



The Reformation
Messenger 

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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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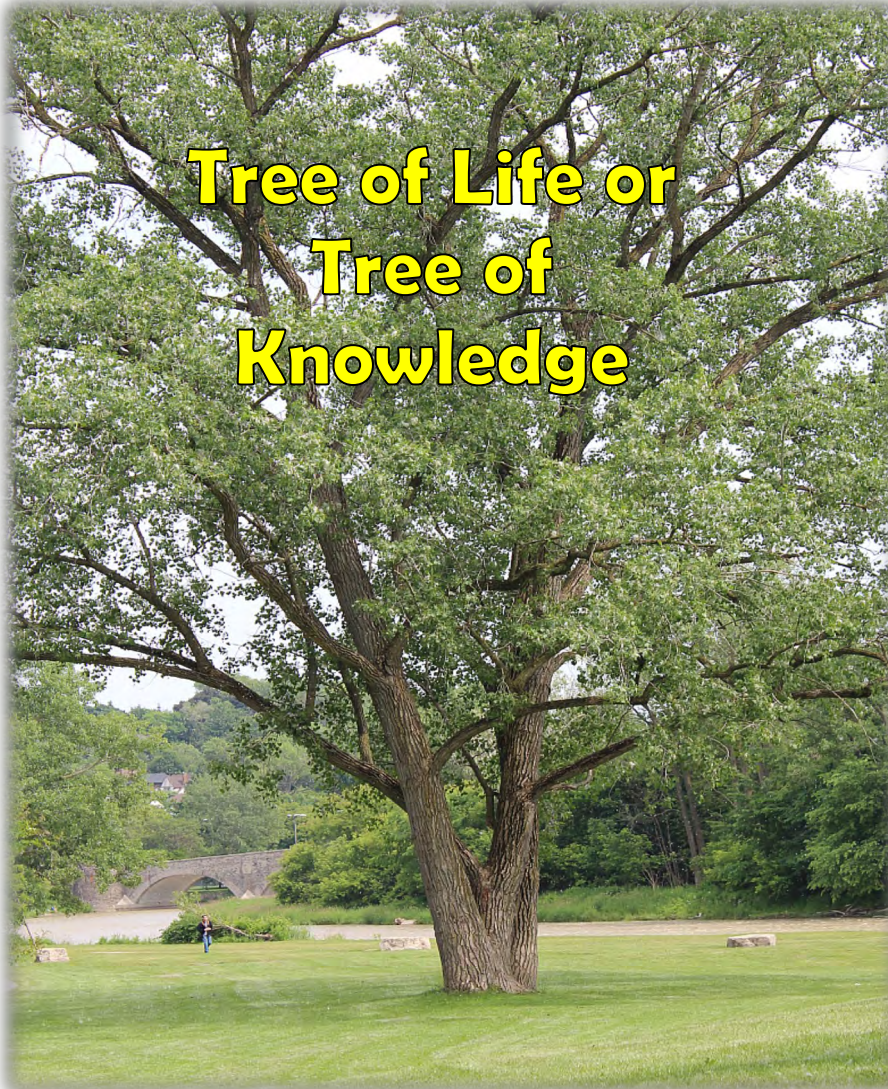
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Helen Martin



Tree of Life or Tree of Knowledge

“Christ does not open the numerous doors at which human curiosity has been striving to obtain entrance. He does not spread for men a feast that would prove deleterious to their highest interests. He came to plant for men, not the tree of knowledge, but the tree of life.” —*Selected Messages*, vol. 2, p.33

TREE OF KNOWLEDGE

“If Adam and Eve had never touched the forbidden tree, the Lord would have imparted to them knowledge,— knowledge upon which rested no curse of sin, knowledge that would have brought them everlasting joy. The only knowledge they gained by their disobedience was a knowledge of sin and its results.” —*Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*, vol. 1, p. 1083

“But through man's disobedience, death entered the world. Adam ate of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, the fruit of which he had been forbidden to touch. His transgression opened the floodgates of woe upon our race.” —*Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*, vol. 7, p. 988

“Our first parents, though created innocent and holy, were not placed beyond the possibility of wrongdoing. God made them free moral agents, capable of appreciating the wisdom and benevolence of His character and the justice of His requirements, and with full liberty to yield or to withhold obedience. They were to enjoy communion with God and with holy angels; but before they could be rendered eternally secure, their loyalty must be tested. At the very beginning of man's existence a check was placed upon the desire for self-indulgence, the fatal passion that lay at the foundation of Satan's fall. The tree of knowledge, which stood near the tree of life in the midst of the garden, was to be a test of the obedience, faith, and love of our parents. While permitted to eat freely of every other tree, they were forbidden to taste of this, on pain of death. They were also to be exposed to the temptations of Satan; but if they endured the trial, they would finally be placed beyond his power, to enjoy perpetual favor with God.” —*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 48–49

“It was through sin that men gained the knowledge of evil; no sooner had the first pair sinned than they began to accuse each other; and this is what human nature will inevitably do when uncontrolled by the grace of Christ.” —*Thoughts from the Mount of Blessing*, p. 126

“The result of the eating of the tree of knowledge of good and evil is manifest in every man's experience. There is in his nature a bent to evil, a force which, unaided, he cannot resist. To withstand this force, to attain that ideal which in his inmost soul he accepts as alone worthy, he can find help in but one power. That power is Christ. Co-operation with that power is man's greatest need.” —*Education*, p. 29

“Age after age, the curiosity of men has led them to seek for the tree of knowledge; and often they think they are plucking fruit most essential, when, like Solomon's research, they find it altogether vanity and nothingness in comparison with that science of true holiness

which will open to them the gates of the city of God. The human ambition has been seeking for that kind of knowledge that will bring to them glory and self-exaltation and supremacy. Thus Adam and Eve were worked upon by Satan until God's restraint was snapped asunder, and their education under the teacher of lies began in order that they might have the knowledge which God had refused them,—to know the consequence of transgression.” —*The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*, vol. 1, p. 1083

“It is a fact widely ignored, though never without danger, that error rarely appears for what it really is. It is by mingling with or attaching itself to truth that it gains acceptance. The eating of the tree of knowledge of good and evil caused the ruin of our first parents, and the acceptance of a mingling of good and evil is the ruin of men and women today. The mind that depends upon the judgment of others is certain, sooner or later, to be misled.” —*Education*, p. 230–231

“Wherever they may turn, the youth will see examples of unholiness. If they go with the multitude to do evil, their influence will be cast on the side of the adversary of souls; they will mislead those who have not cherished principles of unswerving fidelity to God. Warnings will not be heeded, and in their self-sufficiency they will say, I know enough not to be misled by any corrupting influence. Not seeking safe paths for their feet, they become unguarded, and, charmed with the careless recklessness of those who pride themselves upon their knowledge of evil, they will take fatal steps in the path which leads to death, for influence is power.” —*Manuscript Releases*, vol. 8, p. 282

“Every man has been placed on trial, as were Adam and Eve in Eden. As the tree of knowledge was placed in the midst of the garden of Eden, so the Sabbath command is placed in the midst of the decalogue. In regard to the fruit of the tree of knowledge, the restriction was

made, ‘Ye shall not eat of it, . . . lest ye die’ [Genesis 3:3]. Of the Sabbath, God said, Ye shall not defile it, but keep it holy. . . . As the tree of knowledge was the test of Adam's obedience, so the fourth command is the test that God has given to prove the loyalty of all His people. The experience of Adam is to be a warning to us so long as time shall last. It warns us not to receive any assurance from the mouth of men or of angels that will detract one jot or tittle from the sacred law of Jehovah.” —*The Review and Herald*, August 30, 1898

TREE OF LIFE

“Blessed are they that do His commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city.” Revelation 22:14

“Must we wait until we are translated before we eat of the leaves of the tree of life? He who receives into his heart the words of Christ knows what it means to eat the leaves of the tree of life.” —*Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*, vol. 7, p. 957

“Transgression of God's requirements excluded Adam from the Garden of Eden. A flaming sword was placed around the tree of life, lest man should put forth his hand and partake of it, immortalizing sin. Obedience to all the commandments of God was the condition of eating of the tree of life. Adam fell by disobedience,

forfeiting by sin all right to use either the life-giving fruit of the tree in the midst of the Garden, or its leaves, which are for the healing of the nations.

“Obedience through Jesus Christ gives to man perfection of character and a right to that tree of life. The conditions of again partaking of the fruit of the tree are plainly stated in the testimony of Jesus Christ to John: ‘Blessed are they that do His commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and many enter in through the gates into the city’ . . .



“The Scriptures, ‘It is written,’ is the gospel we are to preach. No flaming sword is placed before this tree of life. All who will may partake of it. There is no power that can prohibit any soul from taking of the fruit of this tree of life. All may eat and live forever.” –*Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*, vol. 1, p. 1086

“After the entrance of sin, the heavenly Husbandman transplanted the tree of life to the Paradise above; but its branches hang over the wall to the lower world. Through the redemption purchased by the blood of Christ, we may still eat of its life-giving fruit.” –*Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*, vol. 7, p. 988–989

“The knowledge that comes from God is the bread of life. It is the leaves of the tree of life which are for the healing of the nations. The current of spiritual life thrills the soul as the words of Christ are believed and practiced. Thus it is that we are made one with Christ. The experience that was weak and feeble becomes strong. It is eternal life to us if we hold the beginning of our confidence firm unto the end.” –*Ibid*, p. 957

“In the Word the Saviour is revealed in all His beauty and loveliness. Every soul will find comfort and consolation in the Bible, which is full of promises concerning what God will do for the one who comes into right relation to Him. Especially will the sick be comforted by hearing the Word; for in giving the Scriptures God has given to mankind a leaf from the tree of life, which is for the healing of the nations. How can anyone who reads the Scriptures or who has heard them read, lose his interest in heavenly things, and find pleasure in amusements and enchantments of the world?” –*The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*, vol. 5, p. 1134

“In his efforts to reach God's ideal for him, the Christian is to despair of nothing. Moral and spiritual perfection, through the grace and power of Christ, is promised to all. Jesus is the source of power, the fountain of life. He

brings us to His word, and from the tree of life presents to us leaves for the healing of sin-sick souls. He leads us to the throne of God, and puts into our mouth a prayer through which we are brought into close contact with Himself. In our behalf He sets in operation the all-powerful agencies of heaven. At every step we touch His living power.” –*The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 478

“Let all bear in mind that the tree of life bears twelve manner of fruits. This represents the spiritual work of our earthly missions. The Word of God is to us the tree of life. Every portion of the Scripture has its use. In every part of the Word is some lesson to be learned. Then

learn how to study your Bibles. This book is not a heap of odds and ends. It is an educator. Your own thoughts must be called into exercise before you can be really benefited by Bible study. Spiritual sinew and muscle must be brought to bear upon the Word. The Holy Spirit will bring to remembrance the words of Christ. He will enlighten the mind, and guide the research,” –*Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*, vol. 7, p. 989

“The leaves of the tree of life are proffered you. They are sweeter than honey and the honeycomb. Take them, eat them, digest them, and your faintheartedness will pass away. –*Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*, vol. 7, p. 989. “Christ . . . was the

tree of life to all who would pluck and eat.” –*Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*, vol. 7, p. 989

“Christ is the source of our life, the source of immortality. He is the tree of life, and to all who come to Him He gives spiritual life.” –*Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*, vol. 7, p. 989

Ellen G. White





A mother told her children to clean their rooms; they did, but very slowly and reluctantly. Then the mother said to them, "If you get your rooms cleaned quickly, I will take you to the zoo." Now the children started to work very hard, and in no time their rooms were clean.

