lamb and sacrifice it because, with the shedding of the blood, their sins were forgiven. This prefigured the Son of God's great sacrifice on the cross. In Psalm 40:6–8 we read "Sacrifice and offering Thou didst not desire; mine ears hast Thou opened: burnt offering and sin offering hast Thou not required. Then said I, Lo, I come: in the volume of the book it is written of me, I delight to do Thy will, O my God: yea, Thy law is within my heart."

Now, where does the law of God originate? Isn't it in the heart of Jesus Christ? If it is originating from Him, it is as holy as Himself. "He is THE ROCK, His work is perfect for all His ways are judgment: a God of truth and without iniquity, just and right is He." Deuteronomy 32:4. It clarifies what is being referred to here, when Moses was to call forth water from the rock, as Paul also refers to in 1 Corinthians chapter 10. Everything Christ does He brings it to judgment, to show how much He cares for every intelligent being. "And were all baptized unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea; And all did all eat the same spiritual meat; And did all drink the same spiritual drink: for they drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them: and that ROCK was CHRIST." 1 Corinthians 10:2–4

If we try to keep the law alone it is impossible because

of our carnal mind, but One who lifts up the sinner and gives life to the soul—the same wonderful Creator—with His help we can. Please don't try in your own strength; you will only be disappointed and frustrated. Maybe it looks simple to you at first, but then you find out you cannot. If you truly imagine God—how holy is He. Just imagine the distance between God's home and our home. It is infinity, as is His holiness; and when we truly pray, His mercy which is at the same distance, so vast is His investment in us, and so great is His love, that He will come to your aid.

When God chose Jacob he was the lowliest person on Earth. What does the Bible say about Jacob? "When the Most High divided to the nations their inheritance, when He separated the sons of Adam, He set the bounds of the people according to the number of the children of Israel. For the LORD'S portion is His people; Jacob is the lot of His inheritance. He found him in a desert land, and in the waste howling wilderness; He led him about, He instructed him, He kept him as the apple of His eye." Deuteronomy 32:8–10. This shows how Jacob's status was. But still this is the Lord's doing. He didn't choose the mightiest, but the least of the least; He strengthened His people and kept them as His crown jewels. The church of God was always very lowly and few in numbers—it is no exception now.

What does the Bible say about Jesus becoming a human? "Who hath believed our report? and to whom is the arm of the LORD revealed? For He shall grow up before Him as a tender plant, and as a root out of a dry ground: He hath no form nor comeliness; and when we

shall see Him, there is no beauty that we should desire Him. He is despised and rejected of men; a Man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief: and we hid as it were our faces from Him; He was despised, and we esteemed Him not. Surely He hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows: yet we did esteem Him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted." Isaiah 53:1-4. When Our Lord came it happened exactly as it was written. How did they dispute this? By asking, will any Prophet come from Galilee? But what did the Lord say concerning this? "Search the scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life: and they are they which testify of Me." John 5:39. The very scriptures testify of the mission of John the Baptist and of Jesus' life in Galilee. "Nevertheless the dimness shall not be such as was in her vexation, when at the first He lightly afflicted the land of Zebulun and the land of Naphtali, and afterward did more grievously afflict her by the way of the sea, beyond Jordan, in Galilee of the nations. For unto us a Child is born, unto us a Son is given: and the government shall be upon His shoulder: and His name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, the mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace." Isaiah 9:1, 6. These verses show clearly that Jesus will start His mission in Galilee and then spread to the whole country.

In England, the Puritans asked King James to only teach the Bible and to reform the teaching of the Anglican church. This caused a rift between the two groups. King James didn't want a war to break out so he compromised and commissioned a new Bible, but he didn't want to reform the church; thus most of the Puritans came to the United States. The Puritans coming to the New World were an important part of the Protestant Reform. When William Miller preached the soon return of Christ it created the 2nd great awakening.

William Miller was a simple farmer who started to preach the First Angel's Message about the soon coming of Christ to this earth. But when October 22, 1844 passed, it was revealed to Hiram Edson what this great event actually was. Daniel portrayed this event in heaven, how the Ancient of days did sit, and when the

thrones were set in place, then the Son of Man approaches Him like a trial judge, taking His position. What a marvelous spectacle to watch this event, but it wasn't to happen before the papacy was to receive the deadly wound. This points us to the year 1844, as promised. When the churches refused to accept the message they became Babylon; soon after the Adventist church started to preach the Third Angel's message. Let us see what the Spirit of Prophecy says concerning this:

"As the ministration of Jesus closed in the holy place, and He passed into the holiest, and stood before the ark containing the law of God, He sent another mighty angel with a third message to the world. A parchment



was placed in the angel's hand, and as he descended to the earth in power and majesty, he proclaimed a fearful warning, with the most terrible threatening ever borne to man. This message was designed to put the children of God upon their guard, by showing them the hour of temptation and anguish that was before them. Said the angel, 'They will be brought into close combat with the

beast and his image. Their only hope of eternal life is to remain steadfast. Although their lives are at stake, they must hold fast to the truth.' The third angel closes his message thus: 'Here is the patience of the saints: here are they that keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus.' As he repeated these words, he pointed to the heavenly sanctuary. The minds of all who embrace this message are directed to the most holy place, where Jesus stands before the ark, making His final intercession for all those for whom mercy still lingers and for those who have ignorantly broken the law of God. This atonement is made for the righteous dead as well as for the righteous living. It includes all who died trusting in Christ, but who, not having received the light upon God's commandments, had sinned ignorantly in transgressing its precepts." – *Early Writings*, p. 254

Then during the 1st World War the reformation was prophesied to come and it did come. "I was shown the inhabitants of the earth in the utmost confusion. War, bloodshed, privation, want, famine, and pestilence

were abroad in the land. As these things surrounded God's people, they began to press together, and to cast aside their little difficulties. Self-dignity no longer controlled them; deep humility took its place. Suffering, perplexity, and privation caused reason to resume its throne, and the passionate and unreasonable man became sane, and acted with discretion and wisdom." – *Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 1, p. 268

A CALL FOR REFORMATION

"Unless the church, which is now being leavened with her own backsliding, shall repent and be converted, she will eat of the fruit of her own doing, until she shall abhor herself. When she resists the evil and chooses the good, when she seeks God with all humility and reaches her high calling in Christ, standing on the platform of eternal truth and by faith laying hold upon the attainments prepared for her, she will be healed. She will appear in her God-given simplicity and purity, separate from earthly entanglements, showing that the truth has made her free indeed. Then her members will indeed be the chosen of God, His representatives.

"The time has come for a thorough reformation to take



place. When this reformation begins, the spirit of prayer will actuate every believer and will banish from the church the spirit of discord and strife. Those who have not been living in Christian fellowship will draw close to one another. One member working in right lines will lead other members to unite with him in making intercession for the revelation of the Holy Spirit. There will be no confusion, because all will be in harmony with

the mind of the Spirit. The barriers separating believer from believer will be broken down, and God's servants will speak the same things. The Lord will cooperate with His servants. All will pray understandingly the prayer that Christ taught His servants: 'Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven.' Matthew 6:10." – *Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 8, p. 251

How gracefully the Lord called for a thorough reformation to take place—and it happened. Please don't look for fire to come down or great miracles to take place, but the Lord's leading is simple, by the sure word of prophesy. Amen.

God Bless!!

Augustus Ratneiya

"Our Saviour was deeply serious and intensely in earnest, but never gloomy or morose. The life of those who imitate Him will be full of earnest purpose; they will have a deep sense of personal responsibility.

Levity will be repressed; there will be no boisterous merriment, no rude jesting; but the religion of Jesus gives peace like a river. It does not quench the light of joy; it does not restrain cheerfulness nor cloud the sunny, smiling face. Christ came not to be ministered unto but to minister; and when His love reigns in the heart, we shall follow His example." –Steps to Christ, p. 120–121

LOOKING FOR YOU...

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Why am I a Committed Christian Seventh - Day Adventist Reformer?

