



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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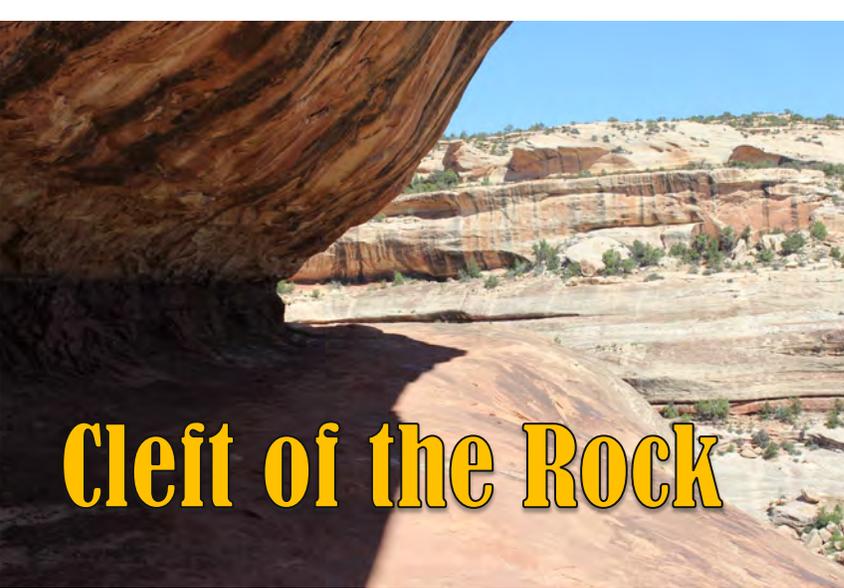
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Cleft of the Rock

“And the LORD said, Behold, there is a place by Me, and thou shalt stand upon a rock: And it shall come to pass, while My glory passeth by, that I will put thee in a cleft of the rock, and will cover thee with My hand while I pass by: And I will take away Mine hand, and thou shalt see My back parts: but My face shall not be seen.” Exodus 33:21–23

“The unveiled glory of God no man could look upon and live; but Moses is assured that he shall behold as much of the divine glory as he can bear in his present, mortal state. That Hand that made the world, that holds the mountains in their places, takes this man of dust--this man of mighty faith-- and mercifully covers him in a cleft of the rock, while the glory of God and all His goodness pass before him. Can we marvel that ‘the excellent glory’ reflected from Omnipotence shone in Moses’ face with such brightness that the people could not look upon it? The impress of God was upon him, making him appear as one of the shining angels from the throne.” *–Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 4, p. 533

“It was when Moses was hidden in the cleft of the rock that he beheld the glory of God. It is when we hide in the riven Rock that Christ will cover us with His own pierced hand, and we shall hear what the Lord saith unto His servants. To us as to Moses, God will reveal Himself as ‘merciful and gracious, long-suffering, and abundant in goodness and truth, keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin.’ Exodus 34:6, 7.” *–Christ’s Object Lessons*, p. 162

“If men will walk with God, He will hide them in the cleft of the Rock. Thus hidden, they can see God, even as Moses saw Him. By the power and light that He imparts they can comprehend more and accomplish more than their finite judgment had deemed possible.” *–The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 362

“Now the question is, Are you gaining in the knowledge of the truth? Have you a living connection with Jesus Christ? You see Abraham had, and he talked with angels, and he could ask a favor of them. You see that Moses had a living connection with God, and his earnest petition was that he might see the glory of God. ‘Show me Thy glory,’ was his petition. Well now, the Lord did not rebuke him for making that request; he was not presumptuous in trying to know more of God and His glory. But we see that that mighty man of faith was hid in a cleft of the rock, and the hand of God was placed over the rock, and then He revealed to him His glory.” *–This Day With God*, p. 95

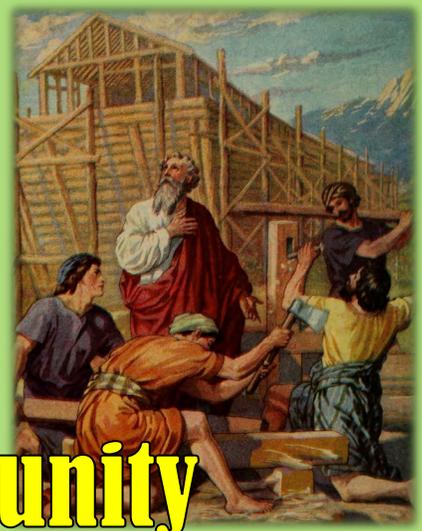
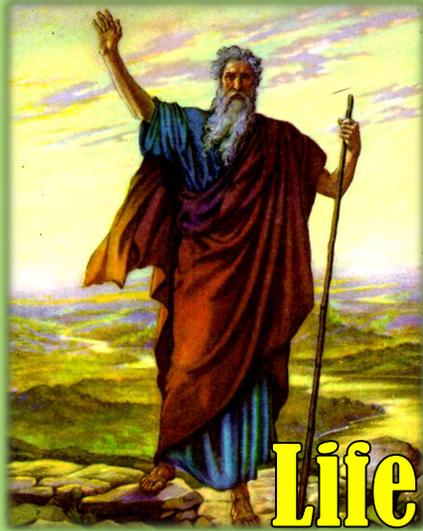
“To hearts that have become purified through the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, all is changed. These can know God. Moses was hid in the cleft of the rock when the glory of the Lord was revealed to him; and it is when we are hid in Christ that we behold the love of God.” *–Maranatha*, p. 88

“The Lord has been waiting long to impart the greatest, truest joys to the heart. All those who look to Him with undivided hearts, He will greatly bless. Those who have thus looked to Him have caught more distinct views of Jesus as their sin bearer, their all-sufficient sacrifice, and have been hid in the cleft of the Rock, to behold the Lamb of God who taketh away the sins of the world. When we have a sense of Christ’s sacrifice in our behalf, our lips are tuned to the highest, loftiest themes of praise.” *–Counsels to Parents, Teachers and Students*, p. 369–370

“The night of trial is nearly spent. Satan is bringing in his masterly power because he knoweth that his time is short. The chastisement of God is upon the world, to call all who know the truth to hide in the cleft of the Rock, and view the glory of God. The truth must not be muffled now. Plain statements must be made. Unvarnished truth must be spoken, in leaflets and pamphlets, and these must be scattered like the leaves of autumn.” *–Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 9, p. 231

“Present truth to the people. Work as if in full view of the whole universe of heaven. We have not time to lose--not a moment. Important issues must soon be met, and we need to be hidden in the cleft of the rock, that we may see Jesus, and be quickened by His Holy Spirit.” *–Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 7, p. 154

Ellen G. White



Life is an Opportunity

The greatest and best opportunity that any can have is to be a Reformer. Reformers are needed in our world, more than any other position. In the Bible we have many faithful men and women who decided to be Reformers, and they have left us an example of the work of a Reformer.

Enoch was a Reformer before the flood, among the wicked and sinful generation. He developed a divine character, ready for translation to heaven without seeing eternal death.

“And Enoch walked with God: and he was not; for God took him.” Genesis 5:24. He is our example in the last days for those who also have to prepare for translation without seeing death.

Noah was a Reformer; for 120 years he preached to the people about the coming flood, and also continued building an ark to save them from the flood. His actions spoke that he believed what he was preaching. The result of his preaching was saving the seven members of his own family.

Abraham and Lot were Reformers. Abraham stayed in the mountains, and Lot went to the city of Sodom. After some time the Lord visited Abraham and told him of His plan to destroy the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah. Abraham knew that Lot was living there; therefore, he asked the Lord to save these cities for the righteous people living there. He thought that Lot may have convinced at least people to give up the ways of the world and serve the Lord.

“And Abraham drew near, and said, wilt Thou also destroy the righteous with the wicked? Peradventure there be fifty righteous within the city: wilt Thou also destroy and not spare the place for the fifty righteous that are therein? That be far from Thee to do after this manner, to slay the righteous with the wicked: and that the righteous should be as the wicked, that be far from Thee: shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?” Genesis 18: 23–25

But, how many were saved from these cities? Only three persons—Lot and his two daughters.

Moses was a great Reformer. For 40 years he taught the people of Israel all throughout their wilderness journey. By many miracles and wonders that he did by the power of God, he patiently educated them. He also taught them all the commandments and statutes of God. And most importantly, Moses taught them to love God above all, and their neighbour as themselves. “And thou shalt love the LORD thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might.” Deuteronomy 6:5

“Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself: I am the LORD.” Leviticus 19:18. Was the message of Moses any different than our message today? No; we preach the same message that Moses preached. He preached of grace which is also our message.

“For wherein shall it be known here that I and Thy people have found grace in Thy sight? is it not in that Thou goest with us? so shall we be separated, I and Thy people, from all the people that are upon

the face of the earth. And the LORD said unto Moses, I will do this thing also that thou hast spoken: for thou hast found grace in My sight, and I know thee by name." Exodus 37:16-17

Elijah was a mighty Reformer; alone he stood against King Ahab, his army, the priests of Baal and the whole nation. He asked the people, "If the Lord be God, follow Him." Not even one answered that they obey God and believe in Him.

"And Elijah came unto all the people, and said, How long halt ye between two opinions? If the LORD be God, follow Him: but if Baal, then follow him. And the people answered him not a word. Then said Elijah unto the people, I, even I only, remain a prophet of the LORD; But Baal's prophets are four hundred and fifty men." 1 Kings 18:21-22

In the end, when the people saw the fire burn the offering of Elijah, they fell on their faces and confessed, "the Lord He is God," and they put to death the priests of Baal.

Nehemiah was a Reformer; he sacrificed his high position in the king's court, and came to the city that lay in ruins, trying to build it up with the small company of the people who had returned from Babylon. They faced the great adversity of neighbouring enemies, and of traitors among their own people. Yet Nehemiah was able to finish repairing the wall and the gates, and the buildings. He also brought the people back to obedience to God.

Paul, the Apostle to the Gentiles had patiently laboured almost 35 years for the conversion of the Gentiles, building up churches and organizing them, traveling from place to place, in perils, dangers, suffering from the enemies from outside, as well as from those within the church. Paul writes of his life: "Are they ministers of Christ? (I speak as a fool) I am more; in labours more abundant, in stripes above measure, in prisons more frequent, in deaths oft. Of the Jews five times received I forty stripes save one. Thrice was I beaten with rods, once was I stoned, thrice I suffered shipwreck, a night and a day I have been in the deep; In journeyings often, in perils of waters, in perils of rob-

bers, in perils by mine own countrymen, in perils by the heathen, in perils in the city, in perils in the wilderness, in perils in the sea, in perils among false brethren; In weariness and painfulness, in watchings often, in hunger and thirst, in fastings often, in cold and nakedness. Beside those things that are without, that which cometh upon me daily, the care of all the churches." 2 Corinthians 11:23-28

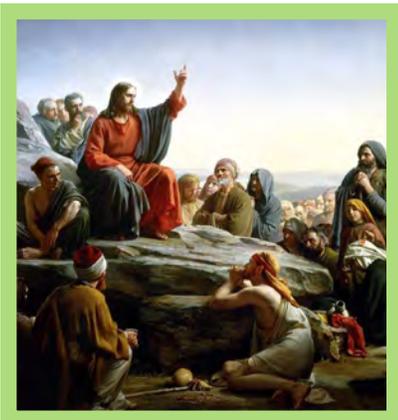
Paul was a faithful Reformer, doing God's work, saving souls, yet in all his sufferings he writes, "Rejoice evermore." 1 Thessalonians 5:16

All these men had an opportunity to become Reformers, and they took it, yet they were hated, persecuted, and some of them suffering martyrdom.