In a factory, men were working slowly, producing little. Then the owner said to them, "I will pay you no more per hour, but by piece," and from that day on the production almost doubled. It was the incentive that made the difference. Without incentives, people do not work well, neither do they do a good job.

In religion also, many work very slow. Years go by and very little progress is made in their character building. Perfection is still lacking, and they are not fit for heaven. They also need incentives to work faster and to produce a better quality of character. Our time is almost finished, and if our sanctification is not complete, all will be lost. Our zeal must not be half-hearted, and our fervor not lukewarm.

Without proper incentive, the attitude of the people is as Malachi writes, "Ye have said, It is vain to serve God: and what profit is it that we have kept His ordinance, and that we have walked mournfully before the Lord of hosts? And now we call the proud happy; yea, they that work wickedness are set up; yea, they that tempt God are even delivered." Malachi 3:14–15

Also, in Psalms we read the same. "Behold, these are the ungodly, who prosper in the world; they increase in riches. Verily I have cleansed my heart in vain, and washed my hands in innocency. For all the day long have I been plagued, and chastened every morning." Psalm 73:12–14

Many people agree with these two Bible texts. They see no reason to serve God.

Job writes about the wicked who say, "What is the Almighty, that we should serve Him? and what profit should we have, if we pray unto Him?" Job 21:15

People expect to get money, riches, and an easy life, through religion; and if it does not happen, they give up on religion.

Other people reason in their minds that "this is sin, but I enjoy it so much, it makes me happy. God will understand, and He will forgive. All I have to do is to say 'forgive me', and all is well again."

The Seventh-Day Adventists faced the war and possible persecution in 1914. Many reasoned in their minds that it is easier to get forgiveness from God than from the governments. God is good, but our governments are bad; then let us obey our governments, and join the army and fight also on the Sabbath.

One Pentecostal minister said to me, "I know that I

break the commandment of God, I know that Saturday-Sabbath is the right day of rest, but I pray to God that He will forgive my Sunday-keeping.”

We all know that we should do missionary work, but often we reason that we are so busy with other things that we have no time for it now. Later we will get involved in the work of soul-saving. Meanwhile, God will understand, and He will forgive.

In all these cases, the incentives were lacking. They did not think of heaven, nor of eternal life, which they will lose.

I saw heaven in my dreams, and it made me homesick; it gave me an incentive to obey God to the utmost, and make any sacrifice to be sure of my salvation. Sister White saw heaven, and she writes, “Heaven is cheap enough,” and no sacrifice is too much for it. Every effort that we must make for it is paid back a thousand times to us. “But as it is written: Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love Him.” 1 Corinthians 2:9

A great incentive for us to serve and to obey God should be freedom from sin—freedom from all addictions to sin in our spirit, soul, and body—to be free from the love of the world, appetites, passions, selfishness, pride, and covetousness. A person who is free from all these sins is truly happy and enjoys life to the fullest. He sees beauty in Christ, and wants to follow His example in all things. He sees beauty in a little flower, he enjoys the sunrise, and all of nature. He is progressing towards sanctification. His heart is filled with love to God.

Love towards God is the strongest incentive to make us want to obey and to serve God. When we understand how much God loves us, then love to Him is generated in our hearts towards Him. It is this love that makes us want to obey Him, and to sacrifice for Him.

Daily we need to remember the scenes of Calvary. This is the best medicine for spiritual sickness.

“A heart of faith and love is dearer to God than the most costly gift.” —*The Desire of Ages*, p. 615

“The heart of God yearns over His earthly children with a love stronger than death. In giving up His Son, He has poured out to us all heaven in one gift. The Saviour’s life and death and intercession, the ministry of angels, the pleading of the Spirit, the Father working above and through all, the unceasing interest of heavenly beings,—all are enlisted in behalf of man’s redemption.

“Oh, let us contemplate the amazing sacrifice that has been made for us! Let us try to appreciate the labour and energy that Heaven is expending to reclaim the lost, and bring them back to the Father’s house. Motives stronger, and agencies more powerful, could never be brought into operation; the exceeding rewards for right-doing, the enjoyment of heaven, the society of the angels, the communion and love of God and His Son, the elevation and extension of all our powers throughout eternal ages—are these not mighty incentives and encouragements to urge us to give the heart’s loving service to our Creator and Redeemer?” —*Steps to Christ*, p. 21

When we have such a love relationship with God, then Satan cannot separate us from Him. Then our greatest enjoyment is to serve Him. Sabbath will be a very special day to us. Bible reading will be our most enjoyable pastime.



Are there not enough incentives to serve and obey God, and to love Him? He has given His Son to die for us; also we have the Holy Spirit to guide us into all truth, and the angels to protect us.

“But to you that fear My name shall the Sun of righteousness arise with healing in His wings; and ye shall go forth, and grow up as calves of the stall.” Malachi 4:2

When we give our heart and our love to Him, already in this earthly life, we will be full of joy. The peace of heaven will fill us. Our happiness will be greater than what the world could ever give.

Timo Martin



The Stones

Crying Out

“And when He was come nigh, even now at the descent of the mount of Olives, the whole multitude of the disciples began to rejoice and praise God with a loud voice for all the mighty works that they had seen; Saying, Blessed be the King that cometh in the name of the Lord: peace in heaven, and glory in the highest. And some of the Pharisees from among the multitude said unto Him, Master, rebuke Thy disciples. And He answered and said unto them, I tell you that, if these should hold their peace, the stones would immediately cry out” Luke 19:37–40

God is able to make stones cry out. All things are possible with God. A stone is something, or someone, incapable of communicating, but Jesus says they will somehow cry out. Jesus used the symbol of stones to indicate praise and worship coming from unexpected sources—sources that one would think were incapable of any praise.

There are other stones that have cried out in history. “Thus saith Cyrus king of Persia, The LORD God of heaven hath given me all the kingdoms of the earth; and He hath charged me to build Him an house at Jerusalem,

which is in Judah. Who is there among you of all His people? his God be with him, and let him go up to Jerusalem, which is in Judah, and build the house of the LORD God of Israel, (He [is] the God,) which is in Jerusalem.” Ezra 1:2–3

How did Cyrus, this heathen king, know that the God of the Jews was the true and living God? “The deliverance of Daniel from the den of lions had been used of God to create a favorable impression upon the mind of Cyrus the Great. The sterling qualities of the man of God as a statesman of farseeing ability led the Persian ruler to show him marked respect and to honor his judgment. And now, just at the time God had said He would cause His temple at Jerusalem to be rebuilt, He moved upon Cyrus as His agent to discern the prophecies concerning himself, with which Daniel was so familiar, and to grant the Jewish people their liberty.” —*Prophets and Kings*, p. 557

During the time of Jesus, if you would have asked any of the Jews at that time, could this man Jesus, be the Messiah, what would they most likely have said? If you would have asked any of the disciples if Jesus was the

Messiah, what would even they have said after He had died upon the cross, and before He was resurrected?

“And how the chief priests and our rulers delivered Him to be condemned to death, and have crucified Him. But we trusted that it had been He which should have redeemed Israel: and beside all this, to day is the third day since these things were done.” Luke 24:20–21. Cleopas, on the walk to Emmaus, said, “We hoped that this was the Man to redeem Israel.” (Cleopas was seemingly not believing that Israel could be redeemed by Jesus at that point.)

Even the disciples were slow of heart to believe. Jesus had warned them beforehand of what was to happen to Him, but when it happened, they still could not believe it. How was it that the Messiah, the Lord of Glory, would allow Himself to die such a cruel and horrendous death?

On that fateful day when Jesus died there were only two that recognized and declared Him to be the Messiah, the Saviour. Could we call them stones—those who were not expected to know anything about God or His will? “And he said unto Jesus, Lord, remember me when Thou comest into Thy kingdom.” Luke 23:42. This was the thief on the cross.

And secondly, the centurion. “When the centurion, which stood over against Him, saw that He so cried out, and gave up the ghost, he said, Truly this Man was the Son of God.” Mark 15:39. This heathen Centurion knew that Jesus was the Son of God by Jesus’ character and behaviour. This was so different than any other criminals he had seen condemned and crucified. A stone was crying out. The people of God did not expect him to know anything about God at all.

Are there any stones crying out today? Even with the degenerate condition that society is in today, embracing all this darkness and ugliness that pass as art and culture, people still treasure a good character. There are many stones crying out. Truth is coming from completely unexpected sources.

The Mayo Clinic is one of the leading hospitals in the world and is freely using therapies like drugs, chemotherapy, and radiation therapy; and you wonder why they would say that herbs, vitamins, keeping our diets simple and close to nature was the right way to go. How did they ever say something so appropriate as this? This is a modern day stone crying out. In the context of Luke 19 we see that Jesus is saying that prophecy will be fulfilled, and if His disciples did not praise God

for the light and appreciate the light, then others would be raised up, that would appreciate the light.

Is not this what the Lord is doing today? All these sources we did not expect to embrace truth, are now doing just that—crying out that truth is the right way to go.

Let us take another example: What do Christians generally have to say about a vegan diet—giving up animal products, staying away from refined sugars, and refined foods? They say, “do not be so fanatical. Diet has nothing to do with religion.” Even Bill Clinton, the ex-President, who nearly died from heart trouble a few years ago, has become essentially a vegan, eating a plant-based diet. This is another stone crying out. It often seems that the people of God take a back seat to the heathen when it comes to exercising faith. The very stones are crying out today.

