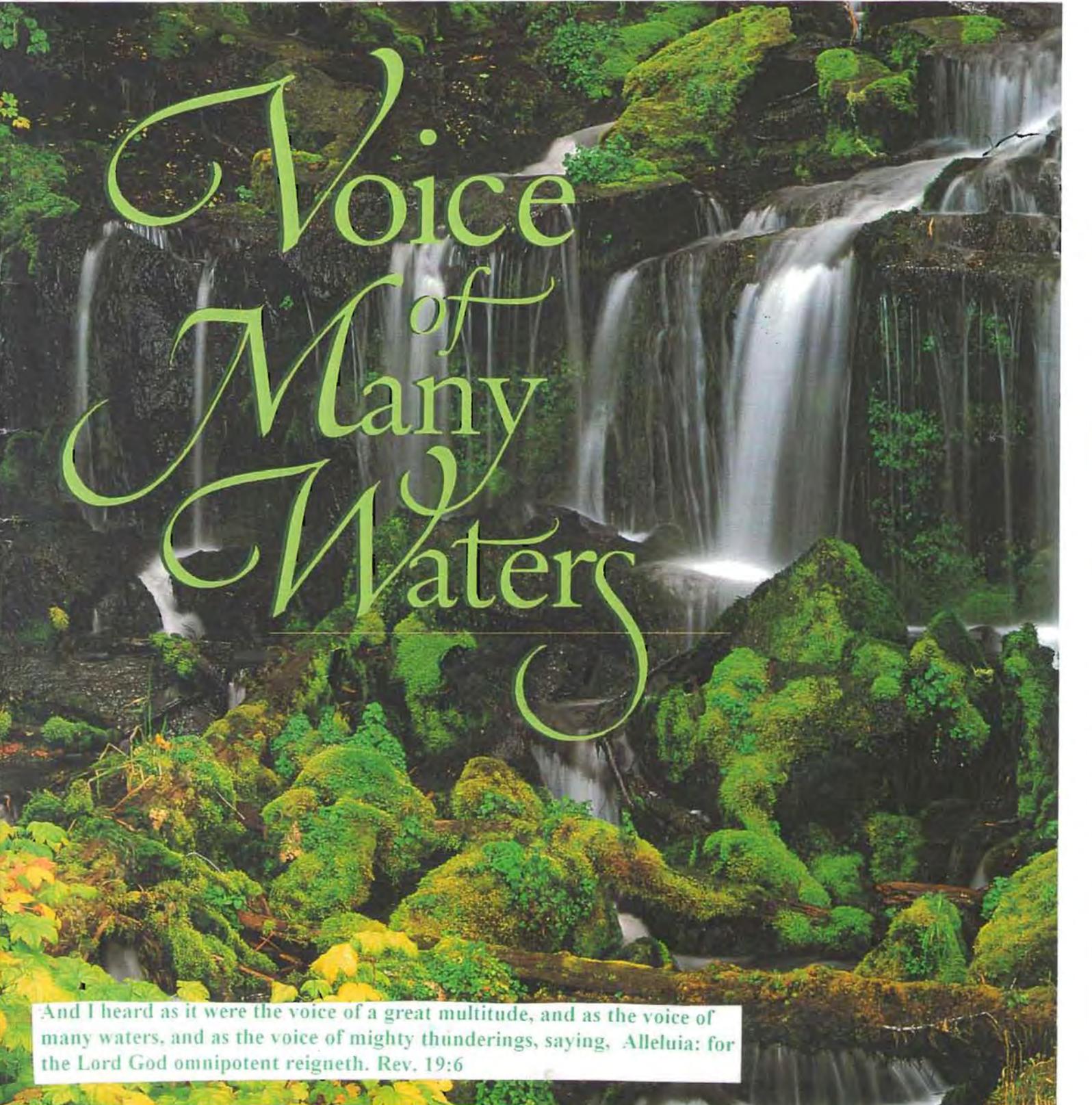


The Reformation 

Messenger

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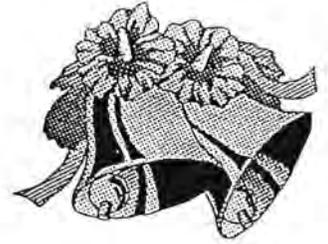


Voice of Many Waters

And I heard as it were the voice of a great multitude, and as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of mighty thunderings, saying, Alleluia: for the Lord God omnipotent reigneth. Rev. 19:6



NEW YEAR – 1999



Another year has passed into eternity and the Lord in His mercy has granted us still time to finish His work on earth and to prepare ourselves for His coming. During the past year we witnessed many significant events which show us the nearness of the end. Especially, there are the preparations and demands for the Sunday laws by the ecclesiastic and the civil powers. It is very likely to see the fulfillment of these prophecies during this year.

The church of God has experienced a time of peace for several years, but according to Bible prophecy, it will end suddenly and we will be in the midst of the time of trouble such as never was seen before.

If we would understand the seriousness of the time of which we live, we would not sleep spiritually. We would not waste time in seeking worldly security and comforts. There is a great danger, that when our time suddenly is up, many will be unprepared and unsaved.

It was at the cost of the blood of His Son that God purchased this new year to us. It was not purchased for a little more enjoyment in the world, but for the saving of our souls.

A year ago a call was made to make the year, 1998, a year of Reformation. How many took this call seriously? How many of us made progress last year in our spiritual condition?

If it had been the last year of mercy for us, how many would have been lost? Now the same applies to the year 1999. This may be the last year of mercy to us. Then are we going to do the same as last year or are we going to do better?

The most important question is, am I saved or in a lost condition? Christ is our standard; compare yourself to Him and to His life. Is your faithfulness equal to Christ? Is your love fervent as His? Is your missionary spirit the same as His? Check your faithfulness in tithes and offerings, your Sabbath keeping, your diet, your humility and every other point.

If you find that you don't measure up to the standard of Christ, it means that you are still in a lost condition. If you have Christ's righteousness, then it must be the same as Christ had during His life on the earth. Our standard is high, but it is attainable. No one needs to be lost. The angels are anxiously waiting for us to make a full surrender to God and to work out a thorough reformation in our lives.

Satan knows that the time is short and therefore he is trying his utmost to keep us back. But a promise to us is sure, when we resist him, he will flee from us.

Let us begin this year with a plan for missionary efforts and also to motivate others to join with us in it. Let this be a year of prayer and Bible study. Also now is time to sacrifice our means to the cause of God because the time will come when we cannot use our means anymore.

May the Lord bless all of us that His prayer may be fulfilled this year, "That they may be one, even as we are one." John 17:22.

The Editors



Newly elected leader of Montreal Church, Ian Grant and new missionary leader Br. Richard Lapensee.



SUNDAY LAW

The sun worship which lead to Sunday observance can be traced back for more than 2,000 years B.C. Already the ancient Babylonians recognized the sun as their god. Shamash, their sun-god was thought to be the son of sin (the moon-god). On the stele which contains the famous code of Hammurabi, Shamash is represented as giving the laws to the king.

In the great temples of Syria an educated priesthood considered the sun to be the directing power of the cosmic system. All the Baals were thence forward turned into suns. Such was the final form reached by the religion of the pagan Semites, and, following them, by that of the Romans who raised the Invincible Sun to the rank of supreme divinity in the Empire.

The old Scandinavians called the sun the White God. Also in ancient Persia, the Mithraists worshipped the sun as their god and the day to worship their god was Sunday, the first day of the week.

When the Roman Empire adopted Mithraism as their religion in the first and second century A.D., they also accepted Sunday as their day of worship. Various laws were enacted in different times regarding Sunday observance. Often very strict laws were made restricting labour and amusement on that day.

When Constantine made the first law to enforce Sunday observance in the

year 321 A.D., he was still a sun-worshipper for the next two years. He did not make the Sunday law for the Christian religion but for the sun-worshipping nation. He called Sunday in his law the venerable day of the sun. No reference was made for the resurrection of Christ or to the fourth commandment.

This Sunday observance was not limited only to pagan sun-worshippers but the Christian church also decided to change the day of worship from Saturday to Sunday. In the Council of Laodicea, in the year 364 A.D., the celebration of Sunday which had already been practiced by the church, was established by a synodal law.

The early Fathers in the Catholic Church compared Jesus to the sun and Mary to the moon. Therefore, they decided to keep the day of the sun in the Christian church as well as Christmas as a day of the sun, only calling it a day of Jesus' birth.

So deeply imbedded in the minds of the converted Christians was their previous sun worship that even in the fifth century the worshippers in St. Peter's Cathedral turned away from the altar and faced the door so that they could adore the rising sun.

The Christian churches and their theologians willfully are ignorant or blinded to the Bible doctrine of the seventh-day Sabbath and hold onto the pagan day of worship. Yet time

to time someone dares to speak up and present the truth to the public.

Roger Williams in his letter to Major John Mason on June 22, 1670 says, "You know yourself do not keep the Sabbath, that is the seventh day. There is no express Scripture for abolishing the seventh day, and instituting the eighth day worship, but that it is at the church's pleasure."

John Gilnary Shea wrote in *American Catholic Quarterly Review*, January 1883. "Protestantism, in disregarding the authority of the Church, has no good reason for its Sunday theory, and ought, logically, to keep Saturday as the Sabbath, with the Jews and Seventh-Day Baptists. For their present practice Protestants in general have no authority but that of a church which they disown, and there cannot be a greater inconsistency than theirs in asking the state to enforce the Sunday laws."

In Toronto, October 27, 1949 Philip Carrington, Anglican Archbishop, said that there is nothing to support Sunday being kept holy. Nowhere in the Bible is it laid down that worship should be done on Sunday. This was published in the newspapers the next day.

Today Sunday laws are existing in many countries. As we are nearing the end more strict laws will be made which will create difficulties to the Sabbath keepers.

"A time is coming when the law of God is, in a special sense, to be made void in our land (the United

States). The rulers of our nation will, by legislative enactments, enforce the Sunday law, and thus God's people will be brought into great peril. When our nation, in its legislative councils, shall enact laws to bind the consciences of men in regard to their religious privileges, enforcing Sunday observance, and bringing oppressive power to bear against those who keep the seventh-day Sabbath, the law of God will, to all intents and purposes, be made void in our land." *Maranatha*, p. 179

"As men depart further and further from God, Satan is permitted to have power over the children of disobedience. He hurls destruction among men. There is calamity by land and sea. Property and life are destroyed by fire and flood. Satan resolves to charge this upon those who refuse to bow to the idol which he has set up. His agents point to Seventh-Day Adventists as the cause of the trouble. 'These people stand in defiance of law,' they say. 'They desecrate Sunday. Were they compelled to obey the law for Sunday observance, there would be a cessation of these terrible judgments.'" *Advent Review and Sabbath Herald*, July 16, 1901.

"Their religious prejudice and bigotry would lead them to do any act of violence, verily thinking they were doing God's service; for they are in great error. A blind zeal under false religious theories, is the most violent and merciless." *Special Testimonies for Ministers and Workers—No 6*, p. 50

"The truth should be presented in short articles, in clear, distinct lines, giving special points in regard to the Lord's Sabbath, and showing that those who frame laws to compel the observance of the first day of the week, are disloyal to the Lord of heaven, who placed His sanctity upon the seventh day. Are we doing all we can to exalt the law of Jehovah?" Counsels to Writers and Editors, p. 97-98.

"We see the world working to the point of establishing by law a false sabbath, and making it a test for all... In Sunday law there is possibility for great suffering to those who observe the seventh day. The working out of Satan's plans will bring persecution to the people of God." 2 Selected Messages, p. 375.

"Foreign nations will follow the example of the United States. Though she leads out, yet the same crisis will come upon our people in all parts of the world." Test. Vol. 6, p. 395.

In the past few months we have heard news and reports about

Sunday laws. The Pope gave a clear message that those who do not observe Sunday must be punished as heretics. The President of the United States has made comments about family-day, which he wants to legislate. Sister White wrote that nominal Seventh-Day Adventists will give up Sabbath-keeping and betray the faithful remnant church to the authorities."

What are we doing in this solemn hour? Is it now time to seek ease and comfort while we are at the threshold of eternity? Many of our people are not yet ready to face the Sunday laws, and it will cause a shaking among us. Only those who have overcome every sin and even wrong thoughts and words will be able to stand firm in the coming crisis.

We need revival and a thorough reformation in our personal lives and our time to accomplish it is almost finished.

AMEN

Timo Martin

"Some few in every generation from Adam resisted his (Satan's) every artifice and stood forth as noble representatives of what it was in the power of man to do and to be--Christ working with human efforts, helping man in overcoming the power of Satan. Enoch and Elijah are the correct representatives of what the race might be through faith in Jesus Christ if they chose to be. Satan was greatly disturbed because these noble holy men stood untainted amid the moral pollution surrounding them, perfected righteous characters, and were accounted worthy of translation to Heaven. As they had stood forth in moral power, in noble uprightness, overcoming Satan's temptations, he could not bring them under the dominion of death." RH March 3, 1874

BITTERNESS



“Looking diligently lest any man fail of the grace of God; lest any root of bitterness springing up trouble you, and thereby many be defiled;”
Hebrews 12:15.

There are two types of bitterness. One is extreme sorrow for wrongs that have been done but is not a selfish type of bitterness. For example in Jeremiah 31:15 we read: “Thus saith the Lord; A voice was heard in Ramah, lamentation, and bitter weeping; Rahel weeping for her children refused to be comforted for her children, because they were not.” In Esther 4:1, “When Mordecai perceived all that was done, and put on sackcloth with ashes, and went out into the midst of the city, and cried with a loud and bitter cry;” And in 1 Samuel 1:10, “And she was in bitterness of soul, and prayed unto the Lord, and wept sore.” These three people were very sorrowful.

The other type of bitterness is the one I want to talk about in this article. It is the sinful type of bitterness, resulting from two different causes: 1) jealousy and 2) the inability to forgive some one who has offended you.

BITTERNESS CAUSED BY JEALOUSY

Simon Magus had become quite bitter as a result of jealousy. “And Simon saw that through laying on of the apostles’ hands the Holy Ghost was given, he offered them money, Saying, Give me also this power, that on whomsoever I lay hands, he may receive the Holy Ghost. But Peter said unto him, Thy money perish with thee, because thou hast thought that the gift of God may be purchased with money. Thou hast neither part nor lot in this matter: for thy heart is not right in the sight of God. Repent therefore of this thy wickedness, and pray God if perhaps the thoughts of thine heart may be forgiven thee. For I perceive that thou art in the gall of bitterness, and in the bond of iniquity. Then answered

Simon, and said, Pray ye to the Lord for me, that none of these things which ye have spoken come upon me.” Acts 8:18-24. Simon couldn’t leave it at that though. Even though he asked Peter to pray for him, he never really could get over his jealousy and this led to bitterness. He met Peter again in Rome. “About the time of Paul’s second arrest, Peter also was apprehended and thrust into prison. He had made himself especially obnoxious to the authorities by his zeal and success in exposing the deceptions and defeating the plots of Simon Magus the sorcerer, who had followed him to Rome to oppose and hinder the work of the gospel. Nero was a believer in magic, and had patronized Simon. He was therefore greatly incensed against the apostle, and was thus prompted to order his arrest.” *Sketches from the Life of Paul*, p. 328. The bitterness of Simon played a major part in the arrest and execution of Peter.

We see this type of bitterness from jealousy manifested in various places in the Bible. First of all it began with Lucifer who showed his jealousy at being excluded from a private counsel between the Father and Son. He, like Simon Magus, had allowed his jealousy to grow into bitterness. Cain harboured this type of bitterness and became the first murderer. Later Jesus portrayed this type of bitterness in the example of the elder brother in the story of the Prodigal son, who was jealous of the honour given to his brother. Judas Iscariot also harboured this type of bitterness and it grew every time Jesus reproved him. He let it grow to the point of suicide. This type of bitterness is extremely difficult to heal. “envy [is] the rottenness of the bones.” Proverbs 14:30.