Jesus is the greatest Reformer. When the prophets, messengers, men sent by God were not accepted many, finally God sent His only Son as the last resort to save His chosen people. John the Baptist gave a witness of Him. "The next day John seeth Jesus coming unto him, and saith, Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world." John 1:29

Jesus is our example of doing Reform work; we must behold Him. "But we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord." 2 Corinthians 3:18

About 300 prophecies of Christ's first coming are written in the Old Testament. The whole nation of Israel was waiting for the coming Messiah. The burden of the Romans was heavy upon them. They had to pay exorbitant taxes, and they expected the Messiah to drive the Romans out. Because Jesus did not do this, they rejected Him. Almost everybody rejected Him, but there were few who accepted Him and followed Him. The life of Jesus was full of self-denial, self-sacrifice, and benevolence; the Jews did not admire such a life. The humility and meekness of Jesus did not attract them. People loved His kindness, mercy, gentleness, His miracles, and His healings, but His messages and His words, were a stumbling block to them.



In the Sermon on the Mount Jesus spoke the following words, “Ye have heard that it hath been said, An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth: But I say unto you, That ye resist not evil: but whosoever shall smite thee on

thy right cheek, turned to him the other also. And if any man will sue thee at the law, and take away thy coat, let him have thy cloke also. And whosoever shall compel thee to go a mile, go with him twain. Give to him that asketh thee, and from him that would borrow of thee turn not thou away. Ye have heard that it hath been said, Thou shalt love thy neighbour, and hate thine enemy. But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you.” Matthew 5:38–44

After listening to His Sermon many left Him. “From that time many of His disciples went back, and walked no more with Him.” John 6:66. This happened to the rich young man who asked Jesus, “what good thing shall I do, that I may have eternal life?” “The young man saith unto Him, All these things have I kept from my youth up: what lack I yet? Jesus said unto him, if thou wilt be perfect, go and sell that thou hast, and give to the poor, and I shalt have treasure in heaven: and come and follow Me. But when the young man heard that saying, he went away sorrowful: for he had great possessions.” Matthew 19:16, 20–21

If Jesus had required less and had not made the way so narrow more people would have followed Him. But the

cost was too great, therefore only few were willing to follow Him. Jesus, the greatest Reformer, was cruelly nailed to the cross as a criminal. Barabbas the criminal was preferred above Him.

Today, in a time of spiritual darkness and iniquity the Lord is calling for Reformers to stand up, and lift up the standard of righteousness among the nations. This work requires self-denial and self-sacrifice, and it involves suffering and rejection.

When World War I started in 1914, the faithful Adventists who remained loyal to the commandments of God had to suffer alone. Alone the young men stood before the courts and military tribunals. There were no ministers visiting them in their cells, and no church was praying for them, as the church prayed for Peter all night. Alone they gave their lives for the truth. They were pioneers of this Reform movement.

Are you willing to follow in their footsteps? Are you willing to sacrifice all on the altar? Is Jesus so dear to you that you are willing to suffer and even to die for Him? If you are willing, then you are a Reformer and God can lay on your shoulders the finishing work of the gospel ministry. Today, we all have the opportunity to become Reformers, to do the most important work of God, and that is to follow the examples of the Reformers of the past 6000 years, and especially the example of Jesus, the son of God. Then you are ready for eternal life. Love not the world, neither the things of the world. Jesus has proven His love to you; look at the nail marks in His hands. Can you do any less for Him than what He has done for you?

Then Jesus will fill your life with joy and peace and your name will be written in the book of life. Jesus calls you today to accept this opportunity; doing so will make Him very happy. Amen.

Timo Martin

“The time is not far distant, when, like the early disciples, we shall be forced to seek a refuge in desolate and solitary places. As the siege of Jerusalem by the Roman armies was the signal for flight to the Judean Christians, so the assumption of power on the part of our nation [the United States] in the decree enforcing the papal sabbath will be a warning to us. It will then be time to leave the large cities, preparatory to leaving the smaller ones for retired homes in secluded places among the mountains.” –*Maranatha*, p. 180



And What's *Your* Excuse?

What is an excuse? It is a reason why you cannot do something. These reasons often appear negative, like "I forgot", or "I am too tired", or simply, "I can't", or "I don't want to." Sometimes, however, they may be legitimate, like, "I did not understand the instructions." But, still, an excuse is an excuse. There is always a way to do something by asking for clarification or help.

When asked to do a task, and it does not get done, the person making the request will ask, "what's your excuse?" "Why did you not get it done?" For example, a teacher gives a homework assignment to her students and some students do not get it done, so each one is asked, "And what's *your* excuse?" Each student has a different answer. There are a variety of excuses.

As we do missionary work, we find many people making excuses as to why they do not want to serve God. It may be a financial issue, feeling the need to work seven days a week to support a family. For many it is the love of this world. They seem happy and content with the material wealth they have acquired, and the entertainments and social events they enjoy, or foods and drinks they wish to indulge in—all of which they do not want to give up for God. They enjoy this world so much that eternity is out of the picture.

It is true that nominal, half-hearted Christians who have not fully committed their lives to Christ, often find all kinds of excuses for not helping out in the church, whether it be cleaning, or doing missionary work. Regarding missionary work, we often hear excuses like, "it's the missionary's job," "I don't have the talent to give Bible Studies." Or simply, "I don't have time," or "Sunday is my only day off and I want to relax at home

as I am so stressed from my job and the Sabbath", or then "I need to do a lot of my home chores on Sunday, I simply cannot take time out from my Sunday to do missionary work." They try to find plausible excuses, rather than just saying, "I don't want to."

"Excuses are tools of the incompetent, and those who specialize in them seldom go far." --- <https://www.bookdepository.com/Excuses-are-tools-incompetent-those-who-specialize-them-seldom-go-far-Newprint-Publishing/9781672278010>

Ben Franklin wrote, "He that is good for making excuses is seldom good for anything else." --- <https://quoteinvestigator.com/2018/03/08/excuses/>

Gabriel Meurier stated, "He who excuses himself, accuses himself." <https://allauthor.com/quotes/56877/>

Jesus told a parable about a man who made a feast and then sent his servant to invite his friends. Unfortunately, his friends began to make excuses because they were preoccupied with the cares of this life. (Luke 14:16–20). They tried to find plausible excuses. None of them said simply, "I am tired," "I don't feel like it," "I really don't want to come."

"And they all with one consent began to make excuse. The first said unto him, I have bought a piece of ground, and I must needs go and see it: I pray thee have me excused. And another said, I have bought five yoke of oxen, and I go to prove them: I pray thee have me excused. And another said, I have married a wife, and therefore I cannot come." Luke 14:18–20

The first man said he had purchased a piece of property and needs to go see it. Surely he must have seen it be-

fore he purchased it. How few would buy a piece of land or a house before seeing it.



Similarly with the second man's excuse. Would he not have tested the oxen prior to their purchase? He would have been foolish not to.

And, of course, we know that the third man could

have taken his wife to the feast. He just wanted to enjoy his new bride and spend time alone with her. The pleasures of life were more important. She was his idol.

"All the excuses betray a preoccupied mind. To these intended guests other interests had become all-absorbing. The invitation they had pledged themselves to accept was put aside, and the generous friend was insulted by their indifference" —*Christ's Object Lessons*, p. 222

"So it is now. The excuses urged for refusing the invitation to the feast cover the whole ground of excuses for refusing the gospel invitation. Men declare that they cannot imperil their worldly prospects by giving attention to the claims of the gospel. They count their temporal interests as of more value than the things of eternity. The very blessings they have received from God become a barrier to separate their souls from their Creator and Redeemer. They will not be interrupted in their worldly pursuits, and they say to the messenger of mercy, 'Go thy way for this time; when I have a convenient season, I will call for thee.' Acts 24:25. Others urge the difficulties that would arise in their social relations should they obey the call of God. They say they cannot afford to be out of harmony with their relatives and acquaintances. Thus they prove themselves to be the very actors described in the parable. The Master of the feast regards their flimsy excuses as showing contempt for His invitation." —*Ibid.*, p. 224

Now, we may argue that these excuses do not apply to me because I am in the church. These people mentioned in this parable are those outside the church. But think carefully about your life, and what your priorities are. Whether our names are on the church records or not, that will not save us. Our commitment to Christ and His cause is what will save us. Are we too busy with our houses and lands, our material goods, or families to go out and work for Jesus? Will we go to the highways and hedges and compel them to come in, as that man in the parable sent his servants out to do? Are we the serv-

ants? Or the invited guests making excuses?

The most common excuse people make are:

Our Time: "If it is not Sabbath, I have little time for church work. Although I may have the talent, and there is a need, I simply am too busy. I do not have a lot of time on my hands."

Our Money: "I know you are asking me to pay not only tithes but a generous offering, however, I just have a lot of expenses and hobbies that I have to take care of."

When Jesus asked some people to follow Him, some made excuses. They did not really want to surrender all and follow so they made excuses that sounded plausible.

"And He said unto another, Follow me. But he said, Lord, suffer me first to go and bury my father. Jesus said unto him, Let the dead bury their dead: but go thou and preach the kingdom of God. And another also said, Lord, I will follow thee; but let me first go bid them farewell, which are at home at my house. And Jesus said unto him, No man, having put his hand to the plow, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God." Luke 9:59–62

Although these words of Jesus may seem harsh, Jesus could read the hearts of these men and knew that they were only making excuses. Was this man's father really dead at that time? If so, the man would not have been in the company listening to Jesus. He would have been at home, mourning, and preparing for the funeral. Perhaps the man wanted to delay making a full commitment until after his father's death, and then follow Jesus. This may have taken years. Similarly, Jesus knew that the second man was making excuses. Perhaps he wanted to go and speak with his family and friends and get their advice—and Jesus knew that they may dissuade him from returning to follow Him. They would come up with all kinds of excuses, such as financial loss or loss of enjoyment in this life.



Although Elisha, when called, also went back to say good-bye to his family. He first took the oxen and sacrificed them to God, clearly indicating his intention. His days of farming were over (1 Kings 19:19–21).