On the other end of the spectrum, how come, when some Christians pray, they do not really think that their prayers are going to be answered? It is the opposite of the stones crying out. The very ones who know so much are not saying, or doing, what they know.

Upon one occasion, a drama about the life of Christ was put on, and at the end the preacher commended the actors and asked how they could speak so convincingly about the things they portrayed in their play. “It is very simple,” the famous actor said, “we speak of things unreal, as if they were real, and you in the church, speak of things real, as if they were unreal.”

When prayer becomes just a form, or something automatic, but not really of faith, it *is* the opposite of the stones crying out. You may as well record your prayer and just play it back during the hour of worship. Then someone comes along, not of our faith, perhaps they do not even keep the Sabbath, or they are not vegetarian, but they end up having a lot more faith than you or I.

“But I tell you of a truth, many widows were in Israel in the days of Elias, when the heaven was shut up three years and six months, when great famine was throughout all the land; But unto none of them was Elias sent, save unto Sarepta, a city of Sidon, unto a woman that was a widow. And many lepers were in Israel in the time of Eliseus the prophet; and none of them was cleansed, saving Naaman the Syrian. And all they in the synagogue, when they heard these things, were filled with wrath, And rose up, and thrust Him out of the city, and led Him unto the brow of the hill whereon their city was built, that they might cast Him down head-



long.” Luke 4:25–29

There were many widows in Israel in the days of Elijah but they were not blessed with Elijah’s presence. The stones were crying out. During His earthly ministry Jesus commended several individuals for having faith. We could call them stones: a Centurion (Matthew 8:5–10) and the Samaritan woman (John 4:4–42).

“For as Jonas was a sign unto the Ninevites, so shall also the Son of man be to this generation. The queen of the south shall rise up in the judgment with the men of this generation, and condemn them: for she came from the utmost parts of the earth to hear the wisdom of Solomon; and, behold, a greater than Solomon [is] here. The men of Nineve shall rise up in the judgment with this generation, and shall condemn it: for they repented at the preaching of Jonas; and, behold, a greater than Jonas [is] here. No man, when he hath lighted a candle, putteth it in a secret place, neither under a bushel, but on a candlestick, that they which come in may see the light. The light of the body is the eye: therefore when thine eye is single, thy whole body also is full of light; but when [thine eye] is evil, thy body also is full of darkness. Take heed therefore that the light which is in thee be not darkness.” Luke 11:30–35

What will the heathen do that have lived up to the light that they have had, often better than the light those who profess to be followers of Christ? They will rise with this generation and condemn it.

If all this is true, then what should we do? “He hath showed thee, O man, what is

good; and what doth the LORD require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God?” Micah 6:8. Seek for the way of the Lord, exercise faith, do justly, love mercy, and walk humbly with God. That is our duty.

He knows what our real needs are, but He asks us to trust Him and pray from our hearts, believing that we will receive the very things that we need, when we need them. When the righteous get to heaven, there will be many there that others never expected to be there.

It is not the outward appearance that God cherishes about His people, but rather He changes their character, their humility, grace, and love for Him and one another. This is living up to the light.

“For there is no respect of persons with God. For as many as have sinned without law shall also perish without law: and as many as have sinned in the law shall be judged by the law; (For not the hearers of the law are just before God, but the doers of the law shall be justified. For when the Gentiles, which have not the law, do by nature the things contained in the law, these, having not the law, are a law unto themselves: Which show the work of the law written in their hearts, their conscience also bearing witness, and their thoughts the mean while accusing or else excusing one another;).” Romans 2:11–15

Even the heathen of today, so called, will have those of them that will be in heaven, because they have seen the light of God’s character and followed the truth contained in the law of God that nature has taught them. Those that lived up to the light that they had may not have the light that you and I do, will rise to condemn us, if we do not follow the advancing light, and live up



to it. The reality is that our lives do depend upon exactly how we live up to the light that God causes to shine upon our pathway.

“There is comfort and joy in the service of Christ. Let the world see that life with Him is no failure.” —*The Ministry of Healing*, p. 487

“If you do not feel lighthearted and joyous, do not talk of your feelings. Cast no shadow upon the lives of others. A cold, sunless religion never draws souls to Christ. It drives them away from Him into the nets that Satan has spread for the feet of the straying. Instead of thinking of your discouragements, think of the power you can claim in Christ’s name. Let your imagination take hold upon things unseen. Let your thoughts be directed to the evidences of the great love of God for you. Faith can endure trial, resist temptation, bear up under disappointment. Jesus lives as our advocate.” —*The Ministry of Healing*, p. 488

You should be the head and not the tail. “And the LORD shall make thee the head, and not the tail; and thou shalt be above only, and thou shalt not be beneath; if that thou hearken unto the commandments of the LORD thy God, which I command thee this day, to observe and to do them.” Deuteronomy 28:13

The stones will cry out if you and I do not uplift the truth by our words and actions. Is not that what Jesus was saying in Luke 19?

“For the disheartened there is a sure remedy,—faith, prayer, work. Faith and activity will impart assurance and satisfaction that will increase day by day. Are you tempted to give way to feelings of anxious foreboding or utter despondency? In the darkest days, when appearances seem most forbidding, fear not. Have faith in God. He knows your need. He has all power. His infinite love and compassion never weary. Fear not that He will fail of fulfilling His promise. He is eternal truth. Never will He change the covenant He has made with those who love Him. And He will bestow upon His faithful servants the measure of efficiency that their need demands.” —*Prophets and Kings*, p. 164–165

What a precious promise. He will bestow upon His faithful servants the measure of efficiency that their need demands. That is how we build our faith. To take God at His word, that we are going to receive the very thing that He promised when we need it.

If you read the rest of Luke 19 you can read of the beautiful love that He had for the doomed city that was soon to see Him spill His blood. They would be guilty of

His blood.

“For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus. And if ye be Christ’s, then are ye Abraham’s seed, and heirs according to the promise.” Galatians 3:26–29

For all of the faithful, until the close of time, Jew, Gentile, bond or free, He is their Saviour and Redeemer. Will you not make Him your Saviour from sin, also? Yes, stones can cry out—but does He not want you and I who know His will, to cry out, instead?

May God help us to fulfil the duty He places before us, and to “Cry aloud, spare not, lift up thy voice like a trumpet, and show My people their transgression, and the house of Jacob their sins.” Isaiah 58:1. “Sing, O barren, thou that didst not bear; break forth into singing, and cry aloud.” Isaiah 54:1. Amen.

Jerry Eaton



Note:

Photos for this article were taken in Bryce Canyon National Park in Utah, USA. The rock formations are called Hoodoos.

The Native Americans from the Paiute tribe lived in the area from 1200 A.D. until the 20th century. They believed that hoodoos were the Legend People . . . turned to stone. Hoodoos is a word in their language which is believed to mean “red painted faces” . They believed them to be people turned to stone.



Countdown to Eternity

Today, more than ever, people are asking the all-important question: How will the world end? Unfortunately, there are a myriad of answers to this question. From every part of the globe there comes yet another speculation, another theory, another prophecy. . . . What are some of the predictions made by scientists, environmentalists, futurologists, politicians, and simply concerned people? Here is a list of eight erroneous ideas about how civilization may end.

1. Terrorists will use nuclear and/or biological weapons to destroy life on planet Earth.
2. The depletion of the protective ozone layer in the atmosphere will allow the sun's ultraviolet rays to cause deadly skin cancers.
3. Epidemics of fatal diseases will wipe out the earth's population.
4. Because of massive deforestation, oxygen is being depleted and this will result in the asphyxiation of the human race.

5. A massive asteroid will collide with the earth and cause the annihilation of the human race.
6. Earth's overpopulation will result in scarcity of food and mass starvation.
7. Extremists will fight religious wars to purge the earth of the infidels, thus destroying everyone.
8. Lack of pure drinking water will result in massive deaths.

But the Bible alone has the true, reliable, answer to the question, "How will the world end?" "But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up." 2 Peter 3:10

An "invasion from outer space" is being planned by Jesus, the King of the Universe. He will come back the second time with a host of angels to conquer evil and to literally destroy this sinful world.

PROMISE OF CHRIST'S COMING

"And if I [Jesus] go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto Myself; that where I am, there ye may be also." John 14:3

Jesus Himself promised to return at God's appointed time to rescue those who are faithful to Him. There are about 2,500 references in the Bible to the Second Coming of Christ. In the Old Testament, for every prophecy of His first coming, there are eight prophecies predicting His second coming. Two thousand years ago, Jesus clearly made this promise: "I will come again." He has not forgotten us, and He wants to take away all the pain, suffering, misery and death. The blueprint of heaven calls for the restoration of the New Earth, where man and God will dwell in peace and happiness

forever.

HOW WILL CHRIST RETURN?

“But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night.” 2 Peter 3:10

Christ will come back to this earth unexpectedly, “as a thief in the night.” The wicked will be totally surprised and overwhelmed. They will not be ready for this grand event. In A.D. 79, Mount Vesuvius erupted unexpectedly. The prosperous but sinful city of Pompeii was completely destroyed by this volcanic eruption. The inhabitants of this pleasure-loving city did not expect an explosion to end their lives. But the endless party that was their lives ended rather abruptly for the Pompeians. The sudden and unexpected return of Christ will likewise find the wicked totally unprepared. No one will escape this fiery and fearful day of judgment, except those who have made Christ their Saviour. “Behold, He cometh with clouds; and every eye shall see Him, and they also which pierced Him: and all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of Him. Even so, Amen.” Revelation 1:7

Christ will appear in the same manner as He left the

earth. This visible event will be witnessed by every living person. No one will miss seeing Jesus coming in the clouds of the sky. The angels accompanying Jesus will blow their trumpets to signal the deliverance of God’s people from the captivity of Satan. When this heavenly invasion by Jesus occurs, the wicked will have no place to hide. Because of guilt and fear, they would rather welcome death than life.

Today is the Time to Prepare for Eternity! How can we get ready for the second coming of Christ?

1. Accept the fact that God loves us. John 3:16
2. Recognize that we cannot save ourselves.
3. Believe that Jesus can and will save us.
4. Confess our sins to Jesus and believe that we are forgiven.
5. Claim His gift of eternal life and decide to serve Him forever.

