

The Reformation
Messenger

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An Acceptable Time
Page 3

Thorns on Roses
Page 9

Experiences in Argentina



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

IN THIS ISSUE:

3 An Acceptable Time

6 Godly Sorrows

9 Thorns on Roses

12 Is the Sabbath Day a Burden or a Joyful Delight?

16 Children's Corner: Animals in the Bible

18 Health Matters: Sweet Potatoes

20 The Suffering and Glorification of Christ . . .

23 Youth Conference in Tanzania

25 Experiences in Argentina

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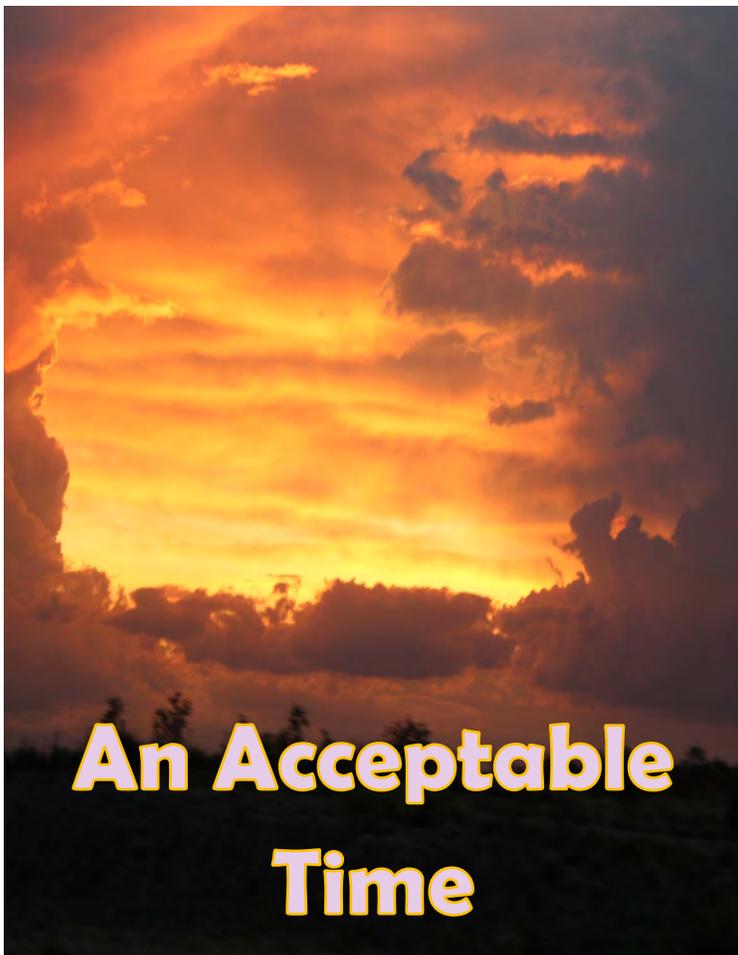
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An Acceptable Time

Dear Reader, — — —

Are you aware that today is the day of salvation, and that there is an acceptable time? If you have not yet given your life to Christ it is important that you do. Each individual has been given this one lifetime to prepare for the heavenly kingdom. Yes! The God of our salvation has given you and I this amazing opportunity in this very life to repent and to ensure that after this present life, there will be an ever joyful, peaceful home in Heaven for you. The scriptures say: "Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love Him." 1 Corinthians 2:9. Yet so many are not seizing this moment, not wanting to relinquish their grasp on pleasure seeking, on gaiety—so many, so many are gone or going to a Christless grave.

Oh dear one, do not be a spiritual statistic, where countless human beings who did not grasp the opportunity now have a case pending at the bar of God where judgment is, or will be, final. There, indelibly chronicled beside each name will be the words: "weighed in the balances, and art found wanting." What a terrible thing it will be to be outside forever; worse yet, to suffer the punishment of hell in the lake of fire prepared for the Devil and his angels. Today, you are oblivious to this fact but when it is all said and done, when the gaiety is over, it will be too late. Says the preacher, "Rejoice, O young man, in thy youth; and let thy heart cheer thee



in the days of thy youth, and walk in the ways of thine heart, and in the sight of thine eyes: but know thou, that for all these things God will bring thee into judgment." Ecclesiastes: 11:9. No less a serious message to the professors of Christianity, where the judgment of God first begins: Cautions Peter, "For the time is come that judgment must begin at the house of God: and if it first begin at us, what shall the end be of them that obey not the gospel of God?" 1 Peter 4:17

Below is a stark parable, a fitting symbol used by Christ in His effort to unfold the importance of developing character, mete for the kingdom—before one passes from this life—a grave lesson.

We read: "There was a certain rich man, which was clothed in purple and fine linen, and fared sumptuously every day: And there was a certain beggar named Lazarus, which was laid at his gate, full of sores, And desiring to be fed with the crumbs which fell from the rich man's table: moreover the dogs came and licked his sores. And it came to pass, that the beggar died, and was carried by the angels into Abraham's bosom: the rich man also died, and was buried; And in hell he lift up his eyes, being in torments, and seeth Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom.

"And he cried and said, Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus, that he may dip the tip of his finger in water, and cool my tongue; for I am tormented in this flame. But Abraham said, Son, remember that thou in thy lifetime receivedst thy good things, and likewise Lazarus evil things: but now he is comforted, and thou art tormented. And beside all this, between us and you there is a great gulf fixed: so that they which would pass from hence to you cannot; neither can they pass to us that would come from thence.

"Then he said, I pray thee therefore, father, that thou wouldest send him to my father's house: For I have five brethren; that he may testify unto them, lest they also come into this place of torment. Abraham saith unto him, they have Moses and the prophets; let them hear them.

And he said, Nay, father Abraham: but if one went unto them from the dead, they will repent. And he said unto him, if they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded, though one rose from the dead." Luke 16:19–31

Clearly there is indeed no repentance in the grave. While many use this to denote that one goes to Hell immediately after they pass from this life. The Bible does not support this and Christ's parabolic use of it was to open to view an object lesson on building for eternity. To be sure, it is only after the great white throne judgment will men and women be cast into outer darkness for ever. The question is, what side of

the gulf will you be on? It merits ponder—more than that it merits making your calling and election sure.

Let us momentarily look at this illustration! One went to paradise and the other to perdition. The question is: In life, did they both have the same opportunity? Yes, they both had the same opportunity in their sphere. Each case was being tested for the works done in their bodies, whether good or bad—unwittingly a record was being kept. The God of heaven who is no respecter of persons deals with us according to the standard of His Law. The rich man was not there because he was rich; he knew of God’s all-encompassing goodness but he willed to serve himself—he failed to fulfil his duty to his fellowman, thus failing to obey God’s commandment of love.

How is your standing? There is a true story of a woman who had a dream. She dreamt that she was at the entrance of heaven. She was told that she could not enter because she did not love. She was sent back with these words. “Go back and learn how to love.”

Oh, dear friend, God is not a dictator; having given us the tools, He leaves us to live our lives, to make choices. He often lays opportunities in our paths, often speaks to our consciences. He sent us His good word. We have the signs and wonders, the miracles of Christ. He leads often providentially—yea, what else can He do? He gives us yet a will—we can therefore will to serve Him or will to serve Him not; of which the outcome is determined by decisions made in the life. Today, the question begs to be asked: Are you using this opportunity in this acceptable time? Do you realize that your benevolence to God and to man is what will determine where you will spend eternity? Why? It is because love is the fulfilling of the law. Finally, do you know that a record is being chronicled of your life as well? You may wonder that your case is a far cry from that of the rich man; but, what is being written by the recording angel of your case?

The focus in the parable was on the rich man’s final outcome—an expressive object lesson! Sadly, no advocate was there to plead his case, a dismal outlook—a bar of no appeal—dismissed! “Depart from Me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels: For I was an hungered, and ye gave Me no meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave Me no drink. . . . Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye did it not to one of the least of these, ye did it not unto Me. . . . and these shall go away into everlasting punishment” (Matthew 25:41–42, 45–46), to suffer in torment of unyielding agony—never to have another opportunity; never to see your loved ones who are saved; never to have

pleasures forever more in the eternal kingdom—a sad end. “It is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment.” Hebrews 9:27. Says the scriptures in a certain place: “Add iniquity unto their iniquity: and let them not come into Thy righteousness. Let them be blotted out of the book of the living, and not be written with the righteous.” Psalms 69:27–28

To be sure, none has ever returned and cautioned; none can repent for their loved one, and even worse yet, no amount of money, as many are told to do, can get one out of what is so-called purgatory, says the word of God. “Though these three men, Noah, Daniel, and Job, were in it, they should deliver but their own souls by their righteousness, saith the Lord GOD. . . . They shall deliver neither sons nor daughters, they only shall be delivered themselves.” Ezekiel 14:14, 18. Saddened, many a loved one know they have no power to wrench their loved one out, as death, who is never satisfied, takes another soul into its clasp. Says the scriptures: “So man lieth down, and riseth not: till the heavens be no more, they shall not awake, nor be raised out of their sleep. . . . His sons come to honour, and he

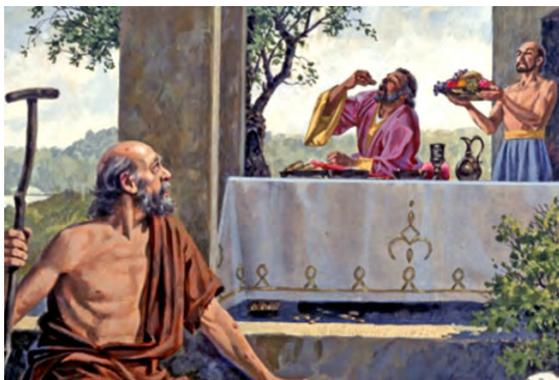
knoweth it not; and they are brought low, but he perceiveth it not of them.” Job 14:12, 21

In the case of those who die in the present truth—while their loved ones and friends gather they know that that individual has sealed his fate, whether for weal or for woe, and prayer is no longer warranted. After the last song, they close the hymnal and leave—only eternity

will tell. The individual now lost to memory; lost to even know that their loved ones came. “The living know that they shall die: but the dead know not any thing,” says the word of God, “there is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom, in the grave, whither thou goest.” Ecclesiastes 9:5, 10

We can safely say no one is cast out into outer darkness without having first been pointed to the way, the truth, and the life. The fact that he cried, “Father Abraham,” gives a clear indication that he was not a heathen. How about you? Have you heard the word preached to you over and over and you shrug it off? Continuing in a life of sin? Have you, from time to time, heard the Spirit speaking to you, and you shut Him out? Oh, to realize that this is a serious matter. Ponder. Where will you spend eternity? God is not mocked.