BITTERNESS THROUGH OFFENSE

We all are human, “subject to like passions”, and in our conversation with one another it is easy to offend someone by mistake. If we do offend, we are to make things right as soon as

possible. Not only is it the duty of the one who has made the offence to make things right, but it is also the duty of the one who has been hurt, to forgive and forget. This forgiving and forgetting is difficult to do. If not done immediately a root of bitterness will grow. This cause of bitterness has led to many crimes in our world. We can say we forgive, and can even act kind toward the person who has hurt us, but have we truly forgiven? This root of bitterness will grow into a large plant if not dug up. The bigger we allow it to grow the more difficult it is to dig up.

In the Lord’s prayer we read, “And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors.” Matthew 6:12. We will only be forgiven AS we forgive others who have done wrong to us.

HOW CAN WE TELL IF WE HAVE FORGIVEN OTHERS OR ARE STILL HARBOURING BITTERNESS?

In order to answer this question I want to relate the experiences of three different people who I feel have forgiven (so they say) but have not been able to forget, allowing bitterness to control their actions to a degree.

The first one is a dear friend of mine who came to church here in Vancouver several years ago. I used to know this lady many years ago when we were young. We both lived in the east, near the city of Toronto, and we often saw one another on Sabbath and during the week. For many years we had lost contact and after 17 years – while here on the opposite side of the country in British Columbia - our paths crossed once more. How happy we were to see each other again. We enjoyed many hours of blessed fellowship. While we spent time together I did notice that she occasionally mentioned instances that had occurred over 17 years ago. While it is fine to reminisce about the past, I noticed that all the events she recalled of the past were those times

when she had been slighted, either by my family or by other church members. Sometimes these slights were done unintentionally, but some were childhood pranks. I was sorry that these childhood pranks were much of what she had remembered from our childhood days for all those years, and also that she had taken them so seriously. After some time she began to become a little more negative towards my husband and I. If we, by mistake, spoke a word that she was offended by, it doesn't matter how many times we apologized; she still remembered every word and would bring them up often. After awhile I was afraid to say anything to her for fear that it would be brought back to me over and over again for many years to come. Needless to say there was a parting of ways with this lady. I am sorry to see her living so much on the empty husks of the past.

The second case I want to bring up is concerning a sister who felt a visitor attending church slighted her many times. This offence led to deep bitterness. The sister had to leave the country and move far away. Even though this happened several years ago, this sister can't let go of this instance. In speaking to her about it, she says that she has forgiven him, but will not come anywhere near him. She will not live in the same country and secretly hopes this man and his family will falter and leave the church. Has she really forgiven him?

The final case I want to bring up is the case of James White. Sister White counsels her husband regarding this matter. "The Lord is seeking to teach my husband to have a spirit of forgiveness, and forgetfulness of the dark passages in his experience. The remembrance of the unpleasant past only saddens the present, and he lives over again the unpleasant portion of his life's history. In so doing he is clinging to the darkness and is pressing the thorn deeper into his spirit. This is my husband's infirmity, and it is displeasing to God. This brings darkness and not light. He may feel apparent relief for the time in expressing his feelings; but it only makes more acute the sense of how great his sufferings and trials have been, until the whole becomes

magnified in his imagination, and the errors of his brethren, who have aided in bringing these trials upon him, look so grievous that their wrongs seem to him past endurance.

"My husband has cherished this darkness so long by living over the unhappy past that he has but little power to control his mind when dwelling upon these things. Circumstances and events which once he would not have minded, magnify before him into grievous wrongs on the part of his brethren. He has become so sensitive to the wrongs under which he has suffered that it is necessary that he should be as little as possible in the vicinity of Battle Creek, where many of the unpleasant circumstances occurred. God will heal his wounded spirit, if he will let Him. But in doing this, he will have to bury the past. He should not talk of it, or write of it.

"It is positively displeasing to God for my husband to recount his difficulties and his peculiar grievances of the past. If he had looked upon these things in the light that they were not done to him, but to the Lord, whose instrument he is, then he would have received a great reward. But he has taken the murmurings of his brethren as though done to himself and has felt called upon to make all understand the wrong and wickedness of thus complaining of him when he did not deserve their censure and abuse.

"Had my husband felt that he could leave this matter all with the Lord, and that their murmurings and their neglect were against the Master instead of the servant in the Master's service, he would not have felt so aggrieved, and it would not have hurt him. He should have left it with the Lord, whose servant he is, to fight his battles for him and vindicate his cause. Then he would have finally received a precious reward for all his sufferings for Christ's sake.

"I saw that my husband should not dwell upon the painful facts in our experience. Neither should he write his grievances, but keep as far from them as he can. The Lord will heal the wounds of the past if he will turn his attention away from them. "For our light affliction, which is but

for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory; while we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen, are eternal." When confessions are made by his brethren who have been wrong, he should accept the confessions and generously, nobly, seek to encourage those who have been deceived by the enemy. He should cultivate a forgiving spirit and should not dwell upon the mistakes and errors of others, for in so doing he not only weakens his own soul, but tortures the minds of his brethren who have erred, when they may have done all that they can do by confession to correct their past errors. If God sees it necessary that any portion of their past course should be presented before them, that they may understand how to shun errors in future, He will do this work; but my husband should not trust himself to do it, for it awakens past scenes of suffering that the Lord would have him forget." *Test., Vol. 3, pp. 97, 98*

These three people all had a difficult time forgetting.

WHEN BROUGHT REPROOF

Some get offended when brought reproof. They feel that their brethren have offended them when in reality they are showing concern. The reproof of our brethren should bring appreciation into our hearts for their care and concern. If it is not accepted in this manner; often the person starts to attack the humble souls who brought the reproof. Oh how Satan is delighted when he can turn brother against brother. Sr. White counsels a brother who has ended up in this situation. "Self-righteousness and carnal security have closed you about as with bands of iron. You need to be zealous and repent. You have been unfortunate in sympathizing with the disaffected, whose course has been in opposition to the work that the Lord through His servants was doing upon this coast. The wrong men have had your sympathy. Because your heart was not right with God, you did not receive the light He sent to you. You set up your stubborn will to resist the reproof which the Lord gave to you in

love. You knew these things were true, but tried to close your eyes to the true state of your case. Whether you heed the voice of reproof and warning God has sent to you or not; whether you reform, or retain your defects of character, you will one day realize what you have lost by placing yourself in a defiant position, warring in spirit against the servants of God. Your bitterness of feeling toward Elder H is astonishing. He has endured and sacrificed and toiled on this coast to do the work of God. But in your blindness, while unconsecrated in heart and life, you have ventured, in connection with I and J, to handle the servant of God in a cruel manner. "Touch not Mine anointed," saith God, "and do My prophets no harm." It is not a small matter for you to array yourself, as you have done, against men whom God has sent with light and truth for the people. Beware how your influence turns souls from the truth which God has sent His servants to declare, for a heavy woe hangs over you." *Test., Vol. 4, pp. 228, 229.*

Human nature doesn't like to have its sins and errors pointed out. We must want to have our human nature die out and a spiritual nature be born within if we ever want to see Jesus. He can do this work for us if we allow Him.

When there are differences among brethren, they should be taken care of immediately. "Let not those unhappy differences remain till they become a root of bitterness in the church, whereby many will be defiled." *Test., Vol. 4, p. 610.* Differences will come, but if we deal with them correctly, that will keep the root of bitterness from growing.

LOVE FOR SELF

The church is the body of Christ. Each member has different talents and responsibilities. The Lord gives talents to each person as He sees what their capabilities are. Some receive more and some less. We must beware that we never get jealous of those that have more. This was a problem in the church in Sr. White's day and we have to make sure that this evil does not rise again.

"Their hearts are filled with selfishness, and they are constantly

finding fault with others who are better than themselves. They put their hands to a work which God has not given them, but leave undone the work He has left for them to do, which is to take heed to themselves, lest any root of bitterness springing up, trouble the church and defile it. They turn their eyes outward to watch lest the character of others should not be right, when their eyes should be turned inward to scan and criticize their own actions. When they empty the heart of self, envy, evil surmising, malice, they will not be climbing on the judgment seat and pronouncing sentence upon others who are in God's sight better than they." *Test., Vol. 5, p. 614.*

"Satan is constantly seeking to cause distrust, alienation, and malice among God's people. We shall be often tempted to feel that our rights are invaded, when there is no real cause for such feelings. Those whose love for self is stronger than their love for Christ, and His cause will place their own interests first and resort to almost any expedient to guard and maintain them." *Ibid, p. 242.*

WHAT WILL BE THE RESULT IF WE ALLOW THIS ROOT OF BITTERNESS TO CONTINUE?

In the world bitterness left unchecked has led to many serious crimes such as murder. They start with smaller things like: our neighbour steals our apples, we steal his peaches. A workmate makes a mistake causing us extra work – seek ways to retaliate. These minor infractions lead to the bigger things. A man murders his neighbour for committing adultery with his wife – even though they repented; he has not been able to forgive. Many crimes have been committed in retaliation, but Paul tells us that Jesus said, "Vengeance is mine; I will repay." *Romans 12:19.*

Love and bitterness cannot dwell in the same heart. Perfect love will drive out any evil in our hearts. "Roots of bitterness that have crowded out the precious plant of love are made manifest. Defects of character, neglect of duties, ingratitude to God, coldness toward our brethren, are called to remembrance." *Desire of Ages, p. 651.*

Sister White gave counsel to a church that had neglected their duties. She noticed that, "The spirit of criticism and bitterness has come into the church, and the spiritual discernment of many has been dimmed." *Test., Vol. 6, p. 297.* **Our spiritual discernment will become dimmed** if we allow bitterness to control us. Our thoughts will be so engrossed with our own selves and how we have been hurt – causing us to have such great bitterness towards others who hurt us, that our spiritual discernment will become dim. Our focus is no longer on the truth for this time, but on the hurts and slights that others have committed toward us. If we are bitter, we keep mulling these thoughts over and over again in our minds and forget about our present duty. Our eyes have been taken off Jesus and are placed on ourselves.

"Let no one deceive his own soul in this matter. If you harbor pride, self-esteem, a love for the supremacy, vainglory, unholy ambition, murmuring, discontent, *bitterness*, evil speaking, lying, deception, slandering, you have not Christ abiding in your heart, and the evidence shows that you have the mind and character of Satan, not of Jesus Christ, who was meek and lowly of heart. You must have a Christian character that will stand. You may have good intentions, good impulses, can speak the truth understandingly, but **you are not fit for the kingdom of heaven.**" *Testimonies to Ministers, p. 441.* There is no room for bitterness in heaven. Suppose that sister mentioned above found her mansion next door to the brother she had a difficult time forgiving. Would she be happy in heaven? Or would she request a move of her dwelling place to another planet?

As mentioned above, Lucifer became bitter when his sin was pointed out. He let this root of bitterness fester until it became open rebellion. At the first he had no thought of rebelling. If he could have seen into the future and had known where his root of bitterness would lead to, he would have been shocked. But if you don't squash the root of bitterness as soon as it springs up, it may lead to things you never

anticipated you would do in the first place had you seen the end of the road.

Sometimes, in this world, people will purposely try to antagonize us. We see this happen especially from those, not in the church, who see the high standard we are reaching for and feel guilty themselves for not reaching the same. If they have no concern for their salvation they will not have much concern for us, but if they feel guilty because they see us progressing and they are not, they are tempted to start trying to tear us down, or tempt us into wrong. They have taken their eyes off Jesus and are looking to man. If we start feeling bitter towards the wrongs they may have done to us, we are just as guilty as they are. It is time to die to self. We must feel pity towards them, as Jesus would. Then we know we have overcome. People will purposely try to trouble us, but we must not let our feelings have the upper hand.

If we have bitter feelings we are the ones who really lose the blessing. Often people hurt us by mistake and then they continue on in their happy lives while we brood in darkness with bitter thoughts.

As we pray for patience and love in our hearts for others, the Lord will not lay a bed of roses in our pathway that has no thorns. How can we learn to face opposition patiently unless we face opposition occasionally? As we pray for patience the Lord will cause circumstances to come about to try our patience and strengthen it.

Many members have left the church through bitterness when there was no reason for it. While it is true we will be offended occasionally, if we allow it to turn to bitterness we may one day leave the ranks of Jesus and find ourselves on the devil's side.

He succeeded in leading astray a large group of believers in 1951 and for many years they have tried to cover up this bitterness. It all began with the bitterness of one man who was not elected president and look at the results today. Had he known that the situation of his followers would be such as it is today, I am sure he would have given a little more thought to his course of action.

But that is the problem with bitterness. It will blind a person to the reality and results of their course of action. They don't think of the end results, they only think of how to retaliate because those bitter feelings have taken control.

JESUS EXAMPLE

We all are human beings and we have feelings and we will have our feelings hurt at one point or another, but what we do with those hurt feelings is what is important. We can let our feelings control our actions or we can take them to the Lord and let Him deal with our hurt and bitter feelings. If any one had any reason to be bitter it was Jesus. Many of those for whom He performed so many wonderful miracles showed very little appreciation, and even if they did appreciate the blessing, not one of them stood by his side in the judgement hall of Pilate. Not one walked the road to Calvary with Him, giving Him a comforting word along the way. All His disciples, whom He had taken so much time and effort to train, also abandoned Him. Yet, He continued on in His purpose. He did not stray from it. Jesus has a purpose for us also. It may not be appreciated by the masses of people, and even our brethren may misunderstand us, but we must not stray from our purpose either. We must never let our feelings control our actions.

We see His love for His followers in His final high priestly prayer (found in John 17). "That union and love might exist among His disciples was the burden of our Saviour's last prayer for them prior to His crucifixion. With the agony of the cross before Him, His solicitude was not for Himself, but for those whom He should leave to carry forward His work in the earth. The severest trials awaited them, but Jesus saw that their greatest danger would be from a spirit of bitterness and division." *Test., Vol. 5, p. 236.* "Satan works to make the prayer of Christ of none effect. He makes continual efforts to create bitterness and discord; for where there is unity there is strength, a oneness which all the powers of hell cannot break. All who shall aid the enemies of God by bringing weakness and

sorrow and discouragement upon any of God's people, through their own perverse ways and tempers, are working directly against the prayer of Christ." *Test., Vol. 6, p. 151.*

Jesus cared not so much for His own suffering. When He saw the women of Jerusalem weeping for Him, He told them not to weep for Him but rather for their children and families who would be destroyed when the city was destroyed. He had pity on them more than on Himself. Every act of His life was for the purpose of being a blessing for others. Even in His dying moments, He had words of encouragement for His mother and the thief on the cross. That is the sign of a truly converted person who has died to self. They no longer care how man may mistreat them. Their main concern in life is not protecting their reputation but rather in helping others, in being a blessing for others and bringing the good news of salvation to others. Our trials will dim into nothingness in our minds when we go out and seek to be a blessing for the world. We will no longer have time to think about the little slights and hurts we have received from others.

HOW TO DESTROY THIS BITTERNESS

"Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamour, and evil speaking, be put away from you, with all malice." Eph. 4:31. All these sins are of the same sort, uncontrolled, negative human emotions.

"Do not suffer resentment to ripen into malice. Do not allow the wound to fester and break out in poisonous words, which taint the minds of those who hear. Do not allow bitter thoughts to continue to fill your mind and his. Go to your brother and in humility and sincerity talk with him about the matter.

