

the  
**REFORMATION**  
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Vol. 59, No. 1

Understanding  
*God's Matchless Love*

Energize Your Life! | The New Earth | The Dignity of Self-Government

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—Testimonies, vol. 4, p. 488.

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# JESUS IS Coming Soon

**T**hrough the apostle John in the book of Revelation, Jesus has declared: “Surely I come quickly” (22:20). Does God have a perfect program regarding the second coming of Jesus? Yes, for sure.

“Like the stars in the vast circuit of their appointed path, **God’s purpose knows no haste and no delay.**”<sup>1</sup>

Regarding His first coming, Paul declared: “When the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law” (Galatians 4:4). “In heaven’s council **the hour for the coming of Christ had been determined. When the great clock of time pointed to that hour, Jesus was born in Bethlehem.**”<sup>2</sup>

Let us consider the inspired words of Habakkuk: “**For the vision is yet for an appointed time**, but at the end it shall speak, and not lie: **though it tarry**, wait for it; because it will surely come, **it will not tarry**” (2:3). These two expressions: “**though it tarry**,” and “**it will not tarry**,” seem contradictory. First, the prophet said that the vision is for an appointed time. Second, he says, “though it tarry,” and, third, he declares, “it will not tarry.” Even though to us it seems that God is delaying the fulfilment of His promise, “it will not tarry.”

The words of Peter help us to understand the apparent delay of the coming of Christ: “The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness” (2 Peter 3:9, first part). In the Darby Bible, we read: “The Lord does not delay his promise, as some account of delay.”

In Matthew 24, talking about His second coming, Jesus said: “**But of that day and hour no one know, not even the angels of the heavens, but my Father alone**” (verse 36, Darby). The Father knows the day and the hour of Christ’s second coming. He will declare them to His faithful, expectant children in due time.

“But the day and the hour of His coming Christ has not revealed. He stated plainly to His disciples that He Himself could not make known the day or the hour of His second appearing. Had He been at liberty to reveal this, why need He have exhorted them to maintain an attitude of constant expectancy. . . . **The exact time of the second coming of the Son of man is God’s mystery.**”<sup>3</sup>

At the time of Christ’s ascension, the disciples asked Him: “Lord, wilt thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel? And He said unto them, **It is not for you to know the times or the seasons, which the Father hath put in his own power**” (Acts 1:6, 7). “It was not

necessary for them to see farther into the future than the revelations He had made enabled them to see. Their work was to proclaim the gospel message.”<sup>4</sup>

Who is preaching that Christ’s second coming delays? The evil servant who “shall say in his heart, My Lord delayeth his coming” (Matthew 24:48).

The apparent delay reflects God’s mercy and grace in behalf of His people. He doesn’t want any of His children to perish, but rather yearns for all to come to repentance.

Are we taking advantage of God’s mercy in granting us time in which to make a thorough preparation?

“Solemnly there come to us down through the centuries the warning words of our Lord from the Mount of Olives: ‘Take heed to yourselves, lest at any time your hearts be overcharged with surfeiting, and drunkenness, and cares of this life, and so that day come upon you unawares.’ ‘Watch ye therefore, and pray always, that ye may be accounted worthy to escape all these things that shall come to pass, and to stand before the Son of man’ (Luke 21:34, 36).”<sup>5</sup> *R*

## References

<sup>1</sup> The Desire of Ages, p. 32. [Emphasis added.]

<sup>2</sup> Ibid. [Emphasis added.]

<sup>3</sup> Ibid., pp. 632, 633. [Emphasis added.]

<sup>4</sup> The Acts of the Apostles, p. 30.

<sup>5</sup> The Desire of Ages, p. 636.

# Understanding God's Matchless Love

*By Peter C. Cay-ohen*

I was born and raised in a strictly pagan community. My religious experience as a boy was molded in an atmosphere of fear of the wrath of the "spirits." I was never taught that I should love and worship these spirits or that they loved and cared for my life. Rather, I was educated to think that we must perform the many prescribed rituals to appease the anger of these spirits and to escape being the subject of their wrath.

## **God loves all people**

When I became a Christian, I learned that "God is love," and we are to love and trust God "because he first loved us" (1 John 4:8, 19). What distinguishes the God of the Bible from the pagan gods is that

He is a loving God. To the nation of Israel, His message was: "Yea, I have loved thee with an everlasting love: therefore with lovingkindness have I drawn thee" (Jeremiah 31:3).

Although this statement was spoken to the Israelites, we should understand it to mean that God loves us Gentiles in the flesh as much as He loves the Israelites in the flesh because God shows no partiality. Peter explains:

"Of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons: but in every nation he that feareth him, and worketh righteousness, is accepted with him" (Acts 10:34, 35).

The Lord Jesus also explains that God's love embraces all persons regardless of color and social status in

life, "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life" (John 3:16).

The universality of God's love was also explained by Jesus in this manner:

"Ye have heard that it hath been said, Thou shalt love thy neighbour, and hate thine enemy. But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you; that ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven: for he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust" (Matthew 5:43-45).

God's act of making the sun to rise on the evil and on the good and sending rain on the just and on the unjust shows that He loves everyone regardless of their character, color, or social status.

Unfortunately, Satan works hard to obscure that love and convince us that God is as cruel and vindictive as the pagan gods I had been taught about as a child.

### **Nature reveals God's love**

Through the things of nature, God has sought to reveal His love for fallen humanity. The apostle Paul wrote:

“For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and wickedness of men who by their wickedness suppress the truth. For what can be known about God is plain to them, because God has shown it to them. Ever since the creation of the world his invisible nature, namely, his eternal power and deity, has been clearly perceived in the things that have been made. So they are without excuse” (Romans 1:18–20, RSV).

In the beautiful flowers covering the thorns and thistles and in the many trees laden with delicious fruits of varying color and taste are found God's message of love, for He gave us all these to enjoy and to demonstrate that He loves us and cares for us. Every time we eat our food we should remember that we are holding in our hands the tokens of God's love to us. Every opening bud and blooming flower speaks to us of our Father's love and care and His desire to make us healthy, happy and wise.

Unfortunately, Satan has blinded the minds of men and led them to forget God and to honor the creature rather than the Creator. Paul explains: “For although they knew God they did not honor him as God . . . but they became futile in their thinking and their senseless minds were darkened . . . and exchanged the glory of the immortal God for images resembling mortal man or birds or animals or reptiles. Therefore God gave them up in the lusts of their hearts to impurity,

# **It was to reveal to the human race the true character of the Father that Christ came and lived in this world.**

to the dishonoring of their bodies . . . because they exchanged the truth about God for a lie and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed for ever!” (Romans 1:21–25, RSV).

The blindness in the human mind was so great that instead of looking to God as a loving and caring Father, people would look upon Him as a severe judge who delights in giving punishment rather than love and forgiveness.

Through the beauty of His creation, however, God is seeking to remind us of His gracious love. Yet there is a still clearer revelation:

### **Christ reveals God's love**

It was to reveal to the human race the true character of the Father that Christ came and lived in this world. No one has ever seen the Father, but all can see the beauty of His character—His goodness, gentleness, kindness, mercy, and love—by “looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith” (Hebrews 12:2). The Bible explains, “No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him” (John 1:18).

“All things are delivered unto me of my Father: and no man knoweth the Son, but the Father; neither knoweth any man the Father, save the Son, and

he to whomsoever the Son will reveal him” (Matthew 11:27).

In order to know the Father, it is not necessary for us to see Him in person. “No man hath seen God at any time” (John 1:18). However, if we have beheld the only begotten Son of God, that is as if we had seen the Father personally. Jesus explains:

“If ye had known me, ye should have known my Father also. . . . Philip saith unto him, Lord, shew us the Father, and it sufficeth us. Jesus saith unto him, Have I been so long time with you, and yet hast thou not known me, Philip? he that hath seen me hath seen the Father . . . the words that I speak unto you I speak not of myself: but the Father that dwelleth in me, he doeth the works” (John 14:7–10).

Through Christ, the world was given a clearer view of the Father's love. In the ministry of Jesus on earth, we can see a living demonstration of our Father's love. The apostle Peter declares: “Truly I perceive that God shows no partiality, but in every nation any one who fears him and does what is right is acceptable to him. You know the word which he sent to Israel . . . the word which was proclaimed throughout all Judea, beginning from Galilee . . . how God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and with power; how he went about doing good and healing all that were oppressed by the devil, for God was with him” (Acts 10:34–38, RSV).

### **The ultimate revelation of God's love**

The supreme demonstration of God's love for humanity was Christ's dying for our sins, “for when we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly. For scarcely for a righteous man will one die: yet peradventure for a good man some would even dare to die. But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us” (Romans 5:6–8).

Paul here explains the contrast between God's love and human

love. Human love is dependent on the beauty or goodness of its object. People naturally fall in love with one who is beautiful, intelligent, honest, and attractive, and would turn away from one who they believe is ugly, ignorant, rude, or offensive. In other words, people typically love only the good and dislike the bad and unlovable. But human love, although selfish in nature, may be developed where it can have some semblance of unselfishness.

The highest form of human love is demonstrated when one would dare to die for a good friend. Jesus explains:

“Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends” (John 15:13).

This spiritual truth was demonstrated in the ancient story of Admetus and Alcelis. The story goes that Admetus, a noble and handsome young man, got sick with a disease that—according to the words of the gods—would cause his death unless someone could be found who would die in his place. His parents and close relatives were consulted.

All agreed that he was a wonderful young man, but “Sorry,” they said, “we couldn’t die for him.” Finally his friends asked Alcelis, the beautiful girlfriend and lover of Admetus, if she could die for him. “Yes,” she said, “because he is a good man and because the world needs him so I am willing to die for him!” According to ancient philosophers, this was the highest development of love—when one is willing to die for a good man!

## Unconditional love

But Paul tells us that no one would dare to die for enemies, not even for a bad friend. I remember the experience of a neighbor in Mindanao. This man had a son with damaged kidneys. The doctor advised that if the father would donate one of his kidneys to the son, both of them could survive with each one having one healthy kidney. But the father



refused and the son died. This father did not love his son enough to share one of his kidneys to save him from physical death. He may not have been a good son.

But the love of God is far higher than human love, for God loves even the unlovable. This fact was shown in the life of Christ. We read:

Christ’s death for us while we were “still sinners” and “enemies” clearly

demonstrates God’s unconditional love toward us.

## Unselfish love

Moreover, human love rests on a sense of need. A husband loves his wife because he needs her, and a wife loves her husband for the same reason. That is why we see many spouses leaving their partners when they no longer supply their physical, social, or financial needs.

In contrast, God’s love is unselfish. He loves us, not because He needs us, but because we need Him. We are the one in need because we are spiritually and materially poor. God loves us because it is His nature to love (1 John 4:8) and His love “seeketh not her own” (1 Corinthians 13:5), but rather seeks to benefit and uplift those He loves.

“You know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sake he became poor, so that by his poverty you might become rich” (2

Corinthians 8:9, RSV).

Christ became poor when He was born of a woman, born under the law (Galatians 4:4). The earthly parents of Jesus were poor, as was indicated by the burnt offerings that they offered when they presented Him to the Father at the temple—a pair of turtledoves (Luke 2:22–24). This was the offering prescribed for a poor family (Leviticus 12:1–8). But before

He became poor for our sake, Paul said that Jesus was rich (2 Corinthians 8:9). Speaking of the time when Jesus was rich, the apostle Paul explains:

“Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus: Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: but made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: and being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross” (Philippians 2:5–8).