These two men both were, in reality, saying "not now, maybe later." And Jesus sensed their reluctance and took every excuse away from them. He was telling them that the kingdom of heaven must be their greatest priority. There is no justification to putting off the call of Je-

sus, delaying, stalling and coming up with excuses to avoid doing what they know to be right. That is all it was—excuses.

Jesus example: “He came in humility, in order that the humblest being upon the face of the earth could have no excuse because of his poverty, or ignorance, and say, Because of these things, I cannot obey the law of Jehovah. Christ clothed His divinity with humanity, that humanity might touch humanity; that He might live with humanity and bear all the trials and afflictions of man. He was tempted in all points like as we are, yet without sin. In His humanity He understood all the temptations that will come to man.” —*The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*, vol. 7, p. 925

THERE IS NO EXCUSE FOR SIN

Sin is sin, and most people are aware of what sin is. They often know when they are doing wrong, yet some do not care. Even if they, at times, may have sinned in ignorance, human nature likes to make excuses. There is a saying in English, “The Devil Made Me do it.” People say it as a joke when caught with some minor, unintentional mistake. Is this true? Nothing could be further from the truth. This saying has its origin with Eve in the Garden of Eden when she blamed God for making the serpent. The serpent “made her do it.” (Genesis 3:13). God did not accept Eve’s excuse and what a flood-gate of sorrow and woe entered this world.

“The strongest temptation is no excuse for sin. However great the pressure brought to bear upon the soul, transgression is our own act. It is not in the power of earth or hell to compel any one to sin. The will must consent, the heart must yield, or passion cannot overbear reason, nor iniquity triumph over righteousness.” —*Maranatha*, p. 225

“The tempter’s agency is not to be accounted an excuse for one wrong act. Satan is jubilant when he hears the professed followers of Christ making excuses for their deformity of character. It is these excuses that lead to sin. There is no excuse for sinning. A holy temper, a Christlike life, is accessible to every repenting, believing child of God.” —*Ibid.*, p. 311

“It is Satan’s act to tempt you, but your own act to yield. It is not in the power of all the host of Satan to force the tempted to transgress. There is no excuse for sin.” —*Maranatha*, p. 82

But, what if I did not know? Well, it is your duty to find out. “**Ignorance is no excuse for error or sin**, when there is every opportunity to know the will of God.” —*The*

Great Controversy, p. 597–598. Study your Bible so you will not be found making excuses. It is all there.

Sometimes the only excuse we can give is, “I forgot.” “Many think it a sufficient excuse for the grossest errors to plead forgetfulness. But do they not, as well as others, possess intellectual faculties? Then they should discipline their minds to be retentive. It is a sin to forget, a sin to be negligent. If you form a habit of negligence, you may neglect your own soul’s salvation and at last find that you are unready for the kingdom of God.” —*Christ’s Object Lessons*, p. 358

The Excuse of Anger: People often do irrational acts when they are angry, and then repent later, excusing their behaviour with the fact that they were angry. There is no excuse whatsoever to be angry. “It is a sin to speak impatiently and fretfully or to feel angry—even though we do not speak.” —*Child’s Guidance*, p. 95

You cannot blame your faults and failings on your parents and the way they raised you: “Never should we lower the standard of righteousness in order to accommodate inherited or cultivated tendencies to wrongdoing. We need to understand that imperfection of character is sin.” —*Christ’s Object Lessons*, p. 330

Romans 7 is not an excuse for sin. Many Christians love Romans chapter 7 in their battle against sin. “For we know that the law is spiritual: but I am carnal, sold under sin. For that which I do I allow not: for what I would, that do I not; but what I hate, that do I. If then I do that which I would not, I consent unto the law that it is good. Now then it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me. For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh,) dwelleth no good thing: for to will is present with me; but how to perform that which is good I find not. For the good that I would I do not: but the evil which I would not, that I do. Now if I do that I would not, it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me.” Romans 7:14–20

They soothe their troubled conscience by stating that God loves them, and it is ok to keep sinning as long as they have a desire for good, then they are fine. We have a sinful flesh and cannot hope to do good when evil dwells within.

“Desires for goodness and holiness are right as far as they go; but if you stop here, they will avail nothing. Many will be lost while hoping and desiring to be Christians. They do not come to the point of yielding the will to God. They do not now choose to be Christians.” —*Steps to Christ*, p. 47–48

It is true that it is impossible for man of himself to resist the power of evil. A higher power must take possession of the soul before the evil passions can be subdued. Paul, in these verses, speaks of the frustration that comes to all who seek to attain righteousness in their own strength.

We could reword this quote in *Steps to Christ* by saying, many will be lost while hoping and desiring to overcome every sin. Reading further in Romans though, we find that the freedom from sin comes through a connection with Christ. "There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death." Romans 8:1-2. Paul was thankful that there is hope. Christ came to condemn sin, not sinners. He came to set the sinners free from sin. "Thou shalt call His name JESUS: for He shall save His people from their sins." Matthew 1:21

"Cease to cherish and excuse sin; for sin caused the death of the Son of God." –*Gospel Workers*, p. 466

Sometimes when people are asked to do a job, they feel inadequate. Or perhaps it is a really challenging job, so they start to think of excuses as to why they are not the best person for the job.

Moses and Jeremiah both came up with excuses when the Lord called them to their life work.

Jeremiah stated, "Ah, Lord GOD! behold, I cannot speak: for I am a child." Jeremiah 1:6

The Lord answered by saying, "Say not, I am a child: for thou shalt go to all that I shall send thee, and whatsoever I command thee thou shalt speak." Jeremiah 1:7

And Jeremiah went with no further excuses. "Then the LORD put forth His hand, and touched my mouth. And the LORD said unto me, Behold, I have put My words in thy mouth." Jeremiah 1:9

When Moses had been living in the court of Pharaoh, he made a mistake and killed a man. He knew that he had been called to deliver Israel out of Egypt at some point in time. However, although he felt ready, God knew he was not. Moses needed another 40 years in the wilderness to learn patience while caring for sheep, to prepare for the task God was asking him to fulfil. Now Moses was an 80-year-old man who was a fugitive from justice. Humanly speaking, he was not the best man, but God sees things differently than we do. Was he really fit and ready to go and deliver Israel? Yes, after 40 years in the

wilderness, God felt that it was time—that Moses was ready.

Now when called, Moses did not respond by saying, "Yes, I am ready. I will go." Rather we see that Moses started to make excuses. He was very reluctant to go. He no longer felt he was the best man for the job.



The first excuse he gave is: "And Moses said unto God, Who am I, that I should go unto Pharaoh, and that I should bring forth the children of Israel out of Egypt?" Exodus 3:11. In other words, "Who am I? Why choose me?" Implying that surely there is someone else better qualified. Moses felt unqualified to go to Pharaoh and demand he release the Israelites.

As mentioned at the beginning, some in the church feel that they are not as qualified as other to do a specific task. They do not have the talent to get the job done properly. If you say that you cannot do a specific duty, ask yourself, who knows best, you or God? If God asks you to do something, it is with full knowledge of your weaknesses. "For He knoweth our frame; He remembereth that we are dust." Psalm 103:14

The Lord responds to Moses that, "Certainly I will be with thee." Exodus 3:12. It was not about what Moses can do. It is about what Moses and God can do together. The Lord took that excuse away immediately by promising to be with Moses.

The next excuse Moses gives is, "Behold, when I come unto the children of Israel, and shall say unto them, The God of your fathers hath sent me unto you; and they shall say to me, What is His name? what shall I say unto them?" Exodus 3:13. Now Moses is asking God for more information. He cannot just go and demand the release of Israel. He needs to be able to tell them who is sending him. He feels he does not have enough information.

The Lord answers this easily by saying. "I AM THAT I AM: and He said, Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, I AM hath sent me unto you." v. 14. Then He adds, just to reinforce His identity. "And God said moreover unto Moses, Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, The LORD God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, hath sent me unto you: this is my name for ever, and this is my memorial unto all generations." Exodus 3:15

Do you feel you do not know enough about God to do the task He is asking of you? We are to go forward by faith and obey, trusting in God's promises, and the Lord will reveal Himself.

Then Moses gives another excuse, "But, behold, they will not believe me, nor hearken unto my voice: for they will say, The LORD hath not appeared unto thee." Exodus 4:1

To this excuse, the Lord does not give a direct answer, but answers with a question. He asks Moses, "What is that in thine hand?" v. 2. Moses simply answers, "A rod." v. 2. It was nothing special. Just a plain simple shepherd's rod; but was very important for him in his line of work. Moses' rod was a shepherd's rod. It was his employment—his livelihood. Now God is telling Moses, it is time for a change. Throw that rod on the ground—give Me that rod. Your employment will change now. The Lord then did two miracles that Moses could show to the leaders of Israel to confirm their faith (and the faith of Moses).

After experiencing the two miracles, Moses still has another excuse. "And Moses said unto the LORD, O my Lord, I am not eloquent, neither heretofore, nor since Thou hast spoken unto Thy servant: but I am slow of speech, and of a slow tongue." Exodus 4:10

"The servant of God was still overwhelmed by the thought of the strange and wonderful work before him. In his distress and fear he now pleaded as an excuse a lack of ready speech." *—Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 254. This was his last effort to escape the duty God was asking him.

The Lord had an answer for this excuse also. "And the LORD said unto him, Who hath made man's mouth . . . have not I the LORD? Now therefore go, and I will be with thy mouth, and teach thee what thou shalt say." Exodus 4:11–12. The Lord then sent Aaron, his brother, to help him out. Moses then went. There were no more excuses.

Many look at their lack of education, their age, their

income, their skill, or their talents, and feel inadequate to do the duty the Lord asks of them. In truth, these are not legitimate excuses. There are no valid excuses. Our duty is to yield our lives into the Lord's hand and allow Him to have free rein in our lives.

Regardless of the excuses that man comes up with for not doing the will of God, God always has an answer. There are no excuses that will be accepted.