Yet this God of love wishes that no one should perish but that all should come to repentance. His question continues to resound “Why will you die? He concludes: “For I have no pleasure in the death of him that dieth...wherefore turn yourselves and live ye.” Ezekiel 18:31-32



He is a God of mercy—when Moses asked Him to show him His glory, declared: “I will make all My goodness pass before thee. . . . The LORD God, merciful and gracious, longsuffering, and abundant in goodness and truth.” Exodus 33:19; 34:6

Will you accept this invitation today to make your calling and election sure? Will you? He has done all He can. He has given His only son that “whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life.” John 3:16. This is the acceptable time—now, take advantage of it while you are alive and able. Says the word of God in another book of the Bible: “Thus saith the LORD, In an acceptable time have I heard thee, and in a day of salvation have I helped thee.” Isaiah 49:8

On the other hand, if you die in the LORD you are called “Blessed”. Says the inspired John the Revelator: “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.” Revelation 14:13. Their graves are marked by the angel and when that day comes, he, along with the living redeemed will hear that trumpet-tone call and will arise to meet their LORD in the air; whereas the wicked, after they arise to see the Redeemer, will again be put down until that great white throne judgment.

Dear Reader, truly the door of mercy is still open; none know how soon this door will close. Will you take heed? “To day if ye will hear His voice, Harden not your heart.” Psalm 95:7–8. The door of mercy, as it were, the window of opportunity is closing fast—like in Noah’s day, there came a time when the door of the ark closed—the acceptable time past. Points the scriptures from a prophet view: “The harvest is past, the summer is ended, and we are not saved.” Jeremiah 8:20

Am I fear-mongering? Not at all! You only need to look at the narrative again. In this object lesson if the rich man had an opportunity he would grab it. On realizing that he no longer had the opportunity, he wished someone would tell his relatives that, whatever you do, stay away from this place. He was essentially saying they need to mend their ways while they are able. Read this again! Here:

“Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus, that he may dip the tip of his finger in water, and cool my tongue; for I am tormented in this flame. But Abraham said, Son, remember that thou in thy lifetime receivedst thy good things, and likewise Lazarus evil things: but now he is comforted, and thou art tormented. And beside all this, between us and you there is a great gulf fixed: so that they which would pass from hence to you cannot; neither can they pass to us, that would come from thence. Then he said, I pray thee therefore, father, that thou wouldest send him to my father’s house: For I have five brethren; that he may testify unto them, lest they also come into this place of torment. Abraham saith unto him, They have Moses and

the prophets; let them hear them. And he said, Nay, father Abraham: but if one went unto them from the dead, they will repent. And he said unto him, If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded, though one rose from the dead.” Luke 16:24–31

Today God’s word is with us. No other word will be furnished; no stronger signal will be given. It still has effect. Thus saith the word of God: “Therefore we ought to give the more earnest heed to the things which we have heard, lest at any time we should let them slip. For if the word spoken by angels was stedfast, and every transgression and disobedience received a just recompence of reward; How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation; which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed unto us by them that heard Him; God also bearing them witness, both with signs and wonders, and with divers miracles, and gifts of the Holy Ghost, according to His own will?” Hebrews 2:1–4

Friend, today there is one being, and one being only, that can save you! Jesus Christ. He died the death for you. He who had no sin became sin for us. He paid sin’s wages—the second death. It was so bad that, “God suffered with His Son. . . . Could mortals have viewed the amazement of the angelic host as in silent grief they watched the Father separating His beams of light, love, and glory from His beloved Son, they would better understand how offensive in His sight is sin.” —*The Desire of Ages*, p. 693

Affirms the word of God: “For He hath made Him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him”. 2 Corinthians 5:21. Truly, He who knew no sin became sin for us. He got what we deserved, now He is offering to us what He deserved. He knows, though, that there is an acceptable time. At the beginning of His earthly mission He cried: “The Spirit of the Lord GOD is upon me; because the LORD hath anointed Me to preach good tidings to the meek; He hath sent Me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives. . . . and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised, To proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord.” Isaiah 61:1; Luke 4:18–19

Oh that God is love. He demonstrated it on the cross. The death of His only begotten Son brings eternal life. You only need to say: “Lord have mercy upon me a sinner.” Call upon Him in this acceptable time, in this day of salvation, while mercy lingers, while the Holy Spirit still pleads. What do you have to do? “Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost” (Acts 2:38), affirms the word of God. In the case of those who once received Him and were baptized, return to the Lord and He will abundantly pardon.

Rose Powell



Godly Sorrows

In the beginning, before man fell into sin, he had no knowledge of sorrow or sadness. Never had he any reason for tears of sorrow in his eyes. But when sin entered into the world, it all changed. God said, “And unto Adam He said, Because thou hast hearkened unto the voice of thy wife, and hast eaten of the tree, of which I commanded thee, saying, Thou shalt not eat of it: cursed is the ground for thy sake; in sorrow shalt thou eat of it all the days of thy life.” Genesis 3:17. Now man had the first taste of sorrow and mourning, and this was to follow all the days of his life as a curse—or was it a curse, or was it a blessing in disguise?

In the world, men and women have many sorrows, worries, cares, and anxieties. “Men’s hearts failing them for fear, and for looking after those things which are coming on the earth: for the powers of heaven shall be shaken.” Luke 21:26

“Many sorrows shall be to the wicked: but he that trusteth in the Lord, mercy shall compass him about.” Psalm 32:10. Men try to lighten their sorrowful hearts in drinking, feasting, and entertainment. But are they able to overcome their sorrows?

“There is a way which seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death. Even in laughter the heart is sorrowful; and the end of that mirth is heaviness.” Proverbs 14:12–13

How is the life of the true child of God? Do they also have sorrows in their hearts? Or is it all joy and gladness? “These things have I spoken unto, that My joy might remain in you, and that your joy might be full.”

John 15:11

Paul said, “Rejoice evermore.” 1 Thessalonians 5:16

Nehemiah writes, “Neither be ye sorry; for the joy of the LORD is your strength.” Nehemiah 8:10

Yet there is often sorrow in the hearts of God’s people. But it is different than the sorrow of the world.

“For though I made you sorry with a letter, I do not repent, though I did repent: for I perceive that the same epistle hath made you sorry, though it were but for a season. Now I rejoice, not that ye were made sorry, but that ye sorrowed to repentance: for ye were made sorry after a godly manner, that ye might receive damage by us in nothing. For godly sorrow worketh repentance to salvation not to be repented of: but the sorrow of the world worketh death.” 2 Corinthians 7:8–10

Godly sorrow is a blessing to us, while worldly sorrow worketh death.

Jesus said, “Blessed are they that mourn: for they shall be comforted.” Matthew 5:4

“For the Lord will not cast off for ever: But though He cause grief, yet will He have compassion according to the multitude of His mercies. For He doth not afflict willingly nor grieve the children of men.” Lamentations 3:31–33

Though He causes grief, He also has compassion towards His people.

When David had sinned, in contrition of heart and sadness he repented. “And David went up by the ascent of

mount Olivet, and wept as he went up, and had his head covered, and he went barefoot: and all the people that was with him covered every man his head and they went up, weeping as they went up.” 2 Samuel 15:30

David, the king of Israel, wept in sorrow for his sin. This kind of sorrow for repentance for sin will be comforted.

“Behold, happy is the man whom God correcteth: therefore despise not thou the chastening of the Almighty: For He maketh sore, and bindeth up: He woundeth and His hands make whole.” Job 5:17–18

To die is a painful process, but it must take place. “Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with Him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin.” Romans 6:6

“I die daily.” 1 Corinthians 15:31

To die to self, to die to sin, and to die to the world, causes suffering and sorrow to a Christian.

Every time we commit a sin it causes sadness to us, but it is godly sorrow which worketh repentance to salvation in us. If someone commits sin without feeling sadness about it, it means that his conscience is hardened, and is near the point where the Holy Spirit will leave him completely.

Wise Solomon gave us advice. “It is better to go to the house of mourning, than to go to the house of feasting: for that is the end of all men; and the living will lay it to his heart. Sorrow is better than laughter: for by the sadness of the countenance the heart is made better. The heart of the wise is in the house of mourning; but the heart of fools is in the house of mirth. It is better to hear the rebuke of the wise, than for a man to hear the song of fools.” Ecclesiastes 7:2–5

Sister White had a vision of God’s people in the last days. “I saw some, with strong faith and agonizing cries, pleading with God. Their countenances were pale and marked with deep anxiety, expressive of their internal struggle. Firmness and great earnestness was expressed in their countenances; large drops of perspiration fell from their foreheads. Now and then their faces would light up with the marks of God’s approbation, and again the same solemn, earnest, anxious look would settle upon them.” –*Early Writings*, p. 269

“I was shown those whom I had before seen weeping and praying in agony of spirit. . . . Their countenances expressed the severe conflict which they had endured, the agonizing struggle they had passed through. Yet

their features, marked with severe internal anguish, now shone with the light and glory of heaven. They had obtained the victory, and it called forth from them the deepest gratitude, and holy, sacred joy.” –*Ibid.*, p. 271

Yet there is another kind of sorrow which God’s people have, even after they have overcome their own sins—it is sorrow for others who have not overcome their sins yet.

Paul had sorrow for the members of the churches; he was in tears for them. “For out of much affliction and anguish of heart I wrote unto you with many tears; not that ye should be grieved, but that ye might know the love which I have more abundantly unto you.” 2 Corinthians 2:4

So great was the sorrow of Paul for his brethren and for his kinsmen that he was willing to give his salvation for them, and he be accursed from Christ. “For I could wish that myself were accursed from Christ for my brethren, my kinsmen according to the flesh.” Romans 9:3

Jeremiah had great sorrow for his people. “Oh that my head were waters, and mine eyes a fountain of tears, that I might weep day and night for the slain of the daughter of my people.” Jeremiah 9:1. He called them “my people”, even though they hated him, and finally put him to a martyr’s death. The book of Lamentations shows the great sorrow that he had for his people.

Sister White had great sorrow for the church that she had supported and counselled with her testimonies and writings for so many years. “Who knows whether God will not give you up to the deceptions you love? Who knows but that the preachers who are faithful, firm, and true may be the last who shall offer the gospel of peace to our unthankful churches? It may be that the destroyers are already training under the hand of Satan and only wait the departure of a few more standard-bearers to take their places, and with the voice of the false prophet cry, ‘peace, peace,’ when the Lord hath not spoken peace. I seldom weep, but now I find my eyes blinded with tears; they are falling upon my paper as I write. It may be that ere long all prophesyings among us will be at an end, and the voice which has stirred the people may no longer disturb their carnal slumbers.” –*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 5, p. 77

The greatest sorrow was upon our Saviour, Jesus Christ. “He is despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief: and we hid as it were our faces from Him; He was despised, and we esteemed Him not.” Isaiah 53:3

Jesus was very sensitive; He felt pain, sorrow, and disappointment when He saw how few accepted His offer of mercy. Those whom He came to save mocked and ridiculed Him; and this caused great pain to His sensitive soul. "And when He was come near, He beheld the city, and wept over it." Luke 19:41

"And He took with Him Peter and the two sons of Zebedee, and began to be sorrowful and very heavy. Then saith He unto them, My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death: tarry ye here, and watch with Me. And He went a little further, and fell on His face, and prayed, saying, O My Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from Me: nevertheless not as I will, but as Thou wilt." Matthew 26:37-39

How He was longing for human comfort and sympathy that moment, but even His closest disciples could not watch and pray with Him.