Before Jesus was made in the likeness of men, He was “existing in the form of God . . . being on an equality with God (the Father).” But He humbled Himself and became poor that we through His poverty might be made rich. (2 Corinthians 8:9.) Thus true Christianity is not humanity seeking after God, but God seeking after us. It was Christ who came from heaven to find and save us.

“The Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost” (Luke 19:10).

Christ left the adoration of heavenly angels and came to our world to suffer shame, insult, humiliation, hatred, and death just so He could lift us up from degradation and transform us into something more valuable than silver and gold. Let us appreciate and accept wholeheartedly His pledge to us: “I will make a man more precious than fine gold; even a man than the golden wedge of Ophir” (Isaiah 13:12).

### Self-sacrificing love

God’s love is a self-sacrificing love. This fact may be better understood when we consider the kind of death that Jesus was willing to go through to save us. He makes the appeal to each one of us:

“Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus: who . . . took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: and . . . he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross” (Philippians 2:5–8).

The emphasis made by Paul is not so much on the fact that Christ “became obedient unto death” but more so in the kind of death that He experienced as indicated by the expression, “even the death of the cross.” Many have suffered death by slow tortures and some even by crucifixion. So how does the death of Jesus Christ differ from the death of these martyrs? Paul explains:

“Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us: for it is written, Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree: that the blessing of Abraham might come on the Gentiles through Jesus Christ; that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith” (Galatians 3:13, 14).

## True Christianity is not humanity seeking after God, but God seeking after us.

Christ becoming a curse for us means that He received the curse of the law because of our sins.

We cannot think to keep the law in order to be saved or look at our personal obedience to the law as that which merits or earns for us eternal life.

“[Christ] bore the curse and was treated as a transgressor, in order that the repentant sinner might be clothed with His righteousness. He was condemned for sin in which He had no share, in order that we might be justified by righteousness in which we had no part.”<sup>1</sup>

If anyone wants to receive eternal life and go to heaven through the law, he or she has to keep it in every

particular for an entire lifetime. To transgress in one point will instantly bring one under the curse as a transgressor (James 2:10); meaning, he will receive the wages of his sin, which is death (Romans 6:23). Being under the curse means being forsaken of God to receive the full measure of God’s wrath against sin. This was what Christ experienced at the cross when He tasted death for every man’s sin (Hebrews 2:9).

Who made Christ a curse for us? It was not the devil, because the devil can’t punish sin. He, too, will be cursed because of his own sin. It was not the Jews either, though they asked God to curse Him. It was God the Father who cursed Christ for our sins. At Gethsemane Jesus pleaded three times:

“Oh my Father, if it is possible, let this cup (curse) pass from me” (Matthew 26:39–44).

Surely the Father loves His only begotten Son and we would think that He would come to rescue Him from the curse of the law. But did the Father spare His own Son? The Bible answers:

“What shall we then say to these things? If God be for us, who can be against us? He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things?” (Romans 8:31, 32).

God did not spare his own Son, but delivered Him up to be cursed because of our sins in which He has no share, that we might receive eternal life in which we had no share.

“Surely he hath borne our griefs and carried our sorrows. . . . Smitten of God and afflicted. But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed. . . . And the Lord has laid on him the iniquity of us all” (Isaiah 53:4–6). *R*

### References

<sup>1</sup> *The Review and Herald*, June 23, 1896.



# The Power of the Gospel

By Charles Fitch  
(Adapted)

*"Let the aged men who were pioneers in our work speak plainly, and let those who are dead speak also, by the reprinting of their articles in our periodicals."—Manuscript Releases, vol. 1, p. 55.*

**F**or I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek" (Romans 1:16).

The object of this discourse is, to discharge a solemn duty, both to God and men—to God, that His name may be glorified, and to men, that their souls may be saved. In relation to my fellowmen, I can truly say, that I am "not seeking mine own profit, but the profit of many, that they may be saved" (1 Corinthians 10:33). And also, that "my heart's desire and prayer to God" for everyman "is, that they might be saved." (Romans 10:1).

## The snare of Universalism

I was passing the Universalist Church, in this village, the other day, at a time when an installation service [a meeting to recognize new church leaders] was in progress, and after revolving in my own mind the question whether I would be likely to get good, or to do good by attending such a service, I was led, as I trust, by the Spirit of God to enter.

After listening to the discourse which was preached on the

occasion, and to the other services, I remembered the words of God to the prophet Ezekiel, contained in the third chapter of the writings of that prophet. "Son of man, I have made thee a watchman to the house of Israel; therefore hear the word at my mouth, and give them warning from me. When I say unto the wicked, thou shalt surely die; and thou givest him not warning, nor speakest to warn the wicked from his wicked way to save his life, the same wicked man shall die in his iniquity: but his blood will I require at thine hand. Yet if thou warn the wicked, and he turn not from his wickedness, nor from his wicked way; he shall die in his iniquity, but thou hast delivered thy soul" (Ezekiel 3:17–19). Again, "when a righteous man doth turn from his righteousness and commit iniquity, and I lay a stumbling block before him, he shall die; because thou hast not given him warning, he shall die in his sin, and his righteousness which he hath done shall not be remembered; but his blood will I require at thine hand. Nevertheless if thou warn the righteous man, that the righteous sin not, and he doth not sin, he shall surely live, because he is warned: Also thou hast delivered thy

soul" (Ezekiel 3:20, 21). In the thirty-third chapter of the same prophet, we read as follows: "Again the word of the Lord came unto me, saying, Son of man, speak to the children of my people, and say unto them, When I bring the sword upon a land, if the people of the land take a man of their coasts and set him for a watchman; If when he see the sword come upon the land, he blow the trumpet and warn the people, then whosoever heareth the sound of the trumpet, and taketh not warning, if the sword come and take him away, his blood shall be upon his own head. He heard the sound of the trumpet and took not warning, his blood shall be upon him; but he that taketh warning shall deliver his soul. But if the watchman see the sword come, and blow not the trumpet, and the people be not warned; if the sword come and take any person from among them, he is taken away in his iniquity; but his blood will I require at the watchman's hand. So thou, O son of man, I have set thee a watchman unto the House of Israel; therefore thou shalt hear the word at my mouth and warn them from me. When I say unto the wicked, O wicked man thou shalt surely die; if thou dost not speak to warn the wicked from his way, that

wicked man shall die in his iniquity but his blood will I require at thine hand. Nevertheless if thou warn the wicked of his way to turn from it, if he does not turn from his way, he shall die in his iniquity, but thou hast delivered thy soul” (Ezekiel 33:1–9).

Now God has made me a watchman for the welfare of souls. To Him I stand accountable. No man can deliver me from responsibility in relation to his soul. If I see danger, and can make my voice heard, and warn him not, God has said, “his blood will I require at thine hand.” Now I see danger to . . . souls in this community, by the efforts which are made to persuade men to the belief of the doctrine of Universal Salvation; and it is the voice of God that calls me, and the authority of God that commands me to lift the note of warning. Many may refuse to hear, but I must obey God and deliver my own soul, by endeavoring faithfully and plainly, yet affectionately, to lift the note of warning.

The discourse to which I allude was preached from the words which I have placed at the head of this: “For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ; for it is the power of God unto salvation, to every one that believeth” (Romans 1:16). The object of the preacher was, to show in what the power of the Gospel consisted.

From the commencement, he assumed it as the design of the gospel, to save men from sin, and thereby prepare them for heaven; and it was therefore his object to show in what the power of the gospel to save men consisted.

### **Where lies the greatest power?**

Now, that the preacher was right in his assumption, that it is the design of the gospel to save men from sin, I am fully prepared to admit. I believe it may have been true, in some cases, at least, that this grand truth has been kept out of sight; while the gospel has been held forth as rather a way of salvation from hell, than from sin. Now he who is saved from sin and preserved blameless, will

unquestionably find an immortality of bliss, for our Lord Jesus Christ has said, “Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God” (Matthew 5:8). We also find the following in the book of Psalms: “Who shall ascend into the hill of the Lord? and who shall stand in His holy place? He that hath clean hands and a pure heart” (Psalm 24:3, 4). Let a man therefore be saved from sin, and the blessedness of his soul is sure; and equally true is it, that he who is not saved from sin, can never inherit the kingdom of God, “for there shall in no wise enter therein anything that defileth, neither whatsoever worketh abomination or maketh a lie” (Revelation 21:27). We also learn that the design of the gospel is to save men from their sin, by the words of God to His ancient people Israel, respecting the object of that ceremonial worship, which was designed to point out Christ, and the end of His coming into the world. Leviticus 16:30. “For on that day shall the priest make atonement for you to cleanse you, that ye may be clean from all your sins before the Lord” (Leviticus 16:34). This idea of cleansing was ever kept in view in all that system of ceremonial worship—while the grand design of that system was to set forth Christ and the object of His coming into the world. . . . “Christ being come a high priest of good things to come, by a greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made with hands, that is to say, not of this building; neither by the blood of goats and calves, but by His own blood; he entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us. For if the blood of bulls and of goats and the ashes of an heifer sprinkling the unclean sanctifieth to the purifying of the flesh; how much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the Eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?” (Hebrews 9:11–14). And for this cause, i.e., for the purpose of purging us from dead works to serve the living God, “he is the mediator of the New Testament” (Verse 15) and we are told in the same epistle what that New Testament is. “I will put my laws in

their minds and write them in their hearts” (Hebrews 8:10). As if to say, ye shall not be as were the Jews in the time of Christ, like whited sepulchres, beautiful indeed without, but full of all uncleanness within. “The Lord thy God will circumcise thy heart, to love the Lord thy God with all thy heart . . . and with all thy soul, that thou mayest live” (Deuteronomy 30:6). It is therefore held forth in every part of the Bible as the design of the salvation of the Gospel, to set men free from sin, and when they are thus effectually saved, there cannot be a doubt that they will find their blessedness here and hereafter in communion with God, as surely as he is a God of purity and love. Accordingly the angel that foretold the birth of our Saviour said, “Thou shalt call his name Jesus,” i.e., a Saviour, “for he shall save his people from their sins” (Matthew 1:21). . . .

I greatly rejoice, that it is beginning to be recognized more and more, as the great design of the gospel to make men pure and holy, and thereby “meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light” (Colossians 1:12). The danger on this point is, that men shall think themselves cleansed by the gospel, while in the sight of God they are still altogether unclean; or shall regard themselves as so sure of being cleansed at last, that they shall pass on uncleansed, until they die in their iniquities, and consequently find, that “where Christ has gone they never can come.” . . .

### **Fruit-bearing through faith**

If we bring before God any works or offerings of our own, as a propitiation, our worship must be no better in His sight than the worship of pagans. For God has provided a propitiation that is all sufficient, and if I attempt to bring another, I treat that which God has offered as of no value, and set up some works or sacrifices of my own, as more meritorious than those of Christ in my behalf, which is unquestionably mocking God, and treating with the greatest possible indignity the Saviour whom He has sent into the world. I am to cast away all dependance on myself, and make



the propitiation of Christ all my hope, and come with an unwavering faith therein, and then I honor the Saviour whom God has provided. . . .

I freely admit the influence of the love of God in saving men from sin; and that if ever saved from sin, it will be in loving God because He first loved us. I admit the influence of that new command of Christ, which requires all men to love one another as He has loved them. I admit that the punishment of the Gospel is disciplinary, yielding the peaceable fruits of righteousness to them which are exercised thereby and consequently reformatory, and inflicted only in the present life; while the punishment of the future life which the Bible calls the second death, is retributive, i. e., meted out to all that cannot be reclaimed by the love of God, according to their works. . . .