“He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned.” Mark 16:16

Henry Dering

“We do not regard divine things as of high value; and by neglecting to train the mind to prize eternal things more than earthly, we lose a valuable experience. We fail to obtain the wisdom God has brought within our reach. Suppose we change this order of things, and begin from today to train the thoughts to dwell upon the great plan of salvation, devoting less time to self-serving. Suppose you try to count all your blessings. You have thought so little upon them, and they have been so continual, that when reverses or afflictions come, you are grieved, and think God is unjust. You do not call to mind how little gratitude you have manifested for all the blessings of God. You have not deserved them; but because they have flowed in upon you day by day, year by year, you have looked upon them as a matter of course, thinking it was your right to receive every advantage, and give nothing in return. The Lord sometimes withdraws His mercies to bring people to their senses. Shall we make it necessary in our case for Him to do so? Look away from your own trials and difficulties. Cease to magnify your little grievances. Put all thoughts of self out of your heart. Cease self-service, and serve the only true and living God. Let his melody be in your heart, and His praises on your lips. The blessings of God are more than the hairs of our head, more than the sands of the seashore. Meditate upon His love and care for us, and may it inspire you with love that trials cannot interrupt nor afflictions quench.” – *The Review and Herald*, December 23, 1884



The Choices We Make

I want to share with you a few thoughts regarding how to make wise choices in life so that you can enjoy life to its fullest, just as your loving Father in Heaven wants you to enjoy it. Studies tell us that we make thousands of choices every single day. Your power of choice is perhaps the greatest thing that you can exercise. People in many countries of the world do not have this privilege. You may remember before 1989 under the Communist regime in Europe how people were treated and their liberty was restricted. We can praise God for the freedom and religious liberty we still enjoy today.

Life is a series of choices. Many choices are trivial and do not have any lasting impact, but many of the choices you make can greatly affect your life. Making wise choices in this 21st century is the key to happiness for the rest of your life. We need to make wise choices. No matter what age we are or what stage of life we are in, we still find ourselves confronted with a series of choices each and every day. Choices like what job we take, or what house we live in. A very important choice we make is who we choose to marry. And then there are other choices such as how we invest our money or how we raise our children. But the most urgent and important choice someone has to make is “whom will you serve?” Jesus said, “No man can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye can-

not serve God and mammon.” Matthew 6:24

We have a lot of important choices that we make each and every day. Whether you turn to the right or to the left, your ears will hear a voice behind you saying, “This is the way, walk ye in it.” Isaiah 30:21. We need to hear that voice. We need that direction. And that direction comes from heaven. I remember 19 years ago how God gave me a dream in which He showed me clearly that if I continued in the way I was going (the way of this life with all its pleasures) I would die. It was so obvious and so clear to me that morning when I woke up, that there was something wrong with my life and that God disapproved of it. Praise God that after 19 years I am so happy for the decision I made in giving my life to Jesus. May I suggest to you to do the same because, trust me, this is the best decision you will ever make.

Choices determine the direction of our life and our destiny. Some decisions have far reaching consequences and other decisions are not so far reaching. However, many of the decisions we make determine our character, determine our destiny, and determine our eternity. Some people can make snap decisions and it does not bother them at all, while other people have difficulty making any decision. They stay in a state of indecision.

One of the mistakes that people make is that they make decisions without counsel from God. In the book

of Proverbs, Solomon warns us over and over again about depending upon man's wisdom rather than seeking God's wisdom when making decisions. Many of us have seen the dire consequences of depending on our own wisdom and looking at circumstances from the perspective of man rather than making decisions by seeking the counsel of God and looking at things from His perspective.

"He that trusteth in his own heart is a fool: but whoso walketh wisely, he shall be delivered." Proverbs 28:26. Ask yourself—how wise are you in making decisions? When you have multiple options in front of you, how do you determine which is the best choice? How do you avoid making a bad choice? For those of us who love Jesus we want to know how to make choices that honor God and keep us from falling.

The Old Testament is a source of very important counsels and provides valuable lessons for Christians today. The Apostle Paul said, "Now all these things happened unto them as ensamples: and they are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come." 1 Corinthians 10:11. In other words, the Bible tells us that there are things written in its pages to benefit us, and they were written to teach us lessons. When we study the Bible we find out how people were affected by the choices they made, both positive and negative, some settling their destiny forever.

From the life of Lot we can learn many lessons regarding the consequences of choices. He made a choice as to where to live, and as a result he experienced war and kidnapping (Genesis 14). What else do we find written about Lot's choice? "And delivered just Lot, vexed with the filthy conversation of the wicked: (For that righteous man dwelling among them, in seeing and hearing, vexed his righteous soul from day to day with their unlawful deeds;)." 2 Peter 2:7-8

Lot was oppressed and tormented by the filthy conduct

of the wicked. In Genesis 19 we read about the loss of all his possessions, the death of his wife, and incest with his daughters. All of these things happened to Lot because of the choices he made (most importantly, the place he chose to live) at some point in his life, and they greatly affected his future. Since choices often result in eternally significant consequences, we must make choices in line with God's principles. Abram indeed made a good choice in obeying God and following His counsels. Of course there was a time in his life when he also failed, but he did not remain there in the fallen state; he kept walking and walking with God.

The herdsmen of Lot and of Abram were quarreling because there was not adequate land to support all their flocks. So Abram gave Lot his choice of where to



live. Lot surveyed the land and decided to move down into the lush Jordan valley. That choice was the beginning of Lot's gradual but steady spiritual decline. First he *looked* toward Sodom. "And Lot lifted up his eyes, and beheld all the plain of Jordan, that it was well watered every where." Genesis 13:10. Then he *moved* his tents near Sodom. "Lot dwelled in the cities of the plain, and pitched his tent toward Sodom." Genesis 13:12. Next we find him *living in* Sodom. "Lot, Abram's brother's son, who dwelt in Sodom, and his goods." Genesis 14:12. Finally he is *sitting in the gate* of Sodom. "Lot sat in the gate of Sodom." Genesis 19:1

He lost his wife, barely escaped with his own life and his two daughters, and goes hiding in a cave where his daughters make him drunk and commit incest with him. The offspring of those disgraceful nights were the Moabites and the Ammonites, two of Israel's perennial enemies. It all began with Lot's choice to live near Sodom. It is possible to gain the whole world and lose your soul. There is much more in life than outward display and material wealth. We must base our choices on God's Word, not on the assumptions of our culture. Those principles encompass the whole Bible and take a

lifetime to learn thoroughly. There are three basic principles that I want to mention:

1. Make choices which value God's eternal promises over immediate pleasure. The Lord Jesus said, "Seek ye first the kingdom of God, and His righteousness; and all these things will be added unto you." Matthew 6:33

Most of us want to seek other things first and add the kingdom of God later in our spare time. Lot's choice of Sodom was based on what would bring him quick gratification; but he did not take into account God's promise to Abram about the land. After Lot moved to Sodom, the Lord reaffirmed His promise to Abram and even expanded on it. "And the LORD said unto Abram, after

that Lot was separated from him, Lift up now thine eyes, and look from the place where thou art northward, and southward, and eastward, and westward: For all the land which thou seest, to thee will I give it, and to thy seed for ever. And I will make thy seed as the dust of the earth: so that if a man can number the dust of the earth, then shall thy seed also be numbered. Arise, walk through the land in the length of it and in the breadth of it; for I will give

it unto thee." Genesis 13:14-17

As believers we are to live by faith in the promises of God. When we face decisions, we must take God into account and make those decisions in line with His promises and principles, not with the immediate gratification of the flesh in mind. "There is a way which seemeth right unto a man, but its end thereof are the ways of death." Proverbs 14:12

2. Make choices which value godliness over greed. In Genesis 13:10 we read that Lot lifted up his eyes and chose the land which looked the best to him. He took off for the good life and left Abram behind, in dusty Canaan, where there had just been a severe famine.

Perhaps as Abram was looking around, his eyes fell down to the dusty soil on which he was standing. So the Lord says, "Do you see all that dust? I will make your descendants as the dust of the earth, so that if anyone can number the dust of the earth, then your descendants can also be numbered." Once again we see how God evaluates our choices and rewards them. Lot chose by sight and ended up spiritually and financially bankrupt. He escaped Sodom with the clothes on his back and the last we hear of him is that he was living in a cave. The things he saw and obtained did not bring him the lasting happiness he expected. Abram chose by faith, not by sight, and ended up spiritually and financially blessed. He saw and possessed by faith the whole land of Canaan. Lot lived for greed and came up empty. Abram lived for God and came up full.

3. Make choices which value fellowship with God over the approval of the world. We must put fellowship with God above the approval of the world in all our decisions.

As Christians, we always face tension: If we pull out of the world too far, we lose our witness because there is no contact. On the other hand, if we blend in with the world, we lose both our fellowship with God and our witness to the world. Jesus was the friend of sinners, but He was never tainted by their sin because He put a premium on fellowship with the Father and He never sought the approval of the world. He was in the world with a clear sense of His mission, to glorify the Father and to seek and to save the lost. May God help us to follow His example. Amen.

Nicholas Anca



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Aim High



People have goals in life—some have high goals, some have lesser goals. Some have goals to become rich and famous, some have goals to get married, buy a humble house and raise a family. Others have goals of single living and enjoying life to the fullest. Those who seem to have no goals in life lead a sad, empty life. Goals are important for healthy living. They give life purpose and meaning.

Some people have multiple goals. Some have only one goal and when they reach that goal, they feel they are on the summit and they relax and stop reaching for more. People have long term goals, and short term goals. Short term goals can be simply the list of duties you wish to accomplish in one day. The long term goals include your career, education, marriage, and a place to live.

Some are satisfied with very humble living and have no ambition to climb higher—they may even live on the street by choice and their main goal in life is to have food to eat for the day; nothing more—no thought for tomorrow. They have reached their summit and have no desire to climb higher. Some have a little more ambition and have only a humble place to live in and food to eat. Beyond that they live in pleasure, and also have no desire to aim higher in life.

People set earthly goals and they do succeed and prosper. Sometimes worldly people seem to reach higher summits on this earth than God's people. This has caused distress to some Christians. "But as for me, my feet were almost gone; my steps had well nigh slipped. For I was envious at the foolish, when I saw the prosperity of the wicked." Psalm 73:2–3. Napoleon had very high goals—to conquer the world. He set out to do just that

and he was successful at an early age. He reached his summit, but after that he had no more goals and his life ended tragically. His life lost its purpose and meaning; he had nothing left to live for. He set no more goals for himself. "Until I went into the sanctuary of God; then understood I their end. Surely Thou didst set them in slippery places: Thou castedst them down into destruction. How are they brought into desolation, as in a moment! they are utterly consumed with terrors." Psalm 73:17–19

Without Christ, people do achieve their goals on this earth, they reach their summit. But, then what? Their life can still be empty even after the summit is reached. I know of a young man who was very faithful in his youth. He had a goal of graduating from university, getting a good job, getting married, and buying a house. He reached his earthly goals, but sadly, today he is not in the church. Reaching primarily for earthly goals can sometimes eclipse the heavenly goals and summits to be reached.