Three times He went to pray to His Father, the same prayer. And in the end He said, "Thy will be done." The moment had come, when the destiny of the world was to be decided. His sweat was like great drops of blood falling from His forehead, so great was His soul anguish (Luke 22:44).

Then came the climax of His sorrow. "And about the ninth hour Jesus cried with a loud voice, saying, Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani? that is to say, My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?" Matthew 27:46. Jesus died

from a broken heart; the burden of sin broke His heart.

Truly Jesus was a man of sorrows. Whatever sorrows may come upon us, they are nothing compared to what Jesus suffered for us.

Yet all the sorrows that Jesus suffered and what we may suffer will be turned to joy and to endless rejoicing. "Verily, verily, I say unto you, That ye shall weep and lament, but the world shall rejoice: and ye shall be sorrowful, but your sorrow shall be turned into joy. And ye now therefore have sorrow: but I will see you again, and your heart shall rejoice, and your joy no man taketh from you." John 16:20, 22



"Therefore the redeemed of the LORD shall return, and come with singing unto Zion; and everlasting joy shall be upon their head: they shall obtain gladness and joy; and sorrow and mourning shall flee away." Isaiah 51:11

When suffering and sorrow come upon us, then remember, "And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to His purpose." Romans 8:28

One day we will understand the purpose of the sorrows that we have suffered and then we will thank God for them, because they helped to develop our characters for heaven and eternal life. Amen.

Timo Martin

LOOKING FOR YOU . . .

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Thorns ON Roses

down to soak in the wonderful perfume arising from the beautiful flower heads, entralling her senses. Eve was

In the beginning, roses had no thorns. But sin caused them to appear. The originator is the “piercing serpent” (Isaiah 27:1), Satan, the fallen cherub, Lucifer.

When Adam sinned, God had to draw the consequences. Man had to see and feel what it meant to take lightly the expressed commandment of his Creator. Though not left without hope, man was driven from God’s presence into a cursed environment so that: “Thorns and thistles shall it bring forth to thee.” Genesis 3:18

BEYOND EDEN

Thus expelled from beautiful Eden, Adam and Eve, when wondering with great sorrow about their immense losses, began to realize what dreadful evil they had committed. Nature was not the same; the curse God pronounced on it and their separation from Him saddened the exiled couple with such grief which mankind of today with 6000 years of degradation could not imagine in the least.

In gaining a deeper insight into the great dilemma, let us imagine for a moment this possible scenario. One day Eve discovered to her joy some familiar looking flowering shrubs she had attended to in Eden. Hastily she came close and saw with delight that these were the roses of pure white she had loved so much.

Overcome with happiness she bent

so enchanted about her discovery that she let out a most grateful “Thank you Lord!” and with great enthusiasm embraced the lovely shrub.

Suddenly she screamed and at once let go. There was a strange, sharp feeling on her hands and arms; and as she looked, red drops begun to ooze on some places from the broken skin.

Horror gripped her; she shrank back in terrible astonishment and sadly realized that she made a first experience with pain. As she examined the cause of this awful encounter, Eve saw that thorns grew upon the stems—how could she now pluck some of those lovely roses to take with her and show them to her husband?

Bewildered she looked around, and it seemed to her as if all nature had a darker hue on it, as though the colours of verdure, trees and flowers, suddenly dimmed down.

The reality of the result of sin crushed her heart. With most sobering, solemn thoughts she left the scene, longing for the loving arms of her husband.

In urgent need she pleaded with him for renewed surrender and obedience to their Creator. They kneeled before the Lord with a keen sense of their helplessness and total dependence upon divine aid for their lives on this earth. They asked that He



guide and help them through the uncertain future ahead, through unknown dangers that may lurk somewhere, through pains and sorrows they may encounter.

THE STING OF THORNS

Martin Luther once said: “If you are a rose of Christ, you must know that thorns will meet you on the way.”

This is a solemn saying. Not only that, it is also very true. It was given by one who certainly knew this only too well, yet did not shrink away from the thorns, but was among them and went through them.

When the onslaughts of Satan, in persons of priests, the clergy and the papacy, threw with hellish vehemence and devilish hatred and contempt his thorns and pricks in his face, Luther passed through unscathed. The word of God was his solid rock of truth and righteousness; his ardent zeal and passionate dedication to Jesus Christ his Saviour made him invincible.

Luther was very much a big thorn in the eyes of the ecclesiastical establishment that wished nothing more as to silence this “wild boar” (as the pope called him), but Providence had other things in mind.



Luther’s momentous protest against the lies, heresies, superstitions and human traditions, burst open the seams of a corrupt religious system delivering multitudes from the deadly poison of “righteousness by works” (penance, confession, absolution, etc.). It brought light and healing through the pure word of God, to the correct belief of “righteousness by faith”. The faith once delivered to the saints, was again established through the divinely appointed Reformation—Protestantism.

Nevertheless, Martin Luther went through periods of melancholia, sometimes lasting weeks. Satan afflicted him with severe depression to discourage this earnest Reformer who seriously felt the sting of thorns upon his mind. Once, during the time he was translating the Bible into the German language at Wartburg, a terrible

gloominess befell him. It seemed to Luther that the devil was right there present in the room. In rebuking Satan, he threw a bottle of ink at him. The marks of the dark liquid on the wall can still be seen today.

A great servant of God, a man of hour-long, agonizing prayer for the welfare of the Protestant faith, Luther was not spared suffering. Anyone so devoted like him (and many others) have had to go through thickets of thorns. Yet they overcame the enemy by their faith and testimony.

The great apostle Paul also speaks about a “thorn in the flesh, the messenger of Satan to buffet me, lest I should be exalted above measure.” 2 Corinthians 12:7. This thorn was something severe, so that he implored the Lord three times to remove it. But no, he got the answer: “My grace is sufficient for thee: for My strength is made perfect in weakness.” verse 9

Paul then realized that this thorn proved to be a blessing in disguise. He learned that it was for the best for him, as it kept him from the evil of becoming proud and self-exalting due to the great revelations he had received from Jesus. His eyes certainly were damaged from the bright light of seeing the glory of Jesus. This was a reminder of how Christ had selected him for His service and where he had come from.

But the thorn in the flesh, the messenger of Satan, was altogether different—a real satanic attack on his body that caused severe pain. It was definitely a revenge of the enemy that he lost him from his territory!

Paul took the words of Jesus to heart rather than dwelling on the release from the pain. We hear him saying with gladness: “Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me.” 2 Corinthians 12:9

Now he really shouts it out: “Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses for Christ’s sake: for when I am weak, then am I strong.” 2 Corinthians 12:10

Here we see a triumphant faith, regardless of what hell invented to discourage him. The foe was defeated whole scale. Paul, who experienced a full quiver of demonic darts against himself only grew in strength and trust in Jesus Christ. He learned the truth of passing through thorns. When one becomes a child, a servant of God, one becomes the target of Satan. In Acts 14:22, we are told that “we must through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of God.”

This is not given to us to scare or frighten us, but as an

assurance that we are not left to ourselves. In tribulation, affliction, sickness, pain, troubles of any kind, we have Jesus beside us. He went through every assault hell could invent against Him. False accusations and open hostility from the religious leaders did not daunt nor dishearten Jesus. He set His “face like a flint” (Isaiah 50:7) to finish His mission, trusting alone in the love and power of His heavenly Father. His has given comforting promises like, “Behold, I have graven thee upon the palms of My hands” (Isaiah 49:16). He also promised to be with us “unto the end of the world.” There are many others like sweet fragrant rose petals that we may pluck one by one from the holy, healing word of God.

THE CONTRAST TO THORNS

During the global Sunday-law, everyone on earth will be forced to obey the mark of the beast.

There are some who will not comply because their love and obedience to Jesus will not allow them to yield to any threats or penalties; they will resist the false day of worship. This will bring forth all the thorns of hell, the full-blown hatred of demonic forces revealed in human beings who are their servants, whose only wish is to eradicate these, irritating, intolerable and loathsome people.

God’s people will be seen in sharp contrast to the heinous outrage of the beast and all the world. For they have lost their thorns, they overcame every evil stinging trait of character, for they have washed “their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.” Revelation 7:14

Their former thorns were being rubbed off one by one by pleading with Jesus to give them strength to overcome their worldly habits, coldness of heart, unchrist-like temper, indifference, negligence, envy, criticism, etc.

It is a tough and hard warfare against one’s ingrained traits of character. There is no earthly cure against this cruel reign of *self*. There is only a true dying to it, by serious, intense and heartfelt imploring to Heaven for help; to boldly enter the Most Holy, that sacred place where deliverance and victory can be found. It is here that we find our blessed High Priest, the one and only Remedy, Jesus Christ, who welcomes every penitent sinner crying out for divine help in the horrendous war against one’s nature.

Our stubborn self, this antagonistic entity—so opposite to the loveliness of Jesus—must perish. We must put

forth a constant effort, never giving up, “For a just man falleth seven times, and riseth up again” (Proverbs 24:16). Also, we must go forward with courage; with a childlike trust, “Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith” (Hebrews 12:2), and also humbly submit to His will and power. Then we shall conquer.

The Bible teaches that God will have a people, a church “not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing.” Ephesians 5:27. Believing this is our privilege and hope, for God’s word does not fail.

JESUS AND YOU

Dear reader, be bold and strong, take your salvation seriously in your hands; you cannot save yourself, but Jesus does and will, if you give your life and heart to Him and all this wretched self. He will help you throw off your thorns with which you have hurt the Saviour so much. Yes, we all have, with our sins, crowned Him with cruel thorns!

Faith in the redeeming, transforming power of Christ will produce works of love, obedience to His commandments, good deeds to others. Then the thorns of our earthly nature, selfish habits, will fall off to be transformed into a pure, pleasing, Christ-like character that diffuses a delightful fragrance, like the perfume of beautiful roses.

The end result will be roses of a new creation, like those at the beginning—pure, exceedingly beautiful, without thorns.

Do you wish to become such a rose? A rose that is endearing, with a pleasant perfume, and reflecting the righteousness of Christ in the hands of your Creator, Redeemer and King, who will present you before His Father with joy and gladness to the glory of God.

“Whatsoever things are. . . just, . . . pure, . . . lovely, . . . be any virtue, . . . any praise, think on these things.” Philippians 4:8. Amen.