God wants to use *you*. He has saved *you* by His grace and He wants to make something out of *your* life. The best thing you and I can do is to never make excuses and realize that God is able where we are not. Our heart's desire should be, and must be, to serve Him at all costs, regardless of what He asks from our lives. After all, He gave His all. He gave His only Son to save the world. He asks no less from us. Are you willing to say to God, "Here am I; send me?" Isaiah 6:8

"Let each one say, 'I am grieved that I yield to temptation, that my prayers are so feeble, my faith so weak. I have no excuse to plead for being dwarfed in my religious life. But I am seeking to obtain completeness of character in Christ.'" *—In Heavenly Places*, p. 122

"Paul did not seek to shield himself; he paints his sin in its darkest hue, not attempting to lessen his guilt. He says, 'Many of the saints did I shut up in prison, having received authority from the chief priests; and when they were put to death, I gave my voice against them. And I punished them oft in every synagogue, and compelled them to blaspheme; and being exceedingly mad against them, I persecuted them even unto strange cities.' Acts 26:10, 11. He does not hesitate to declare that 'Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners; of whom I am chief.' 1 Timothy 1:15." *—Steps to Christ*, p. 41

And what is *your* excuse? You have none. Today, the Lord is asking you to surrender your life to Him. He may be asking you to go and do some task; he may be asking to surrender some darling sin. "The things which are impossible with men are possible with God." Luke 18:27. Trust Him. He makes no mistake. He will take away all your excuses. Amen

Wendy Eaton





The New Wine

“Hear this, ye old men, and give ear, all ye inhabitants of the land. Hath this been in your days, or even in the days of your fathers? Tell ye your children of it, and let your children tell their children, and their children another generation. That which the palmerworm hath left hath the locust eaten; and that which the locust hath left hath the cankerworm eaten; and that which the cankerworm hath left hath the caterpillar eaten. Awake, ye drunkards, and weep; and howl, all ye drinkers of wine, because of the new wine; for it is cut off from your mouth.” Joel 1:2-5

This prophecy that the prophet Joel relates to us gives a stark warning to God’s people. It gives us a picture of blessings of God being removed from His people because of cherished sin and unbelief. “That which the palmerworm hath left hath the locust eaten; and that which the locust hath left hath the cankerworm eaten; and that which the cankerworm hath left hath the caterpillar eaten.”

Nothing worthy is left. In each successive stage, more blessings are removed from His people. Each thing is degraded and broken down further and further until there is nothing left.

Is this something that God wants to do? No. “For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, saith the LORD, thoughts of peace, and not of evil, to give you an expected end.” Jeremiah 29:11

God’s thoughts towards us are to give us an expected end. The end that He expects of us is clearly shown in John 3:17, “For God sent not His Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through Him might be saved.”

God expects you to be saved. He wants to “save His

people from their sins.” This is God’s motive; it is His never-ending love that He has towards us. He loves you so much that He gave the best that He had to you. He gave you His son to take your place, to pay the price for your sins and to give you an example of how to be saved.

God has “thoughts of peace and not of evil” towards you. God felt it necessary to tell us of this fact because He knew there would be times in our lives when we might not think that it was so; times when we might think that God maybe did not have our best interests at heart or when we have to go through a terrible experience and it seems that we are all alone and without

hope.

It is a strange thing to be in the middle of what we may think at the time is a hopeless situation. Have you ever experienced hopelessness or helplessness? When it seems nothing that we can do will change our circumstance or make it better? Imagine not being able to see how an extremely negative situation might become a positive one.

Why would it be necessary for a person to go through such a situation? But what happens sometimes in this relationship between God and His people?

Some are unwilling to be saved. They do not trust God, as they should. They are not obedient to what He knows is best for them. They think that God has somehow let them down.

“There was a man in the land of Uz, whose name was Job; and that man was perfect and upright, and one that feared God, and eschewed evil.” Job 1:1. Job was a good person; yet, why did he have to go through such affliction? Why did God allow Satan to destroy his life?

“Then Job arose, and rent his mantle, and shaved his head, and fell down upon the ground, and worshipped, And said, Naked came I out of my mother’s womb, and naked shall I return thither: the LORD gave, and the LORD hath taken away; blessed be the name of the LORD. In all this Job sinned not, nor charged God foolishly.” Job 1:20–22

Even after Satan was allowed to destroy his wealth, his family, and everything that he had, the Scriptures say that “Job sinned not, nor charged God foolishly.” I wonder, if you had gone through such a circumstance would you have the same opinion of God. Would you have a difficult time believing that God has “thoughts of

peace and not of evil" towards you?

The Scriptures say that when this happened that "Job sinned not." This means that not only did Job not blame God but he also did not blame anyone else.

Four times a lone survivor came to tell Job the news of each loss. First his oxen and servants were slain, then his sheep and his servants. Next his camels were stolen and his servants slain and then a whirlwind came up and destroyed Job's eldest son's house with his children inside.

Despite receiving news of each destruction, Job held no malice to those who survived and brought him the news. "In all this Job sinned not." Rather we see that Job fell down and worshipped God. He did this publicly. He did not blame God but instead realized that everything is a blessing from God. God only had thoughts of peace towards him and, strangely enough, what Job was going through was part of that peace.

It is an odd thing to think that losing everything that a person has could be part of that peace which God says He has towards us.

Next God allowed Satan to take away his health.

"So went Satan forth from the presence of the LORD, and smote Job with sore boils from the sole of his foot unto his crown. And he took him a potsherd to scrape himself withal; and he sat down among the ashes. Then said his wife unto him, Dost thou still retain thine integrity? curse God, and die." Job 2:7-9

Job's wife here is saying, dost thou still retain thy integrity? She is asking, why he is retaining his integrity.

God allowed Satan to cause Job to have boils covering all of his body. What a painful experience that must have been. It was so bad that Job took a broken piece of pottery and scraped his skin with it. Still Job did not curse God.

His wife even went so far as to tell Job to curse God and then die. After all Job was in a hopeless situation.

"But he said unto her, Thou speakest as one of the foolish women speaketh. What? shall we receive good at the hand of God, and shall we not receive evil? In all this did not Job sin with his lips." Job 2:10

Even through this accusation, at the lowest point of his life, the Scriptures say "In all this did not Job sin with his lips."

I wonder how many could go through this experience that Job did? Do you have a connection with God strong

enough to withstand this?

But, God was not finished with Job and neither was Satan.

"Now when Job's three friends heard of all this evil that was come upon him, they came every one from his own place; Eliphaz the Temanite, and Bildad the Shuhite, and Zophar the Naamathite: for they had made an appointment together to come to mourn with him and to comfort him. And when they lifted up their eyes afar off, and knew him not, they lifted up their voice, and wept; and they rent every one his mantle, and sprinkled dust upon their heads toward heaven. So they sat down with him upon the ground seven days and seven nights, and none spake a word unto him: for they saw that his grief was very great." Job 2:11-13

When his friends came to comfort him, Job was so disfigured that it says that when looking at him from a distance they could not recognize him. They made such an outward show of their grief that they wept loudly, ripped their clothes and threw dust toward heaven. They then sat with Job for seven days not speaking a word.

It was Job who broke the silence with recriminations about the situation that he found himself in. Job was in such a state that he wondered if it would have been better if he had never been born.

His three friends could see from his troubles the depth of his despair. Then Eliphaz spoke to Job and instead of giving support he mocked Job. "Remember, I pray thee, who ever perished, being innocent? or where were the righteous cut off? Even as I have seen, they that plow iniquity, and sow wickedness, reap the same." Job 4:7-8

Was this a fair assessment of this situation? It is easy to answer that we would not be like Eliphaz as we can read the whole account of Job. What if this happened to someone that we knew? What would you have said in a similar situation? Is it a nice experience to have lost everything and your friends come to comfort you but instead heap accusations upon you?

Next his friend Bildad spoke. "If thou wert pure and upright; surely now he would awake for thee, and make the habitation of thy righteousness prosperous." Job 8:6. Bildad also thought that Job's life was ruined because of his own fault. He reasoned that God would definitely bless him if he were a good person and had a pure heart. Would you be like Bildad and speak for God's motivation and judgment?

Then his friend Zophar spoke. "Should not the multitude of words be answered? and should a man full of talk be justified? Should thy lies make men hold their peace? and when thou mockest, shall no man make thee ashamed? For thou hast said, My doctrine is pure, and I am clean in thine eyes. But oh that God would speak, and open His lips against thee; And that He would shew thee the secrets of wisdom, that they are double to that which is! Know therefore that God exacteth of thee less than thine iniquity deserveth." Job 11: 2-6

Zophar said that Job was always speaking well but there was really a different person inside—God knew the real Job and that he was evil inside. Zophar here is having the arrogance to claim to speak for God. He said God was just punishing Job for who he really was. Zophar went even further to say that Job really deserved worse than what had happened to him.

Is it possible that you could be like his friend Zophar? What would you feel like to have your friends speak to you like this in a time of sorrow?

But what was the real truth? Remember Job 1:1, "There was a man in the land of Uz, whose name was Job; and that man was perfect and upright, and one that feared God, and eschewed evil."

Yet even though in God's eyes Job was a perfect man and a person that kept away from evil, even in the midst of severe trials, his friends falsely accused him of being evil and that he really deserved worse.

Was this something that was supported by God?

What did Job think?

"And Job answered and said, No doubt but ye are the people, and wisdom shall die with you. But I have understanding as well as you; I am not inferior to you: yea, who knoweth not such things as these? I am as one mocked of his neighbour, who calleth upon God, and



He answereth him: the just upright man is laughed to scorn." Job 12:1-4

Job knew that his friends were laughing him to scorn despite the state of his life at that moment. He knew what the truth was but nothing that he could have done or said would change their opinion.

Many times, we think that we know what is going on in someone's life. It is very easy to judge others through our own eyes when we can see neither the motive, background and experience of the other person. Only God can see the inner thoughts and heart of a person. Only He is omnipresent and omniscient to be able to judge. Yet even God the Father gives the judgment to His Son Jesus Christ who has the experience of life and persecution as a man; a man that lived a perfect life, yet without sin. "For the Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment unto the Son:" John 5:22

Jesus is the only one that has experienced everything that we may go through in our life. He was falsely accused, even by His own people and betrayed by His own friends. Yet Jesus bares no malice against them.

As Peter betrayed Jesus by denying Him three times on the night He was taken captive, what was Jesus' reaction? "And the Lord turned, and looked upon Peter. And Peter remembered the word of the Lord, how He had said unto him, Before the cock crow, thou shalt deny Me thrice. And Peter went out, and wept bitterly." Luke 22:61-62. Jesus had no malice towards His friend Peter but only a look of love that pierced Peter's heart and he went from the scene and wept bitterly.

"Then said Jesus, Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do. And they parted His raiment, and cast lots." Luke 23:34. On the cross, His hands and feet were pierced through with rough nails, yet Jesus' dying words were of forgiveness for the very ones who accused Him falsely, betrayed Him, tortured Him and put Him there. By the way, we put Him there also.

Job also knew that many times it is the wicked in this world that prosper. "The tabernacles of robbers prosper, and they that provoke God are secure; into whose hand God bringeth abundantly." Job 12:6

God wants everyone to be saved so He lets His grace rain down on the just and the unjust, even when we think that this is unfair. Often it is hard to understand why God allows evil people to persecute good people and why God allows His good people to be misrepresented.

“These ten times have ye reproached me: ye are not ashamed that ye make yourselves strange to me. And be it indeed that I have erred, mine error remaineth with myself. If indeed ye will magnify yourselves against me, and plead against me my reproach: Know now that God hath overthrown me, and hath compassed me with His net. Behold, I cry out of wrong, but I am not heard: I cry aloud, but there is no judgment. *He hath fenced up my way that I cannot pass*, and He hath set darkness in my paths.” Job 19:3–8

Even Job felt helpless at this point in his life. Even the person whom God said “In all this Job sinned not” felt helpless. He felt that he was enclosed in a net from which there was no escape. He felt the negativity of the persecution of his friends. Job cried out of wrong, but he felt that he was not heard.