"An appearance of wealth or position, expensive architecture or furnishings, are not essential to the advancement of the work of God; neither are achievements that win applause from men and administer to vanity. Worldly display, however imposing, is of no value with God." — *Pastoral Ministry*, p. 40

When people climb physical mountains, aiming for the summit, and they reach the top, then what? There is no where else to go but downhill. When I have been driving cross-country in North America, occasionally the road goes over mountains—some high, some low. Each one has a summit and there is often a sign at the side of the highway stating that you have reached the summit, in-

forming you of the elevation. After the summit is reached the road leads you downhill. If it is a small mountain the summit is easily reached, higher ones are more difficult. When you have reached the summit of your life do you also begin to go downhill? Or do you set your sights on higher goals and summits? We are counselled to always aim higher. There is always a higher mountain. Some do



not want to make an effort to reach the higher mountains. It is a lot of difficult, painstaking work. They are happy with their lower mountain. They try to stay on their current summit; however, unless they set their sights on higher summits, they will eventually begin to go downhill, whether physically, morally or mentally, just as did Napoleon.

If you think you have reached the summit of your spiritual life, you are mistaken. There is a higher mountain that Jesus wants you to climb. Climbing takes a lot of effort. You are either climbing upwards or you will eventually go downhill.

A LOW SUMMIT

There are many people in this life who choose not to aim very high. They are satisfied with the low level of existence that they maintain daily. They may eat, sleep, and perhaps go to work, and that is all. Many are also satisfied with the summit they have reached in their spiritual life and feel no need to aim any higher. They are good Christians, keep the Sabbath, pay their tithes and faithfully attend church. How many are constantly aiming higher—for Christlikeness? They excuse themselves, stating that God is not so strict that we need to overcome every character defect today. That would be asking an impossibility. So they remain on their low summit and aim no higher.

“Let no one say, ‘I cannot overcome my defects of character;’ for if this is your decision, then you cannot have

eternal life. The impossibility is all in your will. If you will not, that constitutes the cannot. The real difficulty is the corruption of an unsanctified heart, and an unwillingness to submit to the will of God.” —*Sons and Daughters of God*, p.115

“There are many who think that it is impossible to escape from the power of sin, but the promise is that we may be filled with all the fullness of God. We aim too low. The mark is much higher. Our minds need expansion, that we may comprehend the significance of the provision of God. We are to reflect the highest attributes of the character of God. We should be thankful that we are not to be left to ourselves. The law of God is the exalted standard to which we are to attain.” —*That I May Know Him*, p. 302

Those who are satisfied with the low summit they have reached, feeling no need to aim higher, believe they are “good enough.” They are satisfied with *good* health, abstaining from flesh foods, but God wants them to aim higher and have *excellent* health by following all of the laws of health—abstaining from all unhealthy foods and following all healthful habits. *All*, I said, not *some* of the health laws. It is not easy to deny selfish, unhealthy habits. Adam and Eve fell on this point in the beginning and terrible were the results.

Some are satisfied with their current spiritual condition and appear happy. God wants them to aim for a higher summit and have a higher purpose for their lives—to help the poor, sick and needy, sharing the gospel with others. Then they will be *supremely happy* and contented.

Then there are those who are satisfied with reaching the summit of others—of the leaders in the church or other members, and thus aim no higher than those around them. They see the spiritual condition of some of the slothful members and then try to live as they do. However, we are told, “Do not sit down in Satan’s easy chair of do-little, but arise, and aim at the elevated standard which it is your privilege to attain. It is a blessed privilege to give up all for Christ. Look not at the lives of others and imitate them and rise no higher. You have only one true, unerring Pattern. It is safe to follow Jesus only. Determine that if others act on the principle of the spiritual sluggard you will leave them and march forward toward the elevation of Christian character. Form a character for heaven. Sleep not at your post. Deal faithfully and truly with your own soul.” —*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 1, p. 241

“Those who measure themselves by others, do as others do, and make no higher attainments, excusing themselves because of the faults and wrongs of others, are

feeding on husks and will remain spiritual dwarfs as long as they gratify Satan by thus indulging their own unconsecrated feelings. Some dwell upon what they shall eat and drink, and wherewithal they shall be clothed. These thoughts flow out from the abundance of the heart, as though temporal things were the grand aim in life, the highest attainment. These persons forget the words of Christ: 'Seek ye first the kingdom of God, and His righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you.'" —*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 1, p. 500

THE SUMMIT OF EDUCATION

Many young people have a goal of furthering their education after they finish high school. That is a worthy goal, as long as Christ is still made an important part of the education process. Many have lost their way in institutions of higher learning because there is so much time occupied with studies that the spiritual life gets put on the back burner, or they get too self-important to take care of the smaller, less important duties in life. With increased knowledge it can lead to pride and a feeling of self-importance. They rest on the summit of their education and feel themselves one step up above the less educated in society. "Let the youth be impressed with the thought that education is not to teach them how to escape life's disagreeable tasks and heavy burdens; that its purpose is to lighten the work by teaching better methods and higher aims. Teach them *that life's true aim is not to secure the greatest possible gain for themselves*, but to honor their Maker in doing their part of the world's work, and lending a helpful hand to those weaker or more ignorant." —*Child Guidance*, p. 295–296 (emphasis mine)

"Our ideas of education take too narrow and too low a range. There is need of a broader scope, a higher aim. True education means more than the perusal of a certain course of study. It means more than a preparation for the life that now is. It has to do with the whole being, and with the whole period of existence possible to man. It is the harmonious development of the physical, the mental, and the spiritual powers. It prepares the student for the joy of service in this world and for the higher joy of wider service in the world to come." —*Counsels for the Church*, p. 202

True education is for the purpose of being a greater blessing to others, not for self-exaltation and increased wealth. It can be a great blessing for the cause of God. The university degree is not the summit, but an aid to reach higher summits.

THE SUMMIT OF AN EARTHLY DWELLING PLACE

This is also a worthy goal. For some this is their summit.

Once they own their own home, they think they have made it in life. "The gospel is a wonderful simplifier of life's problems. Its instruction, heeded, would make plain many a perplexity and save us from many an error. It teaches us to estimate things at their true value and to give the most effort to the things of greatest worth—the things that will endure. This lesson is needed by those upon whom rests the responsibility of selecting a home. They should not allow themselves to be diverted from the highest aim. Let them remember that the home on earth is to be a symbol of and a preparation for the home in heaven. Life is a training school, from which parents and children are to be graduated to the higher school in the mansions of God. As the location for a home is sought, let this purpose direct the choice. Be not controlled by the desire for wealth, the dictates of fashion, or the customs of society. Consider what will tend most to simplicity, purity, health, and real worth." —*The Ministry of Healing*, p. 363

THE SUMMIT OF MISSIONARY WORK

It should be the aim and goal of all Christians to do some sort of missionary work, either full-time, part-time or volunteer. We are all counselled to "Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven." Matthew 5:16. Jesus spoke these words to everyone. Not just the leaders of the church. Reach for the summit. Do as much as you possibly can for others, not as little as is required. "The work of the Christian laborer is not light or unimportant. He has a high vocation, from which his whole future life must take its mould and coloring. He who gives himself to so sacred a work should bend all his energies to its accomplishment. He should aim high; he will never reach a higher standard than that which he seeks to attain. He cannot diffuse light until he has first received it. He must be a learner before he can have sufficient wisdom and experience to become a teacher, able to open the Scriptures to those who are in darkness." —*Gospel Workers*, p. 73

"This should be the anxiety of every worker, to reach a higher standard. We shall never graduate in this life, but should keep every power upon the stretch for more knowledge. You do not want to labor in such a spiritless way that the people will go to sleep under your words, but you want to bring earnestness and fervency into your prayers, and into your Bible readings, and into your preaching, that you may leave the impression that the sacred truths you are presenting to others are to you a living reality. Whatever you do for Jesus, seek with all your powers to do it with earnestness. Never feel that you have attained to the highest point, and can therefore

rise no higher. I often feel agony of spirit as I look over the wide field, and see so few to do the missionary work and open the word of God to those who are in darkness. The very work that is essential for every one who receives the present truth, is to aim at perfection of character, and thoroughness in winning souls to Christ. Be determined that you will advance and improve in your work, and then you will be continually progressing; for those who have received this light feel that they must bring more of the Spirit of Christ into their own life and character as they advance, else they cannot bring it into the lives of others. And you can make the most of every opportunity while in conversation with your friends, to make your words a blessing to them. Set your mind to task, that you may present the truth in a manner to interest them. Seize the most interesting portions of Scripture that you can bring before them, come right to the point, and seek to fasten their attention, and instruct them in the ways of the Lord." —*The Review and Herald*, July 26, 1887

"The youth can do good work in laboring to save souls. They can reach their young associates when those who are older cannot, and God holds them accountable for the use they make of the talents intrusted to them. Let those who claim to be sons and daughters of God aim at a higher standard. Let them use every faculty God has given them. Let them glorify Him by correctly representing the religion of the Bible." —*The Signs of the Times*, September 11, 1884

I was impressed by the following quote, especially the last sentence. "God is well pleased if those striving for eternal life aim high. There will be strong temptations to indulge the natural traits of character by becoming worldly wise, scheming, and selfishly ambitious, gathering wealth to the neglect of the salvation which is of so much higher value. But every temptation resisted is a priceless victory gained in subduing self; it bends the powers to the service of Jesus, and increases faith, hope, patience, and forbearance. . . . *Let us aim in the strength of Jesus for the crown heavy with stars.*"—*That I May Know Him*, p. 91 (Emphasis mine). It is not a sin to aim for a crown heavy with stars "in the strength of Jesus." Let us all make this one of our goals in life.

"They that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament; and they that turn many to righteousness as the stars for ever and ever." Daniel 12:3

THE MIND OF CHRIST

A summit we all *must* reach is to have the mind of Christ. "For who hath known the mind of the Lord, that He may instruct him? But we have the mind of Christ." 1 Corin-

thians 2:16. It is commonly said that our goal in life is Christ-likeness. This means that we will have overcome all sin and will be ready to meet Jesus when He comes. That is the summit we are aiming for. This is a very high goal, and not everyone understands the true meaning of this statement. "Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus." Philippians 2:5. To have the mind of Christ means we will *always* do what Jesus would do, think what He would think—no exceptions or excuses.