Edda Tedford, Canada



Is The Sabbath Day *A Burden or a joyful delight?*

This is the Lord's instruction to us but how many have found the Sabbath a delight in reality?

(based on Isaiah 58:13–14, and *Child Guidance*, chapter 79, p. 527–537)

The Sabbath institution, which originated in Eden, is as old as the world itself. It was observed by all the patriarchs, from creation down. What does the Bible really teach about Sabbath? You may have grown up observing the Sabbath or maybe you have just recently accepted the Sabbath or you need to know more about this biblical truth, "The Sabbath Day". Whatever your situation, this question is important to you: "Have you ever thought about what the Sabbath is? What it was really designed for, and what it means to us?"

In this light we will take this time to look at the Sabbath, what it was designed to be, right and wrong ways of observing the Sabbath, and the kind of people we must be in order to be able to keep the Sabbath Day holy.

DESIGN OF THE SABBATH

In Isaiah 58:13 we read, "If thou turn away thy foot from the Sabbath, from doing thy pleasure on My holy day; and call the Sabbath a delight, the holy of the LORD, honourable; and shalt honour Him, not doing thine own ways, nor finding thine own pleasure, nor speaking thine own words." This is the Lord's instruction to us; but, how many have found the Sabbath a delight in the real sense of the word? Is it a delight to us not to be able to speak our own words and to do our own pleasure? In this article, we will look more directly at this aspect of what we really delight in. But, I would like to draw your attention to the design pointed out in this text, the design was for the delight. It was on this day, at the end of creation week, that "the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy." Job 38:7. For men and women this day was given. Jesus said unto the Pharisees: "The Sabbath was made for man, and not man for the Sabbath" (Mark 2:27)—and to the human race this day was given for rest

and enjoyment. Exodus 31:15 says, "Six days may work be done; but in the seventh is the Sabbath of rest, holy to the LORD." "While [the Sabbath] calls to mind the lost peace of Eden, it tells of peace restored through the Saviour. And every object in nature repeats His invitation, 'Come unto Me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.' Matthew 11:28." —*The Desire of Ages*, p. 289

RIGHT AND WRONG SABBATH OBSERVANCE

Make Friday the Preparation Day

"On Friday let the preparation for the Sabbath be completed. See that all the clothing is in readiness, and that all the cooking is done. Let the boots be blacked, and the baths be taken. It is possible to do this. If you make it a rule, you can do it. The Sabbath is not to be given to the repairing of garments, to the cooking of food, to pleasure seeking, or to any other worldly employment. Before the setting of the sun, let all secular work be laid aside, and all secular papers be put out of sight. Parents, explain your work and its purpose to your children, and let them share in your preparation to keep the Sabbath according to the commandment." —*Child Guidance*, p. 528

It is true that we can have a good gift but we can use it in a bad way and lose its original purpose. This is the reason why we need to know clearly what kind of things we can do upon the Sabbath, which makes it a delight. Through inspiration, God has given us many instructions on the design for the Sabbath, and what we are exhorted and privileged to do on this day, more than on any other. The following are some of the many things we can do on this day:

Thoughts and talks

"Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever

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

Yes, on the Sabbath day we can talk together. But, the Bible says, we are not to speak our own words. For this reason we can speak of things that especially relate to our spiritual life. Have you ever had questions on religious doctrine or Bible topics? Have you ever wanted to share things that God has done for you, such as testifying to others? Then this is the day to ask these questions and talk about these things. “It is necessary that the people of God assemble to talk of Him, to interchange thoughts and ideas in regard to the truths contained in His word, and to devote a portion of time to appropriate prayer.”—*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 2, p. 583

Worshipping

In Revelation 14:7, the first angel’s message states: “worship Him that made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and the fountains of waters.” In order to accomplish this and recognize our Creator, the Sabbath is a day in which we devote a portion of time to worship and Bible study. These times are precious, and to worship God through prayer and praise is to really give honour to Him as our Creator. We are given instruction, though, this is not to fill the whole day. “Everyone should feel that he has a part to act in making the Sabbath meetings interesting.”—*Counsels for the Church*, p. 265

“Fathers and mothers should make it a rule that their children attend public worship on the Sabbath, and should enforce the rule by their own example. It is our duty to command our children and our household after us, as did Abraham. By example as well as precept we should impress upon them the importance of religious teaching. . . . But while we worship God, we are not to consider this a drudgery. The Sabbath of the Lord is to be made a blessing to us and to our children. They are to look upon the Sabbath as a day of delight, a day which God has sanctified; and they will so consider it if they are properly instructed. . . .

“Many need instruction as to how they should appear in the assembly for worship on the Sabbath. They are not to enter the presence of God in the common clothing worn during the week. All should have a special Sabbath suit, to be worn when attending service in God’s house. While we should not conform to worldly fashions, we are not to be indifferent in regard to our outward appearance. We are to be neat and trim, though without adornment. The chil-

dren of God should be pure within and without.”—*Child Guidance*, p. 530–531

Praise in song

The Psalmist says: “Make a joyful noise unto the LORD, all ye lands. Serve the LORD with gladness: come before His presence with singing.” “It is a good thing to give thanks unto the LORD, and to sing praises unto Thy name, O most High.” Psalm 100:1–2; 92:1. Praise to God in song is one of the most beautiful gifts given to us from heaven, and when we make right use of these gifts heaven draws very near to the earth. “Let us all bear in mind that in every assembly of the saints below are angels of God, listening to the testimonies, songs, and prayers. Let us remember that our praises are supplemented by the choirs of the angelic host above. Then as you meet from Sabbath to Sabbath, sing praises to Him who has called you out of darkness into His marvelous light.”—*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 6, p. 367

Psalm 92 was written specifically for praise to God on the Sabbath day. Read this through and join with David in his exaltation of the Lord on this day. Do we play instruments? Then let us use them to give reverent and honourable praise to God.

Spending time in nature

God is our maker. “The sea is His, and He made it: and His hands formed the dry land. O come, let us worship and bow down: let us kneel before the LORD our maker.” Psalm 95:5–6. During the week we may not have time to go out and really enjoy some time in nearby parks, mountains, or by the ocean, sea or lake. This is a day where we can, with friends or family, enjoy the things that God has provided in nature for our enjoyment. “The Sabbath calls our thoughts to nature, and brings us into communion with the Creator. In the song of the bird, the sighing of the trees, and the music of the sea, we still may hear His voice who talked with Adam in Eden in the cool of the day. And as we behold His power in nature we find comfort, for the word that created all things is that which speaks life to the soul.”—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 281

In all of the above activities, “The Sabbath should be made so interesting to our families that its weekly return will be hailed with joy.”—*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 2, p. 585. This is the design that God had in mind for this one day of the week which He has reserved as holy. Good reading materials—the Bible, the Spirit of Prophecy, and true experiences from the lives of missionaries—these provide wonderful food for thought and meditation during the sacred Sabbath hours. Because, “We should in no case allow burdens and business transactions to divert our minds



upon the Sabbath of the Lord, which He has sanctified. We should not allow our minds to dwell upon things of a worldly character even. But the mind cannot be refreshed, enlivened, and elevated by being confined nearly all the Sabbath hours within walls, listening to long sermons and tedious, formal prayers. The Sabbath of the Lord is put to a wrong use if thus celebrated." —*Ibid.*, vol. 2, p. 583

WHAT SHOULD WE AVOID?

Speaking our own words

"The words and thoughts should be guarded. Those who discuss business matters and lay plans on the Sabbath, are regarded of God as though they engaged in the actual transaction of business. To keep the Sabbath holy, we should not even allow our minds to dwell upon things of a worldly character." —*Counsels for the Church*, p. 269

"Talking upon anything or everything which may come into the mind is speaking our own words. . . .

"When the Sabbath commences, we should place a guard upon ourselves, upon our acts and our words, lest we rob God by appropriating to our own use that time which is strictly the Lord's." —*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 2, p. 702

Secular studies

"You have desecrated the Sabbath by bringing your studies into that holy time which was not yours to occupy for your own purposes. God has said: 'In it thou shalt not do any work.'" —*Ibid.*, vol. 4, p. 114. Here is a warning given against abusing Sabbath time. Even long trips and traveling should be avoided when not done specifically for necessary missionary purposes.

"Some of our people have sent their children to school on the Sabbath. . . . Some parents have tried to justify their course by quoting the words of Christ, that it is lawful to do good on the Sabbath day. . . . Our brethren cannot expect the approval of God while they place their children where it is impossible for them to obey the fourth commandment. They should endeavour to make some arrangement with the authorities whereby the children shall be excused from attendance at school upon the seventh day. If this fails, then their duty is plain, to obey God's requirements at whatever cost. . . . Here is where we are to prove our loyalty. . . . If parents allow their children to receive an education with the world, and make the Sabbath a common day, then the seal of God cannot be placed upon them. They will be destroyed with the world; and will not their blood rest upon the parents?" —*Counsels for the Church*, p. 268–269

Labour—Secular works

"Every time you put your hands to labour [for a livelihood] on the Sabbath day, you virtually deny your faith." —*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 4, p. 250

"Cooking on the Sabbath should be avoided; but it is not therefore necessary to eat cold food. In cold weather the food prepared the day before should be heated. And let the meals, however simple, be palatable and attractive. Especially in families where there are children, it is well, on the Sabbath, to provide something that will be regarded as a treat, something the family do not have every day." —*The Ministry of Healing*, p. 307. To prepare on Friday, the cooking, cleaning, clearing up of differences between ourselves and others we may have hurt, as well as caring for duties which can be done during the week, we free ourselves for rest on the Sabbath, for contemplation of God, and for recreation.

And what if we need money?

"Circumstances will not justify anyone in working upon the Sabbath for the sake of worldly profit. If God excuses one man, He may excuse all. . . . Those who disregard the Lord's express injunction for their personal advantage are heaping future woe upon themselves." —*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 4, p. 251–252

What did Nehemiah do and why? "In those days saw I in Judah some treading wine presses on the Sabbath, and bringing in sheaves, and lading asses; as also wine, grapes, and figs, and all manner of burdens, which they brought into Jerusalem on the Sabbath day: and I testified against them in the day wherein they sold victuals. There dwelt men of Tyre also therein, which brought fish, and all manner of ware, and sold on the Sabbath unto the children of Judah, and in Jerusalem. Then I contended with the nobles of Judah, and said unto them, What evil thing is this that ye do, and profane the Sabbath day? Did not your fathers thus, and did not our God bring all this evil upon us, and upon this city? yet ye bring more wrath upon Israel by profaning the Sabbath. And it came to pass, that when the gates of Jerusalem began to be dark before the Sabbath, I commanded that the gates should be shut, and charged that they should not be opened till after the Sabbath: and some of my servants set I at the gates, that there should no burden be brought in on the Sabbath day. So the merchants and sellers of all kind of ware lodged without Jerusalem once or twice. Then I testified against them, and said unto them, Why lodge ye about the wall? if ye do so again, I will lay hands on you. From that time forth came they no more on the Sabbath." Nehemiah 13:15–21

What about doctors and nurses?