"Whatever the character of the offense, this does not change the plan that God has made for the settlement of misunderstandings and personal injuries. Speaking alone and in the spirit of Christ to the one who is in fault will often remove the difficulty." *Test., Vol. 7, p. 261.*

"If we have in any manner defrauded or injured our brother, we

should make restitution. If we have unwittingly borne false witness, if we have misstated his words, if we have injured his influence in any way, we should go to the ones with whom we have conversed about him, and take back all our injurious misstatements.

"If matters of difficulty between brethren were not laid open before others, but frankly spoken of between themselves in the spirit of Christian love, how much evil might be prevented! How many roots of bitterness whereby many are defiled would be destroyed, and how closely and tenderly might the followers of Christ be united in His love!" *Thoughts from the Mount of Blessing*, p. 59

In order to prevent this root of bitterness from growing it is important to take care of any misunderstandings as soon as they occur and then Paul has further counsel for us, "forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before." Phil. 4:13. Jesus has promised to "cast all their sins into the depths of the sea." Micah 7:19 when

they are confessed. He has promised to forget about them, "And their sins and iniquities will I remember no more." Hebrews 10:17. This being the case, what right do we then have to bring into remembrance the sins of others that Jesus has cast away and promised to forget? We must beware not to venture on ground that Jesus would not tread. It is Satan that is the accuser of the brethren. He brings up these past sins of others that they have confessed, leading to accusation in our minds. Let them rest as Jesus would.

"The heart knoweth his own bitterness;" Prov. 14:10. Only you can know if this root of bitterness is growing in your heart as it usually grows in secret. However you cannot hide it forever. If you do not ask God to take it away right now, it may lead to some action in the future that you will regret. As it grows it will be increasingly more difficult to root out. Do not allow it to grow to the point that Lucifer did or that Simon Magus did. Get rid of that poison now. If you do not, some day it will manifest itself and it will be seen for what it really is. It is not something we can play with,

as is true with any sin, deciding to put it away when we are ready. Today we must do something about it.

"The world is against us, the popular churches are against us, the laws of the land will soon be against us. If there was ever a time when the people of God should press together, it is now. God has committed to us the special truths for this time to make known to the world. The last message of mercy is now going forth. We are dealing with men and women who are judgment bound. How careful should we be in every word and act to follow closely the Pattern, that our example may lead men to Christ. With what care should we seek so to present the truth that others by beholding its beauty and simplicity may be led to receive it. If our characters testify of its sanctifying power, we shall be a continual light to others — living epistles, known and read of all men. We cannot afford now to give place to Satan by cherishing disunion, discord and strife." *Test. Vol. 5, p. 236.*

Wendy Eaton

Confession for Evil Speaking

"To Bro. and sister White I would say, I have deeply wronged you, and caused you much anguish of heart and mind. I have listened to reports against you, and although while at Battle Creek enjoying your hospitalities, I had a good opportunity to talk with you about said reports, I waited until I came home, then began to spread them, thus alienating the minds of the brethren away from you. I did not stop to investigate them and while you were far away I was trying to injure you.

Oh, why did I do so! You had never harmed me in any way. Oh! I feel sad when I think how I have been working for the enemy. Can such wounds be healed! Such stains be washed out!" H.W. Brikerhoff

Many similar confessions were done to Sis. White. This kind of evil speaking is being done also today. Those who are led by the Holy Spirit are always hated by those who are controlled by Satan's spirit, even in the church of God. Yet only few do confess their evil speaking, most of the people who are guilty of it will go to their graves with the burden of unconfessed sins of evil speaking.

AMEN

STRESSFUL TIMES-NO END IN SIGHT?

December 1997

Dear Friend,

Probably the majority of people are aware that the troubles of this world are getting worse, rapidly, and we need something solid and reliable to hang onto in these perilous times. Unfortunately, many people have become disgusted or discouraged by the confusion of beliefs but we hope that you will take the time to read this and to look up the references. Indeed, a serious study of this most timely subject is not only intensely interesting but also vital to our eternal well being and our peace of mind for the here and now.

This summary is written in the hope that it will help people to gain a better understanding of some very significant developments in our fast moving world as they relate to the teachings and warnings of the word of God, the only infallible source of truth, wisdom and power. We fervently hope that from that understanding will come a sense of the urgent need to be prepared for events which will otherwise come upon us as a disastrous surprise such as happened at the time of the flood of Noah's day, because the warnings then were not heeded. (1) And we pray that the information given here will be in total accord with that infallible Word.

We are living in a time of rapid change with much stress, haste and instability in our lives. Even here in this good land we see increasingly serious, and tragic, social problems, along with hopeless debt, merciless taxes, endless paperwork and erosion of our rights and freedoms. There seems to be no peace in the world;

even nature is in turmoil with environmental disorders and disasters becoming worse and more frequent. We see no light at the end of the tunnel and we worry that things will be even worse for our children.

BUT IN ALL OF THIS THERE IS SOME REALLY GOOD NEWS, FOR OUR LORD JESUS SAID THAT WHEN YOU SEE THESE THINGS, THEN LOOK UP FOR YOUR REDEMPTION DRAWS NEAR (2).

He also said that the gospel - (good news) of His kingdom would be preached as a witness to all nations and "then shall the end come" (3) — the end of the struggle on this sin-cursed planet. Thanks to great advances in technology and the providential opening of doors to God's word, the gospel is going out rapidly to the entire world as never before. (This is one of the three main signs that show us that Christ's Second Coming is very near. The other two are world-wide fear of the nuclear threat and other weapons of mass destruction, Luke 21:25-28; and world-wide pollution, Rev. 11:18.) Soon our Lord will come as He promised; to rescue those faithful to Him, both the living and the dead (raised to life at His coming)). (4) And this time He will come as King of kings and Lord of lords, with power and great glory, accompanied by many angels (5). It will be the best day of their lives for those ready and waiting for His coming, and the worst day for those who are not. (6) This life is so short and uncertain and so much depends upon the choices we make

- eternal life in paradise or eternal death; which is the complete cessation or absence of life. (7) We need to be ready at all times to meet Him. "Eye has not seen nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man the things that the Lord has prepared for them that love Him" (8).

Another extremely important fulfillment of end-time prophecy, particularly of Daniel and Revelation, is the New World Order now taking shape. On the surface it may appear to be a good thing, but the plans for it have been laid in partial secrecy over many years by an alliance of antichrist powers that will briefly gain control of the whole world and will try to force everyone to worship according to their dictates and against the will of God. We are told that this will be a time of trouble such as never was, a time when no man can buy or sell unless he has the mark of the beast. And the most dire warning in the Bible is given against taking that mark for the end-time plagues will fall upon those having it: (9). The mark will involve worship - to whom goes our worship, our loyalty and obedience - to God or to Satan and his agents? (10). If we have some knowledge of the past - early Church history, the Dark Ages, the story of Martin Luther, the Council of Trent, etc., we can understand the significance of what is happening now and how it relates to the Mark of the Beast.

The recent book, *The Keys of This Blood* by Vatican insider, Malachi Martin, tells of the all-encompassing power which aspires to rule the New World Order *soon*. A quote from the book tells us, "Now that it has

started there is no way it can be reversed or called off." And "the world and all that's in it - our way of life as individuals and as citizens of the nations; our families and our jobs; our trade and commerce and money; our educational systems and our religions and our cultures; even the badges of our national identity,.....all will have been powerfully and radically altered forever. No one can be exempted from its effects. No sector of our lives will remain untouched" (11). Martin's bold claim that "no one will be exempted from its effects" corresponds exactly with the Bible prophecy concerning the Mark of the Beast. (12). *This is the same power, an alliance of Church and State, which ruled with an iron hand during the Dark Ages, persecuting and killing those faithful to God. It also claimed the power to change God's law (as prophesied in Daniel 7:25), particularly His Sabbath to the pagan's "venerable day of the sun"* (13). *It calls the change "the mark" of her authority and plainly, and truthfully, states that there is no Scriptural authority for the change* (14). This is indeed a great insult to our Creator, for at the time of creation God set aside and sanctified the seventh day as a memorial to His creative power and a sign between Him and His people (15).

With the increase of catastrophes of various kinds, many people will consider these disasters as a sign of God's displeasure with wickedness - (16) and so will be prepared to accept the rule of a strong leader who purports to bring the world back to God. This is what those heading the New World Order are waiting for (17). Those who remain faithful to God and who refuse to accede to the dictates of the New World Order powers will be looked upon as trouble makers and they will be persecuted as prophesied (18). However, the Bible also tells us that many people

will wake up to realize that it is not the spirit of Christ that forces upon them the commandments of men but the spirit of antichrist and they, too, will truly turn to God (19). **And in the time of terrible trouble God will rescue His people** (20). It is vital that we become informed concerning this arrogant power and its allies which again will try to control the minds of men, demanding the worship and obedience that belongs to God alone. It is Satan and his agents who use force. God doesn't force, but He counsels us to choose wisely - "Come let us reason together" (21).

The messages of the three angels of Rev. 14 are for our time as they concern the judgment hour, the fall of modern, or symbolic Babylon (false religion) and the mark of the beast (22). In Rev. 18:4 God, in His love and mercy, sends out the urgent warning to people entangled in the confusion of false religion, "Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues." God condemns the apostate system but He loves the people and wants to save them.

Satan, the great adversary of Christ, is the author of confusion and the original rebel, liar, deceiver and murderer. He was once Lucifer, an angel of great beauty and high position in heaven. But the angels were made free to choose just as we are. Lucifer became proud and jealous, coveting even the place of God, and with his deceptive lies he persuaded one-third of the angels to follow him (23). God could have destroyed the rebels at the outset, but had He done so, the loyal angels, not having seen the end results of sin, would not have understood such a drastic measure and God would have been viewed as a tyrant rather than the loving Father that He is. The Bible tells us that there was war in heaven and

Satan (the former Lucifer) and his angels were cast to the earth (24). Satan then started the trouble here by deceiving our first parents into distrusting and disobeying God (25). As a result they lost their place in the paradise of Eden and finally died as God had warned would happen if they failed the simple test of loyalty to Him (26). And Satan has persisted in his warfare against the human race. **Knowing that he has passed the point of no return and must finally be destroyed, he would like to see all of us go down with him, and the shorter the time, the greater his wrath** (27). Satan has many helpers too - the fallen angels and human agents who do his bidding. Jesus warned against the many clever deceptions, counterfeits, distractions and temptations of Satan and his servants (28). Our only defence is to stay close to God and His word that we be not deceived or coerced into siding with the forces of evil (29).

It has now been demonstrated beyond any doubt that sin, the transgression of God's law (30) is destructive and terrible beyond description. It caused war in heaven and has caused immeasurable trouble, suffering, sorrow and death in this world. Our limited minds can only imagine the sorrow that this has caused our Creator, to see the people that He made in His image, brought to such a sorry state by sin, and to see this exceedingly beautiful planet, that He made for their enjoyment, so ravaged and spoiled. (But He made it so well that a lot of its beauty still shows through.) Sin hurts everything and "the wages of sin is death"- (31). All of us have sinned (32). We inherited sin and it has such a strong pull on our degenerate natures that we tend to cultivate it, too, for ourselves. But God so loved the world that He gave His

only Son to pay the price of sin, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish but have eternal life (33). And so the price was paid, a terrible price. Again we can only imagine the sorrow of God, the Father, seeing His Son mercilessly beaten and crucified by Satan-inspired men, the men that He created.

Indeed, God has done everything possible to save us sinners but He leaves it up to us to choose which way to go and He lovingly counsels us, "I have set before you life and death --- choose life ----" (34). We can see now that sin must be abolished and so when God finally puts an end to sin and unrepentant sinners, every intelligent being in the whole universe will understand why. God will be justified and sin will never rear its ugly head again (35). As an example, the very wicked cities of Sodom and Gomorrah suffered the vengeance of eternal fire (hellfire). The fires went out but the results are permanent - nobody will ever rise from the ashes. The people of those cities were warned but they thought the warnings were a joke (36).

Jesus, the Son of God, came to seek and to save that which was lost to redeem the fallen children of Adam that they, by repentance and faith in Him, might become again the sons and daughters of God (37). He came to pay the price of sin that we might have life to the full (38). He came to show us what God is like and to show us how to live. He told the story of the prodigal son, showing the yearning love of God for the sinner and the joyful welcome when the remorseful sinner comes home. We look to our Lord Jesus for salvation, and with that faith there must also be obedience for faith without works is dead (39). If we remember what Jesus did for us, we will be eager to do that which pleases Him and He said, "If you love Me, keep My commandments"

(40). He came to magnify the law and He summarized the Ten Commandments as love for God and fellowmen (41). If we consider their simplicity, justice and perfection, we have to acknowledge that no human law can compare with those commandments and that God's law is indeed "Holy, just and good"

(42). **THE WHOLE UNIVERSE OPERATES ON GOD'S LAWS; NO WONDER THEIR IMPORTANCE IS SO OFTEN EMPHASIZED THROUGHOUT THE BIBLE. WITHOUT OBEDIENCE TO HIS COMMANDMENTS BY EVERYONE, THE PEACE AND JOY AND JUSTICE THAT WE LONG FOR CAN NEVER BE.**

Furthermore, we are told that if we offend in one point we are guilty of all (43); we show contempt for the whole law if we keep only what suits us. If the law, or any part of it, could have been abolished or set aside, Jesus would not have had to suffer and die to pay the price of a broken law. To keep the law we must stay close to our Lord for only He can give us the change of heart we need. "As many as received Him, to them gave He power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on His name." John 1:12. "Blessed are they that do His commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city" (44).

Daniel 7:25 prophesies of a power that "shall wear out the saints of the Most High and think to change times and laws." This is the power, previously

mentioned, which persecuted God's people during the Dark Ages and which would rise to prominence again at the end time to impose its mark, a violation of God's law, on everyone, with dire penalties for non-compliance (45). Rev. 14:9,10 gives the strongest warning against taking that mark. It will be a severely testing time, but that power will be completely destroyed and God's people will be rewarded (46). It is indeed "the mystery of iniquity" (47) that anyone should want to defy God. Jesus said, "In vain they worship Me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men" (48). And he taught us to pray, "Our Father in heaven---Thy will be done on earth." Rev. 22:19 contains the most solemn warning against tampering with God's word. And "What does it profit a man if he gain the whole world and lose his own soul?" (49)

There will be no divisions in God's peaceable kingdom for there can be only "one God, one faith, one baptism" (50). Many sincere people have lived and died not understanding the requirements of God but they lived up to all the light they had; their hearts were right toward Him and he knows the hearts and they will surely be in His kingdom (51). But now we live in an age of enlightenment and God wants a people who know the truth and will stand up for Him in these last days as did Daniel and his three friends (52). They are described as those "which keep the commandments of God, and have the testimony of Jesus Christ" (53).

"God is not willing that any should perish" (54). We must pray for those confused by Satan's deceptions. We must pray also for the wisdom, courage, strength and faith that we need to remain faithful to God through these trying times, that we might love and obey Him supremely and love

each other as we should, helping our families and our neighbors, and whoever loves life, to be ready and waiting for the coming of the Lord. Read the beautiful invitation in Rev. 22:17

We must never forget that God is love, He is infinite in wisdom, almighty in power and He will have the last word. In the earth made new "They shall build houses and inhabit them...." "Every man will sit under his own tree and none shall make him afraid...." "God will wipe the tears from their eyes; there will be no more death, sorrow, pain...." (55).

Note: It must be emphasized that, contrary to various claims and beliefs, Peter was not the first pope and Christ's church was not founded on him. The word 'Peter' in Greek is 'petros', a stone, while 'Petra' denotes rock, as a huge boulder, or as a protecting ledge - the mother rock. Petra or Rock is applied to Christ in both Old and New Testaments. Christ's statement to Peter was, "Thou art Petros (a rolling stone) but upon this Petra (a solid rock) I will build My Church. Christ is the solid rock upon which the Church is built.