The apostle Paul tells us in what the power of the gospel consists, when he says as in the first chapter of his 1st Epistle to the Thessalonians, "For our gospel came not unto you in word only, but in power and in the Holy Ghost" (1 Thessalonians 1:5). Peter in the first chapter of his 1st Epistle, speaks of "the things which were reported by them that have preached the gospel, with the Holy Ghost sent down from Heaven" (1 Peter 1:12).

Paul also says to Titus, "Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us (i.e. from sin), by the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Ghost which He shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Savior" (Titus 3:5). The power of the gospel then to save from sin, consists in the regenerating, renewing, and sanctifying influences of the Spirit of God, shed forth to attend the gospel through Jesus Christ our Savior, and without these influences, the Gospel with all the love which it reveals, is utterly powerless, in working in the hearts of men, that "holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord" (Hebrews 12:14).

Accordingly our Lord Jesus Christ at His ascension, after having commissioned His disciples to go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature, commanded them not to depart from Jerusalem, but to wait for the promise of the Father. "Ye shall receive power," said He, "After that the Holy Ghost is come upon you, and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem and in all Judea and in Samaria and unto the uttermost parts of the earth" (Acts 1:8).

Having therefore received from Christ the direction, "tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem, until ye be endued

with power from on high" (Luke 24:49), and the assurance behold I send the promise of my Father upon you; and "ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you," the disciples "returned unto Jerusalem from the Mount called Olivet, which is from Jerusalem a Sabbath day's journey, and went into an upper" (Acts 1:12) chamber, and there continued with one accord in prayer and supplication, both men and women, until they were, on the day of Pentecost, all filled with the Holy Ghost. Then they preached the gospel with the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven, and multitudes were pricked in their hearts and inquired what shall we do? And when "others mocking said these men are full of new wine" (Acts 2:13), they replied, this Jesus whom ye crucified hath God raised up whereof we all are witnesses. Therefore being by the right hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost, he hath shed forth this which ye now see and hear. "Yea and all the prophets from Samuel and those that follow after have likewise foretold these days. Unto you first, God having raised up his Son Jesus Christ, sent him to bless you, in turning away every one of you from his iniquities" (Acts 3:24-26).—*To be continued.* *R*

# The Dignity of Self-Government

By G. Robles

## Original freedom

**F**reedom is a human right and it is a God-given right. People are free only when they can choose to do as they please. But in so far as our choices affect others, it is appropriate that there be limits. In the Bible, these limits are the restrictions of the law of God.

Governments exist to punish those who harm others. “Rulers . . . execute wrath upon him that doeth evil” (Romans 13:3, 4).

When a person chooses not to harm another person, there is no need for another government to exercise control over that person. Self-control, self-governing, makes a person a safe person to be free. True freedom, then, is self-government according to the will of God. This is the ultimate type of freedom.

Our ability to self-govern, though, has been seriously hindered. One of the effects of the original apostasy is seen in the loss of our power of self-government. Sometimes we lose our temper. Sometimes we cannot control what we eat. Sometimes we cannot control how we feel. The struggle of

the man in Romans chapter 7 is a perfect example of that failure at self-government.

## Sin-bound

When sin entered the world through Adam, a state of sin entered the human race and sin then seized the reins of government. Judgment, reason and conscience were dethroned, and the lusts of sin then took control. The human race became a slave to sinful lusts. Each new individual born into the human race is born into a family that is dominated by sin. They are born into slavery. All have a death sentence hanging over them.

“Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned” (Romans 5:12). “For of whom a man is overcome, of the same is he brought in bondage” (2 Peter 2:19).

## Freedom restored

This is what Christ came to set us free from. He came to “preach deliverance to the captives . . . to set at

liberty them that are bruised” (Luke 4:18). The whole purpose of Christ’s sacrifice upon the cross is to restore to humanity the dignity of freedom. To restore the dignity of self-government.

Paul shows how God is restoring this power of self-government in you and me. He writes, “work out your own salvation with fear and trembling, for it is God which worketh in you, both to will and to do of his good pleasure” (Philippians 2:12, 13).

Some might say true freedom is self-government alone without the need to live in reference to the will of God. But I choose to get my definition of freedom from the Scriptures. Where do we see an example of true freedom in the Bible? Right in Genesis. Before there ever was anything known in this world as captivity, there was freedom.

Before ever there was sin—there was freedom from sin. Freedom from disease. Freedom from all corruption.

In Eden we see our first parents tasting of freedom in its highest sense. We see Adam and Eve, endowed with the power to self-govern. They were free to do as they pleased. This is the power of the individual. The power

to think, choose and do. Adam and Eve were free in themselves and by themselves, as individuals, to think, choose and do. But in this freedom to self-govern, we also see them made subject to law. God said,

“And the Lord God commanded the man, saying, Of every tree of the garden thou mayest **freely** eat: but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die” (Genesis 2:16, 17). [Emphasis added.]

So they possessed a freedom within the boundary of a law. That law is called the “law of liberty” (James 2:12). The fact that Adam and Eve were made subject to this law didn’t undermine their freedom. God created the human race with the freedom to choose Him or not. And He gives us this same power. We have the ability to do whatever we please, whether it pleases God or not.

As we read through the narrative of Genesis, it becomes obvious that with this power to self-govern came the possibility for Adam and Eve to disobey. However, God imposed consequences upon disobedience. He said, “in the day that thou eatest thereof [of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil] thou shalt surely die” (Genesis 2:17).

Some will say, come on, it was only a little fruit—why didn’t God just let them eat it and let things carry on as they were before? Why all this suffering? Why no longer free?

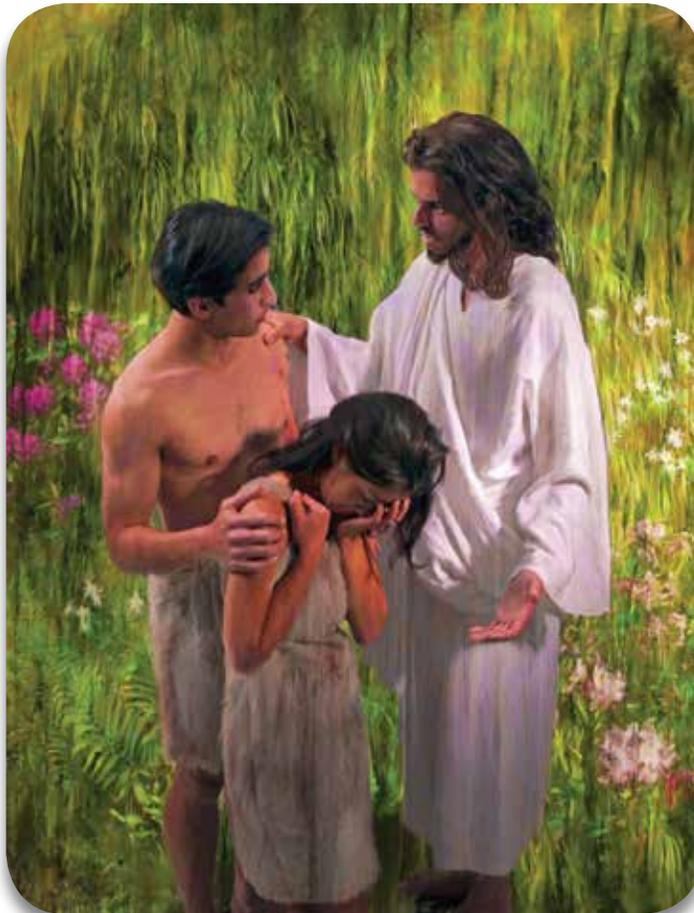
### Freedom has limits

What was at stake here was not a fruit, but the government of God. If He created me to do as I please, you also do as you please, and others do as they please without any boundaries, then at some point our pleasing will

collide and eventually there would be a state of anarchy (freedom from government).

But some will say, yes, but freedom from government today is a bad thing because we have evil people around. If you let them loose, we’re all in danger. But freedom from government when everyone is perfect—can that be such a bad thing?

Remember, this has already happened. In heaven, everything was perfect. All the angels of God lived in



perfect freedom. But they were also free in subjection to God as creatures to their Creator. Lucifer however began to entertain another concept of freedom. A freedom that would make him subject to nothing: to nobody, not even God. Where would Lucifer’s freedom take him? What did he desire?

“For thou hast said in thine heart . . . I will exalt my throne above the stars of God: I will sit also upon the mount of the congregation, in the sides of the

north. I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; I will be like the most High” (Isaiah 14:13, 14).

Lucifer’s freedom would ultimately drive him to attempt to depose God Himself from off His throne. He was dissatisfied with the already exalted position God gave him. That position was given to him within the order of God’s perfect government. But God was not going to let Lucifer’s desire to be free from government to destroy the order of the universe. Eventually, when the order and stability of

God’s government was threatened, it had to be met in actual conflict.

“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” (Revelation 12:7, 8).

So the freedom that claims no restrictions of government leads directly to war and is actually anarchy. It is a threat to peace, stability and order in God’s society. It doesn’t work and it only results in certain destruction.

### Freedom & social relations

When God made all things, He made all things relational. What do we see in the solar system? The relation and balance

of planets and sun. What do we see in nature in the animal and plant kingdom? The relation of trees, plants and species to each other. What do we see in the original man and woman? Their relation to plants, animals, to each other, and to God. It was a society built upon love. And although there is an element of sin in the world today, God’s society is still the reality into which we are all created.

So there are a couple of things we should realize about freedom and by

extension—self-government. Freedom can only be maintained while we live in harmony in our relation to God as creatures loyal to our Creator and to each other as equals in our relation to God. When we live as though God didn't exist—when we exercise our “freedom” outside of the limits of His will, when we assert this kind of “liberty” and “despise government,” we are in fact in the most hopeless slavery. Look at this verse:

“Chiefly them that walk after the flesh in the lust of uncleanness [freedom from restrictions], and despise government. Presumptuous are they, selfwilled, they are not afraid to speak evil of dignities. . . . While they promise them liberty, they themselves are the servants of corruption: for of whom a man is overcome, of the same is he brought in bondage” (2 Peter 2:10, 19).

When we embrace this type of liberty—a liberty outside of the restrictions of God's will, our relationship to others will naturally deteriorate. Why? Because we were created subject to those two laws—love to God and love to humanity. The power to self-govern was not given at the expense of our relationship with God or at the expense of our relationship with others.

It is when people feel they can dispense with their relationship with God that they begin to lose the power to self-govern and in consequence their relationship with others deteriorates. It is because of this that we see people do horrible things to themselves and to each other. They forget that we were created to live within the jurisdiction of a society built upon love.

The apostle Paul, who was free in Jesus Christ, wrote, “And herein do I exercise myself, to have always a conscience void of offence toward God, and toward men” (Acts 24:16).

## Self-governing individuals in society

Today, everybody wants to know their function in society. The larger question, though, is why are we here

# The order, prosperity and happiness of this society is based upon the ability of individuals to self-govern according to the will of God—not outside of it.

in this world? What is my purpose in life?

People have tried to come up with some answers to these questions. Someone may say, “we are here to help each other get through this thing, whatever it is.” Someone else says, “The true meaning of life is to plant trees, under whose shade you do not expect to sit.” There are so many different takes on it in the world, but sadly, as I look at these answers—they fail to satisfy.