"We should individually aim for a higher and holier standard. The mind will surely become dwarfed if it is continually occupied with earthly things. But if trained to dwell upon heavenly, eternal themes, it will be expanded, elevated, and strengthened. The mind should take hold of things unseen, and meditate thereon; then things of eternal interest will be so exalted above the earthly, that temporal affairs will sink into insignificance in comparison." —*The Review and Herald*, December 23, 1884

"Be very decided in your religious service. Make the Lord Jesus your confidant. Make your aim a high one, and let your attainments be higher and higher still in the knowledge of your Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ." —*Medical Ministry*, p. 34.

The knowledge of God is exhaustless. A full knowledge is a summit we will never reach. We will ever be learning more of His mysteries throughout eternity. Although, "Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love Him." 1 Corinthians 2:9. If we have the mind of Christ, then, "God hath revealed them unto us by His Spirit." 1 Corinthians 2:10

THE HIGHEST SUMMIT

I found the following statement very interesting. Like the Scribes and Pharisees in the days of Christ, some people's main goal in religion is perfection in outward things. They are overly concerned and careful with the "rules"; what they should do, or should not do outwardly, to obtain salvation. Once they are "perfect" they feel they have reached the summit. While this is important, it should not be the primary goal. As we are striving for this summit, we aim for something higher. What could be higher than "perfection in outward things?" Inward perfection—thoughts, feelings, emotions and motives, through a personal relationship with Jesus. "While it is our duty to seek for perfection in outward things, it should ever be kept in mind that this aim is not to be made supreme. It must be held subordinate to higher interests. Above the seen and transitory, God values the unseen and eternal. The former is of worth only as it expresses the latter. The choicest productions of art possess no beauty that can

compare with the beauty of character which is the fruit of the Holy Spirit's working in the soul." —*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 7, p. 143

"The kingdom of God comes not with outward show. It comes through the gentleness of the inspiration of His word, through the inward working of His Spirit, the fellowship of the soul with Him who is its life. The greatest manifestation of its power is seen in human nature brought to the perfection of the character of Christ." —*Ibid*, p. 143

"Jesus tells us that there is something higher for our consideration and aim than what we shall eat, and what we shall drink, and what we shall wear, and that is beauty of character, that shall last as long as eternity." —*The Signs of the Times*, February 15, 1892

"We profess to be the depositaries of God's law; we claim to have greater light and to aim at a higher standard than any other people upon the earth; therefore we should show greater perfection of character and more earnest devotion. A most solemn message has been entrusted to those who have received the light of truth. Our light should shine forth to brighten the pathway of those who are in darkness. As members of the visible church, and workers in the vineyard of the Lord, all professed Christians should do their utmost to preserve peace, harmony, and love in the church. Mark the prayer of Christ: 'That they all may be one, as Thou, Father, art in Me, that they also may be one in Us, that the world may believe that Thou hast sent Me.'" —*Manuscript Releases*, vol. 15, p. 143

"The echo of God's voice comes to us, ever saying. Holier, holier still. And ever our answer is to be, Yes, Lord, holier still. Holiness is within the reach of all who reach for it by faith, not because of their good works, but because of Christ's merits. Divine power is provided for every soul struggling for the victory over sin and Satan." —*The Seventh-Day Adventist Bible Commentary*, vol. 7, p. 908

For those who have climbed high mountains know that when you come close to the top, there are places where it seems as if you are nearing the top, but once you get there you see that there is still a higher summit to reach and you must keep going. If you fail at the smaller mountains, you will never achieve the higher ones. You must climb the smaller ones—aim for the smaller mountains, and then you will see the summit of the next mountain to climb. Once you have reached what you think is the summit, there is another one. God has a higher mountain for you to climb. One mountain at a time. Higher and higher still; closer and closer to Jesus—reflecting His

character more fully. We will finally reach the ultimate summit when Jesus comes. "Look up, and lift up your heads; for your redemption draweth nigh." Luke 21:28

"Sanctification is not the work of a moment, an hour, a day, but of a lifetime. It is not gained by a happy flight of feeling, but is the result of constantly dying to sin, and constantly living for Christ. Wrongs cannot be righted nor reformations wrought in the character by feeble, intermittent efforts. It is only by long, persevering effort, sore discipline, and stern conflict, that we shall overcome. We know not one day how strong will be our conflict the next. So long as Satan reigns, we shall have self to subdue, besetting sins to overcome; so long as life shall last, there will be no stopping place, no point which we can reach and say, I have fully attained. Sanctification is the result of lifelong obedience." —*The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 560–561

Today we can be perfect in Christ. As we take His hand He will lead us higher and still higher so that we can ever reach higher summits. Amen.



Wendy Eaton



Hydration—Essential to Health

“In health and in sickness, pure water is one of Heaven’s choicest blessings. Its proper use promotes health. It is the beverage which God provided to quench the thirst of animals and man. Drunk freely, it helps to supply the necessities of the system, and assists nature to resist disease.” —*Counsels on Diet and Foods*, p. 419

Poets refer to water as the elixir of life. Scientists refer to water as a nutrient. Water is second only to oxygen as essential to life. We can live perhaps six weeks without food, six days without water, and three minutes without air. Water is by far the most abundant substance on earth and in our bodies.

Although 70% of the planet’s surface is water, most of it is salt water in the oceans. Only 3% of the world’s fresh-water is safe for drinking, and 97% of that is frozen in glaciers in areas like Antarctica. That leaves us with less than 1% usable water from lakes, rivers and underground sources. Almost 900 million people do not have access to safe drinking water—about one in every eight people. The World Health Organization (WHO) says that every year more than 3.4 million people die as a result of water related diseases, making it the leading cause of disease and death around the world. 90% of the deaths that occur from unsafe water are in children under five years old, who die of illnesses caused by organisms that live in water sources contaminated by raw sewage. In fact, diseases from unsafe water and lack of basic sanitation kill more people every year than all forms of vio-

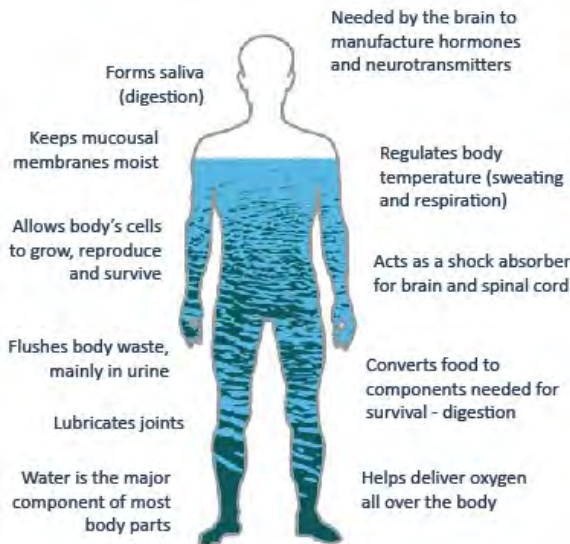
lence, including war. Clean water is essential to human health. “Thousands have died for want of pure water and pure air, who might have lived.” —*Healthful Living*, p. 155

FUNCTION OF WATER IN THE BODY

The single largest nutrient in our body is water. Up to 60% of the human adult body is water. The brain and heart are composed of 73% water, the lungs are about 83% water, skin is 64% water, muscles and kidneys 79%, and bones 31%. Because of this, proper hydration is vital for the proper functioning of the human body.

Water performs numerous, distinct and vital body functions. It transports oxygen and essential nutrients to cells, and also transports hormones, enzymes, platelets, and blood cells to the part of the body where they are needed. It removes wastes from cells. Water also facilitates excretion of waste products and toxins, mostly in urine. Water provides lubrication for joints, for the digestive tract, and for the organs. It is contained in saliva and other secretions that lubricate food as it passes through the digestive tract. Water keeps the skin moist, which helps to prevent infections. Water also assists in cells maintaining their shape, as it is an integral part of cell membranes. It helps to cushion organs and maintains body structures, such as bones. It works as a shock absorber for the brain and spinal cord, and for the fetus during pregnancy. Water helps in regulating body temperature by either absorbing heat or releasing heat through perspiration. All metabolic processes (what keeps us alive) occur in a water medium.

What Does Water do for You?



WATER BALANCE—HYDRATION

Body water balance refers to the net results of balance between water intake and water loss. When the net difference is equal, water balance is maintained. Our bodies are constantly losing water, as vapour in our breath, and in liquid form from perspiration and urine, and via our feces, which must be replaced to stay hydrated. This is referred to as the “obligatory water loss”. A loss of just 1–2% of body water can put a strain on the heart, and cause both health and performance to suffer.

In most healthy adults, thirst is used as a guide that fluids need to be increased either from beverages or food, to balance out a loss of water. The body also concentrates urine to reduce water loss. As a consequence, a negative fluid balance is usually short-lived. If unusual circumstances don't impact the major routes of water loss, water balance is maintained. To identify whether or not you have adequate hydration, observe the colour of your urine. It should be the colour of pale straw. If it is darker, you are either becoming dehydrated or are already dehydrated. Also, if your feces are hard and dry, and difficult to pass, this can also be as a result of dehydration. These both should be signals for you to drink more fluids.

Although it is well known that water is essential for survival, only recently have we begun to understand its role in the maintenance of brain function. Current findings suggest that particular cognitive abilities (thinking, learning, memory) and moods are influenced by water consumption. Maintaining proper fluid levels will improve cognition and mood. The negative impact of dehydration on cognition and mood has most relevance for those with poor fluid balance, such as the elderly and children.

The amount of fluid to maintain proper hydration varies depending on age, body size, physical activity level, health status, food intake patterns and environmental conditions, such as humidity and temperature. Therefore, recommendations for total water intake, including beverages and foods, should take into consideration regional and international differences, in addition to lifecycle and special health needs. For example, in the United States and Canada, the Institute of Medicine (IOM) based their recommendation for water intake on data showing that about 75–80% of total water intake comes from drinking water and other beverages, with the remaining 20–25% coming from foods. For physically active people 19 years and older, that translates to an average daily fluid intake of 3 liters (about 13 cups) for males and 2.2 liters (about 9 cups) for females. On average, a sedentary adult should drink 1.5 liters of water per day. Water is the only liquid nutrient that is really essential for body hydration.