"Often physicians and nurses are called upon during the Sabbath to minister to the sick, and sometimes it is impossible for them to take time for rest and for attending devotional services. The needs of suffering humanity are never to be neglected. The Saviour, by His example, has shown us that it is right to relieve suffering on the Sabbath. But unnecessary work, such as ordinary treatments and opera-

tions that can be postponed, should be deferred.” *–Ibid.*, vol. 7, p. 106

What does God require of us?

Let us reflect for a moment on Isaiah 58:13. On the Sabbath we are not to do our own ways, find our own pleasure, nor speak our own words. Is this possible? Yes. Is this easy? No, not when we have been doing these things every day of the week and suddenly on one day we have to stop completely. The Spirit of Prophecy declares, “It is possible to do this. If you make it a rule, you can do it.” *–Ibid.*, vol. 6, p. 355. What is God’s object here? “All through the week we are to have the Sabbath in mind and be making preparation to keep it according to the commandment. . . . All who regard the Sabbath as a sign between them and God, showing that He is the God who sanctifies them, will represent the principles of His government. They will bring into daily practice the laws of His kingdom. Daily it will be their prayer that the sanctification of the Sabbath may rest upon them. Every day they will have the companionship of Christ and will exemplify the perfection of His character. Every day their light will shine forth to others in good works.” *–Ibid.*, vol. 6, p. 353. In order to keep the Sabbath day holy we must ourselves be a holy people, a people set apart for a special purpose. We cannot be just set apart on one day of the week. “To all who receive the Sabbath as a sign of Christ’s creative and redeeming power, it will be a delight.” *–The Desire of Ages*, p. 289



It will be a delight to those who are truly keeping His commandments. Notice the following quote: “The moral law enjoined the observance of the Sabbath, which was not a burden except when that law was transgressed.” *–Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 3, p. 391. The delight in keeping the Sabbath is the result of keeping the whole law, a sign to all that we have sanctified our entire life to Jesus, and that He is the center of our life every day of the week. This is the sign that the angel of God will see when he comes to make the distinction between those who have the mark of the beast and those who have the seal of God. The seal will not be the fact that we go to church on Sabbath every week. We may do this and still be left out of heaven. Rather, the seal will be in our hearts. “The Sabbath is a sign of the relationship existing between God and His people, a sign that they are His obedient subjects, that they keep holy His law.” *–Ibid.*, vol. 8, p. 198

In order to properly keep the Sabbath, taking delight in not speaking our own words or doing our own pleasure, we must have a relationship with Jesus. This relationship with Jesus is everything. The power of God is presented through

the conversion of our own hearts—and then on the Sabbath that same power of re-creation rejuvenates our body and soul for the coming week. This is an experience each one of us must have individually.

The true observance of the Sabbath is an experience, an experience we cannot have for each other. We must each make it personally. It is an experience of a person set free from sin, living each moment in the presence of Jesus and by His power being victorious over sin. This experience leads us on the Sabbath day to come aside to rest, contemplate His works, and spend time with those who love Him. This experience can be yours. To see the Sabbath as a delight is a privilege you may have if you surrender your life completely to Jesus. In keeping the Sabbath we are sanctified.

Sabbath, a Delight

“All who love God should do what they can to make the Sabbath a delight, holy and honorable. They cannot do this by seeking their own pleasure in sinful, forbidden amusements. Yet they can do much to exalt the Sabbath in their families and make it the most interesting day of the week. We should devote time to interesting our children. A change will have a happy influence upon them. We can walk out with them in the open air; we can sit with them in the groves and in the bright sunshine, and give their restless minds something to feed upon by conversing with them upon the works of God, and can inspire them with love and reverence by calling their attention to the beautiful objects in nature.

“As the sun goes down, let the voice of prayer and the hymn of praise mark the close of the sacred hours, and invite God’s presence through the cares of the week of labor. Thus parents can make the Sabbath, as it should be, the most joyful day of the week. They can lead their children to regard it as a delight, the day of days, the holy of the Lord, honorable.” *–Child Guidance*, p. 536–537

May the Lord strengthen us to keep the Sabbath holy and to enjoy it as a day of delight until His appearance in the cloud, keeping in mind that “So long as the heavens and the earth endure, the Sabbath will continue as a sign of the Creator’s power. And when Eden shall bloom on earth again, God’s holy rest day will be honored by all beneath the sun. ‘From one Sabbath to another’ the inhabitants of the glorified new earth shall go up ‘to worship before Me, saith the Lord.’ Matthew 5:18; Isaiah 66:23.” *–Counsels for the Church*, p. 271. Amen.

Victor SHUMBUSHO, Congo Union Secretary

CHILDREN'S CORNER



Animals of the Bible

THE LAMB

The Lamb is one of the most symbolic and widely used animals in the Bible. The lamb/sheep has been used by humans for many reasons, such as for wool, milk, and clothing. In the time of Moses, rams skins were dyed red for the making of the Tabernacle. But the main purpose of sheep/lamb was a symbolic one. After sin entered the Bible tells of Abel who sacrificed a lamb to God. He understood the meaning of that great sacrifice. Abraham would also make burnt offerings to God.

What were the characteristics of the lamb to be brought to the altar? "Your lamb shall be without blemish, a male of the first year." Exodus 12:5. Was not Jesus like this—perfect? These sacrifices in the Old Testament were a symbol of the real sacrifice of Jesus Christ. The Morning and the Evening sacrifices daily pointed to the Lamb of God.

"He was oppressed and He was afflicted, yet He opened not His mouth: He is brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so He openeth not His mouth." Isaiah 53:7. He gave His life as an offering for sin, for our sin. We were bought with a price, a heavy price. "Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold. . . . But with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot." 1 Peter 1:18–19

As a child Jesus went to the temple with His parents. He saw the priests dressed in white, performing their solemn ministry. He saw the bleeding victim upon the altar of sacrifice. In the congregation He bowed to worship day by day as He saw the meaning more clearly. He understood that every act seemed to be bound up with His own life. Jesus knew that He would be the ultimate sacrifice. The Holy Spirit illuminated His mind and little by little He sees and understands

The thief on the cross sees in Jesus the Lamb of God that taketh away the sins of the world; Jesus—bruised, mocked and hanging on the cross. Hope enters his heart and with anguish he casts his helpless dying soul upon the dying Je-

sus, "Lord, remember me," he said, "when Thou comest into Thy kingdom." Luke 23:42. We must also see our helplessness and like him cast ourselves at the feet of Jesus.

Let us remember this sacrifice of Jesus and come to Him so that we may truly have eternal life. "Never can the cost of our redemption be realized until the redeemed shall stand with the Redeemer before the throne of God. Then as the glories of the eternal home burst upon our enraptured senses we shall remember that Jesus left all this for us, that He not only became an exile from the heavenly courts, but for us took the risk of failure and eternal loss. Then we shall cast our crowns at His feet, and raise the song, 'Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing.' Revelation 5:12." —*The Desire of Ages*, p. 131. Amen.

Cyrus Newby

THE DOVE



The dove is sometimes used to represent the Holy Spirit. It is mentioned in the Bible several times .

When Jesus went to Jordan He got baptized by his cousin, John. When He came out of the water the heavens opened and the Holy Spirit landed on

Him in the form of a dove. Then all present heard God say, "This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased."

"When He was baptized of John in Jordan, as He came up out of the water, the Spirit of God, like a dove of burnished gold, descended upon Him, and a voice from heaven said, 'This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.'" — *Selected Messages*, bk. 1, p. 227

In Noah's time, after the flood, he sent out a raven to see if it could find land. It flew around until the water dried up. Then Noah sent out a dove, and it came back with nothing. A week later he sent it again and it came back with an olive tree leaf. The third time Noah sent the dove it did not come back because it found land.

The dove is a symbol of peace. When the Holy Spirit comes into our hearts and we are forgiven that creates peace in our hearts.

It is my prayer that we may let the Holy Spirit into our hearts so we will have His peace. Amen.

Sarah Newby

THE SERPENT

One animal, the serpent changed earth's history completely in the Garden of Eden. The scientific name of serpent is "*acrochordus arafurae*". In many different religions, the serpent, or snake, is a good omen. In early civilization, the serpent was a sign of fertility and good fortune. Some reli-

gions state that the serpent was the umbilical cord between humans and the Mother Earth. In Buddhism, it was said that a hooded cobra protected Buddha during a vicious storm. Buddha put his two hands into the snake's hood as a blessing, and that created the spectacled cobra. In other mythology, dragons and serpents were used interchangeably. The venom of a serpent was said to have the same fiery quality as a dragon's fire. In the Bible, the serpent was Satan, deceiving Adam and Eve to disobey God.

Today there are 3,400 species of snakes, and all species have their own distinctions from one another. Some swim, some spit venom. Some have hoods to intimidate, while others have rattles on the tips of their tails. Some swallow whole animals into their mouth, while others squish their prey to death. Some are scavengers who hunt bird eggs and smaller reptiles, amphibians and insects. Certain species of snakes glide across the sand and others swing from tree to tree. Some are small and others are at the top of the food chain in their habitats. Snakes are reptiles, which means they are cold-blooded. They do not give birth to live young.

They produce eggs. As always, these eggs need to incubate, and the mother sits with her eggs in a burrow or dead tree of some kind, and produces rays of heat that reach the eggs so they incubate faster. When the eggs hatch, the mother leaves her babies to fend for themselves. Here are the names of several species of snakes: Boa constrictor, spectacled cobra, king cobra, the green anaconda, diamond back rattlesnake, coral snake, black mamba, reticulated Python, rat snakes, milk snakes and garter snakes.

The diet of a snake depends on its species. Usually they will eat small vertebrates like birds, rats and sometimes other snakes. Bigger species like the anaconda, for example, eat big prey like wild pigs, deer, birds, capybara, caiman and sometimes even jaguars. Anaconda do not have venom, so they squeeze their prey to death and swallow it. They can go for weeks, if not a month after a big meal. The average lifespan of a snake is nine years.

Dragons are mythical creatures that originated from China. They are considered reptiles and cold-blooded. Some dragons have wings while some do not. Dragons were used in oriental ceremonies such as celebrating the New Year. Dragons would originally spit fire but it does not matter. Satan was also represented in the bible as a dragon. "And there was war in heaven: Michael and His angels fought against the dragon; and the dragon fought and his angels. And prevailed not; neither was their place found any more in heaven. And the great dragon was cast out, that old serpent, called the Devil, and Satan, which deceiveth the whole world: he was cast out into the earth, and his angels

were cast out with him." Revelation 12:7-9. Here Satan is referred to as a serpent and a dragon.