Those who advocate evolution run into a similar problem with this issue. Evolutionary theory seeks to explain “where we came from” but not so much what our purpose is for being here. In fact, here's the basic difference between Christianity and evolution. Christianity says: The purpose of a giraffe's long neck is because God created it to feed upon the leaves of tall trees.

Evolution says: The reason a giraffe has a long neck is not for it to achieve any purpose—it has a long neck because long-necked giraffes in the past were more likely to survive and reproduce than were all the short-necked giraffes.

The argument of Christianity is that the giraffe exists for a created purpose. Evolution responds that we have no purpose—only that giraffes are surviving because they are not quite as worthless and helpless as other species that did not survive.

By the logic of evolution, the reason you're here is because you have good genes. That hardly answers the question. If there is any purpose to life perceived by the evolutionary world view, it is in the cooperation seen in nature between species. Some see this cooperation between species as some sort of path the human race is moving in towards greater cooperation between races, genders, families, society and nations. This cooperation, however, is limited, because in this trajectory the will of society will sooner or later undermine the will of the individual to serve God according to the dictates of his own conscience. That individual is perceived as a threat. It's the survival of the fittest. The little, weak people in this world that are perceived as threats are eliminated. They don't go along with the rest.

A worldly society will have their view of freedom. But any idea of freedom that dispenses with the order and restrictions of God upon the individual cannot make for good and everlasting society. While God's society gives freedom to the individual to self-govern, it does so upon the basis of the law of love. When love is not the governing principle in the individual, sin is—for sin is only the absence of love. And sin operates only in the domain of this temporary world.

## Why were we created?

It matters where we look to for an answer to this question of life's purpose. As Christians, we get our purpose and meaning in life by understanding where we came from and the reason why God made us.

“I have created him for my glory, I have formed him; yea, I have made him” (Isaiah 43:7).

It is for God's glory that we were created. To glory in something means

to rejoice over it. God rejoices over His creation.

“All things were created by him, and for him” (Colossians 1:16).

“For thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are and were created” (Revelation 4:11).

All parents know what this pleasure is. All parents know what it means to rejoice in our children. Especially, when the children embrace our values, our love, our careful restrictions, they bring us delight. And when we see them become morally independent, when they choose of themselves to do good—that is a joy.

In turn, if you recall when you were a child, you felt happy and deeply fulfilled when you knew your parents rejoiced over you. We fit perfectly, like a piece in a puzzle, into God’s purpose for our creation.

But sinful humanity no longer reflects God’s values, His love. Sinful and corrupt, we have all wondered away from Him. God cannot then rejoice over us until He saves us from this condition:

“The Lord thy God in the midst of thee is mighty; he will save, he will rejoice over thee with joy; he will rest in his love, he will joy over thee with singing” (Zephaniah 3:17).

### Dignity restored

We are affected by sin in two ways. It dominates us and it curses us. Christ brings deliverance to us on both these fronts. He delivers us from the dominance of sin by giving us the divine grace to conquer it, “For sin shall not have dominion over you: for ye are not under the law, but under grace” (Romans 6:14). And He delivers us from the curse of sin by, “being made a curse for us: for it is written, Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree” (Galatians 3:13).

To be delivered by Christ, means to regain the freedom that we lost.

“If the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed” (John 8:36).

Christ restores to us the dignity of true freedom. He restores to us the power of self-government. With Christ, we again stand tall in the dignity of men and women in Christ Jesus. This power that Christ gives us to self-govern is most often expressed in the words “self-control.” In the King James Version, self-control is shown by the term temperance. Temperance is one of the fruits of the Spirit in Galatians chapter 5.

This is the faith in Christ that Paul taught and preached. When Felix called Paul from the prison house and “heard him concerning the faith in Christ” (Acts 24:24), he heard Paul reason “of righteousness, temperance, and judgment to come” (Verse 25). Unfortunately, Felix wanted to enjoy his earthly “freedom” a little longer and we never hear from him again. Let’s not be like Felix!

People who are in slavery to habits of sin often feel deeply



remorseful. They often experience severe feelings of self-loathing and shame. These awful feelings lead them to hate themselves with intense hatred. Their sense of utter weakness in themselves to resist besetting sins leads them often to despair. But they don't know how to escape the pit of sin they are sunken into. At these times, we echo the cry of Paul, "O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" (Romans 7:24).

Here is where Christ alone brings help. Humanity enslaved by sin, needed a divine-human Saviour to break the power of sin in humanity. The hope of the human race rests upon the fact that the Son of God lived a life of perfect self-government in keeping with God's law. He did this while living on earth, as a man, in the same weak, degraded, sinful nature that we possess. Nobody on earth could do what He did. No one ever was able to escape the curse and domination of sin over humanity. That is why we needed Christ.

"Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same; that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil; and deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage" (Hebrews 2:14, 15).

There is not a soul on earth that was ever able to meet the claims of justice. "For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God" (Romans 3:23). Here is where Christ brought divine aid. He was the only one able to meet the claims of justice, both in life and in death. "For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh [sinful nature], God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh [nature], and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh" (Romans 8:3).

I can't be righteous in my flesh. Nobody can. The law of God could not produce righteousness in my flesh because all it found was weakness. The law of God failed in my flesh—in fact all it found in my flesh was "nothing

good." So Jesus took upon Himself that same weak flesh with all my sins and what the law could not do in my weak flesh, it did in His. By living a perfect life of faith and dependence upon divine power, He condemned sin in His own weak human nature. And this He did, "that the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit" (Romans 8:4).

**In Christ, the universe has seen a man in the weakness of sinful flesh live up to the claims of justice through the power of divinity and humanity combined.**

In Christ, the universe has seen a man, in the weakness of sinful flesh live up to the claims of justice through the power of divinity and humanity combined. It has seen a man, who by the grace of God, has lived in perfect harmony with the law of God in the likeness of sinful flesh.

It is not the purpose of this article to expound on how He did it, but to highlight the fact that He brought "deliverance to the captives" (Luke 4:18). In this deliverance, He restores to us the power of self-government or self-control. And it

is in this, that we regain our human dignity—for we were created in the image of God.

Ellen White makes three beautiful statements about this. As you read these, notice how God restores the power of self-government through the plan of redemption:

"The expulsion of sin **is the act of the soul itself**. In its great need the soul cries out for a power out of and above itself; and through the operation of the Holy Spirit the nobler powers of the mind are imbued with strength to break away from the bondage of sin."<sup>1</sup>

"In order to reach excellency of character, we must realize the value which Christ has placed upon the human race. In the beginning, man was invested with dignity; but he fell through indulgence of appetite. Notwithstanding the great gulf thus opened between God and man, Christ loved the hopeless sinner, and came to our world to bridge the gulf, and unite divine power to human weakness, that in his strength and grace man might **wrestle for himself** against Satan's temptations, **overcome for himself**, and stand in his God-given manhood, a victor over perverted appetite and degrading passions."<sup>2</sup>

"Jesus endured the painful fast in our behalf, and conquered Satan in every temptation, thus making it possible for man to **conquer in his own behalf**, and **on his own account**, through the strength brought to him by this mighty victory gained as man's substitute and surety."<sup>3</sup> *R*

## References

- <sup>1</sup> *The Youth's Instructor*, September 20, 1900. [Emphasis added.]
- <sup>2</sup> *Christian Temperance and Bible Hygiene*, p. 146. [Emphasis added.]
- <sup>3</sup> *The Review and Herald*, April 19, 1887. [Emphasis added.]

# The Outcome of a Homeschooler

**M**om! Why am I going to public school? You know I'm not supposed to be there. . . . We know we are supposed to be educated at home; please don't take me to public school!"

These were my questions and remarks after my parents, sister and I had heard and studied about true Christian education in the home. As a 5-year-old boy, it was impossible for me to comprehend why true education was a mere theory, divested of practical application to our lives. I had been told that this truth, if heeded, could be a great blessing. I recalled all the stories about Jesus, the prophets, and John the Baptist; each of whom were schooled at home. Inspiration declares:

"Jesus secured His education in the home. His mother was His first human teacher. From her lips, and from the scrolls of the prophets, He learned of heavenly things. He lived in a peasant's home and faithfully and cheerfully acted His part in bearing the household burdens. He who had been the commander of heaven was a willing servant, a

loving, obedient son. He learned a trade, and with His own hands worked in the carpenter's shop with Joseph."<sup>1</sup>

My parents had placed my sister and I in the first year of public school at age 4. Not knowing what else to do, they explained to us their challenging situation—that they could not afford to move out of the city in order to provide us with an environment where a Christian-based education could be better implemented. As the school year went by, my sister and I encountered difficulties, especially as we stood firm for our beliefs. On many occasions, we were sent home as we refused to watch and participate in watching cartoons on television. In addition, we were often ridiculed for not eating the cafeteria's lunch that included animal products.

Although I was young, I would pray each day for the Lord to provide a way for us to move out of the big city and into the countryside where we could be educated in a better way. When I asked my mother about homeschooling, she would reply that her poor English skills rendered her unable to teach us English at home. At

that time, the difficulties were great, and with our means, homeschooling seemed impossible.

## The crisis

One day after I arrived at my class, my teacher announced that Christmas was in 3 days and our school had been selected to perform a group dance. As the teacher made her announcement, the students became excited. But my heart sank as I started thinking of what I could do in order to avoid being in school that day. It was impossible for me to avoid it, so I thought; it was part of our final participation grade. Since my mother had partially taken to heart—if you will—the idea of educating us in the home, she had taught us at home to read and write Spanish as well as basic mathematics operations. Therefore, when we were admitted at the school, we were placed in an advanced class. Being in this class had its benefits, but not when it came to class participation. We were expected to participate in all class activities. Therefore, withdrawing from the school's dance performance meant a big markdown on my grade.

I recall that those days were the

worst. I was sent home with a fever, thinking how I could deal with the problem. At times, I wished I could tell my mother, but I thought there was nothing she could do.

The day soon arrived; I had not participated in the practices and I had somehow managed not to be seen by the teacher. The group was big and the dance consisted of a marching motion. As I began to think about it, I began to find there was nothing wrong with marching. At times, I would realize that the marching was in honor of the Christmas season; thus speaking to my conscience. As the group got ready to do the final rehearsal before the performance, the teacher noticed I was not participating. I was then called and asked why I was refusing to participate. In a moment of human weakness, I decided to participate. In a couple more minutes, my mother appeared and spotted me on the crowd of students. As we were returning back home she asked, "What have you done?" The rest of the walk home was sheer silence. I reflected on what I had done and was deeply discouraged as I realized I had failed the test of standing up for my beliefs. As we got home, I ran to my room and cried, asking God for forgiveness, and for a Christian home education. I couldn't understand how I could be trained to be firm without any training in the home where I could learn these valuable lessons.

At times, I would hear my mother reading the verse "Train up a child in the way he should go: and when he is old, he will not depart from it" (Proverbs 22:6).

I would often hear my father and mother speaking about claiming the promise; if they obeyed the Lord's plan, their children would not depart from the good way.

### The decision

One evening, when my dad arrived from work—he announced that he had something of great importance to tell us. He said, "Your mom and I have prayed to the Lord, and we have decided to move to the country

as the Lord will provide." As we quietly and thoughtfully went to our room, I heard my dad expressing to my mom how he would take the Lord at His word and try moving to the country and homeschooling us. My parents were concerned over the many negative reports of families who had tried to homeschool yet had, to a large extent, not experienced the success they had sought, thus casting a shadow over the entire hope of achieving true education in the home. But my dad's greater concern was over the fact of having the light and not practicing it. Therefore, he decided to put God to the test—making the effort to move into the country, giving us a Christian home education, and progressing as the Lord opened the way. Their faith was rewarded. While my parents continued to grow in their belief, God always provided and never forsook us as we did His will.