Note: The law that was abolished when Jesus died on the cross was that which pertained to the sacrificial system that pointed forward to His sacrificial death and ceased to have meaning when He died.

Note: Christians are spiritual Israelites: "If ye be Christ's then are ye Abraham's seed and heirs according to the promise," (Galatians 3:29)

- 1) Matt. 24:38,39. 2 Peter 2:5.
- 2) Luke 21:28.

- 3) Matt 24:14
- 4) 1 Cor. 15:52. 1 Thess. 4:16,17. See also John 14:1-3
- 5) Rev 19:11-16 Matt. 24:30,31. See also Rev. 1:7
- 6) Isa. 25:9. Isa.26:21. Jer. 25:33 Matt. 24:30, 31,44-51. 2 Tim. 4:8. Rev. 6:16,17. Rev. 19:17-21. Rev.22:12
- 7) Luke 12:20. Rom. 6:23. Luke 23:43. Psal. 146:3,4. Eccl. 9:5. Eccl. 12:7
- 8) 1 Cor. 2:9. See also Rev. 11:16-18.
- 9) Rev. 13:3, 12-17. Dan. 12:1. Rev. 14:9,10. Rev. 16:1,2.
- 10) Rev. 13:4,8. Rev. 14:7. Rom. 6:16. Acts 5:29.
- 11) *The Keys of This Blood, p.15. Prophetic Insights pgs. 75,76.*
- 12) Rev. 13:3,7,8,12,16,17.
- 13) Edict of Constantine 321 A.D., Council of Laodicea 364 A.D., *The Converts Catechism*-see also 2 Thess. 2,3,4
- 14) C.F. Thomas, Chancellor under Cardinal Gibbons. Doctrinal Catechism pg. 174. John Eck 1533. Council of Trent 1563. See *Mark of the Beast* for much more information. It gives many references regarding historic councils and declarations.
- 15) Gen. 2:1-3. Exodus 20:8-11. Ex. 31:13,17. Ezek. 20:12,20. See also Isa. 58:13,14 and Gal. 3:29.
- 16) Pat Robertson Road to Victory conference, Virginia Beach, 1992. *Prophetic Insights p. 102.*
- 17) *Keys of This Blood, pgs. 656,657. Prophetic Insights p. 102.*
- 18) Matt. 24:9-12. Rev. 13:15-17.
- 19) John 10:27. See also Rev. 7:9-17. *Prophetic Insights p. 114.*
- 20) Psal. 91. Isa. 25:9. Dan. 12:1. Matt. 24:13,22.
- 21) Rev. 13:8. Matt. 4:10. Acts 5:29. Rom. 6:16. Isa. 1:18.
- 22) Rev. 14:6-12.
- 23) John 8:44. James 3:14-16. Isa. 14:12-14. Ezek. 28:12-17. Rev. 12:4.
- 24) Rev. 12:7-9.
- 25) Genesis Chapter 3.
- 26) Genesis Chapter 3, Gen. 5:5.
- 27) 1 Peter 5:8. Rev. 12:12.
- 28) Matt. 24:4,5,11,24,37-39. See also- 2 Cor. 11:13-15 and Rev. 13:13,14.
- 29) Heb. 3:12-14.
- 30) 1 John 3:4.
- 31) Rom. 6:23
- 32) Rom. 3:23
- 33) John 3:16.
- 34) Deut. 30:19.
- 35) Rom. 3:4. Rev. 19:19. Rev. 20:7-9. Nahum 1:9
- 36) Jude 7. Gen. 19:14. 2 Pet. 2:68.
- 37) Luke 19:10.
- 38) Isa. 53:5. John 1:29. Heb. 9:22. John 10:10.
- 39) John 14:6,9. Acts 10:38. Luke 15:11-32. John 3:36. James 2:26.
- 40) John 14:15.
- 41) Isa. 42:21. Matt. 22:37-40.
- 42) Rom. 7:12.
- 43) James 2:10,11.
- 44) Ezek. 36:26. Heb. 8:10. Gal. 3:29. Rev. 22:14.
- 45) Rev. 12:17. Rev. 13:3,11-18.
- 46) Dan. 7:26,27. Dan. 11:40-45. See also Rev. chapter 18.
- 47) 2 Thess. 2:7-12.

- 48) Matt. 15:19. Matt. 7:21.
- 49) Matt. 6:10. Mark 8:36.
- 50) Ephesians 4:4-6.
- 51) Psal. 87:4-6. 1 Sam. 16:7. Acts 17:30. James 4:17.
- 52) Daniel chapters 3 and 6.
- 53) Rev. 12:17. See also Rev. 19:10. Rev. 14:12.
- 54) 2 Peter 3:9.
- 55) Isa. 65:21. Micah 4:4. Rev. 21:4.

Dear Friend: This letter was written in December, 1997, and so much of great significance has happened since then we can see that this terribly troubled world cannot go on much longer. Indeed, Scripture, history and current events all cry out to warn us that we are nearing a conclusion and that we must not delay in making well informed choices because our eternal destiny depends upon them. At the same time, Satan, the enemy of our souls, is working overtime trying to keep us too busy and too confused to make the right choices.

If you would like helpful literature we will be glad to give you the excellent, *Know Your Bible Correspondence Course*. And we have other material to loan: *The Great Controversy Between Christ and Satan, Mark of the Beast, The National Sunday Law*, etc. Please contact us at the address and/or telephone number below. Thanks and God bless you and your family richly is our prayer.

Dorothy Ross, Olds, AB.



Have you sown the wind, to reap the whirlwind?

"For they have sown the wind, and they shall reap the whirlwind: it hath no stalk: the bud shall yield no meal: if so be it yield, the strangers shall swallow it up. " Hos. 8:7 What you plant, you're going to harvest by and by - you can be sure of that.... This is true on a human level and at least in one way on a spiritual level in this life.

You may think it strange to mention, but so often in this life people sow their wild oats and then pray that there will not be a harvest, right? Mark 1:23-27 This young man that was possessed with the unclean spirit had thought to make life a grand carnival and gave into the spirit of frivolity and vice. This is the way that the demon took possession of him, for his feet went rapidly down the spiral into darkness and depravity until finally Satan had total control of him.

If you chase after emptiness, one can only become empty in this life. This young man had sown the wind, and he just about reaped the whirlwind, but God in His mercy reached out to save him. His case actually reminds me of my own in many ways.

Now it is true that the Lord Jesus can take away many of the harmful consequences of those things that we have chosen, but often He *does not* do this in order for us to trace from cause to effect. Sometimes this isn't that easy for people to do, is it? Because there may be months or even years between the cause and the effect. But God is very patient with us, isn't He?

We must raise up our voices in warning that there is now great deception and soon there will be even greater. 2 Thess. 2:9-12 How will it be for you and I when Satan's lying wonders are going forth in the earth? For the world is rapidly filling up their cup of iniquity by choosing the pathway of self-indulgence and rejecting God's law. You see, it is because people have lied to themselves for so long that they start to believe their own lies after awhile.

We know that Jesus said we were to sow the good seed of His word. And yes, we have to sow beside all waters in this life, but we must look for the good ground hearers that are calling out for grace, light and the Holy Spirit - just waiting to be gathered into the kingdom.

If you sow the good seed, we can expect a good harvest. Does this mean we don't expect anything bad to ever happen to us if we serve the Lord Jesus?

Far from it....Solomon in Ecclesiastes said similar things befall the wicked as well as the good and it has to be that way because we have to choose to serve the Lord because it is right, regardless of any promised reward or threatened punishment.

In Egypt many years ago a woman was seen walking down the street with a pan of fire in one hand and with a bucket of water in the other hand. The people who saw her were mystified so they asked her: "Why are you carrying these things?" In this way she said she wanted to burn up all of men's reward in heaven and put out the fires of hell, so that men could learn to serve the Lord for the love of God alone.

When all is said and done, it is only the true Christian that will serve the Lord Jesus out of the motivation of love. Not because of threatened punishment, or promised reward but because He has loved us and we respond to that love. That is the highest motivation, isn't it?

What kind of seed should we be sowing? Of course, the word of God. And if we believe that word, we must also sow seeds of kindness, humility and love. Then we will be planting good seed and can expect a harvest of souls. And there's something else we expect with this harvest of souls, isn't there? What is it? Persecution, actually.

The servant is not greater than his master, Jesus said. If they have believed my word, they will believe yours also, if they have persecuted me, they will persecute you also.

The principle of persecution is something that has always existed and will always exist as long as the gospel has vital power.

We let the Holy Spirit sow the good seed in our hearts and then there comes the harvest.

Matt. 25: 14-19,24 They all received talents so why didn't the man with the one talent get any reward or harvest? Because he wouldn't share the seed - he called God a hard man and thought it too much a burden to do missionary work.

To give sacrificially is to understand a bit of what God is all about. He sowed the seed of His only begotten Son for you and I, giving so sacrificially it's beyond us to completely comprehend it. But in this life,

we don't always get to choose how we're going to give – do we?

Some might be called upon to give sacrificially of their time, others their money – maybe you will even be called upon to stay faithful to the truth even though you aren't getting what you need emotionally. Perhaps giving this sacrifice of love is the greatest sacrifice, isn't it?

Psalm 119:161,165,176

To some the law of God may sound like gloom and doom – How does it sound to you? You have to hold to the laws of God, even if others are opposing you. But how can we suffer for the truth's sake? Well, speaking about the law, to put things in perspective - Sir Isaac Newton, one of the most famous scientists of this or any age said: "in the greatest discoveries and insights God has given me, I have felt like I was just a child playing on the seashore with a vast ocean beyond of all the knowledge I couldn't touch or enter into."

The redeemed will have all the wonders of the universe opened before them – how the laws of gravity, thermodynamics, action and reaction were worked in God's creation. How God sowed seeds of kindness for all creation by establishing His laws in nature. And when the rubber meets the road, it seems to be only God's people today that are standing up for the deep meaning of God's law, at least in a literal interpretation of it. At least to show how the law is necessary in our salvation. Rules and laws are good things, aren't they? But you know what the greatest wonder will be when the

righteous get to heaven? How God could become a man and give His life to redeem mankind from certain death.

All the law could do is show us rule and regulation of creation or redemption -- which is good and right, but the Lord Jesus gave us redemption from sins that are past, from the broken law by taking our sins upon Himself.

That's a mystery – and how he could do that is going to be the study of the righteous throughout eternity.

Maybe you have sown wrong seeds in the past in not relating correctly to the hard things that the Lord allowed to come upon you. Maybe you allowed yourself to become hard because of these hard things – and you found yourself relating to others that were better off than you in a hard or resentful way, but let's remember: how we relate to the brethren is how we relate to God. Our spirit and attitude toward the brethren will be exactly our spirit and attitude toward God.

If we chase the wind of worldly approval, worldly riches or worldly power, we're bound to be disappointed because God's approval, spiritual riches and power are of the essence of true happiness. Neh. 8:10

To look for the world to support or complete us is to sow the wind! And finally, for all of those who will not submit to God's will, they will reap the whirlwind....in the mark of the beast.

As the world is sowing the wind by rejecting God's will and way in His law, they are causing society's ills in a thousand ways. Crime, degradation, disaffection, rebellion: only eternity will show what the fruit is of this doctrine of

the grace of God setting men free to trample upon the law of God. Of course, you and I know that all of this will culminate with God's judgments being poured out in the 7 last plagues. And the ungodly will finally reap the whirlwind...

Modern-day religion that emphasizes unity at the expense of truth, and political power at the expense of spiritual power will finally bring the whirlwind of God's wrath upon them. In the book, *The Keys of This Blood*, the Pope is quoted as looking at Seventh-day Adventists as "minimalists". They and the other Christian minimalists, he says hold to some elements of true religion like the Catholic church has and thus will surely be integrated into a profession of the full faith. You may not understand that, so let me sum up the rest of it in everyday terms: the Pope is looking to bring everyone on side by the turn of the millennium and he is more than willing and plenty able to use any and all means to do it, including political, financial and social pressure. But in this way, he is only sowing the wind, to reap the whirlwind of God's wrath. May we have the discernment and faith to stand for the truth, regardless of who is sowing the wind, to reap the whirlwind around us. There are so many today that willingly choose pathways of self-destruction, and yes, even religionists are doing this when they reject the truth of God's commandments. Psalm 91 May the Lord guide us to make choices of faith, to see where we have all individually sown the wind in sin, but how we can repent and avoid reaping the whirlwind that is soon to burst upon the ungodly. AMEN
By Jerry Eaton



The Olive Tree

"The Lord called your name, Green Olive Tree, Lovely and of Good Fruit" Jeremiah 11:16

As I return from Italy my eyes are full with the images of hills covered with olive trees.

When we think of evergreens we always think of the pine tree or the cypress, never of the olive tree, although this unpretentious tree never loses its leaves.

The olive tree, if compared with other trees, is quite insignificant, it is not very tall, its trunk is never straight or smooth, it has very little leaves and the colour is almost gray, but it produces one of the most delicious fruits: the olive. This fruit has high nutritional value and releases oil which, besides having a soothing effect, can be also used as a light.

The Lord calls His children olive trees, and actually a Christian can be well compared to this tree. In a Christian there is no apparent beauty, it is not the external that attracts or calls the attention of others but the fruit he produces. The fruit of the Spirit can be bread for the hungry, a medicine for the sick, and a light for those who live in darkness.

In the Bible, the olive tree is mentioned several times. A very important vision is given to the prophet Zechariah in which he sees two olive trees by a bowl that feeds the lampstand with oil and the angel explains to the prophet: *"Not by might nor by power, but by My Spirit."* Zech 4:14. As the Holy Spirit is poured upon the children of God they can be the light of the world.

In the book of Romans chapter eleven we are compared to wild olive trees that have been grafted to the root and are warned not to boast against the branches (Romans 11:18).

Olive trees were very familiar to Jesus as He lived upon this earth because they are a component of the Mediterranean landscape. Our Lord used to climb the Mount of Olives and spent nights in prayer crying over the world, over

His disciples, over us, and the night before He was crucified drops of blood from His forehead watered His beloved olive trees.

The Lord, in His infinite love, gave me the opportunity of living several years in a country where the olive tree grows and bears much fruit. On a snowy winter day, as I was tutoring a 9 year old boy in Greece and looking out of the window of his room at the garden, I commented to him: Did you notice that the snow sits on all trees except on the olive tree? And he gave me a very sweet and naïve answer: Sure, because of the oil.

Many years later I can see the deep spiritual meaning of such a naïve answer. A Christian can go through many tribulations in his life, but the "snow" never sits on his leaves, because the Holy Spirit, that not in vain is called the Comforter, soothes all his wounds and keeps him warm even in the coldest winter nights.

As I lived in Germany I had an interesting experience related to the olive tree. It was Spring, and I had never seen a more beautiful Spring than the one in Germany where all the trees are in blossom. It was there that I got to know a beautiful tree I had never seen before called Golden Rain, with beautiful yellow flowers that hung as a golden shower. A very dear friend of mine called me then from Italy and I commented to him how lovely the Spring was, and he told me that in Italy the Spring was also beautiful because the olive trees had bloomed. I felt very bad that day and for the consecutive days because although I had lived 13 years in a country full of olive trees, I had never seen its blossoms.

I had always admired the way this friend dealt with souls, his tact, his kindness, his non-pretended Christian love, and now I understood why: He had seen the blossoms in the olive tree, it required a soul as sensitive as his to see blossoms in an apparently ugly tree. I realized

how superficial I was, how I was impressed by the outward appearance and my soul craved for a change of heart.