This is quite a picture of a despondent and helpless person. “Have pity upon me, have pity upon me, O ye my friends; for the hand of God hath touched me. Why do ye persecute me as God, and are not satisfied with my flesh?” Job 19:21–22. Job felt the persecution of his friends. Where was their compassion? He asked why they tried to take the place of God and be his judge and executioner.

Would you like to be on the receiving end of this? Have you ever felt that circumstances enclosed you in a net from which there seemed no escape? Or have you been as Job’s three friends claiming to be the ones standing in for God?

But even in his helpless despair Job still had a hope. “For I know that my redeemer liveth, and that He shall stand at the latter day upon the earth: And though after my skin worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God: Whom I shall see for myself, and mine eyes shall behold, and not another; though my reins be consumed within me.” Job 19:25–27. Job had a precious hope even in the middle of his despair at losing everything in his life, his material assets, his health, his family and persecution from his friends. Job said that he knew that he had a redeemer—Jesus Christ, and that one day he would see God face to face. He knew that despite the trouble that he was in, even if it meant his death, one day he would live with God on a new earth. Job had this hope in God because he had built a relationship with God. He knew who God was. He knew who his Saviour was. God could call Job perfect because he knew who Job was. They had a relationship.

When these trials come upon your life, and they will, we need to know that we can trust God. “Being confi-

dent of this very thing, that he which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ.” Philippians 1:6. Be confident in God because He does not work with half measures. When He makes a commitment to you, He will follow through right until the end. His promise to you is to save you from your sin, both by paying the penalty of your sin and by removing it from your life. That is what salvation is all about and that is what God is focused on in your life. Everything that happens to a child of God is for a purpose.

“And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to His purpose.” Romans 8:28. If you love God then all things that happen in your life will work for good and not just how man sees good but how God sees good.

Even if you are in the middle of what seems a helpless situation, we must trust that God has our best interests at heart, that everything that He allows in our life is for a reason and it is a good reason. He wants to save you from your sin.

But there is one condition shown here in verse 28, “to them that are the called according to his purpose.” Another way of putting it, to those who are doing the will of God.

“That He may withdraw man from his purpose, and hide pride from man.” Job 33:17. In our own purpose is pride. That is what God wants to remove from us. Pride is killing us, so God needs to remove it. Everything will work for good in our lives; we just need to remove our purpose and replace it with God’s purpose.

But, how is this done? How do we get through an experience like Job had? How did Job have such an intimate relationship with God? “Then shall ye call upon Me, and ye shall go and pray unto Me, and I will hearken unto you.” Jeremiah 29:12. How often do you call upon God? Do you find it difficult to have a regular morning and evening prayer? Are you struggling with this? What could be stopping you? Maybe you are too tired or indifferent? Is it pride? “Ye stiffnecked and uncircumcised in heart and ears, ye do always resist the Holy Ghost: as your fathers did, so do ye.” Acts 7:51

If we neglect the exercise of prayer we will lose our hold on God. Job’s friends thought they had a hold on God because they each claimed to be speaking for God. We need to learn to “Pray without ceasing.” 1 Thessalonians 5:17

Remember this verse in Joel 1:5, "Awake, ye drunkards, and weep; and howl, all ye drinkers of wine, because of the new wine; for it is cut off from your mouth."

Are we drunk with the attractions of the world, or have a cherished sin of judging others?

"And it was so, that after the LORD had spoken these words unto Job, the LORD said to Eliphaz the Temanite, My wrath is kindled against thee, and against thy two friends: for ye have not spoken of me the thing that is right, as My servant Job hath." Job 42:7. God sees through the hearts and minds of men to their motives. God knows the truth where often it is elusive to us. Job's friends did not treat him right, but it was Job who was in the right. Through all of his troubles Job trusted God and he built that trust through a relationship with God connected through prayer. Job lived in prayer so when the trials of life came, Job knew God and trusted Him.

Eliphaz, Bildad, Zophar were not ready and instead of being helpers became persecutors and misrepresented God. They could not understand the importance of loving their fellow man and therefore they lost the love of God. They were not connected with their heavenly Father. They did not follow God's purpose but their own. They were drunk in their own righteousness, in their own pride and jealousy with the old wine of their evil human nature.

Job was given the "new wine" of salvation. God blessed him in this life: "And the LORD turned the captivity of Job, when he prayed for his friends: also the LORD gave Job twice as much as he had before." Job 42:10. Even though Job was persecuted he prayed for those that persecuted him and he was blessed all the more because of it.

"When trials arise that seem unexplainable, we should not allow our peace to be spoiled. However unjustly we may be treated, let not passion arise. By indulging a spirit of retaliation we injure ourselves. We destroy our own confidence in God, and grieve the Holy Spirit. There is by our side a witness, a heavenly messenger, who will lift up for us a standard against the enemy. He will shut us in with the bright beams of the Sun of Righteousness. Beyond this Satan cannot penetrate. He cannot pass this shield of holy light." *—Christ's Object Les-*

sons, p.171

"I have heard of thee by the hearing of the ear: but now mine eye seeth Thee." Job 42:5

For the life Job led in prayer, and his resulting faithfulness, he was given the "new wine" of salvation and God blessed him spiritually to know God on an even deeper level. No longer did Job just hear God and His word but now He could truly see God and His loving character. It is interesting that such a deep, helpless experience could result in such a deep understanding of God.

"And He took the cup, and gave thanks, and said, Take this, and divide it among yourselves: For I say unto you, I will not drink of the fruit of the vine, until the kingdom of God shall come. And He took bread, and gave thanks, and brake it, and gave unto them, saying, This is My body which is given for you: this do in remembrance of Me. Likewise also the cup after supper, saying, This cup is the new testament in My blood, which is shed for you." Luke 22:17-20

The new wine of God's covenant is available to each one of us. But unless we make that deep connection and experience each day with Jesus we will lose access to this covenant. If you have not made that covenant with Jesus it is not too late. He offers His new testament in His blood, but will you accept it? Let us learn each day to love one another, to be like Job and not like his friends. No matter what the perceived hurt may be will it be too great to keep you or another out of heaven? Jesus can heal all wounds between us and all of the wounds of your life, no matter what the experience. Do not be happy with the old wine of a sin sick human nature but choose the new wine of the nature of Jesus. That is the end that God expects for you. Amen.



Nature



Nature shows God's love, He created it for us.

In E.G. White's writings it says, "Nature and revelation alike testify of God's love. Our Father in heaven is the source of life, of wisdom, and of joy. Look at the wonderful and beautiful things of Nature... The sunshine and the rain, that gladden and refresh the earth, the hills and seas and plains, all testify of the Creator's love." –*Steps to Christ*, p. 1

Every season we can see the amazing changes in Nature. For example, in winter there is soft white snow. In spring there are the colorful flowers and new fresh foods. In summer there is the beautiful singing of the birds especially early in the morning, and in the fall the leaves change into their fall colours.

Everywhere we look Nature is seen, we see the rivers, the ocean, the earth, and even looking above we see the brilliant sun in the daytime and in the night we see the moon and the stars.

In Psalm 96:11–12 it says, "Let the heavens be glad, and let the earth rejoice; let the sea roar, and all that fills it; let the field exult, and everything in it! Then shall all the trees of the forest sing for joy."

This is all God's handiwork. It is a gift from Him to us as part of His creation. It shows His unchanging love.

When Jesus was on earth He went a lot into nature to teach the people about the love of God. Sometimes He was on the boat in the sea and sometimes He was in the mountain side.

I thank God for His wonderful creation and on the Sabbath day we can observe it while we rest. It causes us to think of Him.

By Naveyah Nurse





The Temptation

The temptation of Christ in the wilderness is a most intriguing, solemn story. Many writers and preachers have dwelt upon this topic which is about the 40 day fast of the Son of God, and Satan's revolting, trying temptations afterwards.

There the faith of Jesus, His physical endurance, love, obedience to God His Father and His love for fallen mankind was severely tested.

Matthew 4:1-11 illustrates this event in clear, plain language. But much food for thought lies in between the lines for us to ponder upon what Jesus Christ must have felt and experienced in this so demanding, dramatic ordeal.

Scripture narrates (*Matthew 3:16-17*) when Jesus was baptized ... "lo, the heavens were opened unto Him, and



he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove, and lighting upon Him: And lo a voice from heaven, saying, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." It was the anointing of Jesus as the Messiah (*Daniel 9:24*). Right after He was

led up of the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted of the devil (*Matthew 4:1*).

There at the beginning, Jesus was in close communion with His heavenly Father to be prepared for the great mission before Him. While wandering in the stillness of the desolate environment He conversed with His Father, altogether oblivious to the barren, unattractive wilderness around Him. His thoughts

and mind were fixed on the intimate contact with heaven that thrilled His soul. Though being on earth, He felt the loving embrace of God His Father, enrapturing Jesus with such warmth and bliss, that the desert seemed to be heaven itself, delighting His soul with that holy atmosphere that satiated His every need.

His sleep was sweet, resting in the security of His Father's love...

But this was not to continue. –

God sent His Son to this world to save fallen man from sin. The solemnity of the Messiah's mission was pressed upon Him with great force. He immersed Himself with heart and soul into it, pleading with His Father to prepare Him for this immensely challenging ministry, to be an obedient Son, faithful unto death. His ardent prayers became ever more intense, lying prostrate on the rough earth, crying out for strength, endurance, how to reach the souls of man.

To reveal to them the love of God, to obey His word and overcome sin, so that they will have eternal life...

A Grave Reality

Jesus was very aware that Israel had long ago lost its high spiritual calling. The religious, sacred ceremonies became mere formalism, the sacrifices a plain mechanism without genuine repentance for transgression, forgetting the significance of the enormity of sin, that only blood can cover. Hearts became cold, minds spiritless, failing to look forward for the true

Sacrifice—the Lamb of God to come.

Greek influence, pride, greed for gain, lust for power had corrupted the religious leaders, who oppressed the people with rigid laws that were impossible to follow through, bringing the nation to despair and discontentment.

Israel was at its lowest ebb, under a hated Roman rule; and waited for the Messiah to appear as the King who will drive out the Romans and make Israel great again.

This was the mindset the Son of God would have to contend with!

Satan perverted the minds of Israel's people; he successfully blinded and drew them away from the true meaning of the promised Messiah...

This grave reality occupied Jesus day and night. He ate nothing, the matter was too serious to even think about eating. As the days progressed, Jesus—to save man—had to discipline Himself to resist satisfying the desire for food, because man failed to restrain himself from eating of the forbidden tree in Paradise (Genesis 3:6), transgressing the specific commandment of God, and falling into sin...