### God's providence

One bright and early morning I woke up to the birds singing. Indeed! We were in the country! As I explored the backyard and wondered in amazement at such breathtaking scenery, I couldn't help but thank the Lord and my parents. But . . . it was school time, and my mom did not waste a minute to get right down to business. As we began our day with morning worship, my dad read once again from Proverbs 22:6, "Train up a child in the way he should go: and when he is old, he will not depart from it"; he continued on to explain how our family was to operate as a team unit in order to be successful. However, my dad's voice lowered as he explained to us how he would have to go back to Los Angeles to work and return home every Friday. It was then that I realized the sacrifice my parents were making to do the best for us. Through the rest of the following year, each morning my sister and I would wake up early to find my dad's goodbye letters for us on the dining table. As we would read, tears would flow while we replied to his letters and saved them until his return.

**"Whatever is to be done at His command may be accomplished in His strength. All His biddings are enablings."**

### Joys and challenges

The initial weeks of homeschool presented themselves with both its joys and challenges, as we placed our trust in God every step of the way. When we met in the late evening—as we tried to understand a certain subject—my mom would begin to sing, "With Jesus in the family, happy, happy home!" Countless were the times, where at the middle of our school hours, my mom would bring us to our knees to seek God's help. For my mom—whose mother tongue is Spanish—it was not easy trying to teach us English grammar and pronunciation. However, the Lord provided sisters and brothers from the church who were also homeschooling, to aid us in our schooling.

Several years have passed, and thanks to the tender loving mercies of God I am now in university. As I reminisce over my years studying at home, I'm eternally grateful to God for His loving patience and His faithfulness in fulfilling His promises.

"Whatever is to be done at His command may be accomplished in His strength. All His biddings are enablings."<sup>2</sup> *R*

### References

<sup>1</sup> *Child Guidance*, pp. 19, 20.

<sup>2</sup> *Christ's Object Lessons*, p. 333.

# Homeschool **FAQs**

## **If the Spirit of Prophecy speaks about church school, why should homeschool even be considered as an option?**

"In some countries parents are compelled by law to send their children to school. In these countries, in localities where there is a church, schools should be established if there are no more than six children to attend. Work as if you were working for your life to save the children from being drowned in the polluting, corrupting influences of the world."<sup>1</sup>

We're told here that if there are as many as six students to attend, a church school should be provided as an option preferable to what the state would provide.

However, many parents have never even thought about homeschool as an option—when in reality, it has existed since the dawn of creation and was actually the original form of schooling from the time of the patriarchs. We also read that Jesus and John the Baptist did not attend the rabbinical schools of their day. Even in Moses' awkward and difficult circumstances as the adopted son of Pharaoh's daughter, God still provided for his real mother to be his teacher for the first twelve years.<sup>2</sup>

Samuel established the schools of the prophets at a relatively weak period in Hebrew history—and these turned out to be a great blessing largely because the spirituality of the nation and its families had already sunk to such a low ebb. The time was ripe to boost the collective piety of the young.

While the church school or school of the prophets had its place both in biblical times and even today, it is interesting to note that the education, training of character, is still to be done firstly at home before the child can even enter church school.

If the parent has not educated the child, Satan then takes the place of the parent and provides the education of his choosing—and unfortunately, the worldly public school readily provides the enemy of our souls with easy opportunities for his deceptive ploys. We are told:

"A child's first school should be his home. His first instructors should be his father and his mother. His first

lessons should be the lessons of respect, obedience, reverence and self-control. If he is not instructed aright by his parent, Satan will instruct him in evil through agencies that are most objectionable. How important, then, is the school in the home! Here the character is first shaped. Here the destiny of souls is often largely influenced. Even the parents who are endeavoring to do their best, have not a hundredth part of the realization they should have of the value of a human soul."<sup>3</sup>

In conclusion, even church schools of the prophets were designed solely to aid the parents in their work—not replace it, as the child was to have been trained already.

References: Proverbs 22:6; Child Guidance, pp. 18:1, 2, 5; 17:1; 19:3, 4.

## **I fear that my children will be too sheltered if I homeschool them—and when they go out into the world, they will not know the difference between right and wrong.**

Genesis 3:5 helps us understand this matter with great clarity. It reminds us of the great falsehood of the devil to our first parents: "For God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil."

Assuming that exposing our children to right and wrong will help them know the difference is perhaps one of the world's age-old lies by the adversary. In order for both us and our children to have greater discernment, we need to behold Christ and thus be changed into His image. Therefore, Christian home education—when done according to the Bible and Spirit of Prophecy—will prove to be a great blessing, as it provides the child with true education. And when encountered with evil, the children will be deeply rooted in the truth. Consequently, they will easily distinguish error and evil when faced with it.

## **How will my children socialize being homeschooled?**

This is probably one of homeschooling parents' greatest concerns. According to the Bible, we were made to be social beings. In Genesis 2:18, it states that the Lord saw

that it was not good for man to be alone. Therefore, social events should be worked into the curriculum. Both the church environment and faith-based home school groups can provide good opportunities for socialization among children of similar faith and values.

Either way, homeschool pioneer Dr. Raymond S. Moore testifies that he "became convinced that little children are not only better taught at home than at school, but also better socialized by parental example and sharing than by other little children. This idea was fed by many researchers from Tufts, Cornell, Stanford and California. Among the more prominent were (1) Urie Bronfenbrenner who found that at least up to the sixth grade, children who spend less of their elective time with their parents than their peers tend to become peer-dependent; and (2) Albert Bandura who noted that this tendency has in recent years moved down to preschool, which in our opinion should be avoided whenever good parenting is possible. Contrary to common beliefs, little children are not best socialized by other kids; the more persons around them, the fewer meaningful contacts."<sup>4</sup>

### **What is the right way to homeschool?**

The Bible and inspired pen provide us with the right way to homeschool. However, in a nutshell, an essential purpose of homeschool education is to fashion the character of the child with the Lord's help, thus making spiritual matters an integral part of our curriculum. And this is also accomplished when the children fulfill an active part in sharing the duties of the home. Life-changing character traits will here be built, as both intellectual and physical education are thus combined.

### **Does a home-schooled individual end up academically deprived?**

Quite the contrary! Standardized test scores, college admissions, performance in college and graduation rates actually point to a typically higher level of academic achievement among homeschoolers.<sup>5, 6, 7</sup>

"A recent report in Education News states that, since 1999, the number of children who are homeschooled has increased by 75%. Though homeschooled children represent only 4% of all school-age children nationwide, the number of children whose parents choose to educate them at home rather than a traditional academic setting is growing seven times faster than the number of children enrolling in grades K-12 every year."<sup>8</sup>

As a result, the curricular resources available for families has grown tremendously—making it much more feasible to tailor a program to the individual needs of your particular child(ren).

### **QUESTIONS SPECIFICALLY FOR BRO. ALONSO REGARDING HIS TESTIMONY:**

#### **What was your experience transferring from homeschool to the university?**

Switching from a one-on-one setting and self-taught setting, university instruction presented itself with its own set of unique challenges. While I noticed that public high school students were finding it difficult to adapt to the greater responsibilities in the college in comparison to their previous experience in rather lenient public institutions, my challenges were rather simply a matter of lack of familiarity with the college system and admissions procedures. However, in terms of responsibility, discipline, self-motivation, perseverance, as well as firmness for the truth and moral values, these characteristics had already been established in the Christian home education.

Therefore, the transition was a rather smooth one in terms of academic advancement.

#### **Do you find college difficult?**

During the first semesters, college seemed fairly easy. The principles learned at home helped me in keeping myself organized and focused on my studies, thus making it easy.

I would add that when you make it a habit to study God-inspired writings, you will find that the experience of studying "line upon line" and "here a little and there a little" will make studying in college easier. In reality, this is no secret. The Lord has told us that when we place the Kingdom of God first, all the rest will be added unto us. Matthew 6:33.

#### **Is it difficult to stand for principle while attending the university or going to work at a secular job after being at home so much?**

We always need to watch and pray. However, when you have been given a Christian education in the home where these lessons of firmness can be learned, standing for principle will be easier. But the youth will already be equipped and trained to be firm because during

their teenage years, their character has been formed and established.

### How can you witness in the university?

In my personal experience—when I started college—it was a mission to stand firm and be a living witness to my classmates. During my first years at the college, I was able to speak to many students about my faith and many received *Steps to Christ* and *The Great Controversy*.

While it is a challenge and in some instances impossible to speak about religious themes on campus, there are certainly other ways to witness.

Your demeanor and the way you dress certainly carries a lot of weight when witnessing. If one would assimilate to the world, the difference would not be seen; thus making it impossible to be a witness to them.

The apostle Paul states in 2 Corinthians 3:2, "Ye are our epistle written in our hearts, known and read of all men."

However, the Lord has provided other means for witnessing as well. In several instances, the Lord has provided opportunities while doing research projects. As part of these projects, one can use Bible examples or in many cases use philosophical approaches to affirm the existence of God.

Truth be told, we all have different talents that can be employed to witness. Some may have the ability and personality to speak to many people while others may employ their talents in other effective ways.

### Is there anything you regret from studying at home?

In summary, I don't regret studying at home. Even if my academic performance would have been below average and I would gain salvation at the cost of my earthly education, I would still count it as a victory. The main goal of a Christian home education is to fit the child for heaven primarily and also for daily tasks as we live in this earth.

### Does homeschool make people socially awkward?

Each child is different and as a result, each child will have different social needs. Therefore, if homeschool is conducted in such a manner as to hinder the child from interacting with any other human beings, the child may be socially awkward. This reveals the importance of including healthy social events in the curriculum of the student.

### Was homeschooling easy?

Homeschool was not always easy. Many times, my mom would pray with us to ask God for help. It requires discipline and much prayer. But we found that the toughest moments were in the beginning. After some time, it became much easier. However, each family has a different experience and it really depends on each family's needs and strengths.

### Is public school truly dangerous for children?

In cases where homeschooling is really not a feasible option, we are told:

"In planning for the education of their children outside the home, parents should realize that it is no longer safe to send them to the public school, and should endeavor to send them to schools where they will obtain an education based on a Scriptural foundation. Upon every Christian parent there rests the solemn obligation of giving to his children an education that will lead them to gain a knowledge of the Lord and to become partakers of the divine nature through obedience to God's will and way."<sup>9</sup>

The Lord has shown us through His word the original way to educate children and He offers a promise to those who adhere to it. Never have I heard honest parents tell me that public school was a blessing to their children. It is always laments and expressions of concern that I hear from parents as they see how difficult is to lead their children through the straight and narrow way while they are attending public school. It is during the early years that character is formed. And children will certainly be marked for life.

As a final note, I urge parents to study and pray for themselves about the importance of this matter. *R*

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- <sup>2</sup> *The Signs of the Times*, February 12, 1880.
- <sup>3</sup> *Spalding Magan Collection*, p. 263.
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- <sup>5</sup> <http://www.brighthubeducation.com/homeschool-methodologies/126403-why-homeschooled-kids-are-smarter/>
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- <sup>7</sup> <https://www.usnews.com/education/high-schools/articles/2012/06/01/home-schooled-teens-ripe-for-college>
- <sup>8</sup> <https://winteryknight.com/2013/06/09/report-growth-in-homeschooling-is-outpacing-new-public-school-enrollments/>
- <sup>9</sup> *Child Guidance*, p. 304.