Some time ago in Romania, I heard of an old woman, exiting from the church she usually attended; and on her way back home a group of women asked her, "Well, we see you are coming from the church, what was the message all about that you listened to in there?" The woman considered the question for a few moments and then replied, "Well, I don't really know what the message was about, but what I can tell you is that it was nice, the priest talked so nice." Is that the way we feel when we come to such important matters as our personal and individual salvation? How is God looking at me when I let my salvation be centered in what others may say or think? Shall I not go to the **Bible** and search for a **"Thus saith the Lord?"**

Many people in the world today go to their churches and come back home, receiving no message at all. We may smile at such a story. We may even doubt its truthfulness, but there are millions of people just like that old woman today, professing Christians who could not give any testimony of what they learned from the priest or minister while they attended their church. You see, my friend, when we go to church we go to a place where we expect to be taught and to receive a message from the Bible, inspired through the one who is speaking there. The Bible says in 1 Peter 4:11 "If any man speak, let him speak as the oracles of God." I believe that if I am a sincere searcher for the truth, God will reveal Himself through the pages of the Bible. Jesus promised us His Holy Spirit, the Comforter, who is the One that leads us to, and teaches us all the truth. Some people go to church for the simple reason that their mother and father taught them to go to that particular church or congregation, though they really know little of the church's teachings. There are people who go to their churches only for social reasons, namely that they have friends and relatives there and they just want to spend family time with them and nothing else. Others go to church to give them social standing; the message that is going to

be preached does not matter very much, but as long as they are seen there, it will make others think that they are good people. We also find people attending church for business reasons; it is good for business to have their names on a certain church register and to be seen at the house of worship from time to time.

Millions of people fall into these categories. Those same millions could not tell you why they attend a particular church or what they really believe. When it comes to understanding doctrinal points, there are some people who just simply say, well, let me ask my pastor regarding this and that point because he knows better. Is this right before God when it comes to matters regarding our salvation? Can I be safe when I let my personal salvation be placed in the hands of others? Can even my priest or pastor decide what I should believe and what I should not believe? Why do people decide to follow their church leaders and what they say, even when they are wrong? I don't want to say that we should not trust our church leaders, especially when they are approved by God and they stand for a "Thus saith the Lord." These are some questions we have to consider.

The Bible says in 1 Peter 3:15, "Be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you." The apostle Peter said that we have to give an account to everyone who asks us of the hope that we have in our Saviour Jesus Christ. We have to give an account to everyone who asks us why we believe differently than they do when it comes to doctrinal points in the Bible. You and I must understand correctly what we believe in matters of religion and be ever ready to explain the reasons for our beliefs to others when we are asked about them. In view of Peter's counsel I would like to give some of the reasons as to why I am what I am, why I believe what I believe, and why I am a committed Christian, following a "Thus saith the Lord," and not based on what people say or what church customs or

traditions are.

As I was brought up in a family that believed in the Orthodox creed, from time to time I was taught to keep Sunday holy and to abstain from meat, eggs and milk on Wednesdays and Fridays each week, to fast one week before Easter and Christmas and to go to church to confess my sins to the priest. All of these things made no sense to me, but I did them, although not always. As I recall, my mother taught me to keep them and follow the traditions of the church, because she believed that this church was the only one which was sure and safe for our salvation. I wasn't a committed Orthodox Christian, but I had respect towards my parents, especially my mother, because she was and still is the faithful one, respecting and keeping the traditions of her family's faith. The Lord in His mercy gave a light to shine on this family and to enlighten them because He loves them. Although they believed in something that wasn't truth, they still have a chance to be saved if they accept the truth and only the truth as it is in the Bible, not mingled with the traditions of men.

When I began to study the Bible at the age of 23, I had never studied it before; I had wrong ideas about death, the need of a Saviour, forgiveness, and Jesus' second coming. As I didn't live to the standards of the Orthodox Church, I said to myself, there is no salvation for me—trying to get rid of the idea of heaven and the chance to be saved. I believed that there was no heaven or hell, no judgement, no second coming of Jesus and the end of the world. I said to myself, "This is our life here on earth; it is short and full of worries—that's why it is not important to God how we live, once we are sinners we cannot make it to heaven." I believed at that time that there was no second chance. Sinners are condemned to die and that's final. What about Jesus' death on the cross? I didn't hear too much about it in the church that I occasionally attended. The Bible? Until I was 23 years old I didn't read it. So then I left the church, in total confusion about the truth. Praise be to God that He didn't allow me to be swept away by the traditions of men; rather He revealed to me His wonderful love and the truth found in Jesus. He led me to the Bible, guiding my thoughts and opening my heart to the wonderful present truth. I felt the necessity of forgiveness; He gave me a Saviour, Jesus Christ, as mentioned in that magnificent Bible verse in Acts 4:12. "Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved."

Peter and John didn't recognize any other name under heaven by which they could be saved except the Holy Name, the Name above all names, which is Jesus Christ

the Messiah, the Anointed One, Immanuel, or God with us. My brother, my sister, there is no other name by which you and I can be saved, except Christ Jesus. Peter and John preached about this wonderful Name; although they had to suffer persecution, they suffered it with Christ and for Christ, the risen Christ. This was their motto: "Christ is risen, Christ is risen from the dead, and this Christ is our personal Priest and Saviour in heaven. They said that "we can only speak about the things we have seen and heard;" this is also what we have to speak, if we walk with Jesus. They spoke about the risen Christ in the 1st century, and we can speak in the 21st century about the Three Angel's Message and Jesus' second coming. They were prepared to receive the early rain and we should be prepared to receive the latter rain, which is promised to each sincere believer in Christ—seeking for the present truth and its sanctification. That was a time of destiny for them and this is a time of destiny for us. The question is: Do I want to set my destiny forever in Christ? Do I want to search for the truth and to be set free by Him forever? If that is the case then we are on the way to heaven.

In fact, I would like to outline some special reasons as to why I am a committed Christian, a Seventh-Day Adventist Reformer.

1. The doctrine is pure. Many of you, when you hear the word "doctrine," perhaps you don't like it too much, but you need to be still and listen, because the doctrine comes from Jesus and with Jesus. I cannot imagine faith without doctrine. In fact, what does the word "doctrine" mean? Do we find any statement in the Bible where doctrine is mentioned and is important? "Take heed unto thyself, and unto the doctrine; continue in them: for in doing this thou shalt both save thyself, and them that hear thee." 1 Timothy 4:16

"But if I tarry long, that thou mayest know how thou oughtest to behave thyself in the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the **pillar and ground of the truth.**" 1 Timothy 3:15. Paul advised Timothy how to behave in the church of God, which is the pillar and the ground of the truth. Why do we need a pillar and a foundation? That the structure may be sure, strong and powerful enough to sustain the building. This same concept we can apply in spiritual matters; we need Bible doctrine for building upon a good and solid foundation, the true foundation that is Jesus.

People may think, "Why do I need doctrine? All that I need are the Gospels—Matthew, Mark, Luke and John. The Bible is full of doctrine. In fact, from the very first pages of the Bible, in the book of Genesis, we find very important doctrines essential for our salvation such as:

Divinity, Creation, Temptation and the Fall, Food, Marriage, Sabbath, Tithe, Health, Moral Law or Ten Commandments, Church, Salvation, Death, Spirit of Prophecy, Preaching, Gospel, Christ's coming, Organization, Circumcision, Baptism, and so forth. We can mention many other points of Bible doctrine which I believe with all my heart are important to our salvation.

We are not saved by keeping points of doctrine, but rather, because we are already saved through the grace of God and faith in Jesus, we accept and keep them. When I first started walking with Jesus and I received Him as my personal Saviour, there were many things in the Bible that I didn't understand at the time, but, praise be to God, that while walking with Jesus by faith the Holy Spirit guided me through the pages of the Scriptures, enlightened my mind and impressed me with the wonderful simplicity of the truth. I acknowledged it as coming from God and being necessary for my salvation. I want to say that if you have doubts regarding the church you wish to attend, doubts that come when the Holy Spirit impresses your mind about new truth and what you ought to do, in the name of the Lord, I beg you, don't hesitate in embracing it; go to the Bible and let the inspired words guide you to Jesus and His salvation.