But then the days for Jesus became evermore demanding, as He was in His body, feeling the want of nourishment. Then He prayed and pleaded more intensely for endurance and fortitude. His fervent entreaties were heard, and God gave Jesus the assurance that He will be sustained and strengthened in His trials and whatever He will have to face.

For Christ, the Son of God became man with all the weaknesses of fallen flesh.

Because of this, He needed divine help to assist Him in the challenging situations ahead; to meet rejection of the religious hierarchy and, most of all, the onslaught of the archenemy Satan, who was ever at His heels.

The great test of Jesus—God in the flesh—was to continually conceal His divinity, to never use it in any way for His own benefit—a trial which sinful man could never comprehend. Human beings, after thousands of years, degenerated in spiritual and moral strength, making them yield to the desires of the flesh, barely able, or even making an effort to, resist temptations, but rather yielded to them. The

more the carnal nature had been fed, the weaker the spiritual nature had become. It is simply the rule of the natural law of cause and effect.

The word of God says "*the carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be.*" *Romans 8:7*

Thus, sinful man was in a hopeless, lost state, in constant bondage, a slave to his habits and desires.

And now comes the Son of God, the Messiah, who is to meet man where he was, to save him from the power of temptation to yield to sin, to reconcile him to God, offering personal redemption and eternal life.

This continuously occupied the mind of Jesus. He meditated intensely about how He could reach the hearts of the nation, awaken in them the desire for a higher spiritual experience, and to lift their souls out of the mire of carnal lusts, and of the cold, lifeless hypocrisy—to a genuine, warm-hearted piety.

In those days He fasted to the limit of human endurance so that He might, in His body, overcome the temptation of the flesh, so that He could be a true Saviour to fallen, helpless man. In this ordeal Jesus needed to completely rely on His Father for in those trying 40 days in the desert, He very much felt the human weakness. It became harder to resist the temptation to eat after such a long fast with His degenerated physical nature crying out. Jesus was in His body experiencing what sin had done to humanity.

Because of Adam's disobedience, Jesus needed to have the victory over the desires of the flesh.

Day by day, He became weaker, but the more determined to resist the urge to satisfy His hunger. His mind was constantly focused on the lost human race. This filled Him with such deep pity and love, that nothing could persuade Jesus to yield to His own needs.

At the end of the 40 days, the ordeal of the long, taxing fast left its mark on His appearance. His body was extremely weak, emaciated, His face reflecting great weariness.

The Tempter appears

Just then, in His frail state—suddenly, there stood Satan before Him, appearing as an angel of light. Sa-

tan watched Jesus during His fast very closely and waited for the time when He would be most feeble.

This wicked, fallen angel thought he would have a quick victory over Jesus, because so far men had become easy prey to his devices.

With angelic glory, Satan intended to make Jesus feel as if He was in company with an angel from heaven. But he gave himself away quite quickly in the way he was addressing Jesus: “*If thou be the Son of God...*” (*Matthew 4:3, 6*). He very well knew that the promised Messiah was before him, but ventured to try to make Jesus question and doubt who He was.

Only a mean, vicious devil could approach and tempt, in His extreme hunger, the exhausted Son of man to perform a miracle for His want. This would suit Satan just fine, knowing that Jesus would then be in his hands and thus forfeit His mission to save mankind.

But the archenemy got a short “*It is written*” (*Matthew 4:4*) as an answer. Then Satan tried another thing to make Jesus yield, but this failed also (*vs. 5-7*).

There was sneer and contempt in the tone when casting those malicious suggestions upon the Son of God, that very clearly revealed the character of this once glorious cherubim at the throne of God. The adversary hoped that Jesus would surely follow his next prompting, for now he was getting really anxious and desperate.

In this last quest, Satan laid all his cards in the open. He boldly affronted Jesus with the most revolting proposal, showing Him all the kingdoms of the world, saying, “*All these things will I give thee, if Thou wilt fall down and worship me.*” *Matthew 4:8, 9*. With this the devil made an open show of who he truly is, and what he actually had in mind all the time.

It is either him, or Jesus Christ, who will once rule the world, who will be worshipped. He pretended that he would be so generous as to give Jesus all the kingdoms of the world, if He only would worship this infamous foe!

What an impertinence! What inconceivable arrogance and despicable haughtiness is here revealed! If he really would have had the victory over the Messiah, Satan would have made Jesus a slave, never giving Him anything at all. He—Satan would be the sole ruler and king!...

But, praise to God, even in all His extraordinary weariness, Jesus never yielded one hairbreadth to the wily suggestions of this archfoe!

His only response and reply every time had been: “*It is written*” (*vs. 4, 7, 10*).

From the beginning, Jesus knew who contended with Him, nevertheless, the prince of darkness kept going on with his heinous quest, till he received the stiff order: “*Get thee hence Satan*”.... *vs. 10*.

In a most miserable, totally confounded state the tempter had to leave. His anger and rage, the fury that came over him cannot be described! How could he lose this so easy-looking contest? Satan was greatly alarmed! There was a serious miscalculation in his reckoning! This shaken up wicked angel retreated to a place where he let out his ineffable wrath in boundless curses against himself, unable to accept his defeat. How could he now face his host???

Deep, sinister thoughts arose in his overwhelmed mind. He had to take rigorous measures to make up for this shameful failure!

If he could not triumph over this so incredible steadfast, unyielding Messiah, then there can be only one way—to make the mission of Jesus as hard as possible, even to the brink of despair!

The people of Israel, especially the religious class must be hindered to accept Him from the start! This gave Satan great satisfaction and with fresh, devilish vigour. He hastened to meet the vast throng of his fellow angels, instructing and urging them on, without delay to engage in his very smart thought-out plan...

The Trial is over

When Jesus was finally alone again, He was exhausted to the core. The ordeal of the long fast and then the taunting onslaught of Satan to make Him yield to the devil’s contemptible suggestions, drained His last spark of energy. Staggering with great effort He retired to the spot where He so often communicated with His Father. Jesus was completely spent—totally undone.

Sinking down, leaning against the rock where He always prayed, Jesus, overcome with fatigue, instantly fell asleep...

The enormous trial was over. The Son of man got the victory over the taxing temptations the adversary threw against Him, and for fallen, mortal beings' sake, endured the gruesome test of self-denial. The first step for the redemption of man was accomplished.

However, this took all willpower, faith, love; strict obedience to the plan of salvation with unyielding determination to conquer over the weakness of the flesh, to lift the fallen human race out of its depraved state. The prize was inconceivably high set, and there was the risk that the human nature of Christ could succumb under the immense pressure.

Only the full surrender of His will to the extremely arduous, all consuming pursuit to be the Saviour for sinners, in self-forgetful love, was able to master this harsh, severe trial. Then, *"angels came and ministered unto Him."* *Matthew 4:11*

The Contrast

Comparing the utterly base and diabolic selfishness and haughtiness of Satan, with the humility and sacrificing love of Jesus—what an inestimable contrast in characters is here revealed!

Both are so contrary to each other, as far apart as east is from the west; so distinct as the light of the day is with the blackness of the night.

They can never come together, never harmonize, never reconcile. It would make sin and Satan acceptable. Only eternal separation, a total annihilation of Satan and sin can be the solution...

When Adam and Eve sinned, they were separated from the presence of God, were driven from their Eden home, had lost their spiritual nature and communion with heaven...

As people multiplied on the earth and men lived for carnal pleasure, power, and riches more than seeking God and His worship, they distanced themselves more and more, so that the rift between became ever deeper and wider.

There was only one way to bridge over this chasm, to reach the sinner and rescue him from the deep abyss—this one and only way was the cross—reaching over to pave the way to reconciliation with God and eternal salvation.

The beginning of redemption is the eradication of sin

in the heart of man, and for this very reason, Jesus Christ came into this world.

As He *"made Himself of no reputation... He humbled Himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross."* *Philippians 2:7-8*

To learn from Jesus

We, like Jesus, can also overcome. What did He do? He prayed for help to His Father for strength and endurance, as He felt the weakness of the human nature. He gave Himself totally into the hands of God to guide and lead Him with complete self-surrender and unyielding trust. This is the sure recipe for resisting the strong power of temptation, and we, in our weak humanity, must adopt this with enduring faith, for Jesus is our mighty Saviour.

He says: *"Abide in Me, and I in you...He that abideth in Me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without Me you can do nothing."* *John 15:4-5*

"For a just man falleth seven times, and riseth up again." *Proverbs 24:16*. We must never, never, never give up, but looking to the Author and Finisher of our faith, always keep going forward, upward, pressing toward *"the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus."* *Philippians 3:14*

Jesus will never disappoint us. His heart longs to sustain us in our severe struggle against sin and character defects. He went before us and gained the victory over every temptation without ever yielding. And we can claim His victory for us; this is a mystery, but a wonderful truth that gives us courage and stamina, to face the battle and win it at last! To God be the glory! Amen.

Edda Tedford, Canada



Kale: King of Greens



“For those who can use them, good vegetables, prepared in a healthful manner, are better than soft mushes and porridge.” –*Healthful Living*, p. 90–91

“All should be acquainted with the special value of fruits and vegetables fresh from the orchard and garden.” –*Counsels on Diet and Foods*, p. 321

“Encourage the eating of vegetables.” –*Ibid.*

Kale is a green leafy vegetable, which comes in many different varieties. Its colours can range from light to dark, to purple and green. It can have differing leaf types, from curly, smooth, or feathery. It belongs to the Cruciferous family, along with cabbage, cauliflower, bok choy, broccoli, and brussels sprouts.

Cruciferous vegetables are one of the most dominant food crops in the world. They are known for their nutritional value, and health benefits. Most cruciferous vegetables are high in vitamins and minerals, including folate, Vitamins A, C, and K. They are also rich in phytochemicals—plant-based compounds which help to lower inflammation in the body, and reduce the risk of developing cancer. Glucosinolates, which are natural components of cruciferous vegetables and contribute to their bitter taste, are known for their anti-cancer properties. Kale is also rich in fiber and low in calories.

Kale has a long history of being an important food source with high nutritional value. Kale was cultivated as a food beginning in 2000 BC in the eastern Mediterranean and in Asia Minor. Varieties of the leafy vegetable existed in Greece, where it was known as Sabellian kale. This is considered to be the ancestor of the modern-day kale we see today. It was one of the most widely eaten green vegetables in Europe in the Middle Ages. Russian red kale was introduced to Canada and the United

States in the 19th century via Russian traders. A botanist, David Fairchild, introduced kale as a crop to the United States, having brought it from Croatia. At the time, kale was widely grown in Croatia because it was easy to grow and inexpensive. Interestingly, kale only became popular as a food in North America in the 1990’s because of its nutritional value. Prior to that time, for most of the 20th century, kale was primarily used for decorative purposes. Now we see many varieties of kale being widely grown and sold. Many of you, readers, may have kale growing in your gardens. It grows easily, is frost resistant, and is able to withstand temperatures of up to -15C. In fact, kale will taste sweeter after a heavy frost. Thus, kale can grow almost year-round, even in chilly climates. This makes it a popular vegetable in northern areas of the world.