# Energize Your Life!

By Janet Sureshkumar Roshan

## What is health?

**H**ealth is a treasure. Of all temporal possessions it is the most precious. Wealth, learning, and honor are dearly purchased at the loss of the vigor of health. None of these can secure happiness, if health is lacking. It is a terrible sin to abuse the health that God has given us; such abuses enfeeble us for life, and make us losers, even if we gain by such means any amount of education.”<sup>1</sup>

“The first wealth is health,” is a popular saying. The truth is that it’s easier to maintain your health than regain it.

Why do people get sick? Because they constantly violate the basic laws of good health.

Why do people go to the doctor? Often it’s because with the doctor’s prescriptions they can continue disregarding the laws of good health and just live on without any change in their lifestyle.

It is not a secret that good nutrition plays an essential role in maintaining health and yet many may fail to live a healthful living. Healthful living

is a combination of knowledge of health and its practice. Health status is determined more by one’s personal behavior rather than by the advanced knowledge in medical technology and the availability of health services.

If one is willing to change his or her lifestyle so as to be more in line with the basic laws of health, then there is hope for healthful living. With a diligent application to these laws, guided by patience and powered by determination, good health is, most instances, guaranteed. Sickness is not a cause, but the consequence. Ultimately, “I am what I choose to be; my self-esteem follows the same path.”—Anonymous.

## What is sickness?

“[Sickness] is the result of violating nature’s law.”<sup>2</sup>

Sickness does not result in one day or is due to one action, but is caused by violating the laws of health continually. Many have adapted wrong habits that are injuring their system, affecting their brain, causing the moral organs to become diseased, and making it impossible for them to think and act wisely upon all points.

Most of us are living in the land of abundance and in the time of plenteousness. This causes another problem. Eating too often and in too big quantities overtaxes the digestive organs, and produces a tense state of the system. Habits of cleanliness, and care in regard to that which is introduced into the mouth, should be carefully observed. Overeating—which the Scripture sharply reproves (Deuteronomy 21:20, 21; Proverbs 23:21)—and overweight are major problems of this electronic age that cause another problem, obesity.

## Modern disquiet

“The Lord has instructed me that as a general rule, we place too much food in the stomach. Many make themselves uncomfortable by overeating, and sickness is often the result. The Lord did not bring this punishment on them. They brought it on themselves; and God desires them to realize that pain is the result of transgression.”<sup>3</sup>

During the past 20 years, obesity among adults has risen significantly in the United States. The latest data from the National Center for Health

Statistics show that 30 percent of U.S. adults 20 years of age and older—over 60 million people—are obese.

This increase is not limited to adults. The percentage of young people who are overweight has more than tripled since 1980. Among children and teens aged 6–19 years, 16 percent (over 9 million young people) are considered overweight.

These increasing rates raise concern because of their health implications. Being overweight or obese increases the risk of many diseases and health conditions, including the following: hypertension, type 2 diabetes, coronary heart disease, stroke, dyslipidemia (for example, high total cholesterol or high levels of triglycerides), gallbladder disease, osteoarthritis, sleep apnea and respiratory problems, as well as some cancers (e.g., endometrial, breast, and colon). Current data indicate that the situation is worsening rather than improving.<sup>4</sup>

### Energy equation

Whether you want to lose weight or maintain a healthy weight, it is important to understand the connection between the energy your body takes in

(through the foods you eat and the beverages you drink) and the energy your body uses (through the activities you do). To lose weight, you need to use more calories than you take in. To maintain a healthy weight, you need to balance the calories you use with those you take in. No matter what result you want, eating a healthy diet and being physically active can help you reach your goal.

### Get the most nutrition out of your calories

There is a right number of calories for you to eat each day. This number depends on your age, activity level, and whether you are trying to gain, maintain, or lose weight. You could fill up the entire amount on a few high-calorie foods, but chances are that you won't get the full range of vitamins and nutrients your body needs to be healthy.

Choose the most nutritionally rich food you can—those packed with vitamins, minerals, fiber, and

other nutrients, but lower in calories. Pick foods like fruits, vegetables, whole grains, and fat-free or low-fat products more often.

### Eat your fruits and vegetables

Healthy diets rich in fruits and vegetables reduce the risk of cancer and other chronic diseases. Fruits and vegetables also provide essential vitamins and minerals, fiber, and other substances that are important for good health. Most fruits and vegetables are naturally low in fat and calories, and are filling.

### Care for bones

Bones play a major role in the body structure and also protect organs, anchor muscles, and store calcium. Adequate calcium consumption and weight-bearing physical activity build strong bones, optimize bone mass, and may reduce the risk of osteoporosis later in life.

### Peak bone mass

Peak bone mass refers to the genetic potential for bone density. By the age of 20, an average woman has acquired



most of her skeletal mass. A large decline in bone mass occurs in older adults, increasing the risk of osteoporosis. For women this occurs around the time of menopause.

It is important for young girls to reach their peak bone mass in order to maintain bone health throughout life. A person with high bone mass as a young adult will be more likely to have a higher bone mass later in life. Inadequate calcium consumption and a lack of physical activity could result in a failure to achieve peak bone mass in adulthood.

## Osteoporosis

Neglecting bone care causes a serious problem known as osteoporosis. Osteoporosis or “porous bone” is a disease of the skeletal system characterized by low bone mass and deterioration of bone tissue. Osteoporosis leads to an increase risk of bone fractures typically in the wrist, hip, and spine.

## Prevention of osteoporosis

How can you prevent osteoporosis? By providing ample supply of calcium. Calcium is a mineral needed by the body for healthy bones, teeth, and proper function of the heart, muscles, and nerves. The body cannot produce calcium; therefore, it must be absorbed through food. Good sources of calcium include dark green leafy vegetables—bok choy (an Asian member of the cabbage family that has a mild flavor) and broccoli. Calcium is also found in cereals, bread, soy beverages, tofu products, nuts and almonds.

The amount of calcium required by the body differs from person to person. Vitamin D also plays an important role in healthy bone development. Vitamin D helps in the absorption of calcium.

## Iron deficiency (anemia)

Another severe problem is iron deficiency. Children are at great risk of iron deficiency because of rapid growth and increased iron requirements. Iron deficiency can

occur due to lack of iron in the diets; if this continues, anemia results. Anemia is a manifestation of iron deficiency when it is relatively severe.

It is important to note that not all anemia is due to iron deficiency. The primary causes of anemia include reduced red blood cell and hemoglobin production, hemolysis of red blood cells, and loss of blood. Although an inadequate dietary intake of several nutrients may reduce the production of red blood cells and hemoglobin, the most common cause of anemia throughout the world is iron deficiency. Iron deficiency anemia is seen most commonly in children six months to three years of age.

Iron deficiency anemia significantly impairs mental and psychomotor development in infants and children. Although iron deficiency can be reversed with treatment, the reversibility of the mental and psychomotor impairment is not yet clearly understood. Thus, prevention and treatment need to be emphasized more than detection. In addition, iron deficiency increases a child’s susceptibility to lead toxicity. Lead replaces iron in the absorptive pathway when iron is unavailable. Deficiency in vitamin B12, which is quite possible in vegetarians, also causes anemia.

## Prevention of anemia

Beets are very helpful in curing anemia. Beet juice contains potassium, phosphorus, calcium, sulphur, iodine, iron, copper, carbohydrates, proteins, fat, vitamins B1, B2, B6, niacin and bioflavonoids. With their high iron content, beets help in the formation of red blood cells. Fenugreek, lettuce, spinach, soybeans, and sesame seeds also help building red blood cells. Further, honey is remarkable for building hemoglobin in the body. This is largely due to the iron, copper, and manganese contained in it. There are several other foods which are rich sources of iron, such as bananas, black grapes, plums, strawberries, raisins, onions, squash, radish, celery, and tomatoes. Vitamin B12, which is

also needed for preventing or curing anemia, is found in nutritional yeast and foods made from wheat gluten or soybeans.

## What does it mean to be physically “fit”?

Physical fitness is defined as “a set of attributes that people have or achieve that relates to the ability to perform physical activity.”<sup>5</sup> In other words, it is more than being able to run a long distance or lift a lot of weight at the gym. Being fit is not defined only by what kind of activity you do, how long you do it, or at what level of intensity you do it. While these are important measures of fitness, they only address single areas. Overall fitness is made up of five main components: cardiorespiratory endurance, muscular strength, muscular endurance, body composition, and flexibility.

## Weight-bearing physical activity

Who ever said physical activity is all work and no play? In fact, it can be just the opposite! There is no need to think of strenuous exercise or boring workouts. Instead, imagine doing fun physical activities you enjoy and watch the health benefits follow!

The evidence is growing and is more convincing than ever! People of all ages who are generally inactive can improve their health and well-being by exercising moderately on a regular basis.

Regular physical activity has been associated with many positive health benefits, including strong bones. Like proper calcium consumption, adequate weight-bearing physical activity early in life is important in reaching peak bone mass. Weight-bearing physical activities cause muscles and bones to work against gravity. Some examples of weight-bearing physical activities include walking, jogging, running, stair climbing, jumping rope, hiking, and weight lifting. Incorporating weight-bearing physical activity into an exercise plan is a great way to keep

bones healthy and meet physical activity recommendations.

### Added benefits

Regular physical activity substantially reduces the risk of coronary heart disease, the nation's leading cause of death, and decreases the risk of stroke, colon cancer, diabetes, and high blood pressure. It also helps to control weight; contributes to healthy bones, muscles, and joints; reduces falls among older adults; helps to relieve the pain of arthritis; reduces symptoms of anxiety and depression; and is associated with fewer hospitalizations, physician visits, and medications. Moreover, physical activity need not be strenuous to be beneficial; people of all ages benefit from moderate exercise, such as 30 minutes of brisk walking five or more times a week.

To be more specific, regular physical activity improves health and . . .

- **Reduces the risk of developing coronary heart disease (CHD) and the risk of dying from CHD.**
- **Reduces the risk of stroke.**
- **Reduces the risk of having a second heart attack.**
- **Lowers both total blood cholesterol and triglycerides and increases high-density lipoproteins (HDL or the "good" cholesterol).**
- **Lowers the risk of developing**

**high blood pressure.**

- **Helps reduce blood pressure in people who already have hypertension.**
- **Lowers the risk of developing non-insulin-dependent (type 2) diabetes mellitus.**
- **Reduces the risk of developing colon cancer.**
- **Helps people achieve and maintain a healthy body weight.**



- **Reduces feelings of depression and anxiety.**
- **Promotes psychological well-being and reduces stress.**
- **Helps build and maintain healthy bones, muscles, and joints.**
- **Helps older adults become stronger and better able to move about without falling or becoming excessively fatigued.<sup>6</sup>**

### Can a lack of physical activity hurt your health?

No one is too old to enjoy the benefits of regular physical activity. Research shows that those who are not physically active are definitely not helping their health, and may likely be hurting it. The closer we look at the health risks associated with a lack of physical activity, the more convincing it is that the one who

is not yet regularly physically active should become active. Do it, move it, make it happen. "No one ever sat his way to success."—Unknown. The good news about regular physical activity is that everyone can benefit from it. Good health is not acquired by chance but by choice. To obey is better than sacrifice. None should sacrifice health and happiness by disregarding the laws of nature. "Whether . . . ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God" (1 Corinthians

10:31). *R*

### References

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- <sup>2</sup> *Ibid*, p. 21.
- <sup>3</sup> *Testimony Studies on Diet and Food*, p. 168.
- <sup>4</sup> *Centers for Disease Control and Prevention*
- <sup>5</sup> *CDC. Physical Activities for Everyone: Components of Physical Fitness*. Atlanta, GA: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 1996.
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# The New Earth

*By Stephen Haskell (Adapted)*

*"I have been instructed that we should make prominent the testimony of some of the old workers who are now dead. Let them continue to speak through their articles as found in the early numbers of our papers."—The Publishing Ministry, p. 31.*

## Revelation—reality revealed

The book of Revelation is a great signal, pointing to the New Jerusalem and the earth made new. Growth in character is all that hastens one along the road that leads [there]. Human history has been like the ebb and flow of the tide. The waves break, break, break, on the sands; but only an occasional one reaches beyond the level of its fellows. David had a good opportunity to watch the fluctuations in human progress, and the backward steps; the stumblings led to the writing of many psalms. Thus came the prayer "Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me" (Psalm 51:10).