There is a danger in rejecting the light, especially when you have been impressed by the Holy Spirit to accept it. Many nominal Christians—ones who have had the privilege to know all the truth but reject it, will finally find themselves committing the sin which cannot be forgiven—as the Bible calls it—the unpardonable sin. “Verily I say unto you, All sins shall be forgiven unto the sons of men, and blasphemies wherewith soever they shall blaspheme: But he that shall blaspheme against the Holy Ghost hath never forgiveness, but is in danger of eternal damnation.” Mark 3:28–29. Christ doesn't want you and me to commit that sin; in His mercy and goodness He shows us how to live a perfect life while living on this Earth. He went before us to make sure that we can follow Him by faith. Claiming the power of the Holy Spirit in our lives we can represent Him in our families, churches and society. This is what He wants and expects from us individually, and do not think that it will be possible without Christ, because Christ said: without Me ye can do nothing. So, in conclusion to this point regarding doctrine, I advise you not to be afraid of doctrine. Remember, the Bible is full of doctrine and Jesus Himself taught many doctrines while He was

on this earth. Doctrine comes from Jesus and with Jesus. I am a committed Christian Seventh-Day Adventist Reformer because I like our doctrines, they come from the Bible, they fit together, they are logical, they are reasonable, they give assurance, they build confidence, they make sense, they strengthen my faith, they bring hope, they are believable and Biblical.

For example, let us take the doctrine of death. There is so much confusion among many Christian denominations around the world regarding death. The Orthodox Church teaches about life immediately after death and not only they, but many others do the same, while the Bible is crystal clear regarding death. According to the Bible, we believe and teach as a church, that death is a sleep in the dust of the earth, an unconscious state where there is no mental or physical activity. The dead remain asleep in their graves until the second coming of Jesus when He calls them from the tomb in a glorious resurrection. The



Bible never indicates that man is immortal now, that there is no part of him that cannot die. Immortality is bestowed on the resurrected dead at the first resurrection, as the Bible calls it, the resurrection of the righteous ones which will take place at Jesus' second coming. I like the way Paul explains it in 1 Thessalonians 4:16–17, “For the Lord Himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God:

and the dead in Christ shall rise first: Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord.” What a wonderful promise for us—either we die in the Lord or we will be alive when He comes.

There is hope for us, hope that many people in the world today don't have, because they go a wrong way, attending congregations where is preached smooth things and pleasing to their hearers, churches that once had light, but because of rejecting God's reproof they turned their back on God and opened themselves to error. They have made it possible for Satan to confuse them and to believe a lie. I thank God for showing me mercy, love and compassion. I thank God for bringing me out of darkness and confusion. I thank God He has a Church on this earth, a group of people, a remnant, as the Bible describes them, as the body, with Christ being the Head. It is in this church you will find the biblical fulfillment of “Here is the patience of the saints: here are they that keep the com-

mandments of God, and the faith of Jesus.” Revelation 14:12

2. I am a committed Christian Seventh-Day Adventist Reformer because I know my **origin, heritage** and **mission**, as it is outlined in the Bible.

The origin of my faith and belief is found in the Scriptures. I am not a Seventh-Day Adventist Reformer just because the Minister told me this is so. Oh, no. In my case, when I realized that Jesus died for me, that He loves me and wants me to be saved in His kingdom, I started searching the Scriptures, just as Jesus mentioned in John 5:39: “Search the Scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life: and they are they which testify of Me.” In the book of Revelation chapter 10 I found the origin of my faith and God’s remnant people. We read of the sealed book of Daniel 12:4 “But thou, O Daniel, shut up the words and seal the book, even to the time of the end.” Where do we find this little book from Daniel 12 in the book of Revelation? Let us read Revelation 10:2: “And he had in his hand a little book open.” You see, this little book in Revelation is the book that Daniel was told to seal. This little book that was opened, that John saw in the hands of the angel from Revelation 10 is the content of the book of Daniel, starting with chapter 8 until chapter 12. Here we find the doctrine of the Sanctuary in heaven and Jesus’ ministry in our behalf as a High Priest in the work of judgement that started on October 22, 1844. Here in this chapter of Revelation 10:8–10 we find the disappointment that occurred from misunderstanding the doctrine of the heavenly sanctuary by William Miller and his followers in 1844, based on Daniel 8:14. In Revelation 10:11, John was told to prophesy again—in fact that occurred exactly just as it was predicted by the angel to John. This prophecy was fulfilled exactly on October 22, 1844.

Not only do we have an origin, but we also have a heritage. In Revelation 12:5 we find how Jesus leaves earth to direct the work from heaven. Satan persecutes the church since he cannot attack Christ. Revelation 12:6 says, “And the woman fled into the wilderness, where she hath a place prepared of God, that they should feed her there a thousand two hundred and three-score days.” Then verse 12 says, “Therefore rejoice, ye heavens, and ye that dwell in them. Woe to the inhabitants of the earth and of the sea! for the devil is come down unto you, having great wrath, because he knoweth that he hath but a short time.” Now in verse 17 the same chapter 12 we find that the church emerges from hiding and is identified as those who keep the ten commandments and have the “testimony of Jesus Christ” which is the **gift of prophecy in their midst**.

Finally, not only do we have an origin and a heritage but we also find out something more; namely that we have a mission, and that mission is pointed out in the book of Revelation 14:6–12 where we find three messengers, flying in the midst of heaven with the following messages to the entire world:

The everlasting Gospel to be preached to the entire world. The good news of salvation.

Fear God and give glory to Him because the hour of His judgement has come. We find here the doctrine of the sanctuary. The judgement has come. We live in this time right now.

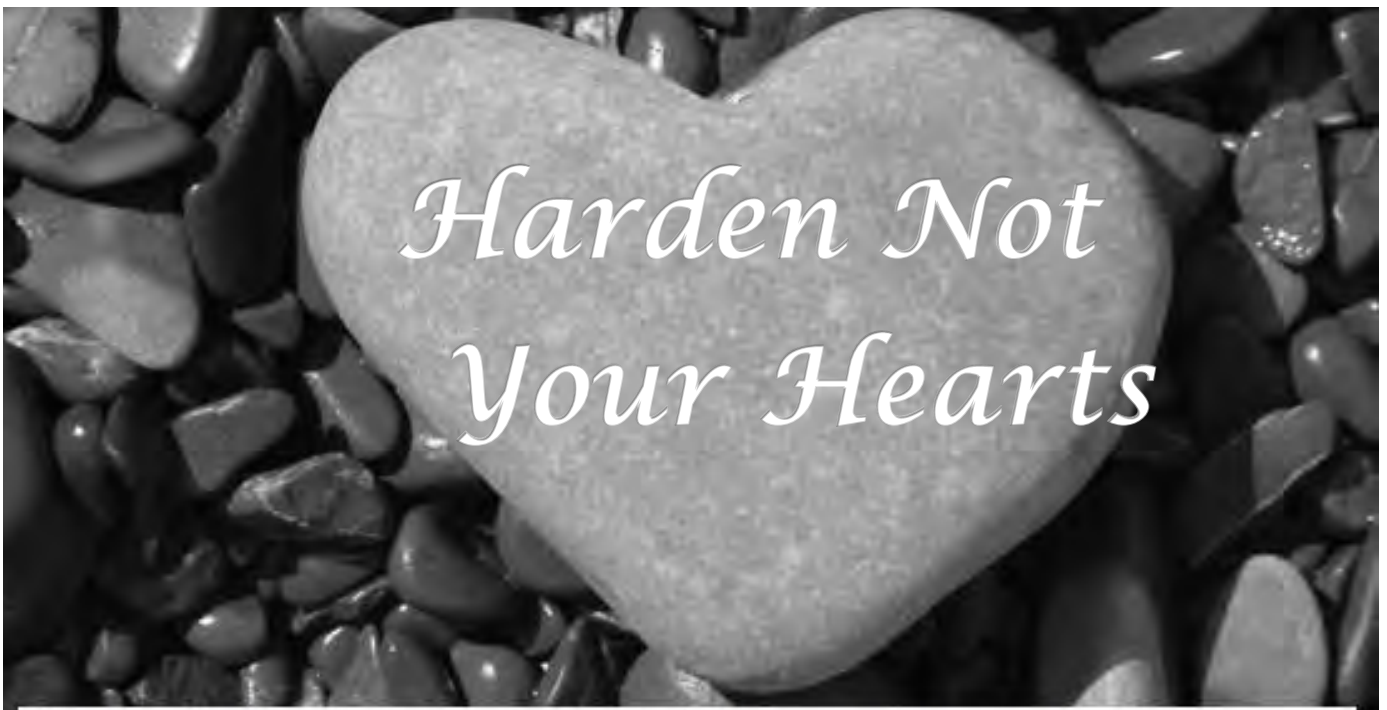
Worship Him who made heaven and earth, the sea and the fountains of waters. How do we call the One who made the heavens and the earth? The Creator. The battle in the universe between good and evil is a battle over worship. It centers on God’s Law. The Sabbath is at the heart of this controversy over worship. We also know that the Sabbath is a sign between God and His people. Then we may ask ourselves: Isn’t it logical that Satan, the great deceiver would attack the Creator by challenging the symbol of creation? God is calling back people to worship Him as the Creator of the heavens and the earth.