Not long after that conversation there was a heavy rain and the Golden Rain lost all its flowers, that decorative tree, which bears no fruit had a very ephemeral beauty, something that only satisfies the eyes, and I had lost my chance of seeing the blossoms of an olive tree! But the life of he who walks with God is full of surprises, and never does the tiniest genuine desire of a child of God remain unsatisfied.

In the Hungarian countryside there are many wild olive trees, and this year, as I was walking in the streets of Albertirsa I was delighted to come across one of these trees, maybe the only one in town. It was Spring, I crossed the street and came very close to the tree and with great joy I discovered many tiny little yellow blossoms hidden among the leaves, well protected so that the fruit is not lost.

"The Lord called your name, Green Olive Tree,

Lovely and of Good Fruit." This school is an olive grove. It is the olive grove of the Lord, and even though many of us may not have an outstanding appearance, or our manners may not be very refined, the Lord, in His grace, has given me the gift of seeing the blossoms that will bear fruit. As olive trees watered with our Saviour's tears and blood we cannot do other than to give fruit.

At the time of Noah the world was destroyed by a flood and when the rain was over Noah sent a dove out of the ark and it came back with "a freshly plucked olive leaf in her mouth" (Gen. 8:11). The olive tree was the only tree that survived that first destruction of the world, and we, the Lord's Green Olive Trees, by His grace, will survive the second destruction and live forever under the shadow of His infinite love.

May the Lord pour His Spirit upon us so that we can bear good fruit!

AMEN

Teresa Corti

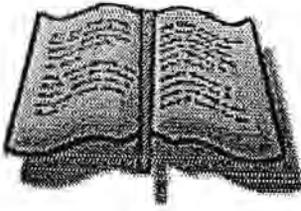


Messenger Articles Index



From: August 1994
To: December 1998

The Messenger articles Index is now available from the IMS Publishing, covering the period of August 1994 to December 1998. Also back copies of the Messenger are still available in case you may have some issues missing.



WHAT SEEK YE?

Greetings in the blessed name of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, who gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto Himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works.¹

In the Know Your Bible Correspondence Course, copywritten in 1977, the individual is asked a very important question. A similar question appeared in a recent Sabbath School lesson (1997). What are you looking forward to most of all on the new earth?² What seek ye?³

When Jesus revealed to His disciples the fate of Jerusalem, and the scenes of the second advent, He foretold also the experience of His people from the time when He should be taken from them, to His return in power and glory for their deliverance. From Olivet the Saviour beheld the storms about to fall upon the apostolic church, and penetrating deeper into the future, His eye discerned the fierce, wasting tempests that were to beat upon His followers in the coming ages of darkness and persecution. The history of the early church testified of the fulfillment of the Saviour's words. Great numbers sealed their testimony with their blood. Noble and slave, rich and poor, learned and ignorant, were alike slain without mercy. Under the fiercest persecution, these witnesses for Jesus kept their faith unsullied.⁴

Through ages of darkness and apostasy, there were Waldenses who denied the supremacy of Rome, who rejected image worship as idolatry, and who kept the true Sabbath. Under the fiercest tempests of opposition they

maintained their faith. Though gashed by the Savoyard spear, and scorched by the Roman fagot, they stood unflinchingly for God's word and His honour. They would not yield one iota of the truth. Thus the Waldenses witnessed for God, centuries before the birth of Luther. Scattered over many lands, they planted the seeds of the Reformation that began in the time of Wycliffe, grew broad and deep in the days of Luther, and is to be carried forward to the close of time by those who also are willing to suffer all things for 'the word of God and for the testimony of Jesus Christ.'⁵

John Wycliffe was the herald of reform, not for England alone, but for all Christendom. In the Scriptures he found that which he had before sought in vain. He gave himself to the service of Christ, and determined to proclaim the truths which he had discovered. The efforts of his enemies to stop his work and to destroy his life were alike unsuccessful, and in his sixty-first year he died in peace in the very service of the altar. It was through the writings of Wycliffe that John Huss of Bohemia was led to renounce many of the errors of Romanism, and to enter upon the work of reform. He chose the martyr's fate, and after seeing his books given to flames, he was himself burned at the stake. Soon after the death of Huss, his faithful friend Jerome, a man of the same fervent piety and of greater learning, was also condemned, and he met his fate in the same manner. So perished God's faithful light-bearers.⁶

While Luther was opening a closed Bible to the people of Germany, Tyndale was impelled by the Spirit of God to do the same for England. He was a diligent

student of the Scriptures, and fearlessly preached his convictions of truth, urging that all doctrine be brought to the test of God's word. Tyndale was betrayed into the hands of his enemies, and at one time suffered imprisonment for many months. He finally witnessed for his faith by a martyr's death. Barnes and Frith, the faithful friends of Tyndale, arose to defend the truth. The Ridley's and Cranmer followed. Baxter, Flavel, Alleine, and other men of talent, education, and deep Christian experience, stood up in valiant defense of 'the faith once delivered to the saints.'⁷

The wife of John Trask was also a Sabbath-keeper. She was declared, even by her enemies, to be a woman endowed with many virtues worthy the imitation of all Christians. This noble woman was seized and thrust into prison. She refused to purchase liberty by renouncing the truth. For nearly sixteen years this feeble woman remained a prisoner, in privation and great suffering. The book of God alone can testify what she endured during those weary years. Faithfully she witnessed for the truth; her patience and fortitude failed not until she was released by death. She was registered among the number who have been hunted, maligned, cast out, imprisoned, martyred; 'of whom the world was not worthy.'⁸

Faith is proven in times of testing. Thus the period under the rulership of the swastika was also a hard test for God's people. The purpose of the Reformation has always been to educate soldiers under the cross. During that trial of World War II, these soldiers of Christ proved themselves victorious—faithful unto death.⁹

And these all, having obtained a good report through faith, received not the

promise.¹⁰ Which he had promised afore by His prophets in the Holy Scriptures.¹¹ And they staggered not at the promise of God through unbelief. But was strong in faith, giving glory to God. And being fully persuaded that, what He had promised, He was able also to perform.¹²

There is a gospel song called "Standing On the Promises".¹³ Which promise are you standing on? Which seek ye? Is it the promise of deliverance from this present evil world?¹⁴ Are you hoping for eternal life, which God, that cannot lie, promised before the world began? Titus 1:2. Or is it the crown of righteousness you seek?¹⁵ And to him that overcometh, there is the right to the tree of life, and to enter in through the gates of pearl into the city, the holy city, new Jerusalem. And the street of the city was pure gold, as it were transparent glass.¹⁶ And there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain.¹⁷ There is the promise to change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto His glorious body.¹⁸ Is the resurrection of the righteous dead your hope?¹⁹ The resurrection of Jesus was a type of the final resurrection of all who sleep in Him. The countenance of the risen Saviour, His manner, His speech, were all familiar to His disciples. As Jesus rose from the dead, so those who sleep in Him are to rise again. We shall know our friends, even as the disciples knew Jesus.²⁰ Exceeding great and precious promises!²¹ Having therefore these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God.²² But where, above, is the promise of His coming?²³

I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending, saith the Lord, which is, and which was, and which is to come, the Almighty.²⁴ Who only has immortality, dwelling in the light which

no man can approach unto Whom no man hath seen, nor can see. To Whom be honour and power everlasting. Amen.²⁵ All things are delivered unto Me of My Father. And no man knoweth the Son, but the Father. Neither knoweth any man the Father, save the Son, and to whomsoever the Son will reveal Him.²⁶ He that hath My commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth Me. And he that loveth Me shall be loved of My Father, and I will love him, and will manifest Myself to him.²⁷ And he that seeth Me, seeth him that sent Me.²⁸ Have faith in God.²⁹

Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.³⁰ And though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, and have not charity, I am nothing.³¹

Every man's work shall be made manifest. For the day shall declare it, because it shall be revealed by fire. And the fire shall try every man's work of what sort it is.³² When the testing time come, those who have made God's word their rule of life will be revealed. In the summer there is not noticeable difference between the evergreens and the other trees, but when the blast of winter come, the evergreens remain unchanged, while other trees are stripped of their foliage. So the false-hearted professor may not now be distinguished from the real Christian, but the time is just upon us when the difference will be apparent. Let opposition arise, let the voice of the dragon be heard, let persecution be kindled, and the half-hearted and hypocritical will quaver and yield the faith; but the true Christian will stand firm as a rock, his faith stronger, his hope brighter, than in the days of prosperity.³³

The Lord is not slack concerning His promise, as some men count slackness. But is longsuffering to usward, not

willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.³⁴

Blessed be the Lord God of Israel. For He hath visited and redeemed His people.³⁵ Blessed is the man to whom the Lord will not impute sin.³⁶ Blessed is the man that endureth temptation. For when he is tried, he shall receive the crown of life, which the Lord hath promised to them that love Him.³⁷ Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord. . . . Yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labours. And their works do follow them.³⁸ Blessed are they that have not seen, and yet believed.³⁹ Blessed is He that cometh in the name of the Lord.⁴⁰

AMEN

Chester Cosby, Detroit

¹ Titus 2:14

² Lesson #8, p. 14

³ John 1:38

⁴ The Great Controversy

⁵ The Great Controversy

⁶ The Great Controversy

⁷ The Great Controversy

⁸ The Great Controversy

⁹ And Follow Their Faith, p. 1

¹⁰ Hebrews 11:39

¹¹ Romans 1:2

¹² Romans 4:20,21

¹³ S.D.A. Hymnal #518

¹⁴ Galatians 1:4

¹⁵ 2 Timothy 4:8

¹⁶ Rev. 21:2, 21: 22:14

¹⁷ Rev. 21:4

¹⁸ Phillipians 3:21

¹⁹ 1 Thess. 4:16

²⁰ The Desire of Ages, p. 804

²¹ 2 Peter 1:4

²² 2 Corinthians 7:1

²³ John 14:3

²⁴ Revelation 1:8

²⁵ 1 Timothy 6:16

²⁶ Matthew 11:27

²⁷ John 14:21

²⁸ John 12:45

²⁹ Mark 11:22

³⁰ Hebrews 11:1

³¹ 1 Cor. 13:2

³² 1 Cor. 3:13

³³ The Great Controversy

³⁴ 2 Peter 3:9

³⁵ Luke 1:68

³⁶ Romans 4:8

³⁷ James 1:12

³⁸ Rev. 14:13

³⁹ John 20:29

⁴⁰ Mark 11:9

"The loss of every earthly blessing could not force them to renounce their belief in Christ." The Great Controversy, p. 41

Thought Question
From Lesson 8

My friend, so dear
I know you'll
Want to be there
Where there's
No crime
Nor destruction
Not a taint
In the air
My dear friend,
Will you be there?

My friend, so dear
I want you
To be there
Where there's
No sickness
Nor sorrow
Or cries
Of despair
My dear Friend,
Will you be there?

My friend, so dear
The time is
Truly near
Soon Jesus
Will appear
And take His
Saints to a place
He has prepared
And there I pray
That thee
Will forever be
And please
Pray for me.

Will I have a part in the lake of fire or in the
joys of the earth made new?



A youth conference and a two week seminar was held in Santo Domingo, Ecuador. More than three hundred attended most of them youth. There, beside a fast flowing river and much rain (spiritual and literal), five souls covenanted with God in baptism and more than 36 gave their hearts to God to the Lord for the first time. Attending this conference was also some brothers and sisters from Columbia. The coming together and messages were a great blessing to all who attended.



AN APPEAL TO CHURCH MEMBERS FOR UPCOMING ELECTIONS

Great care should be exercised in selecting officers for the new churches. Let them be men and women who are thoroughly converted. Let those be chosen who are best qualified to give instruction, those who can minister both in word and in deed. There is a deep-seated necessity for work in every line. 6T 85.

Churches soon will be considering voting for new and/or previous members for church offices for the upcoming new year. Let us take time to reflect on our responsibilities in the selection and investigation process. The following are excerpts from the testimonies on individual responsibility, voice in choosing officers, church responsibility and principles to guide your selection.

Individual Responsibility

"Let each individual member of the church feel that he is responsible in a large measure for the strength and prosperity of the church. While you do the very utmost of your ability, God will as surely do his part, giving you divine enlightenment. God will work, and you must work to the same end to accomplish the same purpose, as faithful soldiers of an army work in harmony with the plans and purposes of their officers. Our will must be surrendered to the will of God. These churches that are small may be living, healthy, strong churches." RH, 1887-09-27.

"Here are lessons which God's people at the present day should take to heart. There are grievous sins indulged by individual members of the church,--covetousness, over-reaching, deception,

fraud, falsehood, and many others. If these sins are neglected by those who have been placed in authority in the church, the blessing of the Lord is withheld from his people, and the innocent suffer with the guilty. The officers in the church should be earnest, energetic men, having a zeal for God, and they should take the most prompt and thorough measures to condemn and correct these wrongs. In this work they should act, not from selfishness, jealousy, or personal prejudice, but in all meekness and lowliness of mind, with a sincere desire that God may be glorified. Inhumanity, false dealing, prevarication, licentiousness, and other sins, are not to be palliated or excused; for they will speedily demoralize the church. Sin may be called by false names, and glossed over by plausible excuses and pretended good motives, but this does not lessen its guilt in the sight of God. Wherever it may be found, sin is offensive to God, and will surely meet its punishment." ST, 1881-01-20.

"Angels of God are watching the development of character. Angels of God are weighing moral worth. If you bestow your attentions upon those who have no need, you are doing the recipients harm, and you will receive condemnation rather than reward. Remember that when by your trifling conversation you descend to the level of frivolous characters, you are encouraging them in the path that leads to perdition. Your unwise attentions may prove the ruin of their souls. You degrade their conceptions of what constitutes Christian life and character. You confuse their ideas, and make impressions that can never be effaced. The harm thus done to souls that need to be strengthened, refined, ennobled, is

often a sin unto death. They can not associate these men with the sacred position they occupy. The ministers, the officers of the church, are all regarded as no better than themselves. Then where is their example?" SPTB, 10.010.002

Voice in Choosing Officers

"Every member of the church has a voice in choosing officers of the church. The church chooses the officers of the state conferences. Delegates chosen by the state conferences choose the officers of the union conferences, and delegates chosen by the union conferences choose the officers of the General Conference. By this arrangement every conference, every institution, every church, and every individual, either directly or through representatives, has a voice in the election of the men who bear the chief responsibilities in the General Conference." 8T 236.

"In place of complaining of the officers of the General Conference because the cannot respond to the multiplied calls for men and means, let our church members bear a living testimony to the power of the truth by denying self and giving liberally for the advancement of the work. Let our sisters save by refusing to put expensive trimmings on their garments. Let every unnecessary expense be cut down. Let every family bring their tithes and offerings to the Lord." 9T 53.

"David's exhortation to Solomon, and his appeal to the burden-bearers of the nation, should be kept in mind by those who are in positions of trust in the Lord's cause today. In this our day God's people will prosper only so long as they keep his precepts; and those who bear responsibilities are called upon to consecrate their service to the Lord. Conference officers, church officers,

managers and heads of departments in our institutions, labourers in the field at home and abroad—all are to render faithful service by using their talents wholly for God. The Lord is not pleased with half-hearted service. To him we owe all that we have and are." RH, 1905-09-14.