The Revelation of Jesus Christ is a double history; it shows the love of Jesus Christ which has met man, and the church, as it has pursued its zigzag course; and it portrays a character, that by the grace of God, made a straight path from earth to heaven. The way which He trod, is the road to the New Jerusalem. The seven churches began where His life closed, and their work closes only where the

gates of the city are open to receive them.

The seven seals portray the sufferings of the slain Lamb in the body of His people; and the seventh leaves heaven in silence while angels gather the redeemed from the earth. The seven trumpets are blown in the hearing of all nations; all the world records the story of the Son of man, and the seventh gives the kingdoms into the hands of Him who reigns as King of kings on the earth, with Jerusalem for His capital.

The birth of Christ, the crucifixion, and the work in heaven since the ascension—all point to the kingdom restored. The history of the beast, and of the image to the beast, both record the persecution of a people who will be loyal subjects of the King of earth. If the one hundred and forty-four thousand are studied, they are found to be the Remnant, snatched from the very pit of destruction, to reign in the earth as kings and priests, throughout eternity. The plagues are but the sign of the self-destruction of all forces opposed to the law of God; and they

pave the way for the cleansing of the earth by fire, preparatory to the restoration of the paradise of God. Christ prepares the capital city in heaven; while on earth He molds the character of His subjects. City and people meet on the new earth. The many paths traced in the book of Revelation, lead unto the thoroughfare which ends at the gates of that city. The last chapter of the book—a fitting close for such history as is revealed in the other chapters, gives a description of the earth rescued from all sin—the Eden restored.

## Eden—the perfection of beauty

The first Eden remained on earth one-fourth of the period of earth's history. With its closed gate, and an angel guard at the tree of life, it was a wonderful lesson to the inhabitants of the world before the flood. Before the destruction of the earth by water, the garden was transported to heaven, and the promise since has been, "To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the tree of life, which is in the midst of the paradise of God" (Revelation 2:7).

## The water of life

In Eden the tree of life grows on the banks of the river of life. As long as Adam and Eve ate of the fruit of that tree, life was eternal. The waters were life-giving. This virtue has been lost by the rivers of earth, through the curse of sin, yet every flowing river is a reminder to man, of the river of life which proceeds from the throne of God. The source of this river is God—the fountain, or head waters of all truth; and flowing from Him, who is infinite and eternal, it signifies the spread of truth through the earth. In Eden that water typified Christ; and there, they communed with Him as freely as they drank of the clear flowing waters. Rivulets from the throne have always watered the earth, but there never have been channels sufficiently strong for an over abundant flow. On the new earth, that river will be restored. Christ Himself will lead His people to the fountain of living waters. “Thou shalt make them drink of the river of Thy pleasures. For with Thee is the fountain of life”

(Psalm 36:8, 9). “Ho, every one that thirsteth” (Isaiah 55:1). “The Spirit and the bride say, Come. . . . Let him that is athirst come” (Revelation 22:17). Jesus said: “Whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst. . . . If thou knewest the gift of God, and who it is that saith to thee, Give Me to drink; thou wouldest have asked of Him, and He would have given thee living water” (John 4:14, 10).

John was fond of the figure, and seemed to catch the words uttered by his Master, as none of the other disciples caught them. Perhaps this was caused by the fact that before writing the gospel, he had seen such a clear portrayal of the new earth that certain sayings of Christ came vividly to his mind.

Every river is a type of the river of life; and every tree that grows will remind the one who listens for the voice of God, of that tree of life, which grows on either bank of the river. The real tree of Eden was transported to heaven; but its boughs are represented

as hanging earthward, and its fruit, in type at least, has been plucked by those who had soul hunger and who reach upward for it. It will blossom in reality in the new earth, bearing its fruit every month, twelve manner of fruit which will supply every want of the spiritual being. There will be no lack. “The leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations,” and “the leaf thereof for medicine” (Revelation 22:2; Ezekiel 47:12). All the war and strife of nations have come because man ate not of the fruit of the tree of life. The whole controversy of six thousand years originated when man ate of the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. That tree will not be found in the earth made new, and the fires of the last days will consume all nations who have continued to eat of its fruit. “The scars and bruises” [Ezekiel 47:12, mar.] caused by eating its fruit will be healed by the leaves of the tree of life.

Christ is the tree of life, the bread of life and the water of life: man will live in Him; and yet in the new earth



as in this world, nature will, in all its features, symbolize what Christ really is to man. As the redeemed partake of the fruit of the tree of life, to their souls, will come redemption's story. By individuals, and through nations, God has attempted to demonstrate the possibility of living under the shadow of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, and yet eating of the fruit from the tree of life. This is the life of faith, and those who gather about the real tree in the new earth, will be those who have partaken of that fruit when the other was near, and was held out as a tempting morsel.

In Israel, as a nation, God wished to illustrate the truths of heaven; and had they followed where He led, He would, through them, have shown to all other nations that the tree of life could blossom on earth, and that a nation could be healed by its leaves. Israel, not willing to eat only of the food of God, mingled the good with the evil, and became like all other nations. In the earth restored, all nationalities, all tribes, and peoples will, for the first time, gather together and with one common language worship our God. The fruit and the leaves of the tree of life bring all together. Christ came "to seek and to save that which was lost." In the river of life and the tree of life, together with the blessing each insures, much is restored that was lost by the entrance of sin.

### No more curse

The angel said to John, "There shall be no more curse." Former things shall not be remembered, nor come upon the heart. "But be ye glad and rejoice for ever in that which I create: for, behold, I create Jerusalem a rejoicing, and her people a joy" (Revelation 22:3; Isaiah 65:18). The presence of joy implies the restoration of families; and in this, is one of the most beautiful promises of the new earth. Sin has marred family relations: the curse has entered all families, if not in one form, it has come in another. The family has been the closest tie between heaven and earth. In the midst of sin and deep

degradation, the unselfish devotion of mothers for their offspring, has spoken of the love of Christ in a language which has reached all hearts, from that of God on the throne to the infidel who scorns the name of God. The truth that "We love Him, because He first loved us" (1 John 4:19) still remains; and when a touch of love has been born in the mire of sin, it is the reflection of Heaven's love. In the new earth such love will meet its reward; for He "setteth the solitary in families: He bringeth out those which are bound with chains" (Psalm 68:6).

"Oh, Thou that hearest prayer, unto Thee shall all flesh come" (Psalm 65:2). Today many families are divided. Some members wish to eat of the spiritual bread, and others prefer the food which nourishes the nations of the earth. This makes a line of separation; for those who are spiritual stand on one plain, and the physical man stands on another. "He that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting" (Galatians 6:8). When the separation comes, as it will at the end of time, God sets the spiritual souls in families—families of which they would have been members. Love of parents for their children is a type of the Father's love for humanity; and to comfort the hearts of mothers, there is the promise that little children lost on earth, will be restored to their parents in the new earth. The promise was made to Israel; it will be fulfilled to those who are Israelites indeed. The sorrow of a mother over her dying child is felt in heaven. . . .

When the Son of righteousness arises with healing in His wings, these "shall grow up as calves of the stall" (Malachi 4:2). "There shall be no more thence [in the new earth] an infant of days, nor an old man that hath not filled his days;" for the curse is removed, and there shall be no more death. The child shall grow as a "calf of the stall," and no man in that land of life will ever die. Before the earth is renewed, the child of a hundred years shall die, and the sinner will be accursed. Over there, they have access

to the tree of life, and they drink of the water of life, and live throughout eternity. In place of the curse of death, there will be the throne of God and the Lamb. God's throne is a living throne.

For the first time since creation, God can be seen face to face. The human race was created inferior to the angels for a little time. While on earth we pray, "cause thy face to shine; and we shall be saved" (Psalm 80:3). Then the full light of His countenance will be open to the gaze of man, "and His name shall be in their foreheads" (Revelation 22:4).

Genesis is the first unfolding, in human language, of the plan of salvation. Each following book of the Bible is a further explanation of the truths stated in Genesis. Revelation is the Omega—the gathering together of all the threads of truth—a meeting of all the ways. The twenty-second chapter is a summary of the book of Revelation. As if John found it difficult to comprehend the scenes he beheld, Gabriel repeats, "These sayings are faithful and true" (Verse 6). To all appearances, the earth was not ready for paradise when it was spread out in panoramic view before John: likewise, as the human eye measures circumstances, the world seems further from that time today; but "The Lord God of the holy prophets sent His angel to show unto His servants the things which must shortly be done. Behold, I come quickly" (Verses 6, 7). And John seeing and hearing these things, again fell at the feet of Gabriel to worship him; and again the angel said, "See thou do it not" (Verse 9). Gabriel professes himself a fellow servant of John, and of all who keep the prophecies of this book. Angels, as well as men, obey the word of God revealed to the prophets, for the prophecies are an unfolding of the law of God.

Reference has been made more than once to the prophecies of Daniel, which Gabriel commanded that prophet to seal until the time of the end. The Revelation prophesies the unsealing of that book, and Gabriel distinctly tells John that the words which he had written were not to be

sealed; for the time of their fulfillment was at hand. The expression is both literal and prophetic, for the record began with the life of John, and extended into eternity. The coming of Christ is near; the signs preceding His coming have already appeared.

In 1844 prophetic time closed; this was the end of the twenty-three hundred days of Daniel 8:14. It was the beginning of a new work; and when the judgment then begun is finished, which event the prophecies say is near at hand, Christ will rise from His judgment throne, with the words, "He that is unjust, let him be unjust still: and he which is filthy, let him be filthy still: and he that is righteous, let him be righteous still: and he that is holy, let him be holy still" (Verse 11). When these words are spoken, the heavens prepare for His second coming. "Behold, I come quickly" (Verse 12). While mercy lingers, man by turning to Christ, may have his heart purified; his mind made a channel for divine thoughts. Only those who are His servants to this extent, can be said to have received His name in the forehead. All others are filthy, and are numbered with the family of Satan who is the father of lies.

At the close of prophetic time Christ came in judgment. Today the message is going to the earth; and it is swelling into the loud cry, "Behold, I come quickly; and My reward is with Me, to give every man according as his work shall be" (Verse 12). He who has been sowing to his flesh, will reap his reward which is death. He who has submitted himself to the ruling power of the Spirit, will of the Spirit, reap life everlasting. The subjects of the judgment of the world, the reward of the righteous, and the punishment of the wicked, are threads in the web woven in eternity's loom. Eden and the new earth clasp hands in the expression so oft repeated in the book of Revelation, "I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end, the first and the last" (Verse 13). "I know whom I have believed, and

am persuaded that He is able to keep that which I have committed unto Him against that day" (2 Timothy 1:12). "Being confident of this very thing, that He which hath begun a good work . . . will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ" (Philippians 1:6). The work, planned before the foundations of the earth were laid, is accomplished without an alteration, notwithstanding the introduction of sin. The only difference there will be, is in the strength of character which is



developed during the journey through the valley of the shadow of death.