DEHYDRATION

Dehydration is defined as the loss of water and salts essential for normal body function. Dehydration occurs when the body loses more fluid than it takes in. Once someone is dehydrated, they are also suffering electrolyte imbalances (loss of salt, potassium), as electrolytes are also eliminated from the body when water is lost. Dehydration can occur in anyone of any age, but it is most dangerous for babies, small children, and older adults.

Dehydration can occur in many different circumstances. These include: illness; a hot, dry climate, with little rain; prolonged exposure to the sun or extreme temperatures; not drinking enough water; excessive urination; nausea; overuse of medications or substances such as alcohol or coffee that increase urination; diabetes; kidney disease; adrenal gland problems. Dehydration upsets the fluid-salt balance that is needed to maintain healthy cells and tissues.

Age is a factor that can contribute to dehydration. Healthy young and middle-aged adults who drink when they are thirsty generally do not need to do anything more to maintain their body's fluid balance. Children need more water because they are more energetic, but they tend to drink when thirsty. Because of their small size, children can get dehydrated easily if they are ill, and if they then experience either vomiting or diarrhea. They also may not take in enough fluids to compensate for extra losses of fluid associated with a fever or sweating. An infant can become dehydrated within hours after becoming ill; a sign of dehydration is no urination in an eight-hour period. Dehydration is a major cause of infant death throughout the world.

Adults over the age of 60 often do not drink adequate amounts of water. If they only drink when they are thirsty, they are only getting about 90% of the fluid that they need, which increases the risk of dehydration. The ability to sense thirst is diminished when adults age. Therefore, older adults need to drink a certain amount of fluids per day, whether they feel thirsty or not.

Mild dehydration is when the body has lost no more than 5% of its water. Loss of 5–10% is considered moderate dehydration. Severe dehydration with a loss of 10–15% of the body's water is a life-threatening condition that requires immediate medical attention. Severe dehydration can require hospitalization and intravenous fluid replacement. If an individual's blood pressure drops enough to cause or threaten the development of shock, medical treatment is usually required.

Symptoms of dehydration at any age include cracked lips,

dry or sticky mouth, lethargy, and sunken eyes. The skin is less elastic than it should be and is slow to return to its normal position after being pinched. Dehydration can cause confusion, constipation, discomfort, drowsiness, fever, and thirst. The mucous membranes lining the mouth and nose lose their natural moisture. When the body's fluid supply is severely depleted, hypovolemic shock is likely to occur. This condition, which is also called physical collapse, is characterized by pale, cool, clammy skin; rapid heartbeat; and rapid, shallow breathing. At this point, blood pressure drops so low that the organs of the body are not getting enough fluid to continue functioning. The internal temperature of the body rises to temperatures that can cause permanent damage to the brain and also to other vital organs.

Climate conditions: The hotter it is, the more you perspire and the more you need to drink. However, even in the winter, high rates of energy used in winter activities such as snowboarding, ice skating, and skiing while wearing heavy clothing can also cause significant fluid loss through sweat, resulting in the need to increase fluids.

Higher Elevations: Have you ever noticed how hard and frequently you breathe when you hike or exercise at a higher elevation? With every breath you exhale, you are losing fluid. High altitudes also tend to have low humidity, which increases fluid losses through the skin. People tend to drink less at high altitudes likely due to a decreased sensation of thirst. If you are staying at a higher elevation, and especially if you are exercising at high elevations, remember to drink plenty of fluids.

Air travel: The air inside airplanes during flight tends to have very low humidity—only about 15%. Low humidity increases dehydrating water losses through the skin, which in turn increases your need to drink. On a long flights, it is important to drink plenty of fluids.

While I was visiting the Grand Canyon, I heard a story about a woman who was hiking down into the canyon. She became confused and very weak. She died of dehydration within a few feet from the water of the Colorado River. Her companions were not aware of the signs of dehydration, nor did they realize how dangerous a situation she was in before it was too late. In general, physical activity affects water balance much more than climate or altitude, but the combination increases water loss at a faster rate.

It is important to understand hydration needs in every situation you are in, and always maintain proper hydration. Choosing beverages that fit your activity level and lifestyle is key to proper hydration while staying within the body's energy needs.

OVERHYDRATION

The importance of consuming adequate fluids to avoid dehydration is extremely important for physically active people. However, overhydration can occur during long periods of exercise (for example recreational hiking, and marathon running) because electrolytes that are also lost through sweat are not replaced, yet excessive amounts of water are consumed. The importance of fluid consumption has, in some cases, overshadowed the risk of consuming too much plain water, without replacing the lost electrolytes which leads to dangerous electrolyte imbalances, such as hyponatremia, a serious condition in which the sodium (salt) level in the blood becomes too low. Large amounts of water are consumed without adequate salt (sodium) intake. Both water and salt must be replaced to prevent dehydration and electrolyte imbalances. Therefore, during prolonged heat or exercise, which results in excess perspiration, not only should water be replaced, but so should the electrolytes, including sodium and potassium.

The World Health Organization (WHO) also notes that this condition occurs in mountain climbers who use melted snow to prepare their beverages, without supplementing with the necessary electrolytes.

Once dehydrated, older adults who engage in prolonged exercise can experience decreased thirst sensitivity, which can make them slower to voluntarily rehydrate. Older adults also tend to have slower kidney responses to water and sodium levels in the body and may be at greater risk for hyponatremia.

The symptoms of hyponatremia tend to be neurological (brain). People may complain of headache, nausea and vomiting, lethargy, and confusion. Other symptoms include cramps, muscle twitching and weakness. Ironically, the symptoms mimic dehydration, but if only water is given, this worsens the condition of hyponatremia. If the sodium concentration drops quickly to critical levels; lung congestion, brain swelling, seizures, coma, and death may occur.

TREATMENT OF DEHYDRATION/OVERHYDRATION

Increased fluid intake and replacement of lost electrolytes (sodium, potassium) are usually enough to restore fluid balances in those who are mildly or moderately dehydrated. Beverages that contain high levels of potassium include coconut water and fruit juices. However, coconut water is low in sodium, and does not contain enough sodium to replace the amount typically lost in dehydration. If using coconut water, add salt tablets to your drink. Processed 100% fruit juices, such

as orange juice contain potassium as well as added sodium, which make them good for replacing lost electrolytes. However, they are also high in sugar. Vegetable juices, especially tomato juice, are high in sodium, with less sugar content. Salt can also be added to your water. Another option is to eat a snack that contains salt, along with drinking plain water, to reverse dehydration.

For people who are losing fluid through vomiting or diarrhea, drink enough fluids for urine to remain the colour of pale straw to ensure adequate hydration.

Infants and young children who lose fluids through vomiting or diarrhea can be given electrolyte solutions, such as unflavoured Pedialyte. The unflavoured version does not contain any artificial additives. In developing countries, the WHO (World Health Organization) provides Oral Rehydration Salts (ORS), a solution of glucose and sodium, to combat dehydration from childhood diarrhea. Fruit juices should be avoided in hydrating infants and young children under the age of five, as the high sugar content will worsen diarrhea.

Medical treatment should be initiated when the following occurs:

- a child less than three months old develops a fever higher than 100 °F (37.8 °C)
- a child more than three months old develops a fever higher than 102 °F (38.9 °C)
- symptoms of dehydration worsen
- an individual urinates very sparingly or does not urinate at all during a six-hour period
- dizziness, listlessness, or excessive thirst occur

Mild dehydration rarely results in complications. If the cause is eliminated and lost fluid is replaced, mild dehydration can usually be cured in 24-48 hours.

Vomiting and diarrhea that continue for several days without adequate fluid replacement can be fatal. The risk of life-threatening complications is greater for young children and the elderly. However, dehydration that is rapidly recognized and treated has a good outcome.

HOW TO MAINTAIN GOOD HYDRATION

- Have beverages in between meals, after the food has left your stomach. Drink several glasses of water before going outside on a hot day.
- Choose beverages that you enjoy. Include soup with your meals.
- Eat more fruits and vegetables. Fruits and vegetables tend to have a high water content, which makes them great options for helping you meet your hydration needs. They also contain electrolytes.

- Do not exclusively rely on thirst. Sometimes thirst is not a reliable measure of hydration because of exercise, medications, age or health conditions. Keep a water bottle or beverage at your desk, in your car, in your bag or where ever you will be reminded to drink.
- Keep beverages at a moderate temperature. Fluids served at moderate temperatures—temperatures that are neither hot nor cold—tend to be consumed in greater volumes.

Increase fluid intake when exercising. If your typical exercise session is around 60 minutes or less, and does not involve vigorous activity outdoors in hot, humid weather, you probably do not need to interrupt your exercise session for a drink. However, when exercising in hot weather and you are losing water and salt from sweating, ensure that you drink at least one cup of fluid every 20 minutes, and include salt and potassium either in your drink or in a snack.

To get the greatest benefit from water, it must be consumed between meals; one hour before or two hours after a meal is ideal. “Many make a mistake in drinking cold water with their meals. Food should not be washed down. Taken with meals, water diminishes the flow of saliva; and the colder the water, the greater the injury to the stomach. Ice water or ice lemonade, taken with meals, will arrest digestion until the system has imparted sufficient warmth to the stomach to enable it to take up its work again. Masticate slowly, and allow the saliva to mingle with the food.

“The more liquid there is taken into the stomach with the meals, the more difficult it is for the food to digest; for the liquid must first be absorbed.” —*Counsels on Diet and Foods*, p. 106

In 2006, experts at the American Conference on Hydration and Health Promotion discussed guidelines for adequate hydration. They noted that “water is essential for life and health, yet hydration and fluid intake have not received adequate attention in public guidelines.” They agreed that science links adequate hydration to survival, health promotion, sustained physical and mental performance, and workplace safety and productivity.

“Water is the best liquid possible to cleanse the tissues.” —*Healthful Living*, p. 226





CHILDREN'S CORNER

Bible Visions, part 3

Josephine
Mensah

GOING TO HEAVEN AND OTHER WORLDS

Sister White was a prophet and she had a vision about going to heaven and other worlds.

This vision started when Sister White saw two saints with their attending angels. She was given wings, as well as an attending angel. Then the Lord brought her to another world where the grass was a beautiful lush green, and the birds sang sweet songs of joy. The people there were noble, majestic and lovely. Their faces beamed with the light of Christ, expressing their happiness and freedom.