God’s remnant people acknowledge that Babylon has fallen and invite people to join the remnant who keep all of God’s commandments and have the faith of Jesus. Revelation 18 is God’s last invitation to come out of her (Babylon), my people. Why? Lest you share in her sins and lest you receive of her plagues, the seven plagues which we find in Revelation chapter 16.

God’s remnant people refuse the mark and image of the beast by keeping God’s commandments, including the fourth commandment, which is the Sabbath of the Lord, the memorial of God’s creation.

So, my dear brother, sister, and friend, we have seen in the Scriptures the foundation of our faith in Jesus. We have a supreme mission from our Saviour and nothing, absolutely nothing, must be allowed to distract us from the task given to us by Jesus. The church’s mission is to go and make disciples, teaching them to observe all things that Jesus has commanded to His church. Revelation 14 is the reason for our existence; we bear God’s final message for humanity, Revelation 12 is our heritage and Revelation 10 is our origin.

May our heavenly Father give us the wisdom and power to do His will and fulfill the holy and sacred duty He has entrusted us with. What a challenge! What a responsibility! What a mission! May God’s grace and peace be with us all is my wish and prayer. Amen! **Nicholas Anca**



Harden Not Your Hearts

Three times Paul repeated these words in the book of Hebrews. "Today if ye will hear His voice, Harden not your hearts, as in the provocation, in the day of temptation in the wilderness." Hebrews 3:7-8

Who is pleading with us not to harden our hearts? Paul said in verse 7, that the Holy Ghost said it to Israel's people. But yet they did harden their hearts and for this reason, only two of the adult men could enter into the Promised Land. Whose voice are we to hear without hardening our hearts? It is the voice of God; He is speaking to us. We read in the book of Job, "Why dost thou strive against Him? for He giveth not account of any of His matters. For God speaketh once, yea twice, yet man perceiveth it not." Job 33:13-14. It does not say that God will speak to us a third time. The first two times we hear His voice, but if we harden our hearts and do not obey His voice, then we do not hear it any more.

The chief priests and elders asked of Jesus many things, but did Jesus answer them? "And when He was accused of the chief priests and elders, He answered nothing." Matthew 27:12

The first two times we hear the voice of God clearly, and if we obey His voice, He will continue to speak to us. But if we put our obedience to a later time, and we say that at a time when it is convenient to us, then we will obey Him, we may not hear His voice anymore, because our hearts have been hardened. Paul did not write, "tomorrow, or next week," but "today," if you hear His voice, harden not your hearts.

Many people came to listen to Jesus as He was speak-

ing the words of God, but in the end, only few accepted them and obeyed them. At one time He had 70 disciples, but after a while they hardened their hearts also and left Him.

"The promise of obedience they appear to fulfill when this involves no sacrifice; but when self-denial and self-sacrifice are required, when they see the cross to be lifted, they draw back. Thus the conviction of duty wears away, and known transgression of God's commandments becomes habit. The ear may hear God's word, but the spiritual perceptive powers have departed. The heart is hardened, the conscience seared." — *Christ's Object Lessons*, p. 278

"He who deliberately stifles his convictions of duty because it interferes with his inclinations will finally lose the power to distinguish between truth and error. The understanding becomes darkened, the conscience callous, the heart hardened, and the soul is departed from God." — *The Great Controversy*, p. 378

Jesus spoke the parable of the sower. Some seeds fell on the wayside, others on the stony ground, and some seeds fell among the thorns. None of these seeds produced a harvest. Then some seeds fell on the good ground and started to grow and produced fruit. Jesus was the sower, and He came to sow the seed among His church, the chosen people, but almost everybody hardened their hearts against the voice of God.

This also happened in the time of Noah. For 120 years he preached to the people about the flood and invited them into the ark to save their lives, but only his own family believed him and entered the ark of safety; all

others hardened their hearts and did not believe him.

God's people travelled in the wilderness for forty years, and during this time Moses was teaching them the way of God. He was, as it were, the voice of God to them. But with the work of forty years, he was able to save only two men out of 600,000 who left Egypt with him; all others hardened their hearts in the day of provocation.

In the book of Revelation, we read in chapters 2 and 3, seven times the words, "He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches." Only a few people have the ear to hear the voice of God. Jesus said, "For this people's heart is waxed gross, and their ears are dull of learning, and their eyes they have closed; lest at any time they should see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and should understand with their heart, and should be converted, and I should heal them." Matthew 13:15

Jesus also said, "But ye believe not, because ye are not of My sheep, as I said unto you, My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me." John 10:26–27

On the Day of Pentecost a mighty power of the Holy Spirit descended upon the apostles. The people heard them speak in their native languages, calling them to repentance and to be baptized. Different reactions took place among the people. "And they were all amazed, and were in doubt, saying one to another, What meaneth this? Others mocking said, These men are full of new wine." Acts 2:12–13

Then others had an ear to hear the voice of God. "Now when they heard this, they were pricked in their heart, and said unto Peter and to the rest of the apostles, men and brethren, what shall we do?" Acts 2:37

These hearers heard the voice of God, and they did not leave their obedience to a later time, but that same day they were baptized into the church.

Many times, Lot had been speaking to his sons-in-law to obey God and save themselves. Then at the last day before the destruction of Sodom he went again to them, calling them to come out of the city, but they had hardened their hearts so much that the words of warning of their father-in-law seemed as a joke to them.

When children are born into this world, they all have a conscience, which is one of the voice of God, telling them to do what is right and not to disobey their parents and not to commit sin. But if they do not obey the

voice of their conscience to do what is right, the voice gets quieter and quieter until they do not hear it any more. Then they can disobey God and continue to do sin without feeling bad about it. The Holy Spirit is grieved, and finally leaves them alone, never to return. Then their salvation is forever too late. They still can be religious and even be members of God's true church, and yet in a lost condition. The brain understands the truth, but the heart is not in it. For selfish reasons they want to escape the hell fire and have eternal life, but they do not love God, neither their fellow men.

The Pharisees were very strict in the outward ceremonies but they hated Jesus and His followers. They did not love the truth. The same deception that Satan used on the Pharisees, scribes, and the high priests 2,000 years ago, he is using today, with great success. Many Christians are so hardened in their hearts that the strongest and most impressive appeals of the Holy Spirit do not have a lasting effect on them.

"I know the danger of those who refuse to walk in the light as God gives it. They bring upon themselves the terrible crisis of being left to follow their own ways, to do after their own judgment. The conscience becomes less and less impressible. The voice of God seems to become more and more distant, and the wrong-doer is left to his own infatuation. In stubbornness he resists every appeal, despises all counsel and advice, and turns from every provision made for his salvation, and the voice of the messenger of God makes no impression upon his mind. The Spirit of God no longer exerts a restraining power over him, and the sentence is passed, 'He is joined to idols; let him alone.' O how dark, how sullen, how obstinate, is his independence? It seems that the insensibility of death is upon his heart. This is the process through which the soul passes that rejects the working of the Holy Spirit." —*The Review And Herald*, June 29, 1897

Examine your heart with the help of God to find out if it is hard as the way side—without feelings and impressions by the Holy Spirit—or if it is as the stony ground, so hard, and so shallow; or could it be as the thorny field where the cares of this world and the deceitfulness of riches choke the word?