Church Responsibility

"Jesus adds to the lesson these words: 'Verily I say unto you, Whatsoever ye shall bind on earth shall be bound in heaven; and whatsoever ye shall loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven.' This assurance, that after the rules of Christ have been followed to the letter, the decisions of the church will be ratified in heaven, gives a solemn significance to the action of the church. No hasty steps should be taken to cut off names from the church books, or to place a member under censure until the case has been investigated, and the Bible rule fully obeyed. The word of Christ shows how necessary it is for church officers to be free from prejudice and selfish motives. Human minds and hearts, unless wholly sanctified, purified, and refined from partiality and prejudice, are liable to commit grave errors, to misjudge and deal unkindly and unjustly with souls that are the purchase of the blood of Christ. But the decision of an unjust judge will be of no account in the court of heaven. It will not make an innocent man guilty, nor change his character in the least before God. As surely as men in responsible positions become lifted up in their own esteem, and act as though they were to lord it over their brethren, they will render many decisions which heaven cannot ratify." HM, 1892-02-01.

Principles to Guide your Selection

"The same principles of piety and justice that were to guide the rulers among God's people in the time of Moses and

of David, were also to be followed by those given the oversight of the newly organized church of God in the gospel dispensation. In the work of setting things in order in all the churches, and ordaining suitable men to act as officers, the apostles held to the high standards of leadership outlined in the Old Testament Scriptures. They maintained that he who is called to stand in a position of leading responsibility in the church 'must be blameless, as the steward of God; not self-willed, not soon angry, not given to wine, no striker, not given to filthy lucre; but a lover of hospitality, a lover of good men, sober, just, holy, temperate; holding fast the faithful word as he hath been taught, that he may be able by sound doctrine both to exhort and to convince the gainsayers.' Titus 1:7-9." AA 95.

"Wise counsel for church and conference officers is given by Peter in the following words: 'Feed the flock of God which is among you, taking the oversight thereof, not by constraint, but willingly; not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind; neither as being lords over God's heritage, but being ensamples to the flock. And when the Chief Shepherd shall appear, ye shall receive a crown of glory that fadeth not away. Likewise, ye younger, submit yourselves unto the elder. Yea, all of you be subject one to another, and be clothed with humility: for God resisteth the proud, and giveth

grace to the humble.' 1 Peter 5:2-5." GW 101.

"God requires his servants who labour for the salvation of souls to be ensamples to the flock; and unfaithfulness on their part is regarded by heaven as a high crime, and will be visited with God's anger. Earthly conflicts and battles were presented before me. No one is allowed to fill the place of officer unless he has been proved, and confidence could be placed in his integrity, his skill, bearing, and ability. He must lead the company placed under his command, and by his own example inspire them with the same spirit which animates him. Should these officers be detected in unfaithfulness, if they do not suffer death, they are immediately removed, and another is placed in their stead. Then I saw how much more important were the battles in which we are engaged. And the burden of this work is committed to ministers; they are overseers of the flock. 'Take heed therefore unto yourselves and to all the flock, over which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood.'" RH 1862-08-00.

AMEN

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Why Be a Seventh-Day Adventist of the Reform Movement?

I started my life in a Hindu and Christian family—yes, my mother was a very strong Hindu and my father was a Christian but in his end of his life, he became a Hindu believer. In this complicated family the members could not understand the teachings of both religions. We all lived a normal life but after my father's death, our Lord sent His servants (the Seventh-Day Adventist Church) who came to my house where we all studied the Bible, especially the prophecies which touched our hearts.

In 1993 I came to Canada where I got the opportunity to join with the Seventh-Day Adventist Church, Reform Movement. This wonderful church is a training ground for everyone who desires to get closer to His Saviour and his fellow man. "Come and learn of Me, said Christ.

Religion, in order to be truth must answer these questions: Does it enable its followers to find a new birth experience? Does it bring the worshipper to a state of peace and rest at the seat and center of reality? Does it lead to the perfect life? If so, it is the true religion, for no one can question the finality of a perfect heart.

I believe the Reform Seventh-Day Adventist's truth fulfills these three demands. More than anything else in the world today, this divine message reveals the object of man's quest, removes the obstacles in the way of the quest, and as a climax allows the image of God to be reproduced in man. Judaism, with all of its

intricate rules and regulations could not do this, although in the original revelation it was God's way to salvation. Nor are the countless religions of our 21st century when analyzed in terms of supplying man's need. The prophetic pulse that beats through the Reform Seventh-Day Adventist message is lacking elsewhere. Because we are a people of prophecy, our proclamation to the world is indeed present truth.

Reform Seventh-Day Adventists have an effectual interpretation of God's revelation to man through His Son. To them God's Son is the embodiment of God's plan and purpose.

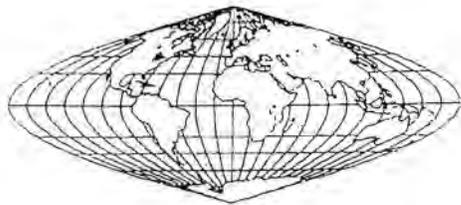
Reform Seventh-Day Adventists have a practical, enlightened understanding of Jesus Christ's work of mediation through His offering and priesthood.

Finally, Reform Seventh-Day Adventists are privileged to bear the final message of man's reconciliation with God. It is a marvelous message of hope flashing through the world's dim concepts of the future.

Yes, every Reform Seventh-Day Adventist, young or old, should be thrilled by the opportunity and challenge to present to the rest of the world the means of claiming an eternal and perfect legacy.

Shall we not lift up our beautiful heads then and witness courageously and effectively today?

Xavior Chelliah



CURRENT SCENE

Adventist-Catholic hospitals align

From *Our Sunday Visitor*, January 7, 1996

Two Colorado health care providers, one Catholic and one Adventist, have joined forces to become one of the state's largest health care systems and employers.

Together, the PorterCare Adventist Health System and Sisters of Charity Health Services Colorado will have \$1.3 billion in combined gross revenues and approximately 12,000 employees.

The new organization, expected to be finalized in early 1996, will be unique in the United States because it combines finances of two separate Christian health care systems.

The companies say that their combination will allow them to continue their Christian mission in the face of health systems motivated mainly by profit.

Gary Susnara, president of the Sisters of Charity organization, said, "These for-profit organizations are committed to enhancing stockholder profits, whereas we are committed to our mission of community service."

"The Sisters of Charity facilities include six hospitals or nursing homes in Denver, six in Colorado Springs, two in Pueblo and one each in Canon City and Florence. PorterCare Adventist facilities include three hospitals in Denver.

The Adventist Health Care network, several billions dollars in debt, is now willing to do anything to stay solvent-even

to make deals with the beast. Actually, this is nothing new, since they have a direct ecumenical connection with the Papacy through the World Council of Churches and have had since at least the mid-70s.

Home Schooling-More than a million kids and growing. Can it work for your Family?

from the cover article of *Newsweek*, Oct. 5, 1998

"Just a few years ago, home schooling was the province of religious fundamentalists who wanted to instill their values in their children and back-to-earth types who rejected the institutional nature of public schools. Now it's edging ever closer to the mainstream. In 1993 - after years of court battles - it became legal in all 50 states for parents to take charge of their kid's education from kindergarten to college. [Since the ruling from the Supreme Court of Canada in 1996, home schooling is theoretically legal in all of Canada. Editor] While there are no national statistics, researchers who study home schooling estimate that as many as 1.5 million youngsters are currently being taught primarily by their mothers or fathers. That's five times the estimated number of home schoolers just a decade ago and bigger than the nation's largest public-school system, New York City's. The increase is especially remarkable in an era of two-income families, since it pretty much requires one parent to stay home (generally the mother), at some financial sacrifice. In a recent *Newsweek* Poll, 59 percent of those surveyed said homeschooled kids were at least as

well educated as students in traditional schools. 'Home schoolers' image is not wacko, fringe, lunatic-type people anymore," says Brian Ray, president of the Home Education Research Institute in Salem, Ore., a nonprofit group. "Today almost everyone knows a home schooler, so it's more socially acceptable."

"Some of the new home-schooling parents are looking for a way to reclaim family closeness in an increasingly fast-paced society. Others have kids with special needs, perhaps because they're highly gifted or have learning disabilities or emotional problems. Still other parents worry about unsavory influences in school-drugs, alcohol, sex, and violence. Florida education officials report that in the last few years, the No. 1 reason parents gave for home schooling was "safety." Some intend to teach at home all the way through 12th grade. Others see home schooling as a way to get through a bad patch in a child's school life.

By the Numbers

Long term studies on home schoolers don't exist, but here are the best estimates:

About 1.5 million students in the United States are home schooled, according to the Home Education Research Institute. There were about 300,000 students in 1990.

In the 12 states with best accounting, the home-schooled population is estimated at 1.5 percent of the total number of elementary - and secondary-school students.

23 (of 36) was the average ACT score for a home schooler in 1998. Traditionally schooled kids

averaged a 21. A 23 could qualify students for a "selective" college.

41 states have no minimum academic requirements for parents who want to home-school their children.

"Their lesson plans are as diverse as their reasons for dropping out of the system, but what unites all these parents is a belief that they can do a better job at home than trained educators in a conventional school. That would have been an outrageous notion a generation ago, when far fewer parents had college degrees and most people regarded teachers and schools with more respect and even awe. Today parents are much better educated, hooked up to a world of information via Internet and inundated with headlines about problems plaguing public schools. They see home schooling as one more step in the evolution of parent power that has given birth to school-choice programs, vouchers and charter schools. 'Americans are becoming fussy consumers rather than trusting captives of a state monopoly,' says Chester Finn, a senior fellow at the Hudson Institute, a Washington, D.C. think tank. 'They've declared their independence and are taking matters into their own hands.'"

"They're probably more likely to be independent and self-motivated. The ultimate goal of any educational path is to inspire love of learning, a passion that lasts a lifetime.

"Kids with special needs-gifted or learning disabled - are more likely than most to benefit from home schooling, researchers say.

Will it Work for You?

Home schooling isn't for everyone. A short list of what it takes for a parent to succeed:

Are you a good candidate?

- You're well organized, patient, resourceful and enjoy being with your children.
- You can afford to lose income and won't mind sacrificing professional goals.
- You put family togetherness at the top of your personal priority list.

Is your child a good candidate?

- He's generally outgoing and makes friends even in informal settings.
- She'll be able to respect you as a teacher and still love you as a parent.
- He sees home schooling as a positive thing, not a punishment for academic or behavior problems.

"Homeschooling has at last gained legitimacy among the educational alternatives available. Be that as it may, home schoolers still must define for themselves the meaning of an education and meet their obligations to the world spinning madly just beyond the doors. They owe it well-educated children."

Many Adventists ask: "What about education? I can't afford to send my children to a church school, so what can I do?" The best and most obvious option is one the Pen of inspiration traced over a hundred years ago, and which the world is rapidly coming to as the logical alternative to "public education".

The Year 2000 - the height of paranoia?

From many different quarters there are voices being raised about the horrors awaiting us as the new millennium dawns on January 1, 2000, (known as Y2K for short). Computer experts are saying that our major technological delivery systems may shut down in the year 2000 due to computer glitches. These

delivery systems include: the stock markets, financial institutions and public service companies like those that deliver our gas and electricity. Sound scary? Of course, it does but perhaps the powers that be are just trying to bring mass paranoia to do anything "in the name of the emergency."

Add to this scenario the fact that more independent SDA ministries are becoming increasingly paranoid. They are talking about how large foreign armies are being built up in North American and concentration camps are being built around North America for those in opposition to the Pope's agenda or "new world order" and how Protestantism is the only thing that can prevent a "takeover", but they seem to have lost sight of the fact that our republican forms of government have been so seriously compromised that we are already beyond the point of no return. Due to many international treaty engines like the NAFTA and Genocide treaties our individual countries' rights and freedoms only exist within the larger "international" framework. In practical terms, this means that the individual's rights and freedoms only exist as the international tribunals, which are being formed now, say they do. Also, in the independent SDA reporting of the opposition of the Roman Catholic church, or the Christian Coalition or whoever it may be, we have a profound shift from the typical SDA complacency to looking under every bush for a conspiracy of physical threat against those named "Adventist." (Of course, apathy and indifference have the flip side of fanaticism and imbalance.)

No, God's people are to look to Him for support, mercy and strength now and in the time of the end. We cannot afford to dwell upon the dark side of anything or

anyone – for only God holds “our times (years) in His hands” and He alone can deliver us from the world, the flesh and the devil. These are the only true enemies that the Christian has ever had or will ever have.

“Let no untruth go forth traced by your pen. The harm you have done your own soul, and the dishonor to God, should go no farther. God’s workmen must continue to bear their blame of being troublers of Israel, but they are not at liberty to make such assertions true. Go not into the assembly of scoffers, sit not in the seat of the scorners, keep away from the gatherings of those who will make your presence an occasion to speak to you humiliating things, and will pour contempt upon your faith. Have no controversy with these men. You have not to do with the men only, but with Satan and his synagogue. When compelled to meet them, remember the Saviour’s words, ‘I send you forth as lambs among wolves.’ The Lord must be your dependence; He will clothe you with a divine panoply, and His Holy Spirit will influence your mind and heart so that your voice shall not catch the notes of the baying of the wolves.

“Your words are not always wise. When you allow your own spirit to have sway, you lose the spirit of God, and then it is that the strange fire is offered. When your spirit is stirred, your imagination is deceptive, you arrive at false conclusions, and things appear to you in a perverted light. Your imagination is wrought upon by satanic agencies. Be careful not to trace a word of your suppositions, to be immortalized. *Manuscript Releases Volume Thirteen*, pgs. 312,313

“The Lord has shown me repeatedly that it is contrary to the

Bible to make any provision for our temporal wants in the time of trouble. I saw that if the saints had food laid up by them or in the field in the time of trouble, when sword, famine, and pestilence are in the land, it would be taken from them by violent hands and strangers would reap their fields. Then will be the time for us to trust wholly in God, and He will sustain us. I saw that our bread and water will be sure at that time, and that we shall not lack or suffer hunger; for God is able to spread a table for us in the wilderness. If necessary He would send ravens to feed us, as He did to feed Elijah, or rain manna from heaven, as He did for the Israelites.

“Houses and lands will be of no use to the saints in the time of trouble, for they will then have to flee before infuriated mobs, and at that time their possessions cannot be disposed of to advance the cause of present truth. I was shown that it is the will of God that the saints should cut loose from every encumbrance before the time of trouble comes, and make a covenant with God through sacrifice. If they have their property on the altar and earnestly inquire of God for their duty, He will teach them when to dispose of these things. Then they will be free in the time of trouble and have no clogs to weigh them down.”

EW 56

Religion and Politics -- always a deadly

MIX “Finally Free from Fear, Iran rescinds its death threat on Salman Rushdie, a step on the road back to world respectability from *Time*, October 5, 1998

“Rushdie is the first to admit that the most important issue at stake in the long battle against the fatwa (the Islamic death threat) was not the threat to his life. ‘No

doubt having the sanction of the fatwas carried out would have been unpleasant for me,’ says Rushdie. But the effect on the freedom of other writers to express themselves would have been far greater.’ Rushdie and all those who waged the long battle against the fatwa did not win a victory for a single author or a single book. Rather, they reaffirmed the right of all authors to publish without fear.”

Moderate Sikh editor killed from *The Leader*, Nov. 20, 1998

“The murder of Tara Singh Hayer this week is the final chapter in his long, and often acrimonious history as editor of North America’s most influential Punjabi-language newspaper.

“Hayer rejected the use of violence in the establishment of a Sikh homeland in Khalistan [India] wrote extensively about the issue, the terrorist bombing of an Air India jetliner and the on-going struggle for control of Lower Mainland Sikh temples.

“His words, and the position of other prominent Sikh moderates, were relayed by Lower Mainland fundamentalists to Amritsar and the seat of Sikhism’s religious authority, the Akal Takht. In May, he and seven others were excommunicated, his friends and business contacts ordered to have no further contact with him or the Newton-based *Indo-Canadian Times*.