Percent Daily Value (DV) indicates how much of a nutrient in a serving of food contributes to the total daily nutritional requirements. For example, if a food indicates 15% calcium, it means that one serving provides 15% of the calcium you need each day.

Here is why kale is considered one of the most nutrient dense foods in existence. One cup of raw kale contains DV values of: Vitamin A (206%), Vitamin K (684%), Vitamin C (134%), Vitamin B6 (9%), manganese (26%), calcium (9%), copper (10%), potassium (9%), magnesium (6%). It also contains 3% or more of the DV for vitamin B1 (thiamin), vitamin B2 (riboflavin), vitamin B3 (niacin), iron and phosphorus. Along with these benefits, kale provides lots of nutrition with low calories. A cup of kale contains 33 calories, 6 grams of carbohydrates (2 of which are fiber) and 3 grams of protein. It contains very little fat, but most of it is the healthy omega-3 fat.

Kale is very high in phytochemicals known as antioxidants, which rid the body of dangerous free radicals. Free radicals cause “oxidative damage”, the accumulation of which contributes to the aging process. It is the cause of many diseases including cancer, Alzheimer’s, Parkinson’s, macular degeneration, cardiovascular disease, emphysema, and all the inflammatory diseases, such as arthritis and lupus.

Substances that generate free radicals can be found in food, in medicines, in the air we breathe and the water we drink. These substances include fried foods, alcohol, tobacco smoke, pesticides, and air pollutants.

Free radicals are also produced naturally in the body. They are the natural byproducts of chemical processes, such as metabolism, in that they are waste products from various chemical reactions in the cell; but when they build up, they harm the cells of the body. Free radicals are also a crucial part of the immune system, floating through the veins and attacking foreign invaders. However, over time, the build up of free radicals is what damages our bodies.

Kale is beneficial in preventing the buildup of free radicals, and thus, decreasing the risk of many diseases caused by oxidative stress.

The powerful antioxidants known as flavonoids, specifically quercetin and kaempferol, are found in relatively large amounts in kale. These substances have been found to have powerful heart-protective, blood pressure-lowering, anti-inflammatory, anti-viral, anti-depressant and anti-cancer effects.

Kale is one of the world's best sources of vitamin C. A cup of raw kale contains more vitamin C than a whole orange. Vitamin C is needed for the growth and repair of tissues in all parts of the body. It is used for collagen production—the most abundant structural protein in the body—to make skin, tendons, ligaments, and blood vessels. It heals wounds and forms scar tissue, repairs and maintains cartilage, bones, and teeth, and aids in the absorption of iron. It is also a powerful antioxidant. It protects our health from cardiovascular disease, cancer, strokes, contributes to eye health and a strong immune system. It prevents prenatal health problems and even skin wrinkling. A high blood level of Vitamin C is a good marker for overall good health.

Cholesterol has many important functions in the body, including assisting the body to digest fats from the diet. However, when levels of cholesterol are high, they contribute to heart disease. Kale contains substances that

prevent cholesterol from being reabsorbed into the body after they are used to digest fats, thus lowering overall cholesterol levels. Studies show that kale is able to increase the levels of “good cholesterol” in the body, and to reduce the levels of “bad cholesterol”. Steaming kale dramatically increases its ability to lower cholesterol.

The main source of Vitamin K in our diet is K1, which comes from plants. Kale is one of the world’s best sources of Vitamin K, an important nutrient. The body needs Vitamin K to produce prothrombin, which is vital for blood clotting and also the formation of bones. Several studies have indicated that Vitamin K supports the maintenance of strong bones, improves bone density, and decreases the risk of fractures. Low Vitamin K intake is correlated to osteoporosis. Increased blood levels of Vitamin K is linked to improved memory in older adults. Vitamin K may help reduce high blood pressure by preventing mineralization, where minerals build up in the arteries. This enables the heart to pump blood more freely through the body. Mineralization occurs with age, and it is a major risk factor for heart disease. Vitamin K also helps prevent strokes. Because Vitamin K is a fat-soluble vitamin, dietary fat enhances the absorption of Vitamin K. Kale, in a salad, drizzled with olive oil both provides Vitamin K and helps the body to absorb it.

Kale is high in Vitamin A, in the form of beta-carotene. The body has the ability to turn beta-carotene into Vitamin A. It helps form and maintain healthy teeth, skeletal and soft tissue, mucous membranes, and skin; it is also important for the immune system. It assists the heart, lungs, kidneys, and other organs to function properly. Vitamin A produces the pigments in the retina of the eye; it promotes good eyesight, especially in low light. Countries that have diets deficient in Vitamin A have high levels of a condition known as xerophthalmia, a condition that affects the ability to see in low light, which can lead to blindness if not treated. Vitamin A also has a role in healthy pregnancy and breastfeeding. Beta-carotene is also an antioxidant, which helps to reduce damage from free radicals.

Kale is high in minerals, some of which people are deficient in. It is a good plant-based source of calcium, vital for strong bones and teeth. Most of the calcium in the body is stored in the bones and teeth to support their structure and



hardness. But, its benefits do not stop there. Calcium is also needed for muscles to move and for nerves to carry messages from the brain to the rest of the body. Calcium also helps move blood through the body, and helps release important hormones and enzymes that are involved in almost every function of the body.

Kale is also a decent source of magnesium. Magnesium is needed for more than 300 biochemical reactions in the body. It helps maintain normal nerve and muscle function, supports a healthy immune system, keeps the heartbeat steady, and helps bones remain strong. It also helps adjust blood glucose levels. It assists in the production of energy and protein. Eating plenty of magnesium is protective against type 2 diabetes and heart disease. Magnesium boosts exercise performance, fights depression, lowers blood pressure, has anti-inflammatory effects, prevents migraines, reduces insulin resistance, and improves premenstrual syndrome (PMS) symptoms.

Kale also contains potassium, which is key in maintaining the body's water balance, prevents cell damage, and regulates the heartbeat. Adequate levels of potassium reduce blood pressure and lower the risk of heart disease. It prevents loss of muscle mass, preserves bone density, and reduces the formation of kidney stones. Overall, a high potassium intake reduces the risk of mortality by 20 percent. One advantage that kale has over leafy greens like spinach is that it is low in oxalate, a substance which can prevent minerals from being absorbed.

Most people, as they age, have worsening eyesight. Several nutrients that are in kale can prevent this loss of vision, including lutein and zeaxanthin. People who consume adequate levels of these nutrients have a lower risk of macular degeneration and cataracts, two very common eye disorders that develop as people age.

There are many ways to eat kale. The most common way is to add fresh kale to a salad. Cutting it finely and adding lemon to the salad enhances its addition to a salad. Some people have difficulty eating fresh kale due to its often bitter taste and rubbery feel. However, there are many varieties of kale, and some varieties are sweeter, and less chewy. Many people add kale to their

healthy smoothies. Kale can also be boiled or steamed, which makes kale silky and smooth; it also reduces its bitter taste. It can also be added to soup, maintaining its structure without falling apart. Kale can similarly be added to pasta; it does not wilt and it maintains its texture. For those who are more adventurous, kale can be made into chips and eaten as a snack. Throw a few leaves in the oven with olive oil and salt, and bake.

With all the health benefits that kale provides, no wonder it is considered the king of all the super healthy greens. It is definitely one of the healthiest and most nutritious plant foods in existence. With only a cup of kale needed to provide a multitude of healthy nutrients, it is easy to include kale in your daily diet. If you want to dramatically increase the amount of nutrients you take in, eat kale regularly.

It is now time for us to adopt the diet of heaven if we hope to be there soon. The diet in heaven is purely a plant-based diet. The signs of the times show clearly that the end is near. It is time to give up all animal products and other harmful foods that will weaken our health and make us unfit for heaven.

"We are built up from that which we eat. Shall we strengthen the animal passions by eating animal food? In the place of educating the taste to love this gross diet, it is high time that we were educating ourselves to subsist upon fruits, grains, and vegetables. . . . A variety of simple dishes, perfectly healthful and nourishing, may be provided, aside from meat. Hearty men must have plenty of vegetables, fruits, and grains." —*Counsels on Diet and Foods*, p. 321

"Health is a treasure. Of all temporal possessions it is the most precious. . . . God has bountifully provided for the sustenance and happiness of all His creatures." —*Counsels on Diet and Foods*, p. 20



CHILDREN'S CORNER:



A Mighty Mountain is Our God

In the country of Indonesia there is a small group of islands called the Sangir islands. The largest island in the group is called Great Sangir.

Our story takes us back about 150 years ago. On this small island was a village by the seaside. The Chief of the village was named Meradin, and his faithful medicine man and witch doctor was named Tama. The two worked closely together to keep the villagers healthy and happy.

Across the bay was a large volcano that was quite active. Every day it rumbled a little and spewed out some rocks and a little lava. The chief had considered moving his villagers to another part of the island for safety, but the villagers did not want to move. This was their home and their livelihood. Besides, that volcano had been rumbling a little for many years, longer than any of them remembered, so they sensed little danger. Besides it was far on the other side of the bay, at least four km distant.

One day, as the monthly supply ship came to deliver goods, a Christian missionary and his family arrived on the ship with all their belongings. The chief was not happy to see this strange white man. Communication was quite difficult as neither spoke each other's language; however, the chief understood that the man wanted a piece of land to build a house. Chief Meradin did not trust this man and refused to give him any land. The missionary, with his wife and two children, simply then went and built their house on the sand. They built a nice stone wall around the house. They also built a trough around the house which they lined with rocks

and filled with soil so that they could plant a garden.

Every morning and evening the man and his family gathered for worship and they loved to sing. Their singing could be heard in the village. This singing was new and strange to the villagers, but it had a beautiful sound and it made them feel peaceful and happy.

As time went on, the missionary slowly learned the language of the villagers and began inviting them to join them in their worship. Many of the villagers came, including the Chief's son, Satoo. This made the chief and the witch doctor very unhappy. The missionary taught them of the gospel of Jesus Christ. He encouraged them in healthful living, and leaving off with evil habits. The chief did not like these new ideas as it was changing the customs of the people. No more feasting, dancing and drinking. Also, people were going to this missionary for their health concerns instead of to Tama, as they had done in the past. This made Tama even more angry.

Tama and Chief Meradin had to think of a plan to get the people away from the missionary as it seemed the missionary was not going to leave. The chief was most upset that his only son, the future chief, was fully involved with the Christian missionaries.

They came up with the idea to bring some Islamic teachers into the village so that the people would follow the Islamic faith and keep their customs, and stop going to hear the Christian missionary.