We all know the story of Adam and Eve. God placed Adam and Eve in the garden He created, calling it the Garden of Eden. They were told that everything in the garden was theirs, except for one tree—the tree of knowledge of good and evil. Of course, the first few times they forgot about it until Eve became curious and went to the tree. In the tree there was a serpent. The serpent hissed to Eve, whispering about the knowledge she could gain and how powerful she could become if only she took one bite. Just one. One bite changed history. Eve took a fruit. Her curiosity got the better of her, and she took a bite. After, she went looking for Adam, so he could take a bite of this amazing fruit. Adam questioned it at first, but then gave in to his wife's persuasion. God knew they disobeyed, and went looking for them. They hid, but of course, no one can hide from God. Adam blamed Eve. Eve blamed the serpent. God then cursed the serpent to forever slide on its belly and that the seed of the woman would bruise the serpent's head. Adam and Eve

were then exiled from Eden. Now they would have to toil for their food and work for their family. Satan however, laughed that he was able to convince Adam and Eve to sin. Sin now spoiled this world. From that moment on, sin spoiled the beautiful handiwork of God.

Another story that involves a serpent is the story of Moses and the Israelites when they were in the wilderness.

God sent serpents into the camp of Israel to punish them for murmuring. Of course, the Israelites pleaded for mercy. Moses prayed to God for an answer. "And the people spake against God, and against Moses. Wherefore have ye brought us up out of Egypt to die in the wilderness? for there is no bread, neither is there any water; and our soul loatheth this light bread. And the LORD sent fiery serpents among the people, and they bit the people; and much people of Israel died. Therefore the people came to Moses, and said, We have sinned, for we have spoken against the LORD, and against thee; pray unto the LORD, that He take away the serpents from us. And Moses prayed for the people. And the LORD said unto Moses, Make thee a fiery serpent, and set it upon a pole: and it shall come to pass, that every one that is bitten, when he looketh upon it, shall live. And Moses made a serpent of brass, and put it upon a pole, and it came to pass, that if a serpent had bitten any man, when he beheld the serpent of brass, he lived." Numbers 21:5-9. Whenever the people looked at this brazen serpent, they were healed. So if we look upon Jesus, we may be healed of our sins. We must beware the temptation of the serpent, for it is strong. May the Lord help us. Amen.

Stephen Newby



Sweet Potatoes

Sweet potatoes are native to Central and South America and are one of the oldest vegetables used by man. Christopher Columbus brought sweet potatoes to Europe after his first voyage to the New World in 1492. By the 16th century, they were brought to the Philippines by Spanish explorers and to Africa, India, Indonesia and southern Asia by the Portuguese. Around this same time, sweet potatoes began to be cultivated in the southern United States. Worldwide, about 80 million tons of sweet potatoes are grown in China each year, with Africa producing about 14 million tons, Central and South America about 2 million, and the U.S. about 1 million tons.

What people may not know is that sweet potatoes belong to an entirely different food species than either yams or the common potato. The potato is a starchy, tuberous crop from the perennial nightshade family. Yams are closely related to lilies and grasses. Compared to sweet potatoes, yams are starchier and drier.

The many varieties of sweet potatoes are members of the morning glory family, Convolvulacea. Depending upon the variety, of which there are about 400, the skin color can range from white to yellow, red, purple or brown. The flesh of the sweet potato may be almost white, cream, yellow, orange, orange-red, pink, or deep purple, although white/cream and yellow-orange flesh are most common. Sometimes this root vegetable will be shaped like a potato, being short and blocky with rounded ends, while other times it will be longer with tapered ends.

When you choose sweet potatoes as a dietary root vegetable, you are getting a truly unique type of potato that is nutritionally different from other types.

NUTRIENTS IN THE SWEET POTATO

The sweet potato's rich orange hue not only adds a nice splash of colour to any dish; but, the pigment that provides the colour to the sweet potato, known as beta-carotene, has many health benefits. The intensity of the sweet potato's yellow or orange flesh color is directly correlated to its

beta-carotene content. Beta-carotene is a precursor to Vitamin A, which means that our bodies have the ability to convert beta-carotene to Vitamin A.

Vitamin A deficiencies are especially harmful to growing children. It is the leading cause of preventable blindness in children. Approximately 250,000 to 500,000 malnourished children in the developing world go blind each year from a deficiency of vitamin A, approximately half of whom die within a year of becoming blind. It has also been linked to prevention of vision loss and macular degeneration in adults.

Vitamin A also boosts the immune system, and in children with deficiencies it diminishes their ability to fight infections. In countries with no immunizations, infectious diseases such as measles have higher fatality rates. Even a mild deficiency can also be a problem, as it may increase children's risk of developing respiratory and diarrheal infections, decrease growth rate, slow bone development, and decrease likelihood of survival from serious illness. Several recent studies have shown the superior ability of sweet potatoes to raise our blood levels of vitamin A. Too much Vitamin A can be toxic, which is a danger when taken as a supplement. However, with beta-carotene, the body will only convert as much of it into Vitamin A as it needs.

Sweet potatoes are available in most countries year-round, which make it a very reliable source of Vitamin A. Many countries are looking at increasing sweet potato crops to combat Vitamin A deficiencies. The recommended daily amount of vitamin A can be achieved with only 100 grams (3.5 ounces), less than one medium sized sweet potato. Orange-fleshed sweet potatoes may be one of nature's unsurpassed sources of beta-carotene per gram, even more so than carrots.

Recent studies, however, have shown that beta-carotene is a valuable nutrient in its own right, wholly apart from its role as a vitamin A source. It plays an important part in the

body's defenses against free radicals that can cause damage to the cells, which can lead to chronic diseases. It also helps to internally protect your skin from sun damage by both deflecting and repairing cell damage caused by excessive UV exposure.

Yet beta-carotene only begins to tell the story of sweet potato antioxidants. Particularly in the purple-fleshed sweet potato, antioxidant anthocyanin pigments are abundant. These are concentrated in the starchy core, and may be even more concentrated in the flesh than in the skin.

Also, the antioxidant pigments have outstanding anti-inflammatory health benefits, similar to the blueberry. Certain events in the body can play a key role in the development of unwanted inflammation; the reduction of the inflammation has been clearly shown by the use of sweet potato phytonutrients in illnesses that include heart disease, arthritis and strokes. In studies, reduced inflammation has also been shown in brain tissue and nerve tissue throughout the body.

Recent research has shown that, particularly when passing through our digestive tract, sweet potato phytonutrients may be able to lower the potential health risk posed by heavy metals that can be contained in our diets, such as mercury, cadmium and arsenic.

Storage proteins—called sporamins—are produced by sweet potato plants whenever the plants are subjected to physical damage. Their ability to help the plants heal from this damage is related to their role as antioxidants. When the sweet potato is being digested inside of our gastrointestinal tract, we may get some of these same antioxidant benefits.

Colour-related sweet potato phytonutrients have an impact on blood clotting. Balanced amounts of fibrinogen, thrombin and fibrin are a key part of the body's health and its ability to close off wounds and stop the loss of blood. However, excess amounts of these clotting-related molecules can trigger unwanted secretions of inflammatory-causing molecules. Intake of sweet potato color extracts have been shown to accomplish a reduction in inflammation, and simultaneous reduction of fibrinogen levels.

For most foods which are especially concentrated in starch, there can often be a risk of too much simple sugar release in our digestive tract, which can lead to a rapid rise in our blood sugar levels. However, sweet potatoes have the ability to potentially *improve* blood sugar regulation—even in persons with type 2 diabetes. Sweet potatoes contain almost twice as much fiber as other types of potatoes. The 6.6 grams of dietary fiber in a medium sweet potato helps to slow down the pace of digestion. This means their caloric energy is used more slowly and efficiently than a lower fiber carbohydrate.

Another nutrient group provided by sweet potatoes is the resin glycosides. In lab studies, these have been shown to have antibacterial and antifungal properties.

An equally amazing fact about sweet potatoes is the antioxidant capacity of all their parts. Different genes are at work in the flesh versus skin of the sweet potato producing different concentrations of antioxidants. Even the leaves of the sweet potato plant have been shown to provide important antioxidant benefits and are included in soups in many cuisines.

BUYING AND PREPARING SWEET POTATOES

When buying sweet potatoes, choose ones that are firm and do not have any cracks, bruises or soft spots. Sweet potatoes should be stored in a cool, dark and well-ventilated place, where they will keep fresh for up to ten days. Ideally, they should be kept out of the refrigerator in a cool, dry, dark place not above 60F /15C. If storing them at room temperature, keep the sweet potatoes in a brown paper bag, away from heat.

If you purchase organically grown sweet potatoes, you can eat the entire tuber, flesh and skin. Conventionally grown ones should be peeled before eating since sometimes the skin is treated with dye or wax. If preparing the sweet potato whole, it can be peeled after it is cooked.

Sweet potatoes can be steamed, boiled, baked, or stir fried. Boiled and mashed sweet potatoes are healthier than baked or roasted, as it has been shown to have a more favourable impact on maintaining proper blood sugar levels, and causes a higher spike in Vitamin A levels in children. However, you can lose some of the nutrients into the water.

The beta-carotene from sweet potatoes is also better absorbed when fat-containing foods are eaten along with the sweet potatoes. Only three grams of fat is needed, which is a small amount.

The best way to cook sweet potatoes is by steaming, for maximum nutrition and flavour. Adding a small amount of olive oil to the sweet potato after it has been steamed will give you the necessary fat, while avoiding the problems that come with frying food. Alternatively, adding sweet potatoes to dishes that contain foods high in fat will assist with the body's absorption of the beta-carotene.

Sweet potatoes, once they are cooked, taste delicious even when served cold in salads and as a packed lunch. Although many people only use sweet potatoes during the holiday season, they are available year-round in most countries. Think of adding one of the most nutritious vegetables on the planet to your menu regularly throughout the year.

The Suffering And Glorification Of Christ Is Parallel To The Experiences Of His Faithful Children



WHY THERE IS SUFFERING

The transgression of our first parents in the Garden of Eden opened the floodgates of woe upon the world. As years went by, the tide of evil was coming fiercely upon the world! Suffering and misery as a result of sin were dire, the case appeared hopeless. But we must quickly mention here that had God not interposed through the sacrifice of His only Son, (John 3:16; Romans 5:6–8) the fate of the world would indeed have been hopeless and abandoned to final destruction.

Before sin, God had placed them in a school. “The Garden of Eden was the schoolroom, nature was the lesson book, the Creator Himself was the instructor, and the parents of the human family were the students.” – *Education*, p. 20. At that time they were learning the easier way for they did not have the knowledge of evil that was, in love, withheld. However, by transgression, they had forfeited the easier way of learning. The hard way, a life of toil and care, was now appointed them. In toil the earth was to yield her increase.