Regardless of what religion it is, when politics is mixed with it, the mix becomes deadly, for man will use force to bring others on the side of his power. We know that God wants to enlist the force of our opinions on His side, so that we may intelligently choose to serve Him through love. May God grant that we can be faithful to His sovereign will, no matter what man may say. Matt. 15: 9. By Jerry Eaton



A working , praying church

To human-agencies is committed the work of extending the triumphs of the cross from point to point. As the Head of the church, Christ is authoritatively calling upon everyone who claims to believe on Him to follow His example of self-denial and self-sacrifice in working for the conversion of those whom Satan and his vast army are exerting every power to destroy. God's people are called upon to rally without delay under the bloodstained banner of Christ Jesus. Unceasingly they are to continue their warfare against the enemy, pressing the battle even to the gates. And everyone who is added to the ranks by conversion is to be assigned his post of duty. Everyone should be willing to be or to do anything in this warfare. When church members put forth earnest efforts to advance the message, they will live in the joy of the Lord and will meet with success. Triumph always follows decided effort. *7T.030.001*

Let church-members during the week act their part faithfully, and on the Sabbath tell their experiences. The meeting will then be as meat in due season, bringing to all present new life and fresh vigor. When God's people see the great need of working as Christ worked for the conversion of sinners, the testimonies borne by them in the Sabbath services will be filled with power. With joy they will bear witness to the preciousness of the experience they have gained in working for others. *GW.199.004*

To the church is given the work of making known to the world what is the fellowship of the mystery "which from all ages hath been hid in God who created all things; to the intent that now unto the principalities and the powers in the heavenly places might be made known through the church the manifold wisdom of God." *ST.1900-02-14.007*

In every age, but never so much as now, this has been the work of the church. Dare any one withhold a jot of the influence that should be exerted for the recovery of the souls that are out of Christ? Dare we work out our ambitious projects and satisfy our selfish desires, and then bring to God's altar the fraction that remains of our time and our means? Think you that God will accept such an offering? *RH.1912-04-11.016*

A Church with a Sacred Trust

When Christ ascended, He left the church and all its interests as a sacred trust to His followers. And the work of the church is not to be left to the minister alone, or to a few leading men. Every member should feel that he has entered into a solemn covenant with the Lord to work for the best interests of His cause at all times and under all circumstances. Each should have some part to act, some burden to bear. If all church-members felt an individual responsibility, greater advancement would be made in spiritual things. The solemn burden of responsibility resting upon them would lead them to seek God often for strength and grace.

The real character of the church is measured, not by the high profession she makes, not by the names enrolled on her books, but by what she is actually doing for the Master, by the number of her persevering, faithful workers. Personal, unselfish effort will accomplish more for the cause of Christ than can be wrought by sermons or creeds. *GW.200.*

THE CHURCH MUST BE A PRAYING CHURCH

Withal praying also for us, that God would open unto us a door of utterance, to speak the mystery of Christ, for which I am also in bonds, that I may make it manifest, as I ought to speak." Here is pointed out the work of church-members. Instead of allowing Satan to lead them to think and speak evil of those who, under trying circumstances, are carrying heavy responsibilities, they are to ask God to give them words to speak to those who know not the truth. There has been much evil-thinking and evil-speaking among us as a people, to the great detriment of home religion and of the work of the church in the world. Let us be determined to work out the plan of God. This will help us to guard against the contagion of evil-speaking. Seeds of evil, scattered in the mind, quickly spring up, and the plants strike their roots down deep, and bear an abundant harvest. "*Pacific Union Recorder.1904-12-15*"

Let us pray for the success of the efforts of the Lord's missionaries. Let us ask the Lord to open to us a door of utterance, that we may speak the mysteries of Christ. In the place of speaking words of criticism, to the discouragement of souls already weak, let us speak of the love and goodness of God. "Walk in wisdom toward them which are without, redeeming the time." Consecrate the talent of speech to God. Let your faith lay hold of His promises, and break forth in praise and thanksgiving to Him. "Let your speech be always with grace, seasoned with salt, that ye may know how ye ought to answer every man." Let us maintain towards our brethren and sisters in the church a faithful, God-fearing attitude, that no one way be disheartened by our words. Let us begin the new year by offering praise and thanksgiving to God, with the determination, through His grace, to consecrate the talent of speech to His service. The love of God in the hearts of the members of the church will give them joy and peace and gladness, enabling them to live lives that will cause rejoicing among the angels of God. "*Pacific Union Recorder.1904-12-15.013*".



SAVED BY WORKS?

Many people think that in our church we teach that we are saved by works. Is this really true? Well, let me give you an illustration. Recently, while one of our church members was at work, his boss (knowing of his religious beliefs), came up to him and said, "You are a Legalist to keep the Sabbath." The church member merely replied, "All I do is rest on the Sabbath, I am not doing any works." By this story we see that we are not really doing works, we are merely setting aside time to talk and walk with God.

"And He said unto them, The Sabbath was made for man, and not man for the Sabbath." Mark 2:27. In this verse we see that Christ merely had our welfare in sight when He made the Sabbath. He knew we would get awfully tired after six days of work. It is actually very ridiculous to not want to keep the Sabbath. The people who say that the Sabbath is a burden don't have time for God. This is very selfish because the Lord did so much for them – why can't they put aside one day for Him.

God also made the other things, such as Health Reform and Dress Reform that worldly people criticize us for, for our welfare. He gave us Health Reform so we wouldn't get sick and die early. The worldly people fight against these things because they lust after food, drink and other things.

So in conclusion, God is merciful, kind and just to make these laws, and people are in a very dangerous position when they fight against God's laws.

Richard Eaton, 12 years old.

P.S. We encourage other young people who are impressed to also send in their short articles for publication.

GREETINGS FROM EL SALVADOR

Dear brothers and sisters in Christ I salute you in the name of Jesus with 1 Thessalonians 5:1-6. My children and I are overjoyed at the opportunity that has been granted us in being able to praise God in public by means of this magazine. Allow us to introduce ourselves. My name is Esther Ellington. I am the mother of four children. The eldest is Tiffany at 9 years old. Kirrisa is 8 years old. Billy is 6 years old and the youngest is Zoe. at 3 years old. We are very proud of being Christians and we praise God with all of our hearts. From the littlest to the eldest they all praise God. I always say that a song is a poem that comes from the heart so we want to share with all of you some of those heart-felt poems.

My name is Tiffany. I salute you all in the name of Jesus. I am 9 years old and am thankful to God for being able to share with you this new song I made.

*Nobody loves me like Jesus loves me.
Nobody dies like He died for me.
The nails that went through His hand
We put them there...
And all-of the blood came down for you and me.*

CHORUS

*Come home, come home, come home, home, home.
He's waiting; He's waiting with open arms.
He loves you; He loves you like nobody does
'Cause He died for you on the cross.*

*He lives, He lives, and He lives for you
He died; He died, for you and me.
He's King, He's King up up high.
He's coming; He's coming again for us.
There's a ladder; there's a ladder
That goes to heaven.
That's the prayer that goes up High
11-22-33-44-55-66-77-88-99-1010
They're going; they're going up high.
My sins are washed with His blood.*

I salute all of you with the name of Jesus. My name is Kirrisa. I am 8 years old and Jesus has given me this song and I would like to share it with you.

"I don't Understand"

*I don't understand why the people say
Jesus is not Jesus that is what they say
But I understand why He does love me
He loves me 'cause He made me and
He died for me*

*Now I understand that there is one God who
Takes care of me. Moments past He takes care of me
And now I'm happy, happy as can be
Because He's coming soon.
Coming back for me.*

My name is Billy. I'm 6 years old and I salute you with this memory verse: "For this is the love of God that we keep His commandments and His commandments are not burdensome."

For the glory and honour of God I want to share with you this song I made:

"He loves me"

*He made me to love me. He loves me with all His heart. He loves me with all His heart.
He loves me and loves every body.*

*He loves me because He made me. I feel like crying. I'm crying in my heart because He
loves me so much that He died for me. He loves me so much!*

My name is Zoe. I'm 3 years old and I salute you with this song I made:

"That's why I'm Happy"

My God is in heaven and He takes care of me. God loves me is why I'm happy.

*Jesus is why I am singing to my Jehovah. I await His glory because when Jesus comes
He will take me with Him.*

*That is why I'm happy every body loves me and they even help me when I'm tired. That is
why I'm happy because my Jesus cares for me.*

My dear brothers and sisters, you have read the praises to God that my children have created for His glory. Now I would like to share with you a song I made.

"He Hears Me"

He hears my prayers when I talk to Him He knows my every need and whether I'm lonely happy or sad. I have found a friend indeed.

He's there when I'm in trouble, in sorrow or feeling pain. He comforts me all around underneath His loving hand.

And when I think nobody cares and that I've been left alone in a cruel world His hand always guides me and leads me through the way.

I'm glad I found a true friend so nice, loving and kind. His mercy is everlasting no matter the passing of the time.

May all these praises go to God as a sweet smelling offering before His throne. And that all of you who have read this may praise Him with all your heart.

My dear brothers and sisters, I was born in El Salvador and then went to Los Angeles and married. Then I moved to Sacramento and now I came back to El Salvador with my 4 children. It has been 1 ½ years since I came back and I still praise God with all my heart and have taught my children to honor and obey Him.

Sincerely,
Esther Ellington

If anyone would like to write to us our address is:

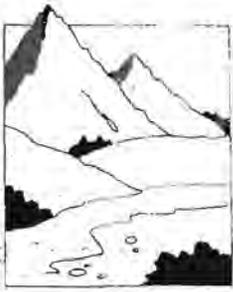
P.O. Box 105

Santa Ana

El Salvador, Central America



"By obedience the people were to give evidence of their faith. So all who hope to be saved by the merits of the blood of Christ should realize that they themselves have something to do in securing their salvation. While it is Christ only that can redeem us from the penalty of transgression, we are to turn from sin to obedience. Man is to be saved by faith, not by works; yet his faith must be shown by his works. God has given his Son to die as a propitiation for sin. He has manifested the light of truth, the way of life, He has given facilities, ordinances, and privileges; and now man must co-operate with these saving agencies; he must appreciate and use the helps that God has provided--believe and obey all the divine requirements." PP, 279.



CONFERENCE TRIP TO COSTA RICA

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

My name is Sister Miriam Segovia de Dubon. I live in San Miguel, El Salvador. I would like to share a religious experience with you that was possible through faith and through the grace of Jesus Christ.

One Sabbath morning, the youth leader of our church read an invitation from Br. Felipe Acuna from Costa Rica. He invited us to attend a 4 day conference to celebrate the opening of a church in Heredia, Costa Rica. The dates were March 27 to 30, 1997. He made a special reminder to bring our valid passports because, as Central Americans, we can only travel with our “cedula” to Nicaragua. (A cedula is a small card with a picture identifying the cardholder.)

As a procrastinator, I let time go by although knowing that I had to go renew my passport. Finally a week before the trip I went to the Passport office. There I was told that someone was travelling in the United States with my passport! Because it was near Easter, they could do nothing for me and I was to return after the holidays. I felt so discouraged and very sad. How could I travel? I had no choice but to return home and tell my husband to pray so that just maybe I could somehow still go.

The enemy is always trying to destroy God’s work. Three of the others that were going on the trip didn’t have passports either. Later, we decided to take a chance and go without passports. Hey, what would be the worst thing that could happen... to be deported back to El Salvador!

We left the 28th of March 1997; we were travelling with God’s help and with lots of prayers. We crossed Honduras, Nicaragua and finally we reached the Costa Rican border. The Immigration officers told us that we could not go in and that we were to return back home. We didn’t know what to do! I went to the lady’s room, changed my clothes and got back into the car. The officer went looking for the lady in white but obviously didn’t find me because I was wearing red! God gave me ideas!

So we crossed the border. Yet there was certain checkpoints we had to go by before we got to Heredia. The last booth we got to, the immigration officer asked to see passports. Obviously four of us didn’t have any, but as a miracle, the officers didn’t see us. God works in miraculous and mysterious ways. He blinded their eyes and we were able to do His work.

When we got to the church, Br. Acuna was happy to see that we were a little late because just a few minutes before, some immigration officers had stopped by to check on “illegals”. By God’s mercy and guiding light, we were safe and sound. We were all very thankful for the care and blessings on the trip.

The conference was a great blessing. It was a happy occasion to see that God always finds a way for us to do His work. We met many different brothers and sisters, especially Br. Raul Escobar, who spoke many beautiful counsels to us.

I hope that God blesses you greatly. Remember that He is always with you and you are not to fear. What seems impossible for us...it is possible for our heavenly Father. AMEN

Sis. Miriam Segovia de Dubon



FORGIVENESS

"Crash!" Philip's bike collided with Gary's and the clatter could be heard all the way down the street. After he recovered from the impact, Philip had to admit that Gary looked pretty funny tangled up in his bike with his hat down over his eyes. Philip had swerved at the last minute and didn't even come off his bike. But Gary hadn't seen him until they'd hit, and being bigger than Philip, he had come down hard.

Gary pushed the cap back out of his eyes. "Why don't you look where you're going!" he yelled at Philip. He looked angry and embarrassed.

"Me! Why don't you look where you're going!" answered Philip.

Gary disentangled his large frame from the bicycle. "If anything's broken, you'll have to pay for it," he shouted, getting angrier.

Then he seized the curved handle of the gear shift and it flipped loosely. "See what you've done? Now the gears are broken and this isn't my bike."

Philip recognized the bike. It belonged to Gary's older brother, Tom. "Those gears were broken months ago!" Philip protested, hotly, "Tom told me."

"Oh no they weren't," Gary said, "Just wait until I tell him."

Philip ignored him. He knew the gears were broken before. Gary was just embarrassed and looking for something to blame on him. Philip mounted his bike again and rode away with Gary's threats echoing after him.

It was too bad, he figured, as he pedaled faster. He'd managed to upset the biggest bully in the junior high school. As well as being a full year older, Gary was several sizes larger than Philip and someone he tried to stay away from. Gary was always threatening, pushing, or hitting someone. He wouldn't be likely to forget today's embarrassment in a hurry.

Just as Philip expected, the next night Gary and his friends waited for him as he got off the school bus. Philip straightened the books under his arm, his heart thumping.

"Hi, Philip," said Dusty stepping in front of him and bumping him with his shoulder. "Oops! Sorry. Did I bump into you? Sorry about that."

Roger circled behind him and Philip glanced over his shoulder. Too late! Roger came at him arms outstretched and palms flat in a well-aimed shove. Philip slammed up against Gary.

"Hey! Watch where you're going!" Gary yelled, grabbing Philip by the back of the collar. Then he clenched his fist under Philip's nose and shook him threateningly. "Now you pay up for those gears, or you'll get what's coming to you."

"That's right," Dusty added, advancing towards Philip again, "otherwise — see these books?" he said, pointing to the books Philip was still clutching. "If you don't..." With a swift punch he knocked the books out of Philip's arms. They shot up in the air, papers and pages flying.

Then Gary pushed Philip into the bushes, and the three bullies ran away laughing loudly.

Philip picked himself up. He was all right except for a few scratches. If he ever caught up with Gary on his own — but in his heart Philip knew he was no match for Gary. Broad-chested and stocky, Gary could make mincemeat out of Philip's slim and wiry frame.