The plan partially worked. Many villagers went to join the Islamic teachers, but several families remained with the Christian missionary, including Satoo. It was notice-

able that the Christians always seemed happy and the followers of Islam were often angry.

Tama himself noticed the difference and he was torn between the two. He had been enchanted by the little missionary girl. Marta was about five years old and very innocent and had been so kind to Tama that his heart softened towards her. He had a great battle raging in his mind. Tama even had a dream one night that Marta was calling him and there was light all around her. It filled him with peace. There was something beautiful about her faith, but Tama resisted still.

One day the volcano started to become much more active. The heaving, writhing volcano was like a gigantic animal dying in agony yet roaring and thundering and reaching in its torment to pull everything and everyone after it.

The villagers became worried. No one had slept for a few days now. Each moment the awful thing they waited for drew nearer, yet no one could say when it would arise and devour them.

Chief Meradin feared the worst and encouraged the villagers to leave the village for higher ground. However, he left the Islamic teachers in the village and told them to prevent the Christians from leaving the village. They must remain. This they did, and Tama also remained with the Islamic teachers. They looked with scorn on the little group of praying Christians in the missionary's garden. Tama, alone of the whole group, tried to weigh the danger and hoped that nothing bad would happen to little Marta.

From the village Tama could hear the sweet singing coming from the Christian missionary's house where all the Christians were gathered to sing and pray to God for protection. Marta, Marta, he could still see her among those singing people down there on the sand. Something drew him toward the house on the sand, but he resisted. A couple of days before he had been sure that he would follow the God of heaven. Now his mind filled with doubt, and his heart ached with sadness. The tempest in Tama's mind threatened greater calamity to himself than the volcano.

The thunder under the ground suddenly rose in a tremendous roar. Every face grew pale. At that instant the solid earth of the mountain blew apart. Tama saw the whole northern half of the volcano explode into the sky and settle with a crashing hiss into the sea. He then took off like a flash running down to the Christian missionary's house. The only thing he could think of was to

save little Marta. Even as he ran he saw the ocean sucked back almost to the base of the volcano. Then a mighty wall of water piled higher and higher and rolled toward the shore. A mighty Tsunami threatened the Christians on the sand.

"Run! Run!" he gasped with his last breath as he reached the house. Couldn't they hear? Couldn't they understand? Oh what madness!

He grabbed Marta and clutched her to him. He turned to the low rock wall. Could he make it back up the hill to safety?

No, it was too late. The big missionary laid a heavy hand on Tama's shoulder and drew him into the midst of the group of singing people, just as the enormous wave broke with deafening thunder on the beach in front of the little house on the sand.

Even as the wave struck, the words of the song lifted about Tama:

"A mighty mountain is our God,
A wall that will not falter. . . "

Tama shut his eyes and clutched the child in terror. Thunder crashed overhead, and then he looked. "The wall!" he cried. "The wall that will not falter!"

The mountainous wave suddenly divided just below the gate of the missionary's garden and passed by on both sides outside the low rock fence. It stood up to heaven, surely the height of three palm trees, a green wall filled with fishing boats and huge driftwood logs, strange sea creatures, shells, and snarled tangles of seaweed.

The wave united into one just behind the teacher's garden and Tama could not see how far it washed up the hill. In an instant it surged back into the ocean, and when the following wave came it reached only to the front gate of the garden.

Tama still held Marta in his arms, but weakness overcame him now and he sank to the salt grass and closed his eyes. Then Satoo, the chief's son bent, over him. "Ah, Tama, God has saved you." The boy's voice broke with gladness. "God lifted up His wall and saved us all."

Then all the Christian people gathered around him. Tama could see that they regarded his presence among them as a miracle equal to the miracle of the divided water. They looked up on him with love, and as they sang and praised God for the mighty deliverance, Tama knelt with them.

All around the missionary's garden the wreckage of the tsunami was piled high, much higher than the white-washed rock wall. Driftwood, seaweed, shells, and broken pieces of the houses from the slope of the hill mingled with sand, rocks, dead sea animals, and scraps of fishing boats. When they went to look, there were no houses left in the village, but most of the coconut palms still stood. Nothing remained of the Islam teachers' houses and garden. Only the people who had fled to the high hills in the middle of the island survived and the little group of Christians who sang and prayed inside the teacher's low rock wall.

Early the next day the village people came straggling back from the hills, but Tama and Satoo had already climbed the trail. They saw the chief round the bend in the path where he could see the destruction of the sea. He stood there like a man whose life had ended, although his body still stood upright and moved.

"My father, my father." Satoo ran to him, and the chief's arms went round him. He thought that both Satoo and Tama had perished.

"Come, come and see!" Tama's voice broke with joy and wonder. Tama explained all the events to Chief Meradin.

When the chief had seen all, he understood how the great wave had divided and destroyed everything, even the Islam missionary's houses on the higher slope. He then called all the people who remained of his village and all the part of the island to see the miracle that the God of heaven had done.

"Listen to me," he said. "This mountain and this wave were controlled by the God these people worship. The Islam teachers are swept away. Tama is here because he loved the missionary's little girl." "There is no god like their God, who is able to deliver him from the anger of the volcano and the great wave. So I make a proclamation that from this day we must follow this teaching and our

children will follow after us. I, Chief Meradin, have spoken."

Tama became the missionary's helper from that very day and was stronger from God than he had been for the old witchcraft.

The villagers rebuilt their village and the volcano was silent and the ocean's green water lay smooth and deep, deep as the peace that had come to Sangir, deep as the everlasting mercy of God.

When the villagers offered to clean up the debris from the sand around the house of the missionary, the missionary refused. He said he wanted the debris to remain as a memorial so that all will remember the mighty miracle that God performed on the day that the volcano erupted.

Years afterward, when Satoo was chief of the village and Tama an old man, scientists from Europe came to see the spot where the tidal wave had divided. These men from the big cities did not believe that such a thing had really happened, but when they saw the drift that remained on the sand, they knew that this story was true.

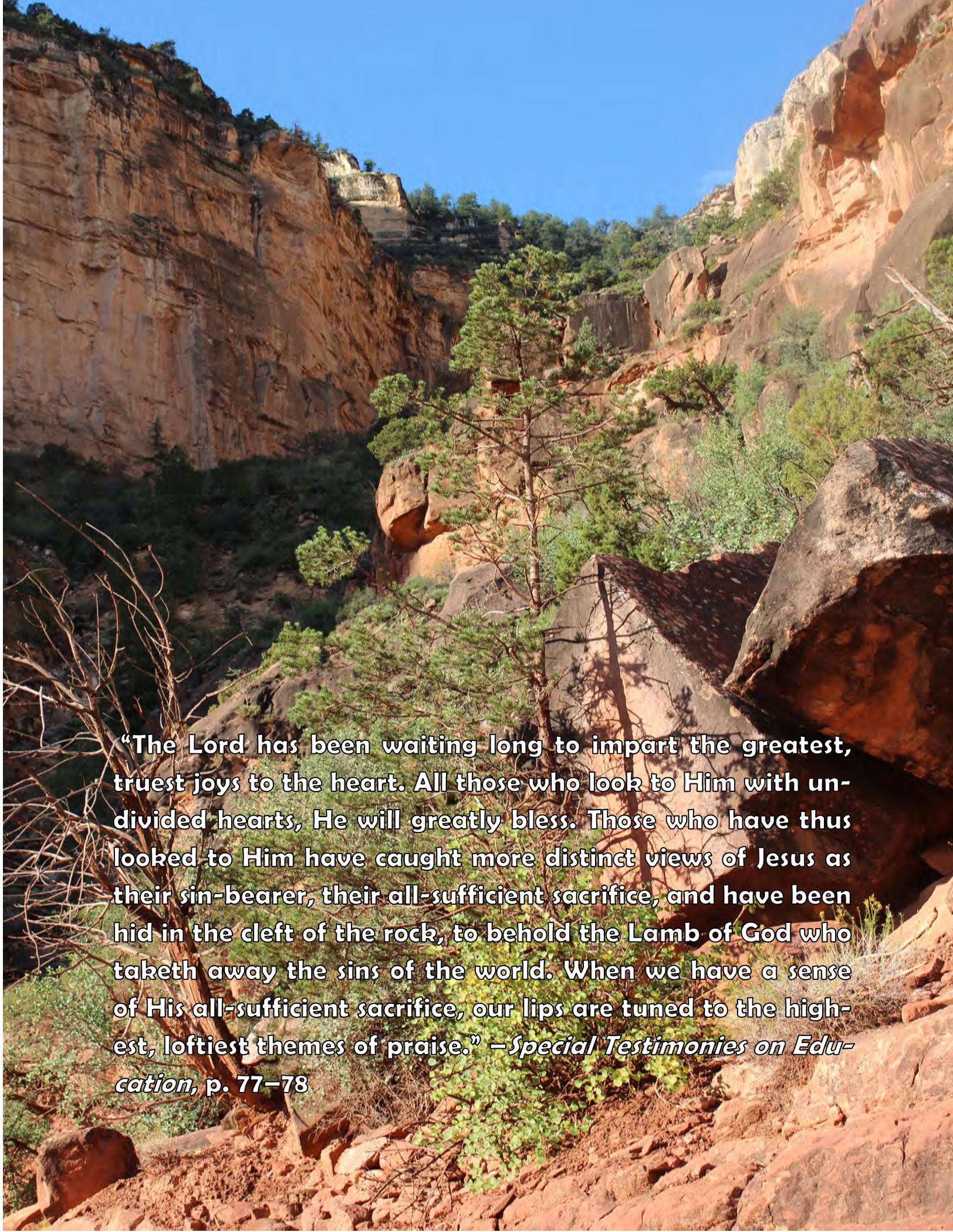
The God who divided the Red Sea and the Jordan River is the same yesterday, today and forever. He is still able to lead His people to victory through songs of praise even as He did the armies of King Jehoshaphat in ancient times.

"A mighty fortress is our God. A bulwark never failing..."

Note: "Sangir Besar . . . is an island in the [Sangir Islands](#) group. Its [Indonesian](#) name literally means 'Great Sangir' . . . It was the scene of the violent eruption of [Gunung Awu](#) volcano in 2 March, 1856."

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sangir_Island#:~:text=The%20main%20language%20is%20the,possibly%20as%20high%20as%206%2C000.





“The Lord has been waiting long to impart the greatest, truest joys to the heart. All those who look to Him with undivided hearts, He will greatly bless. Those who have thus looked to Him have caught more distinct views of Jesus as their sin-bearer, their all-sufficient sacrifice, and have been hid in the cleft of the rock, to behold the Lamb of God who taketh away the sins of the world. When we have a sense of His all-sufficient sacrifice, our lips are tuned to the highest, loftiest themes of praise.” – *Special Testimonies on Education*, p. 77–78