If your heart is in the good ground, then it will produce fruit for eternity. When you hear these words, do not harden your heart. We are nearing the end, and soon, very soon, it will be forever too late to prepare ourselves for eternity. Amen.

Timo Martin



PART 3: PROTECTING OUR MEMORY THROUGHOUT OUR LIFETIME

We have learned about the way our brains retain memories, the process that is involved, how the brain cells talk to each other, and how permanent memories are created by moving through the hippocampus, and then remaining as permanent records in the various areas of our brain.

Now we will look at the challenges we face as we get older, in terms of our memory, and how we can preserve and even improve our memory as we age.

In the previous articles, we learned that our ability to remember, to lay down permanent memories, and to bring them to our conscious mind, even years later, is dependent on the efficient communication between brain cells, and a healthy hippocampus that acts as a sorting centre, that sends information to the various parts of the brain where they are stored.

OUR AGING BRAIN

As we age, the connections between brain cells decrease because of the decrease in an important brain chemical called acetylcholine. This chemical sits in the space between brain cells, and when information must pass from one brain cell to another, this chemical acts as a messenger to move the information along. Without this chemical, the transmission of information between cells doesn't happen. We also lose the insulation that surrounds the brain cells when we get older. This loss of insulation is like an electrical wire that loses the insulating material around it. What happens with a wire when this insulation is removed? It creates a short circuit, does it not? The same thing happens in our brains. Because of this "short circuiting," the information gets lost and doesn't reach the area of the brain cell that connects it to the next brain cell. Because of this lack of communication between brain cells, it is harder to develop and retain new memories.

Also, memories must travel through the hippocampus in order to become permanently stored in the various areas of our brain. Already at the age of 30, the hippocampus

begins to lose volume; it loses 5% of its size for every decade of our life. By the time we are 80 years old, the hippocampus has lost 20% of its volume. With a smaller hippocampus, its ability to sort information becomes less efficient, and the laying down of permanent memories is impaired. The total volume of the brain also shrinks as you age.

Learning and memory is often described in terms of three functions. Acquisition refers to the introduction of new information into the brain. This can only occur when we are conscious, or awake. Consolidation refers to the process where a memory becomes stable, or permanent. Studies have shown that consolidation of memory takes place when we are asleep, through the strengthening of brain connections. Recall is the ability to access the information, either consciously or unconsciously, after it has been stored. Typical aging causes a decrease in each of these three functions, to varying degrees.

Aging also affects a person's "executive functioning", which is the ability to perform a series of actions that are involved in a complex task. By the age of 45, most people also develop problems with word-finding. If you are over this age, think of how many times you couldn't remember the word for something, or someone's name, during a conversation. This is normal and not anything to be concerned about. The speed of acquiring and processing information also slows down; it takes more time to memorize. And then, even if the memory is retained in our brains, we have more trouble accessing or recalling the memory. However, our brain cannot tolerate unanswered questions, so that even when we are sleeping, our brain is trying to remember something we had forgotten. How many times, when you have forgotten a name, it comes back to you hours later, when you weren't even thinking about it? This is your brain, working in the background, unconsciously trying to solve the problem of the forgotten name. It is also easier to get sidetracked by something,

and then you can't remember what you were planning to do before you were interrupted. We don't sleep as well when we get older, therefore, the consolidation part of our memory is also affected.

But, all is not lost. Despite the obvious changes in our memory as we age, studies show that even people in their 80's still have a good ability for memory. Memory loss can also be prevented or slowed if we avoid those factors that damage our memory, and act on those things that help us retain and even improve our memory. We will learn about these in the next sections.

FACTORS WHICH CAUSE MEMORY IMPAIRMENT

Unlike the aging process which none of us can do anything about, there are many factors that can worsen memory that we have control over. Avoiding these will ensure that we are not doing anything to actively harm the memory centers of our brain.

Alcohol kills brain cells, especially in the memory centers. Excessive alcohol use over many years can cause a brain disorder called Korsakoff's syndrome, where severe memory loss is the most significant symptom. Even if a person doesn't develop Korsakoff's, brain cells are killed, and memory is impaired to a certain degree with continued alcohol use.

Recent studies are also proving that people who have many depressive episodes over their lifetime have changes in the brain that also affect their ability to store new memories. Depression uses up a lot of brain energy, and not much energy is left over for less life-preserving duties. Memory retrieval also becomes inconsistent. Prolonged periods of depression can actually damage brain cells. Because depression also affects sleep, this also contributes to memory problems.

Concussions and head injuries also affect our memory. Many children fall and hit their heads multiple times and do not suffer damage to their brains. However, if you have more than several hundred concussions over your life time, this will affect your memory. We can see this in athletes who have had multiple concussions, especially those who play contact sports such as football, soccer and hockey. They often end up with permanent brain damage. The more serious concussions occur if you suffer a hit on the front of your head, where the bone is thinner.

Another factor that causes memory problems is chronic pain. When someone is in pain, it takes "wattage" away from the brain and therefore depletes the brain of some of its energy. Pain involves an emotional perception and the physical state of pain. Pain is disabling, and thus affects memory.

Various lifestyle factors also affect memory. Poor diet,

obesity, diabetes, smoking, chronic lung diseases, and increased blood pressure contribute to problems with memory. Some of these illnesses prohibit nutrients and oxygen from getting to the brain. Obese persons develop what is called "metabolic syndrome." This syndrome occurs when the fat accumulates in the abdominal area, which then creates an inability to process sugars properly, causing inflammation in the body, which damages blood vessels and destroys brain cells. With 1/3 of children in the developed countries being overweight, at a time when their brains are still not fully developed, they can develop lifelong problems with memory, because their brain development has been affected by the damage caused by obesity. Increases in blood pressure and plaque development damages arteries, which decreases blood flow to the brain. Brain cells are damaged from lack of nutrients and oxygen.

Free radicals, which are the by-products of the body's metabolism, increase as we age. According to some theories, we age because cells accumulate free-radical damage over time. The same theories indicate that free radicals are the most destructive agent contributing to the aging of the brain.

MILD COGNITIVE IMPAIRMENT

Mild Cognitive Impairment (MCI) is a condition in which a person has more memory loss than what the average person their age may have, but they can still carry out the normal activities of life. Symptoms include misplacing items, forgetting events or appointments, having trouble coming up with words. These people also have a higher risk of developing Alzheimer's.

ALZHEIMER'S DISEASE

Alzheimer's disease makes up 50% of all dementias. The biggest risk factor to developing Alzheimer's is age. The risk of Alzheimer's also increases because of poor diet, and other health problems. With the population becoming increasingly older, with people being able to live longer because of advances in medicine keeping people alive who would have died in the past, more cases of Alzheimer's exist. 35% of people over the age of 80 have Alzheimer's. Only 10% of people who have Alzheimer's have another family member with the disease. 90% of Alzheimer's develops with no family history of the disease.

In Alzheimer's disease, the hippocampus is destroyed, and a person is not able to lay down permanent memories. It causes "rapid-forgetting." A person who has Alzheimer's is not able to recall words after two minutes. The ability to convert short-term memory to long-term memory is not possible. When trying to name something, words are switched around, and the person uses words that are similar to the word they cannot remember. As the disease

progresses, the person loses decades of memory, decade by decade, with only the earliest memories of their life being able to be recalled. Events from childhood can still be accessed, but they cannot remember what they had for their most recent meal. Long-term memory is not initially affected because these memories have already been stored in other parts of the brain; the hippocampus is not needed to retrieve long-term memories. Eventually, most areas of the brain begin to shrink or atrophy, and more than just memory is affected. They lose the ability to perform the most simple tasks that they have been used to doing all their lives, such as dressing, tying shoelaces, or even feeding themselves. The motor cortex, the area of the brain that contains the memory for movement is affected and many people with Alzheimer's eventually forget how to walk. Trying to orient a person with Alzheimer's to their current age and year can be very distressing as their memories are all based in the past.

So, how do we strengthen the connections between our brain cells and avoid damage to the memory centres of the brain?