“It was a discipline rendered needful by his sin, to place a check upon the indulgence of appetite and passion, to develop habits of self-control. It was a part of God’s great plan of man’s recovery from the ruin and degradation of sin.” – *Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 60

THOSE THAT SUFFERED FOR JESUS’ SAKE

Even though the whole world is suffering, Satan, since the fall, has bent all his efforts in concentrating this suffering upon God’s people with the aim to discourage and thus wrench away their faith in God. God’s people,

therefore, are afflicted with poverty, oppression, pain, persecution, and, at times, put to death.

Take, for example, Joseph, the servant of God, suffering at the hand of his brothers, sold as a slave, and essentially left to destruction! Satan uses numerous methods. If deception and seduction do not work, he resorts to torture to intimidate the chosen of God. Day after day Satan urged an unchaste woman to bring Joseph down to the abyss by tempting him to venture upon the transgression of the seventh commandment (Genesis 39:10). When he resisted this severest of temptations that can ever come to man, his faithfulness ignited the wrath of the devil, and he was cast in prison.

Job suffered for his faithfulness. Satan thought that by poverty and torture, he would wrench away Job’s hold on God. Job declared: “For I know that my Redeemer liveth, and that He shall stand at the latter day upon the earth: And though after my skin worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God.” Job 19:25–26. Satan had failed.

Of the disciples of Jesus inspiration tells us that they all suffered and died for Christ’s sake. Christ foretold of a great time of tribulation to befall His people. It occurred during the dark ages between 538 A.D. to the year 1798 A.D. (Matthew 24:21–22.) It is estimated that more than 50,000,000 faithful souls lost their lives. Paul, who also was a partaker in the sufferings of Christ, writes that: “All that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution.” 2 Timothy 3:12. In his letter to the Hebrews he writes of people severely persecuted for clinging to the truth:

“And others were tortured, not accepting deliverance; that they might obtain a better resurrection: And others had trial of cruel mockings and scourgings, yea, moreover of bonds and imprisonment: They were stoned, they were sawn asunder, were tempted, were slain with the sword: they wandered about in sheepskins and goatskins; being destitute, afflicted, tormented; (Of whom the world was not worthy:) they wandered in deserts, and in mountains, and in dens and caves of the earth.” Hebrews 11:35–38

“Why is it, then, that persecution seems in a great degree to slumber? The only reason is that the church has conformed to the world’s standard and therefore awakens no opposition. The religion which is current in our day is not of the pure and holy character that marked the Christian faith in the days of Christ and His apostles. It is only because of the spirit of compromise with sin, because the great truths of the word of God are so indifferently regarded, because there is so little vital godliness in the church, that Christianity is apparently so popular with the world. Let there be a revival of the faith and power of the early church, and the spirit of persecution will be revived, and the fires of persecution will be rekindled.” –*The Great Controversy*, p. 48

JESUS—THE GREATEST SUFFERER

As we find ourselves in strait places, suffering in diverse ways, and destitute due to stinging poverty, let us remember that our Lord Jesus was the greatest sufferer. No one has ever endured the pain He went through. He was tempted just as we are. He condescended and took our poverty so that we may be rich. With His stripes we are healed! There is nothing of our condition that He does not know. (You may wish to meditate on Isaiah 53, and Hebrews 2:18; 4:15–16)



“The Son of God has opened a way of escape for the ruined race by taking the transgressions of man and their just penalty upon Himself. He laid aside His robes of royalty, clothed His divinity with humanity, and came into our world. He was a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief. He suffered insult and reproach and mockery, and yet He was the Majesty of heaven” –*Manuscript Releases*, vol. 9, p. 233

“As soon as Jesus was nailed to the cross, it was lifted by strong men, and with great violence thrust into the place prepared for it. This caused the most intense agony to the Son of God.” –*The Desire of Ages*, p. 745

“The followers of Christ must tread the same path of humiliation, reproach, and suffering which their Master trod. The enmity that burst forth against the world’s Redeemer would be manifested against all who should believe on His name.” –*The Great Controversy*, p. 39

“And of all the gifts that Heaven can bestow upon men, fellowship with Christ in His sufferings is the most weighty trust and the highest honor. Not Enoch, who was translated to heaven, not Elijah, who ascended in a chariot of fire, was greater or more honored than John the Baptist, who perished alone in the dungeon. ‘Unto you it is given in the behalf of Christ, not only to believe on Him, but also to suffer for His sake.’ Philippians 1:29.” –*The Desire of Ages*, p. 224

THE GLORIFIED LORD IS A SYMBOL OF THE GLORIFICATION OF HIS CHILDREN

Our Saviour, Jesus Christ, “the author and finisher of our faith,” was faithful in every point and He overcame. And “for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God.” Hebrews 12:2

The apostle John of Patmos was privileged to see Jesus in His glorified state. He gives an impressive narration:

“I was in the Spirit on the Lord’s day, and heard behind me a great voice, as of a trumpet, Saying, I am Alpha and Omega, the first and the last: and, What thou seest, write in a book, and send it unto the seven churches which are in Asia; unto Ephesus, and unto Smyrna, and unto Pergamos, and unto Thyatira, and unto Sardis, and unto Philadelphia, and unto Laodicea. And I turned to see the voice that spake with me. And being turned, I saw seven golden candlesticks; And in the midst of the seven candlesticks one like unto the Son of Man, clothed with a garment down to the foot, and girt about the paps with a golden girdle. His head and His hairs were white like wool, as white as snow; and His eyes were as a flame of fire; And His feet like unto fine brass, as if they burned in a furnace; and His voice as the sound of many waters. And He had in His right hand seven stars: and out of His mouth went a sharp two edged sword: and His countenance was as the sun shineth in His strength. And when I saw Him, I fell at His feet as dead. And He laid His right hand upon me, saying unto me, Fear not; I am the first and the last: I am He that liveth, and was dead; and, behold, I am alive for evermore, Amen; and have the keys of hell and of death. Write the things which thou hast seen, and the things which are, and the things which shall be hereafter.” Revelation 1:10–19

“Richly favored was this beloved disciple. He had seen his Master in Gethsemane, His face marked with the blood drops of agony, His ‘visage . . . marred more than any man, and His form more than the sons of men.’ Isaiah 52:14. He had seen Him in the hands of the Roman soldiers, clothed with an old purple robe and crowned with thorns. He had seen Him hanging on the cross of Calvary, the object of cruel mockery and abuse. Now John is once more permitted to behold his Lord. But how changed is His appearance! He is no longer a Man of Sorrows, despised and humiliated by men. He is clothed in a garment of heavenly brightness. ‘His head and His hairs’ are ‘white like wool, as white as snow; and His eyes . . . as a flame of fire; and His feet like unto fine brass, as if they burned in a furnace.’ Revelation 1:14, 15, 17. His voice is like the music of many waters. His countenance shines as the sun. In His hand are seven stars, and out of His mouth issues a sharp two-edged sword, an emblem of the power of His word. Patmos is made resplendent with the glory of the risen Lord. . . .

“John was strengthened to live in the presence of his glorified Lord. Then before his wondering vision were opened the glory of heaven. He was permitted to see the throne of God and, looking beyond the conflicts of earth, to behold the white-robed throng of the redeemed. He heard the music of the heavenly angels and the triumphant songs of those who had overcome by the blood of the Lamb and the word of their testi-

mony. In the revelation given to him there was unfolded scene after scene of thrilling interest in the experience of the people of God, and the history of the church foretold to the very close of time.” —*The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 582

“We all entered the cloud together, and were seven days ascending to the sea of glass, when Jesus brought the crowns and with His own right hand placed them on our heads. He gave us harps of gold and palms of victory. Here on the sea of glass the 144,000 stood in a perfect square. . . . Then we began to look at the glorious things outside of the city. There I saw most glorious houses, that had the appearance of silver, supported by four pillars set with pearls most glorious to behold. These were to be inhabited by the saints. In each was a golden shelf. I saw many of the saints go into the houses, take off their glittering crowns and lay them on the shelf, then go out into the field by the houses to do something with the earth; not as we have to do with the earth here; no, no. A glorious light shone all about their heads, and they were continually shouting and offering praises to God.” —*Early Writings*, p. 16–17

Fellow traveler, these promises are true. We have no choice. We cannot give up the battle, for the price of doing so is too great. The final victory is just around the corner! Amen.

Joel Msiska

THE WEDDING RING

“Some have had a burden in regard to the wearing of a marriage ring. . . . All this is unnecessary. . . . Not one penny should be spent for a circlet of gold to testify that we are married.” —*Testimonies to Ministers*, p. 180–181

“Here (1 Timothy 2:9) the Lord, through His apostle, speaks expressly against the wearing of gold. Let those who have had experience see to it that they do not lead others astray on this point by their example. That ring encircling your finger may be very plain, but it is useless; and the wearing of it as a wrong influence upon others.” —*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 4, p. 630

“In like manner also, that women adorn themselves in modest apparel, with shamefacedness and sobriety; not with broided hair, or gold, or pearls, or costly array.” 1 Timothy 2:9

“Whose adorning let it not be that outward adorning of plaiting the hair, and of wearing of gold, or of putting on of apparel.” 1 Peter 3:3

A Blessed Youth Conference, Tanzania, December 17–27, 2015



to be with Jesus always in this life. It is a privilege to be together in this conference; we need to be pure in life and try to win souls for Jesus. God cannot use us if we are cherishing even one sin. Our main mission is to bring people to Jesus to be converted and saved. "But 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

He concluded that all preaching that leaves people unsaved is of no use. "I cried unto Thee; save Me, and I shall keep Thy testimonies." Psalm 119:146. During the conference, each day except Sabbath, morning worship was at 6:00 a.m. After morning worship we all engaged in physical exercise.

The Lord blessed us in having several speakers at the conference who shared their testimony to feed the conference with spiritual bread. This was a most interesting event.

Some days were dedicated for tours, including climbing part of Mount Kilimanjaro. We visited the Ngorongoro craters, which are considered one of the seven wonders of Africa. These craters are inhabited by wild and domestic animals, living together, and surrounded by traditional ethnic Masai houses.

The conference was blessed to have Pastor Pablo Hunger present, the Secretary and Vice President of the General Conference. His presence was a great blessing, not only to the youth, but to the whole congregation. He encouraged and counselled the youth on the four steps of courtship, how to lead their lives before and after marriage, how to find the right spouse, and how to plan for the future. The four steps of courtship are: friendship, courtship, engagement, vow of marriage.

Brother Hunger was accompanied by his daughter, Damaris, who also shared her experience in the Lord.

Pastor Andrew Mangwe, the Botswana Field Leader talked about "Our Great Mission" of spreading the gospel. From Botswana we also had Sister Dinewi Dube who also shared her experience in the Lord. She talked about "Waiting Upon the Lord." From South Africa we had Sister Stella Morudu, who talked about self-conduct and sexual behaviour. Sister Morudu was accompanied by her two daughters, Diniwe, who lives in Botswana, and Molatela. Sister Molatela played a big role in arranging, planning and coordinating the conference, together with Brother Ben Muzondo, Gabriel Shirima, Prosper Mbwambo, Erick Ndimangwa and Moses Akim, the Tanzanian Youth Leader.