Sister White asked one of the inhabitants why they were more lovely than those on earth. The reply was, "We have lived in strict obedience to the commandments of God, and have not fallen by disobedience, like those on earth." Then she saw two trees; they both looked the same, the fruits of the two trees looked much the same also. But one of them they could not eat from because it was the tree of knowledge of good and evil. Her attending angel said, "None in this place have tasted of the forbidden tree, but if they should eat, they would fall."

Sister White was then taken to another world where Enoch was. This world had seven moons. In Enoch's right hand he had a palm, and on each leaf of the palm was written "victory". On his head he had a wreath and in the middle of each leaf was written "purity". Also he had a bow that confined the wreath and on it was written "holiness". Above the wreath was a beautiful crown that shone brighter than the sun.

Sister White begged her attending angel to remain there, but he said she could not. But when Jesus comes, if she remains faithful, then she would go to heaven with Him.

It is my wish and prayer that we will all be able to go to heaven and dwell there for eternity. Amen.

Sarah Newby

JACOB'S LADDER

The dream about the ladder was seen in Jacob's dream on his way to his mother's country, while fleeing from his brother Esau's anger. Jacob stole the birthright from Esau making Esau want to kill his brother.

Jacob's mother suggested he to go to her homeland to find a wife. So Jacob left. On his way, he thought of how he had done a great sin. This bothered him, and he did not want to sleep, until sleep gave way. Jacob had a very strange dream. "And he dreamed, and behold a ladder set up on the earth, and the top of it reached to heaven: and behold the angels of God ascending and descending on it. And, behold, the LORD stood above it, and said, I am the LORD God of Abraham thy father, and the God of Isaac: the land whereon thou liest, to thee will I give it, and to thy seed." Genesis 28:12–13

During this dream, God spoke to him. God said, "And thy seed shall be as the dust of the earth, and thou shalt spread abroad to the west, and to the east, and to the north, and to the south: and in thee and in thy seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed. And, behold, I am with thee, and will keep thee in all places whither thou goest, and will bring thee again into this land; for I will not leave thee, until I have done that which I have spoken to thee of." Genesis 28:14–15. Jacob felt touched by Jesus' kind words.

He pondered on what Jesus said and decided that Jesus was a merciful God; a God who forgives, not hates. Jacob later decided he would change his life. He wanted to live a better life than the old one. From now on he would serve the Lord. Jacob soon made a promise to God.

“And Jacob vowed a vow, saying, If God will be with me, and will keep me in this way that I go, and will give me bread to eat, and raiment to put on, So that I come again to my father's house in peace; then shall the LORD be my God: And this stone, which I have set for a pillar, shall be God's house: and of all that Thou shalt give me I will surely give the tenth unto Thee.” Genesis 28:20–22

Jacob called this place, Bethel. Jesus is our ladder to heaven. By Him we are allowed access to heaven. Jesus said, “ I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by Me.” John 14:6

“We can ask Jesus anything. He can forgive our sins. If we have any problems, we can ask Him. No one should be afraid to pray for forgiveness. The ladder is always there. We can climb it any time we like. It is my wish and prayer that we may never be afraid to ask Jesus anything, and that we may climb the ladder to heaven. Amen.

Stephen Newby

JOSEPH'S DREAMS

Joseph was the second youngest son of Jacob's 12 sons. Jacob loved Joseph, the son of Rachel, the most. Joseph loved his brothers also, and sometimes told them what not to do, and he would advise them. His brothers did not like that at all. Joseph was younger than them, and they were annoyed with him giving them advice. His older brothers brought much grief to their father, Jacob.

We are told that Joseph was of a different character, with an attractive appearance, which reflected an inward beauty of mind and heart. Joseph gave evidence of moral earnestness and firmness. He listened to His father's instruction and loved to obey God.

Jacob's affection towards Joseph was to become a cause of trouble and sorrow. Jacob unwisely showed preference to Joseph, and this made the other sons jealous. Joseph did not want to see his brothers sinning against God, and laid the matter before his father. With deep emotion, Jacob implored his sons not to bring reproach upon his name, and above all, not to dishonour God.

Then Jacob gave a gift of an expensive coat of many colours to Joseph, something which was usually worn by a person of distinction. This made his brothers become suspicious that their father intended to pass by his elder children and give the birthright to Joseph.

Then, Joseph had a dream. Afterwards he told the dream to his brothers. This is how it went (as told in Genesis 37):

“For, behold, we were binding sheaves in the field, and, lo, my sheaf arose, and also stood upright; and, behold, your sheaves stood round about, and made obeisance to my

sheaf. And his brethren said to him, Shalt thou indeed reign over us? or shalt thou indeed have dominion over us?” exclaimed his brothers in envious anger.

Soon Joseph had another dream. “Behold, I have dreamed a dream more; and, behold, the sun and the moon and the eleven stars made obeisance to me.”

Jacob, who was present to hear his dreams, spoke reprovingly. “Shall I and thy mother and thy brethren indeed come to bow down ourselves to thee to the earth?” But, regardless of his words, Jacob believed that the Lord was revealing the future to Joseph.

As Joseph stood before his brothers, his beautiful countenance lighted up with the Spirit of Inspiration. They could not withhold their admiration, but still hated the purity that reproved their sins. His brothers hated him not only because of the dream, but for his boldness in telling them about it.

The first dream shows his supremacy over his brothers, and the second one extended to his whole family. Despite the reaction of his brothers after telling them the first dream, he still told them his second dream. This dream only intensified their hatred.

One day, Jacob sent Joseph to find his brothers who were looking after the sheep in far-away fields. His brothers saw him coming and they said, “Behold, the dreamer cometh.” Envy and revenge now controlled them. “Let us slay him,” they said, “and cast him into a pit.” But then they sold him instead to a caravan going to Egypt.

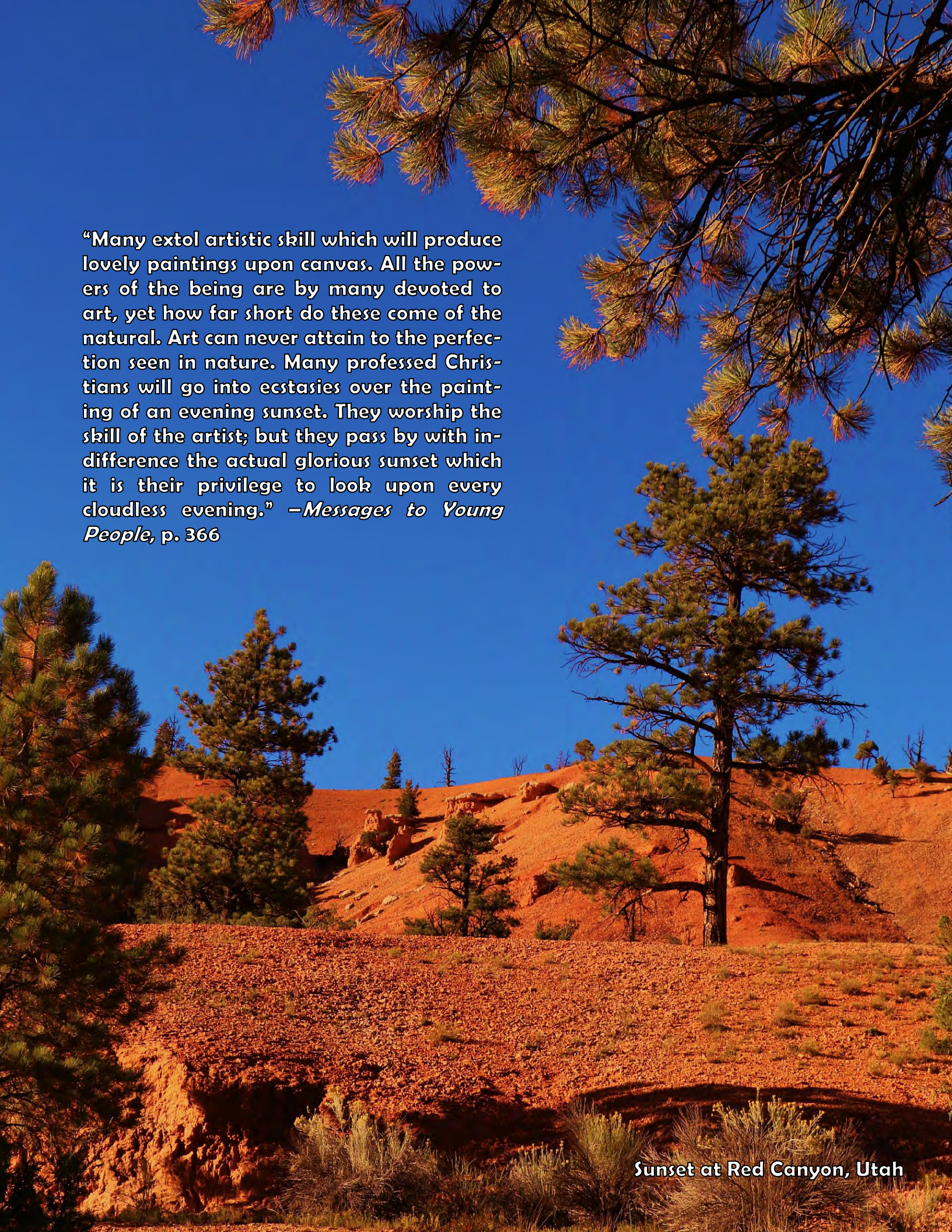
In all the land there was a great famine, but there was grain in Egypt. Jacob sent his sons to buy food. They were directed to the presence of the King's deputy, and they bowed down before him with their faces to the earth. Joseph knew his brothers but they did not recognize that it was him. His Hebrew name had been changed, so there was not much resemblance between the Prime Minister of Egypt and the sibling that they had sold to the Ishmaelites.

As Joseph saw his brothers bowing down and making obeisance, his dream and the scenes of the past were clearer before him. A second time his brothers came to him; Joseph's dream came to his mind. Joseph's dream was fulfilled. His family did bow down to him.

God knows the future and we must understand and accept what is shown to us. God took care of Joseph throughout his life and prepared him to become a real blessing in the world.

May we also be faithful and true to God, is my wish and prayer. Amen.

Tiffany Bessec



“Many extol artistic skill which will produce lovely paintings upon canvas. All the powers of the being are by many devoted to art, yet how far short do these come of the natural. Art can never attain to the perfection seen in nature. Many professed Christians will go into ecstasies over the painting of an evening sunset. They worship the skill of the artist; but they pass by with indifference the actual glorious sunset which it is their privilege to look upon every cloudless evening.” –*Messages to Young People*, p. 366

Sunset at Red Canyon, Utah