MEMORY PRESERVATION

Chronic stress is a condition that most people in this fast-paced world complain about, there is never enough time for families, not enough time to exercise, to take care proper care of one's health, worrying about getting all the household tasks done, looking after children, working long hours, with not enough pay, etc. However, to stay healthy, we need to avoid this chronic stress. When we experience a stressful situation, our bodies produce a hormone called cortisol, which helps us deal with the stress. In the short-term, cortisol is necessary as it increases our sensory abilities, speeds up our reaction time, and keeps us alert. When the stressful event is over, our body gets rid of the cortisol by excreting it via our kidneys.

Optimal performance often involves some level of stress, so that our body has an improved ability to cope with the stress. However, when the adrenal glands, which produce cortisol, are repeatedly triggered to work in conditions of chronic stress, high levels of cortisol stay in our bodies. These high cortisol levels in our body cause inflammation, which, in turn, causes damage to all the cells in our body. Cortisol specifically destroys cells in the memory centers of our brains, which include the cerebral cortex, where memory is stored, and the hippocampus, which is the sorting centre for memories. In periods of high stress, we find it difficult to make new memories. Students, who feel a lot of pressure in school have difficulty with learning new things because of the effect that stress has on the memory centres of the brain. Stress increases when we don't feel we have control over our lives, when all the worries of life overwhelm us, when we have unresolved

conflicts that we constantly ruminate about. It takes up brain energy.

As Christians, we have a way to deal with stress that the rest of the world doesn't have. We have a way that allows us to feel in control of our lives, and that is by putting our trust in God, by not relying on our own inadequate abilities to cope when stressful situations occur. "Come unto Me, all ye that labour, and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." Matthew 11:28. "By prayer and supplication with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known unto God, and the peace of God, which passeth understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus." Philippians 4:6-7

The brain depends on the energy it receives from oxygen. 20% of the oxygen that we take in when we breathe is used by the brain for all of its various functions. New brain connections develop in the presence of oxygen. Depleting the body of oxygen will prevent these connections from being made. With decreased connections, memory is impaired, and memory loss takes place. Regular exercise provides oxygen to the brain. As our aerobic fitness improves, we are able to bring more oxygen to our brain in a more efficient manner. Exercise also prevents obesity, and increased cholesterol levels in the blood, which would prevent oxygen-rich blood from flowing to the brain.

When we establish intimate relationships with others, when we maintain our family ties, when we interact regularly with others, and perform activities that increase our feelings of usefulness, when we decrease loneliness, and live in a supportive environment, our brain function improves. Church attendance is a way to establish significant connections with other people of like faith, with the same goals and interests. The most significant relationship that helps to maintain our brains is our connection to God.

When it comes to our brains, the old adage, "use it or lose it" is a true saying. People who continually learn throughout their lives have more synaptic connections in their brain. Even older adults can improve brain function by stimulating the brain by new learning. This can be done by learning a new skill, developing a new hobby. Keeping the brain stimulated and active by doing various puzzles, such as jigsaw puzzles, word puzzles such as Sudoku and crosswords will also maintain brain function. Reading is also brain stimulating. Reading the Bible is the most stimulating reading we can do. "The Bible is the best book in the world for giving intellectual culture. Its study taxes the mind, strengthens the memory, and sharpens the intellect more than the study of all the subjects that human philosophy embraces." —*Gospel Workers*, p. 99

Stimulating environments increase the amount of dendrites, or branches on our brain cells. These branches al-

low for communication with other cells. Brain cells with more dendrites have more connections to other brain cells, and have increased communication abilities with other brain cells.

Our diet can affect our memory. Eating anti-oxidant rich foods will decrease the free radical levels in our body. This involves eating multiple coloured fruits and vegetables. Blueberries have been proven to be the most memory-protective food available. We need to avoid sugar and saturated fats which increase inflammation in our body, and put plaque onto our arteries. Eat foods rich in Vitamin C and E, which are anti-oxidant vitamins. Include B12, folic acid, and Omega-3 fatty acids, which have also been found to protect our memory. Vegans need to include a B12 supplement to prevent B12 deficiencies. The one thing to note is that ginkgo, which has been promoted as improving memory, has been shown to have no positive effect on memory.

“You are a gourmand when at the table. This is one great cause of your forgetfulness and loss of memory.” – *Counsels on Diet and Foods*, p. 138. This testimony points out the fact that our diets should be kept simple and close to nature even for our memory’s sake.

When studying, we can improve our memory of new facts by studying one subject at a time. Our brain needs to consolidate the information that was previously learned before new learning should take place. During the course of a day, students are provided teaching in a variety of different subjects. The problem is that often new learning later in the day interferes with learning earlier in the day. Memory is also enhanced with multiple inputs of new facts, i.e. visual, hearing, asking questions. When a teacher announces to his students at the end of a class that a quiz will be held, based on what was taught during that class, he is using one of the methods that improve learning. If we are quizzed on information that we learned we remember it better. Even when we give Bible studies to people, we should do a quick quiz at the end of the Bible study to see what the Bible student remembers. This will help them remember what we taught them.

One-third of our lives are spent sleeping. Sleep calibrates our circadian rhythms, decreases the cortisol levels in our body, and reduces blood pressure. Also, when we sleep, information that we learned is moved into long-term storage. Sleeping after learning new material helps to consolidate it in our brains, to create permanent memories. Disrupted sleep patterns interfere with learning and memory. Many students stay up all night, studying, working on assignments and preparing for exams. The problem

is that when students don’t get a good night’s sleep, their memory is impaired, and they will not do as well on tests and assignments. Adolescents especially, suffer from poor memory because school schedules do not align with their body rhythms and they suffer from chronic sleep deprivation.

Sleep apnea is a condition in which people, as they sleep, have breathing pattern characterized by long pauses in breathing, or in abnormally low breaths. Sometimes these pauses in breathing last anywhere from 10 seconds to minutes at a time, and can occur anywhere from 5-30 times an hour. Risk factors for developing sleep apnea include being overweight, having diabetes, and aging. People with sleep apnea are damaging specific areas of the brain, all of which are involved in learning and memory. The result is impaired executive functioning, increased difficulty in paying attention, and in processing information. Sleep-disordered breathing is associated with an increased risk of high blood pressure, heart disease, diabetes and strokes. This damage occurs because the pauses in breathing prevent adequate levels of oxygen reaching the brain. Severe sleep apnea can result in permanent brain damage and even death. The various treatments for sleep apnea prevent these pauses in breathing.



Our procedural memory, i.e. skills, is not affected by disrupted sleep patterns. This is the reason why healthcare professionals, who often go for 24 hours without sleep, are still able to use their skills in caring for patients without making mistakes when they are sleep deprived.

We have learned much about memory over the last three months: We learned how our brain takes in information and stores it, and how memory can either be a blessing to us or a curse; we have learned the value of cultivating the habits that fit us for heaven, and now we know what we must do to preserve our memory. The Spirit of Prophecy provides us with the final words regarding the importance of memory to our salvation. “It is for our own benefit to keep every gift of God fresh in our **memory**. Thus faith is strengthened to claim and to receive more and more. There is greater encouragement for us in the least blessing we ourselves receive from God than in all the accounts we can read of the faith and experience of others. The soul that responds to the grace of God shall be like a watered garden. His health shall spring forth speedily; his light shall shine in obscurity, and the glory of the Lord shall be seen upon him. Let us then **remember** the loving-kindness of the Lord, and the multitude of His tender mercies.” –*The Desire of Ages*, p. 348 (emphasis mine). Amen.



Two Kinds of Service

"Have you put up my dinner, Maude?"

John Melvin asked the question almost timidly. His daughter's face clouded, her lips were compressed, and she was making a great deal of unnecessary noise as she moved about the kitchen. She did not reply at once, and when she spoke it was in no pleasant voice.

"Yes, father, your dinner is ready. Now I must put up the children's dinners, and there is the ironing to do, and I must do some cooking also. This will be a busy day with me, but all my days seem to be busy. Perhaps I do not understand how to keep ahead of the work. I have no time for recreation; there seems to be nothing in life for me but drudgery."