Toward the end of the year 2015, the African continent was favoured by God to host an African Youth Conference in the city of Arusha, Tanzania. The conference was attended by people from 12 countries: Botswana, Burundi, Canada, Kenya, Malawi, Uganda, U.S.A., South Africa, Zambia, South Sudan, Zimbabwe, and Tanzania, who hosted and played a major role in organizing the conference. Many tasks, both spiritual and physical, were carried out in order to make the event attractive and blessed, so as to give God the glory.

Pastor P. Shirima opened the conference with a silent prayer, inviting the presence of the Holy Spirit. He then welcomed all the people. As the first speaker, Brother Shirima invited the congregation to meditate on the following verses, "Father, I will that they also, whom Thou hast given Me, be with Me where I am; that they may behold My glory, which Thou hast given Me: for Thou lovedst Me before the foundation of the world. O righteous Father, the world hath not known Thee: but I have known Thee, and these have known that Thou hast sent Me." John 17:24–25. He emphasized to us to always behold Jesus and His father, and reveal Their glory in our daily life, revealing unity. Everyone should imitate Jesus in everything; we need to aim to reach and receive the divine nature, and then become sons and daughters of God.

The next speaker, our main speaker for the Youth Conference was Brother Joel Barnedo, the General Conference Youth Leader, who lectured about "Jesus Is Our Friend and Our Saviour". There is nothing that we are passing through that Jesus did not go through Himself. And He is now at the right hand of God, "And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto Me in heaven and in earth." Matthew 28:18

Brother Barnedo beseeched us to delve more and more into heavenly things where Jesus is; our mind should be occupied and enshrouded with heavenly things. We need to be closer to Jesus now more than ever. The 144,000 will be with Jesus always throughout eternity, so we need

For the first time we had representatives from South Sudan, Brother Festus John and Brother Karisa.

Pastor Sandoya, the Zambian Union Leader preached about "Working with Aim," just like the four men in Jesus' time. "And they come unto Him, bringing one sick of the palsy, which was borne of four. And when they could not come nigh unto Him for the press, they uncovered the roof where He was: and when they had broken it up, they let down the bed wherein the sick of the palsy lay." "Mark 2:3-4. These four men had aimed to bring their friend to Jesus, to have him healed by Him, but they had to pass through several obstacles before they got the man to Jesus to be healed. Success in a Christian's life does not come in just one moment, but by a combination of effort and sacrifice.

Sister Leila McTavish from Canada who does a lot of missionary work, having visited the African continent over 20 times, shared her experience in the Lord. One of the topics that she shared was "Three Types of Baptism." These include: baptism by water, baptism by the Holy Spirit, baptism by fire. She emphasized that the hardest one is baptism by fire, which brings purification and brings us closer to Jesus. We were encouraged to always hold onto the hands of Jesus Christ.

Sister Christina Bosek talked about a famous criminal by the name of Tom, who met a great and famous lawyer. This story drew the attention of the congregation to the fact that we are all criminals, but Jesus offered up a special sacrifice in order to save us from the penalty of death. Jesus is that famous lawyer. He can win our cases for us only if we go to Him, and be willing to part with all the bad, past history of our lives.

Brother Hildon talked about the necessity of "drinking and eating from the blood and the flesh of Christ", for He is the heavenly manna, come down from God, in order for us to grow spiritually. The Holy Spirit must quicken us and give life to us. "Then Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink His blood, ye have no life in you." John 6:53. It was outlined that we must pray hard and meditate on the sacrifice of Christ continually, so that we can be protected from the devil.

On Friday, we witnessed one brother and three sisters who dedicated their lives to the Lord, making a covenant with Him through baptism. Pastor Joel Barnedo conducted the service.

The second Sabbath of the conference, December 26, was the most beautiful we had ever experienced. During the divine service, Pastor Pablo Hunger fed the conference with the topic, "Source of All Power and the Secret of the Power of Samson." Samson's power did not come from his uncut hair. "And he was sore athirst, and called on the LORD, and said, Thou hast given this great deliverance into

the hand of Thy servant: and now shall I die for thirst, and fall into the hand of the uncircumcised? But God clave an hollow place that was in the jaw, and there came water thereout; and when he had drunk, his spirit came again, and he revived." Judges 15:18-19

It was the spirit of God who renewed the strength of Samson; he became a hero only when God gave him power, and his end proved this when he prayed for revenge from God. The Pastor brought before the congregation a new plate as an illustration. The plate in his hand looked good, but then he threw down the plate and it broke into many pieces. It was an interesting example to show us that only God can make us new again. He can change our lives and then we can become useful again. Apart from Him we are nothing. At the end of his sermon he extended an invitation to those who wish to let Jesus make them new and renew their covenant with Him. There was a positive response. The whole congregation stood up, as many hearts were touched by the sermon, then prayers were offered.

After lunch, Pastor Joel Barnedo gave his final words to the meeting with a talk he titled, "The Budding of Aaron's Rod."

"And it came to pass, that on the morrow Moses went into the tabernacle of witness; and, behold, the rod of Aaron for the house of Levi was budded, and brought forth buds, and bloomed blossoms, and yielded almonds." Numbers 17:8. He concluded that as we all leave and go home again, each one of the young men and women, pastors, Bible workers, need to blossom and bear fruits and this can be possible only if we are connected to Jesus.

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Hildon Mbogela

Secretary of the Union of Tanzania (Dar es Salaam)

See photos in the February 2016 issue of the Reformation Messenger

Experiences in Argentina



For several years now, Sister Raquel Sosa, here in Canada has told me that her mother has invited me to visit her in Argentina. Each year I went somewhere else, but this year I decided to take her up on her offer.

I had spoken to Sister Susanna a few times by telephone, and she was always a very positive person. Sister Raquel always shared with me the missionary experiences of her mother. I was looking forward to meeting her and spending a couple of weeks in her house.

Sister Raquel then asked me if I would host a vegan cooking class, as there are people who are considering becoming vegan, but would like some instruction. I agreed. I asked Raquel, to ask her mother to find some Tofu in their city (Mendoza). Sister Susanna said it does not exist. I was sure it did and told her to continue looking.

I arrived in Argentina on February 21st, 2016 and was warmly greeted by Sister Susanna and her daughter and son-in-law at the airport. We spent a few days in rest and recreation, and then began to prepare for the cooking class. We did find Tofu in two different locations in the city. The plan was to present 13 different recipes in the two hours time that was allotted.

Sunday February 28 was the planned date, at 5:30 p.m. Since it was to be held in the courtyard of the church in the open air, we needed to be finished by nightfall.

There was much support and interest from the local churches in Mendoza and from as far away as San Juan (3 hours). Present were approximately 60 people with about 10 being visitors. After spending all day in preparation with Sister Susanna and Sister Lillian, we began on time.

Instruction was given on the harmful effects of dairy products. In 1902 Sister White wrote, "Let the diet reform be progressive. Let the people be taught how to prepare food without the use of milk or butter. Tell them that the time will soon come when there will be no safety in using eggs, milk, cream, or butter, because disease in animals is increasing in proportion to the increase of wickedness among men. The time is near when, because of the iniquity of the fallen race, the whole animal creation will groan under the diseases that curse our earth." —*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 7, p. 135. We are now 114 years further on in history



after this was written. How soon is soon? I believe the time has come when there is no safety in eating the products from animals any longer and God has provided sufficient foods as alternatives.

Also, instruction was given on combining proteins on a vegan diet (legumes and grains), mentioning that there are several

foods that are complete proteins such as soy beans (and Tofu), quinoa and nutritional yeast. Tofu is very versatile and can be used in main dishes such as cooked vegetables and sandwich spreads, as well as desserts



Some of the Attendees at Cooking Class

like ice-cream and yogurt. We do not have to eliminate the foods we like, we just need to substitute healthy ingredients, such as carob for chocolate as demonstrated in the Carob Brownies. Even the vegan crepes were enjoyed. Several recipes were demonstrated which combine the proteins well, such as Corn Souffle and Sunflower seed burgers.

Good sources of Calcium were also mentioned, from some nuts, seeds and leafy green vegetables. Unfortunately the soy milk available is not of good quality at the moment, but a recipe for preparing soy milk at home was given.

Several different bread spreads were demonstrated as an alternative to the cheese and tomato sandwiches which many people enjoy. These were hummus, tofu parsley spread and potato vegan cheese. It was shown that Burritos can be enjoyed also having the beans with the vegan cheese being a delicious alternative to dairy cheese.

I was encouraged when speaking with several of the young people who had recently adopted a vegan diet and were very interested in learning more about vegan cooking. I pray that they will continue in their commitment.

The day following the cooking class I was privileged to go and visit the Mission School in Mendoza. This is one of the first mission schools that our church has established. They have an excellent education system with study in the morning and physical work outside for two hours in the afternoon. There are several acres of land well used for growing produce. The school supplies its own fruits and vegetables for the most part and is able to sell much also in support of the school. The students study for a few months and then go out into the Lord's

Vineyard and do practical missionary work for a few months. Many missionaries have been trained in this facility.

On the Sabbaths I was blessed by the wonderful love and kindness shown by the believers.

The final day took me to the local children's hospital where one of the interested souls in the local church works as a nurse (Margarita). She has been having Bible Studies with Sister Susanna. She asked me to come and see the hospital and pray with some of the children. I was privileged to pray also for several of the staff members who were having their own health and spiritual challenges.

We are to sow beside all waters. There are people everywhere searching for something more than this world has to offer.

I am very thankful that Sister Susanna invited me to visit her. It was a blessing for me also. "As cold waters to a thirsty soul, so is good news from a far country." Proverbs 25:25

Wendy Eaton



Church Building at Mission School

Argentina, Maipu Church



Congo



**Left: Baptism in Kivu Lake, December 2015. Floribert, ordained elder, baptizing ten souls in Bukavu, East Congo Field.
Below: After the baptism some of the members in Goma**



A Prayer

I knelt to pray when day was done,
And prayed, "O Lord, bless everyone;
Lift from each saddened heart its pain,
And let the sick be well again."
And then I woke another day
And carelessly went on my way.

The whole day long I did not try
To wipe a tear from any eye;
I did not try to share the load
Of any brother on my road;
I did not even go to see
The sick man just next door to me.

Yet once again, when day was done,
I prayed, "O Lord, bless everyone."
But as I prayed, into my ear
There came a voice that whispered clear,
"Pause, hypocrite, before you pray;
Whom have you tried to bless today?"

"God's sweetest blessings always go
By hands that serve Him here below."
And then I hid my face and cried,
"Forgive me, God, for I have lied;
Let me but see another day
And I will live the way I pray."

Author Unknown