He snatched up the rest of his papers and ran home. Safely in the house he ran up to his room and threw his books and papers in a jumble on the bed. *That Gary!* He thought angrily, *Now he'll make life miserable for me until I pay up. I've got to think of something to stop him.*

Philip sat on the edge of his bed thinking hard. *I'll never win by trying to fight him. Even if I got all my friends to help, Gary would just try to get back at me again some other time. It could go on forever. No, there must be a better way.*

He kicked off his shoes, swung his legs around onto the bed and stretched out, staring at the ceiling. *I didn't break those gears, he thought. I know I didn't. I wonder if Tom knows Gary's trying to get me to pay for them. I wonder if Tom even knows Gary was riding his bike yesterday. Gary was always riding Tom's bike. Didn't he have one of his own?* Then a thought occurred to him. Suppose he offered to let Gary ride his bicycle one afternoon. It was almost new and had ten speeds. Gary would like that and then maybe he'd leave Philip alone.

Yeah, he argued with himself, but who wanted to do anything nice for Gary after today! Besides Gary would think he was doing it because he was scared. He continued turning things over in his mind. If he could only get Tom to admit in front of Gary that the gears had been broken long ago. That wouldn't make Gary any friendlier, but it would prove a point.

At last, little by little a plan began to form. A plan that would put Gary in his place. It would show him that Philip wasn't going to be bullied by him, but it would be an offer of friendship too.

The next Sunday Philip knew that if he went right over after breakfast, Gary and Tom would both be home. As he parked his bike against the fence, Philip noticed Tom's bike with the broken gears parked close by.

Philip's heart was pounding, but he was determined to go through with his plan. He rang the front door bell. Gary answered the door. He looked surprised to see Philip. "May I speak with Tom, please?" Philip said quickly, taking advantage of Gary's surprise.

"Tom!" Gary called over his shoulder, responding automatically. Then he growled suspiciously, "What do you want to talk to Tom for?" But Tom came to the door before Philip could reply.

Philip led Tom out to the driveway, telling him he wanted to show him something. Gary followed, looking even more suspicious. "How long have the gears been broken on your bike?" Philip asked Tom, walking over to it.

"Wait a minute," Gary interrupted, looking uncomfortable, "you broke . . ."

Philip stepped in front of Gary. Inwardly he was quaking, but he spoke firmly. "I came to talk to Tom."

"Yeah," said Tom, looking annoyed at his brother's interruption.

Gary stopped abruptly. He looked puzzled.

Tom began to flick the loose gear shift back and forth. "This has been broken since last summer," he said, "Why?"

"Well, Gary seems to think I broke it last week when he raced out of the driveway and we collided," Philip answered.

"I didn't say that," Gary protested, "I mean I . . ." his voice faded.

"Are you throwing your weight around again?" Tom said, turning to Gary. "You know that gear shift has been broken for months. What are you trying to pull?" Tom grew angrier as he spoke. "And how come you went racing out into the street on my bike without looking? You're lucky it was only Philip you crashed into. Keep your hands off my bike from now on. The way you ride, it will be no good to anyone. Don't ride it again. Do you hear?"

Gary wilted under his brother's words. Philip almost felt sorry for him. He didn't look like much of a bully now.

Tom continued, turning to Philip, "Don't take any notice of him, kid. You didn't break those gears," and he strode back into the house.

Gary was silent for a moment. The he scowled "Thanks a lot!" he said glumly. "There goes my transportation."

"Don't worry about that," Philip said, and he paused. He had to force himself to continue, but he had to do it if he really wanted to make his plan work. He took a deep breath. "You can borrow my bike," He finished. There! It was out.

Gary looked at him in amazement. "You're kidding!"

"No, I'm not. I mean it." Philip replied, feeling better about it now that he's said it.

"You mean, after what I did to you, you'd let me borrow your bike?"

"If you promise to take care of it."

Gary's face lit up and he walked over to Philip's ten-speed. He ran his hands over the handle bars and patted the seat.

"Hey, I misjudged you," he said softly. "You're okay. Look - I'm sorry for the way. . ."

"Forget it," Philip replied.

"I'll be careful," Gary promised. "I never had a bike as nice as this one," he added wistfully.

Philip watched Gary's face as he tried the bike out for size. Maybe, if I got to know Gary better, he thought, I might even learn to like him.

**Love your enemies. Do good to them which hate you.
Luke 6:27.**

Father, when others are mean to me, give me the courage to stand up for what I know is right. Help me to love even those who would make my life miserable. Help me to love the way you love us.

AWAKENING THE CITIES



"The great day of the Lord is near, it is near, and hasteth greatly..."
Zephaniah 1:14.

If we would fully understand the prophetic words from the Lord's messenger, we would get up and work. There's no time to lose! We must go to the villages, towns and cities preaching the gospel with the one purpose to win souls to God.

"Let the gospel message ring through our churches, summoning them to universal action. Those who place themselves under God's control, to be led and guided by Him, will catch the steady tread of the events ordained by Him to take place. Inspired with the Spirit of Him who gave His life for the life of the world, they will no longer stand still in impotency, pointing to what they cannot do."
Christian Service, pg. 77

We, in San Miguel, El Salvador, have followed many biblical verses and also paragraphs from the Spirit of Prophecy concerning missionary work. We are awakening this city where we live; we have not lost time. With God's help, we go and encourage each other to do His work in this part of the country.

When the week of prayer ends with a day of fasting, I hope we will all go forward and preach the three angel's message.

Brothers and sisters here go out every Sunday in pairs to do missionary work, door to door canvassing, giving out flyers, pamphlets and small Bibles. Our desire is to bring to the people the bread of life. During the week, we also give our flyers to the newspaper offices, to office buildings, in parks, businesses and other places we can think of. With the grace of God, we are able to distribute around 6,000 flyers a month. May God's leading hand lead us in this work of awakening in this city with His everlasting truths.

May God bless you with His Spirit so that you may also awaken your neighbourhoods, towns and cities, bringing many precious souls to God's family. I ask you to pray for us here in El Salvador and that we may continue to bless the people here in San Miguel.

Your brother in faith, Oscar Archila Z.

LORD I WANT TO BE A GOOD BOY

Lord, I love you, do not forget me!
Take me, take me in the clouds of heaven,
Higher...higher and higher take me;
Take me as high as you can; I want to reach heaven.
Please Lord Jesus, help me to be a good boy.
Oh Lord Jesus I want to reach the kingdom of heaven to be with you.

David Jonathan Aguirre

THE TEN COMMANDMENTS



What are the Ten Commandments? What do they mean? What do they do for us? Have you ever thought about that?

The Ten Commandments are ten commands that God has sent us to keep for the rest of our lives until He comes again.

The first commandment - what does it mean? It means that we should not have any gods before Him but worship only Him.

What does the second commandment and the rest of the ten mean? What do they do for us?

Well, they do very much for us. For example, they help us in our lives and help us get to heaven. They help us know what Jesus wants us to do and there is much more.

God gave these commandments to Moses and then to us. All of Moses' followers obeyed them so this means that we should also. But there is someone who stops us and it is Satan. Yet, with the help of God, we can do anything in the world.

What do these Ten Commandments mean to you? Think about it. Well, they are a message from God to us saying "follow me and forget Satan and all his hate." "Follow me", He says, "all the time". But often we are lazy and Satan takes over our minds. We have no control over it. But if we follow this message, we shall love God and go to heaven with all our friends and family members.

So read and follow the Ten Commandments.

By: Edwin Alfaro
12 years old

To the Editors of "The Messenger"

Meditate upon Psalm 133 and may it bring you peace and blessings from above.

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

It brought me great joy to know the work that is being done in Canada through "The Messenger" magazine. Thanks to Sister Rosario Conde, I had the privilege to own one of the magazines. Even though I don't fully understand English, I can read and write a little bit. I looked through "The Messenger" and read the articles and I was able to understand the message.

I congratulate you on this breakthrough. Wishing you blessings as well. Sis. Rosario encouraged me to write a brief report concerning the work here in San Miguel, El Salvador. I hope you may be able to mail me a copy of "The Messenger" every month (if it is not inconvenient of course). I would like to write to you later on to keep you updated on this mission we're in.

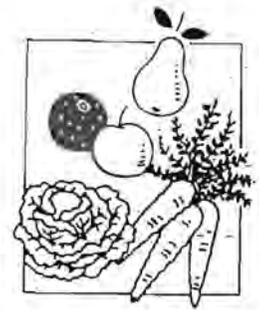
I pray that God's help and guidance be with you always,

Oscar Archila Z.

P.S. You can write to me at:
14 Calle Oriente #206
San Miguel, El Salvador
C.A.



Eat Right for Health



Fight Cancer

- Fruits and vegetables help prevent cancers of the mouth, lung, colon, stomach, larynx, esophagus and bladder. Scientists haven't figured out exactly why... but they know it has something to do with the antioxidants and phytochemicals found in fresh produce.
- One of those antioxidants is lycopene, a carotenoid found in tomatoes, pink grapefruit and watermelon. A recent study showed that lycopene may protect against prostate cancer.
- Fibre found in fruits, vegetables, whole grains and beans helps prevent colon cancer.

Fight Heart Disease

- Soluble fibre (found in citrus fruits, apples, potatoes, dried peas and beans, oats and barley) helps to lower blood cholesterol.
- Folic acid, a B vitamin, lowers blood levels of a harmful amino acid called homocysteine, reducing the risk of heart disease. Good sources of folic acid include orange juice, leafy greens (such as kale, endive, beet greens, turnip greens, spinach, romaine lettuce, rapini, Chinese greens, etc), green peas, corn kernels, peanut butter, lentils, wheat germ, wheat bran, pinto and black beans, whole grains, broccoli, citrus fruits, avocados, plantains, cantaloupe, asparagus and sunflower seeds.
- Many researchers believe that antioxidants such as vitamin E may protect the heart by preventing the oxidation of LDL or "bad" cholesterol. Plant foods high in vitamin E include vegetable oils, margarine, wheat germ, nuts, whole grains and some breakfast cereals.

Fight Stroke

- Omega-3 fatty acids help to prevent blood clots by reducing the stickiness of

blood platelets. Plant sources include wheat germ, walnuts, and walnut oil, canola oil, soybeans and purslane.

- Onions, garlic and an edible Chinese fungus called "tree ear" have all shown a promising ability to reduce blood clots in recent studies.

Fight Constipation

- It's no secret that foods high in fibre help prevent constipation. You can increase fibre intake with the following tips:
- Eat the skins of potatoes, apples and other fruits and vegetables. Remember to first scrub produce clean under running water.
- Serve raw vegetables regularly.
- Use whole grain cereals and breads and brown rice.

Fight Eye Disorders

- More and more studies are showing that antioxidants and bioflavonoids can help prevent certain eye disorders such as cataracts and night blindness.
- Eat more carrots, sweet potatoes, citrus fruits, melons, tomatoes and dark green vegetables.



Happiness is working together in the church garden.

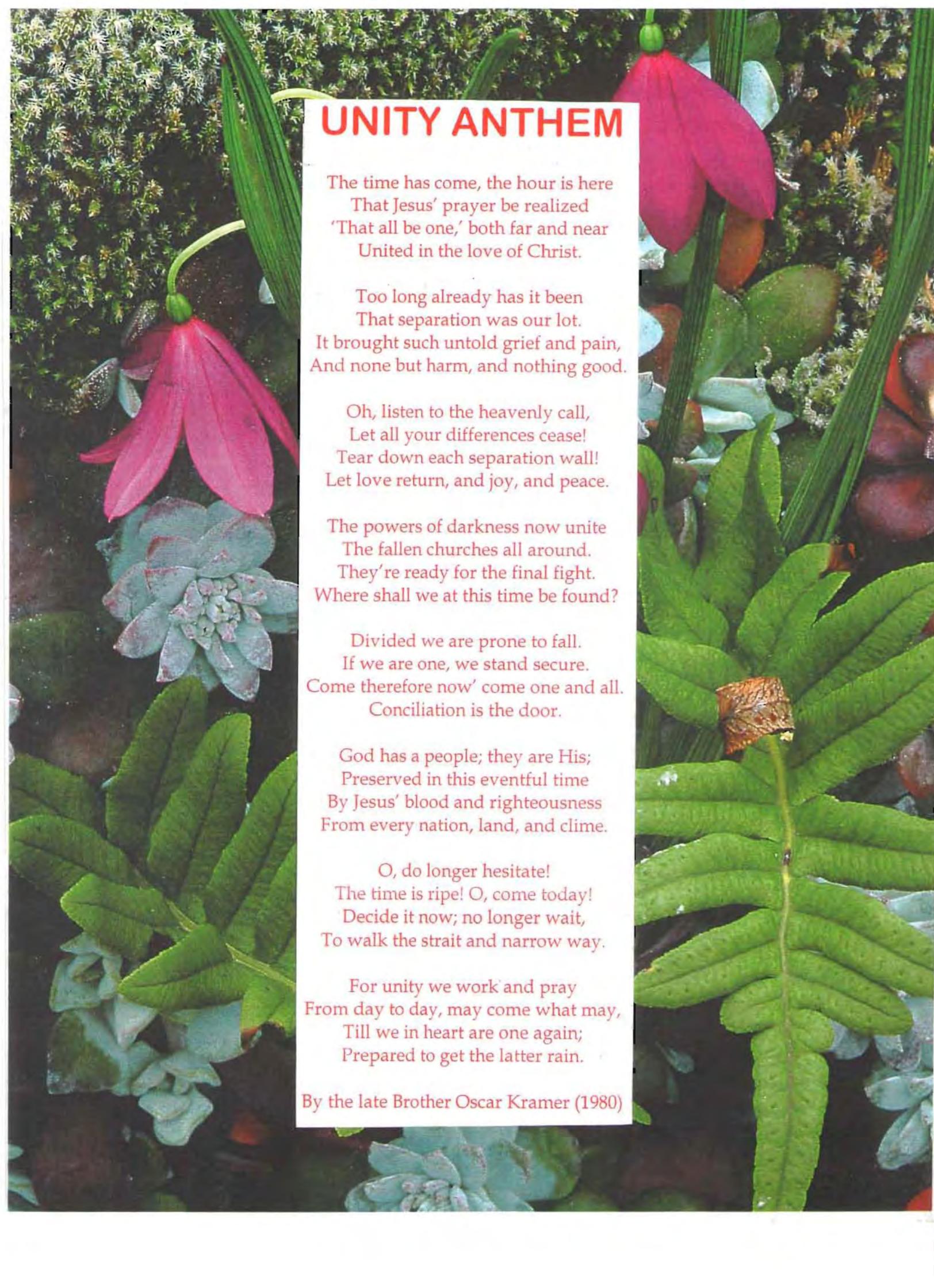
I KEEP YOUR COMMANDMENTS

I keep your commandments Father.
I keep them Lord.
Oh how I love you and you love me!
Someone told me you love every little creature in this world.
But, why do you love them?
Because you died on the cross at Calvary.
Now, I understand why you love them so.
Because you created them.

Omaris Elizabeth Aguirre

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UNITY ANTHEM

The time has come, the hour is here
That Jesus' prayer be realized
'That all be one,' both far and near
United in the love of Christ.

Too long already has it been
That separation was our lot.
It brought such untold grief and pain,
And none but harm, and nothing good.

Oh, listen to the heavenly call,
Let all your differences cease!
Tear down each separation wall!
Let love return, and joy, and peace.

The powers of darkness now unite
The fallen churches all around.
They're ready for the final fight.
Where shall we at this time be found?

Divided we are prone to fall.
If we are one, we stand secure.
Come therefore now' come one and all.
Conciliation is the door.

God has a people; they are His;
Preserved in this eventful time
By Jesus' blood and righteousness
From every nation, land, and clime.

O, do longer hesitate!
The time is ripe! O, come today!
Decide it now; no longer wait,
To walk the strait and narrow way.

For unity we work and pray
From day to day, may come what may,
Till we in heart are one again;
Prepared to get the latter rain.

By the late Brother Oscar Kramer (1980)