Mr. Melvin sighed heavily.

"I am sorry, Maude. If last season's crops had not failed, I should have hired some stout woman to do the heavy work. It is too much for you, a girl of nineteen, to have all these cares; but what can I do?"

"You can do nothing, father, and no one is to blame. I expect to be a drudge. Amy," raising her voice, "where are you? Go and pick up the breakfast dishes, and be quick about it. It isn't time to get ready for school. Fred, what are you doing? Haven't I told you not to whistle in the kitchen? Oh, dear! One needs more patience than any mortal ever had!"

"I am sorry, Maude," said Mr. Melvin, again. "It was a sad day for us all when your Mother died."

And then the discouraged man, old and worn before his time, took his dinner-pail and started for the distant wood-lot.

Maude continued to move rapidly about the kitchen and pantry, doing the morning's work and scolding the children in a shrill voice.

"What's the use of being so cross, Maude?" asked Amy, a bright-eyed girl of twelve. "I can't see that it does any

good."

"I can't be so easy as you are, Amy. I wish things didn't fret me, but they do. And you have an easy time, while I have to work like a slave."

"I'm sure I help you all I can, Maude. I don't suppose you want me to stay out of school to work."

"You know I don't. You won't have time to do any more this morning. Now, Fred, I told you to study hard today and not fail in your lessons."

"All right, sis," rejoined Fred carelessly.

"Fred, how many times have I told you not to call me 'Sis?' I am tired beyond endurance. I don't want to hear another word from you this morning, sir," she added as she saw the boy was about to speak.

As the children left the house, Fred looked significantly at his sister.

"Wasn't Maude cross this morning? How she did bang things!"

Amy puckered up her brow.

"I can't understand, Fred. Maude is always scolding."

"Yes, and she belongs to the church. I'm glad I'm not a Christian, if she's one."

"Oh, hush, Fred! Christian people are happier than we are."

"Humph! Maude professes to be a Christian, but she can't be happy. Seems to me she's the unhappiest person I know. Papa doesn't belong to the church, but he isn't always scolding."

"Well, I can't understand it," sighed Amy. "But, Fred, you know Mama was a Christian."

"She was a real Christian, too," said Fred soberly. "But I guess it's hard work to be the real thing. Maude must be a make-believe one," he added.

“Oh, hush, Fred! I don’t like to hear you say such things.”

Left alone, Maude’s hands were busy. At dinner time she ate a lunch, and at two o’clock was through her work.

“Everything’s in order,” she thought, as she looked about the neat kitchen. “And I’m not going to touch a bit of sewing this afternoon. I’ll go into the sitting-room and rest until it’s time to think about supper.”

THE DREAM

In the pleasant little sitting-room Maude sat down in an easy rocker at the front window and looked out over the snow-covered fields. Presently she saw the bent form of a little old lady in a black coat and red hood coming up the path.

“Aunt Sarah Easler,” she said to herself, “and coming here, too.”

The old lady came in without knocking and Maude rose to meet her. Aunt Sarah seemed much agitated. She took both of the girl’s hands in hers, tears streaming from her eyes.

“What is it, Aunt Sarah?” cried Maude. “Has anything happened?”

“My poor child! My poor child! May God help you!”

Maude felt herself growing faint, but she resolutely banished the feeling.

“What has happened?” she asked, in a voice so calm that it astonished herself. “The children?”

“The children are all right, my dear. It is your father.”

“My father! What of him? Is he hurt?”

The old lady bowed her head and replied in a broken voice: “Badly hurt, my dear.”

Maude grasped Aunt Sarah’s arm.

“Your face tells me that it is even worse than that,” she said, calmly. “Is he dead?”

“My poor child!”

“You need say no more. I know he is.”

Even as Maude spoke, she looked out of the window



and saw four men bearing her Father’s form on a stretcher. She did not faint or cry out, but in a moment her mind went back over the three years that had passed since her mother’s death, and she saw wherein she had failed as a daughter and sister.

Tears came to her relief, and as they gushed down over her cheeks, she awoke with a start. She looked out of the window. Oh, thank God! No men were in sight, bearing her father’s form on a stretcher.

“It was a dream,” she murmured. “Heavenly Father, I thank Thee!” And she formed a few resolutions and lifted up her heart in prayer for help.

“How terribly I have erred and wandered from the way,” she said aloud. “This dream has opened my eyes, and I see what I have been doing. What must have Papa thought of me? No wonder that he is not a Christian. I have wondered, too, that the children have been so indifferent to religious teaching, but the influence of my life has spoiled everything. But, thank God! The present is mine, my dear ones are spared to me, and henceforth I will strive to have my life count for Christ.”

When the children came that night they looked in wonder at their sister. There was a smile on her face, and her voice was gentle when she spoke to them. The tea-table was neatly spread and Fred saw his favourite hot rolls. Presently Mr. Melvin came

in, somewhat timidly, expecting as usual to hear complaints and impatient exclamations from Maude. Instead, she greeted him pleasantly.

“Tired, father? Supper’s ready. I’ve made some of the toast you like and opened a can of peaches.”

“I suppose you are very tired, Maude,” said Mr. Melvin, looking wonderingly at his daughter.

“I’m a little tired, father, but I’m thankful for the privilege of getting tired. I have a comfortable home, and we are all in good health. You see, father, I am beginning to count my blessings. I have been a fault-finding, ungrateful girl, and have made you all unhappy; but I hope to make some amends for the past.”

“God bless you, my daughter!” said John Melvin, huskily.



INVITATION

INTERNATIONAL YOUTH CONFERENCE
AND LEADERSHIP SEMINAR

“Victory in Christ”

AUGUST 21–28, 2013
CAMP O–AT–KA
PORTLAND, MAINE, U.S.A.

After the American Union Conference, which is scheduled for August 12–18, 2013, near San Diego, California, the young people from around the world are invited to attend the conference and seminar sponsored by the General Conference Youth Department at beautiful Camp O–AT–KA on Sebago Lake in Portland, Maine, a center of Adventism’s early rise and development.

This is a unique opportunity for the youth to gain a wealth of practical spiritual knowledge to prepare them not only for service in their own countries but also to stand faithfully for Jesus Christ in tests that the world has never before faced.

The concepts that will be presented over the course of one week are cutting edge in the world of leadership training, and they will be seen to be founded on the eternal principles presented in the holy Scriptures and lived out in the life of Jesus Christ. It is astonishing what God is doing and will do to have faithful people ready to give the last testimony to the world and greet Jesus at His coming.

ACTIVITIES: In addition to the seminar and presentation of related spiritual topics, there will be outings for missionary outreach, visits to historical Adventist sites, and recreation in some of the most beautiful natural places on the east coast of the United States.

TRAVEL INFORMATION: Participants should arrange for their flight to Boston Logan International Airport, to arrive before noon on Wednesday, August 21. If, for any reason, one arrives earlier, he will need to make his own arrangements for lodging and meals until he is picked up after noon on Wednesday. For their return flights, participants will be transported back to Boston on Wednesday, August 28, so their flight should be scheduled after 4:00 p.m. that day.

FEES: for lodging, meals, and transportation to and from the airport, as well as all outings during the week, total US \$480 per person. Participants are responsible for their own flight arrangements, as well as required visas and travel insurance.

NOTIFICATION OF INTEREST: Send an email before January 25, 2013, to Pastor Joel Barnedo, leader of the General Conference Youth Department, Youth@sda1844.org, or jnbarn@yahoo.com, or to conference coordinator Barbara Watts, barbara.watts@sda1888.org, to notify the General Conference Youth Department of your interest in attending and to receive the Program and Reservation Form.

Reservations need to be made and payment received by April 4, 2013. If you have questions, call Pastor Barnedo at +1-720-325-0368. Barbara Watts can be reached at +1-916-765-3389.

VISA APPLICATION: Send an email to Barbara Watts at barbara.watts@sda1888.org to request a letter of invitation from the General Conference Youth Department to attach to your visa application.



The Garden of Eden

The Garden of Eden is a very important place in the Bible. It is the place where man was created and where he fell into temptation by Satan. It is also the place that was taken to heaven and that we may be able to see, if we are faithful.

“And the LORD God planted a garden eastward in Eden; and there He put the man whom He had formed. And out of the ground made the LORD God to grow every tree that is pleasant to the sight, and good for food; the tree of life also in the midst of the garden, and the tree of knowledge of good and evil.” Genesis 2:8–9

The Garden of Eden was a very beautiful place that was watered by one river which turned into four heads. The name of the first river is Pison; the second river is called Gihon; the third river is called Hiddekel; and the fourth river is Euphrates.

“As it came from the Creator’s hand, not only the Garden of Eden but the whole earth was exceedingly beautiful. No taint of sin, or shadow of death, marred the fair creation. God’s glory ‘covered the heavens, and the earth was full of praise.’ ‘The morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy.’ Thus was the earth a fit emblem of Him who is ‘abundant in goodness and truth;’ a fit study for those who were made in His image. The Garden of Eden was a representation of what God desired the whole earth to become, and it was His purpose that, as the human family increased in numbers, they should establish other homes and schools like the one He had given.” –*Education*, p. 22

Adam and Eve lived in harmony together, and with the animals, until one day the serpent, which was Satan in disguise, tempted Eve into eating the fruit from the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil. After she had taken one bite she went and found Adam. When he saw what she had done he decided to eat the fruit also, so that he could die with her. After they ate the forbidden

fruit, they heard the voice of God, calling through the garden. Finally, they answered and God asked them why they had sinned. Adam blamed Eve, and Eve blamed the serpent.

“And the LORD God said unto the serpent, Because thou hast done this, thou art cursed above all cattle, and above every beast of the field; upon thy belly shalt thou go, and dust shalt thou eat all the days of thy life: And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel. Unto the woman he said, I will greatly multiply thy sorrow and thy conception; in sorrow thou shalt bring forth children; and thy desire shall be to thy husband, and he shall rule over thee. And unto Adam He said, Because thou hast hearkened unto the voice of thy wife, and hast eaten of the tree, of which I commanded thee, saying, Thou shalt not eat of it: cursed is the ground for thy sake; in sorrow shalt thou eat of it all the days of thy life; Thorns also and thistles shall it bring forth to thee; and thou shalt eat the herb of the field; In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou return unto the ground; for out of it wast thou taken: for dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return.” Genesis 3:14–19

Adam and Eve were told to leave the garden, forever. After that, God placed Cherubim with a flaming sword at the entrance of the garden to keep any man from the Tree of Life.

“The Garden of Eden remained upon the earth long after man had become an outcast from its pleasant paths. The fallen race were long permitted to gaze upon the home of innocence, their entrance barred only by the watching angels. . . . When the tide of iniquity overspread the world, and the wickedness of men determined their destruction by a flood of waters, the hand that had planted Eden withdrew it from the earth. But in the final restitution, when there shall be ‘a new heaven and a new earth,’ it is to be restored more

gloriously adorned than at the beginning. Then they that have kept God's commandments shall breathe in immortal vigor beneath the tree of life; and through unending ages the inhabitants of sinless worlds shall behold, in that garden of delight, a sample of the perfect work of God's creation, untouched by the curse of sin—a sample of what the whole earth would have become had man but fulfilled the Creator's glorious plan." —*The Adventist Home*, p. 539

When God was speaking to Adam, Eve and the serpent, He revealed part of the plan of redemption. He said that the serpent's seed and Eve's seed would be enemies forever. He said that someone would bruise the serpent's

head and that the serpent will bruise His heel. God was talking about when, thousands of years later, Jesus would be nailed to the cross by the priests and Pharisees under the influence of Satan. Satan would bruise His heel with the nails, but at the time of the end, Jesus, our Lord and Saviour would bruise the serpent's head, or, in other words, killing him, therefore ending all sinful life in the universe.

It is my wish and prayer that we may all be faithful, so we may meet in the Garden of Eden in heaven, eat the fruit from the Tree of Life, and live with Jesus forever. Amen.

Michael Cyrus Newby



LUSAKA, ZAMBIA



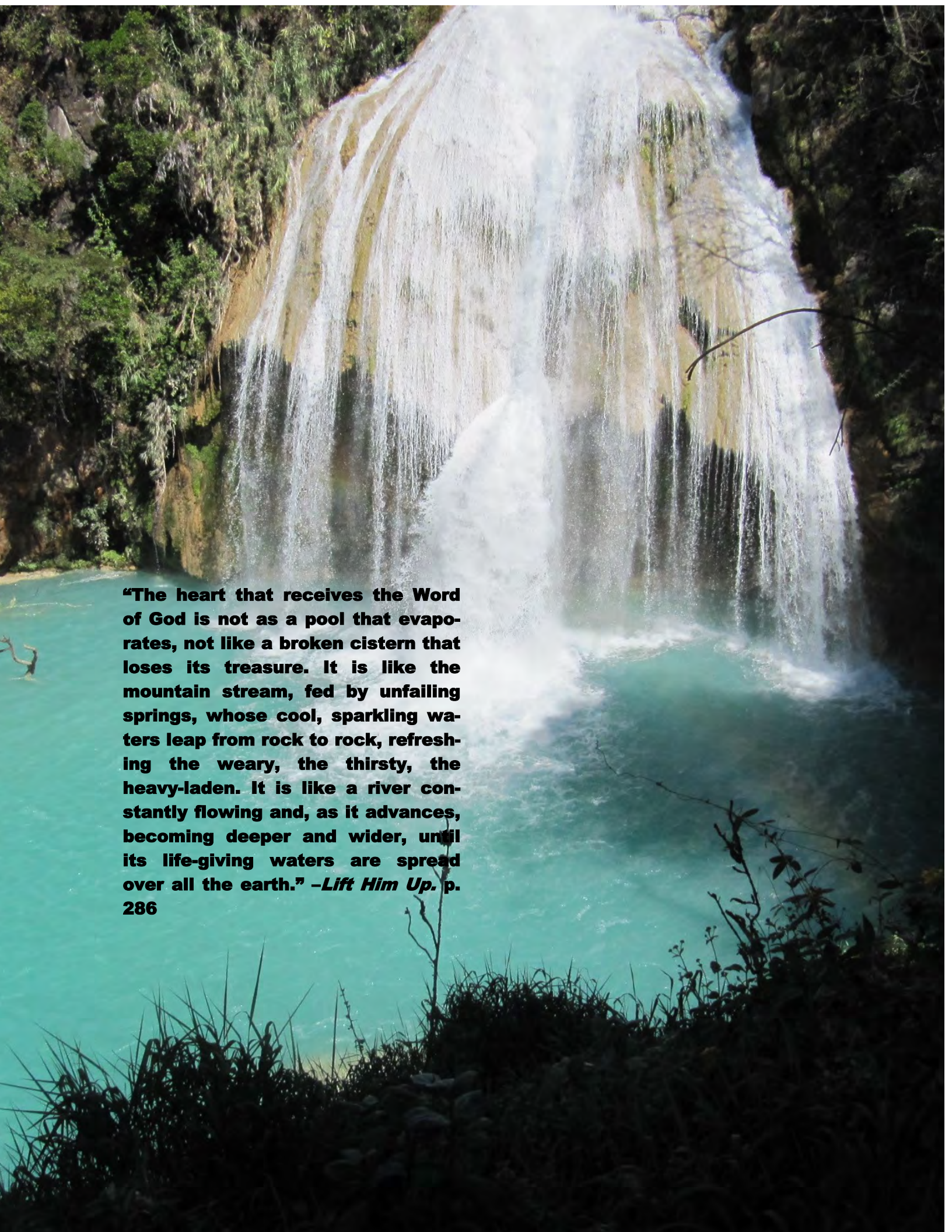
ADDIS ABABA, ETHIOPIA



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NAIROBI, KENYA



“The heart that receives the Word of God is not as a pool that evaporates, not like a broken cistern that loses its treasure. It is like the mountain stream, fed by unfailing springs, whose cool, sparkling waters leap from rock to rock, refreshing the weary, the thirsty, the heavy-laden. It is like a river constantly flowing and, as it advances, becoming deeper and wider, until its life-giving waters are spread over all the earth.” –*Lift Him Up*, p. 286