### Made fit for eternity

In Eden, God's word was made known to man by angels at the tree of life. Upon obedience, rested the right to eat of the fruit of that tree. Satan made it appear that obedience to the commandments was a tyrannical request, and at the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, proclaimed that man should be as gods. The error of all time—the hope of eternal life by some other means than obedience to the commandments—is the subject of the controversy. In Eden, at the beginning, the commandments and the tree of life were placed together. Christ in His personal teaching and

in His life, linked them again, saying, "The words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life" (John 6:63); and John, writing for those who stand at the gateway of the New Jerusalem, says, "Blessed are they that do His commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city" (Revelation 22:14).

Jehovah's law is a law of life; those who are sealed, are commandment keepers; and the last struggle of earth, will be over the question of the immutability of the law. This then, is another thread, so often miserably twisted and knotted, which is woven into its proper place, in this closing chapter. Without are dogs and sorcerers, false prophets, murderers, and all, who, in word, bear false witness, or by life, belie the name of Christ; but to the church He says, "I Jesus have sent Mine angel to testify unto you these things" (Verse 16). "Here is the patience of the saints: here are they that keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus" (Revelation 14:12). As the offspring of David, He speaks with the authority of the rightful ruler of the earth.

There, His commandments are the foundation of His throne and the law of His kingdom. He is the bright and morning star, and leads the universe; He heralds a new day, when time will be no more, and eternity will be unbroken. The new day is about to begin; it is ushered in by the marriage supper of the Lamb. The invitation to that feast is given by the Spirit, the Bridegroom, and the bride. There is power in the word, "Come"; for the Spirit breathes it, and whatever is God-breathed is. Here is the same experience that Peter had on the stormy sea. The Master said, "Come," and while the disciple believed the waves formed a solid footing. When he doubted he began to sink. Today the Spirit says, "Come"; and he who believes in the power of God unto salvation, will be carried through by the one word, "come." It is a living

word, like the word spoken during creation week. As the trees have continued to grow year after year, each oak bearing acorns, which in time produce other oaks, so the word “come” has been repeated by those who heeded the sound, and whosoever will, has drunk of the fountain of life. Those in whom the Word lives, become living voices who repeat the invitation, “Come,” “Ho, every one that thirsteth, come” (Isaiah 55:1).

“What thing soever I command you, observe to do it” (Deuteronomy 12:32). This is the divine voice speaking. “Ye shall not add unto the

word which I command you, neither shall ye diminish ought from it, that ye may keep the commandments of the Lord your God” (Deuteronomy 4:2).

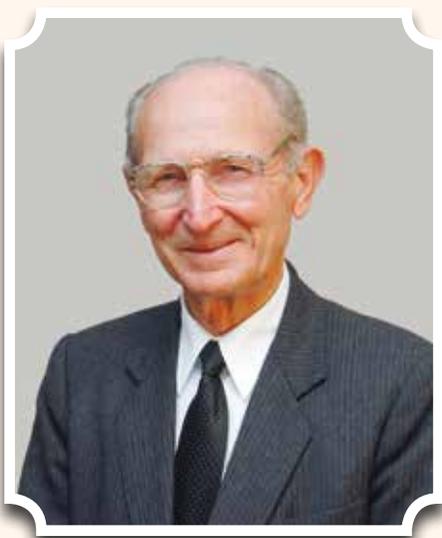
### He will surely come quickly

God’s Word is pure; every word contains eternal life; and he who crushes one word to earth, will find that it will rise against him, to blot out his name from the Book of Life.

The whole of the Revelation of Jesus Christ, by the angel Gabriel to the prophet John, tells of the unspeakable love of our Father and our Brother; and of longing in the

courts of heaven, for the completion of the conflict with sin; and of the restoration of man to his place around the throne. Christ’s parting words are concerning His coming. He speaks them Himself, as if to make them doubly impressive. “Surely I come quickly” (Revelation 22:20). “Lo, I am with you always” (Matthew 28:20), fell as a parting blessing as the cloud received the risen Saviour; “Surely I come quickly” is the personal message sent to us who are today waiting for the consummation. And our hearts respond, as with John we say, “Even so, come, Lord Jesus” (Verse 20). *R*

## In Memoriam: Francisco Devai 1927-2017



1927, and was raised in the SDARM church. He was baptized at the age of 15 and served the church as a canvasser, Bible worker, pastor, and minister, holding many offices in the church, including the General Conference presidency from 1967 to 1979 and vice-presidency from 1979 to 1987.

This beloved brother will always be remembered for his tremendous dedication to the Lord’s work and for his amazing self-denial and remarkable love for others above himself. He has left us an example of meekness that was always ready to serve whenever there was a need to help—literally at any place on the entire planet at any time, even on a moment’s notice. He was undaunted by inconvenience, pioneering, and persecution in dangerous places, and could always be counted on to seek out earnestly the lost sheep anywhere and to tenderly nurture the flock. Wherever this gentle servant was to be found, he genuinely blessed all with whom he came in contact. Brother Devai is now resting peacefully in the Lord, yet his inspiring method of labor will continue bringing forth fruits to glorify God’s name. The full results of his work will only be

known in eternity, but we appreciate the opportunity that God gave us to know him and for using him to bless people in so many ways. Indeed this was a modest, unassuming man whose heavenly crown will likely be quite brilliant with an abundance of stars, symbolizing the many precious souls deeply touched by the wondrous love of Jesus that shone through this humble vessel.

We pray that God will continue to comfort the extensive Devai family, especially his wife, Sister Dora and their children and grandchildren, along with our church family around the world. May the Lord give us all the strength we need to continue looking forward to the day when:

“He will swallow up death in victory, and the Lord God will wipe away tears from off all faces; and the rebuke of his people shall he take away from off all the earth: for the Lord hath spoken it” (Isaiah 25:8).

“Be of good courage. Keep looking up. Jesus is the only hope of us all. He will not leave or forsake you. Precious are the promises of God. We will hold them fast. We will not let them go.”—*Selected Messages*, bk. 2, p. 249.

Dear SDARM family,  
**B**rother Francisco Devai (Lucacin) went to his rest in the Lord on April 16, 2017, in Sacramento, California, USA, at the age of 89. He was truly a brother to be remembered, a real soldier of the cross.

We would like to express our gratitude and appreciation for the work of this beloved servant of Jesus Christ.

Brother Devai was born in Brazil of Hungarian descent on August 30,



## Making Progress in Malawi

### THE HISTORY OF THE SDARM IN MALAWI

By Kapukuta M. Chilufya

The Lord's work of reformation in Malawi began in 2006 with an interested brother who was traveling through the country. He created some interest while in the capital city of Lilongwe and as a result, in 2007, the Zambian Mission sent Bible workers to start the work in Malawi. A permanent worker was supplied within a year and the church was registered with the government in October 2010.

Donations from outside and local sources were given to acquire land for a headquarters in Lilongwe—and by 2013, the number of groups in various places that were gathering to hear the present truth in Malawi had doubled.

Now this number is six times more than when we started. Currently there are 742 souls attending our Sabbath school classes around the country.

By God's grace, we have also begun to acquire more properties and have since built three chapels, plus three more are under construction. We

also have acquired six properties for the church where construction is yet to start and hope to secure more to keep up with the progress of the work.

With the help of Brother Luiz Costa, we have visited many places and acquired a public address system for public evangelistic meetings and have conducted many such meetings throughout Malawi.

With God's help, the brethren have also started a school in Lilongwe; it has been operating for 2 years and is now self-supporting, although housed in a temporary building. We hope to build and promote this institution, as we see its potential for providing physical and spiritual help.

Seminars are held regularly for volunteer Bible workers, young people, and the welfare department. These



must be held in rented facilities, so we hope to build our own facility soon.

Currently we have three full-time Bible workers and usually have volunteers during peak missionary times.

The brethren here are united in spirit, which has been a great blessing. I would like to thank all who have been sacrificing their time and means for the work in this country. Many good things have happened because of the spirit of unity in service. I hope and trust that this spirit continues.

### Recent Work

On June 6, 2017, Bro. P. Lausevic arrived in Blantyre, Malawi, to visit the church and to hold seminars. Due to illness contracted in Uganda, it was not easy—yet the need was great and the Lord strengthened him sufficiently to meet it.

There were many question-and-answer sessions over the next days on topics such as vegetarianism and proper church organization. We covered the issues directly from the Bible and Spirit of Prophecy. On

Sabbath and Sunday, we studied both the plan of God in helping us reach a higher standard, as well as the principles of Romans chapter 7.

On Friday, June 9, 2017, we had the first official reorganization of the mission and on Sabbath afternoon, the ordination of Brother Mulenga Chilufya (originally from Zambia) as a minister.

Let us pray that God continues to bless the work in Malawi. Please keep in prayer the workers and the work being done in this country.

## Reaching out in the Dominican Republic

### SANTO DOMINGO, DOMINICAN REPUBLIC

Over the first weeks of July 2017, the brethren Ivanov Dragan, M.D. (GC Medical Department) and Peter D. Lausevic (GC Vice President) visited our brethren in the Dominican Republic for a health seminar and youth conference.

The first health seminar was held from July 7–12, 2017. The topics of the health seminar were as follows:

- **Anatomy and physiology of the brain**
- **How to improve brain power**
- **Two brains in one head**
- **The brain's hormones**
- **Stress and how to overcome it**
- **The heart diseases in the Bible**

The lecturer for the health seminar was Brother Dragan Ivanov.

Participants in the health seminar included missionaries and members of the church from Haiti, Colombia, Martinique, Guadeloupe, St. Lucia, and the Dominican Republic.

At the same time, from July 2–12, 2017, a series of Bible lectures based on Daniel chapter 11 was led by Bro. Peter Lausevic.

On July 13–16, 2017, a youth conference took place, based on the theme, “Youth in Action, Church Growth,” closing with a wedding performed by Brother Peter Lausevic.

May the Lord bless the work being done in the Dominican Republic. May the messages heard at each event bring forth glory to His name.



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MOVING? Please let us know.

# Spiritual Vacuums by E. W. Carey (Adapted)

**A** vacuum is an empty space with nothing in it. As we experiment with vacuums, interesting things happen.

For example, a feather in a vacuum falls just as fast as a stone or a heavy ball made of lead. However downy the feather may be, however high it might normally float on the breeze, when the support of the atmosphere is taken away, it falls on the ground and probably gets dirty. Then before the feather can be carried again on the wings of the wind, it must be washed in pure water and dried in the bright beams of the sun. The Bible says that God delivers us from the powers of darkness and translates us into the kingdom of His dear Son. By faith, He then makes us to sit together with Jesus in heavenly places. (Colossians 1:13; Ephesians 2:6.) “In the matchless gift of His Son, God has encircled the whole world with an atmosphere of grace as real as the air which circulates around the globe.”<sup>1</sup> We need to choose to breathe this heavenly atmosphere.

But on the other hand, there are some places on earth that we might call “spiritual vacuums” where the Spirit of God is grieved away—places where the holy angels of God turn away their backs in sadness, places where evil angels go around fiercely tempting people to forget about eternity and our need to prepare for it. Some examples would be amusement parks, cinemas, video game parlors, and dance clubs, but there may be many more—depending on what happens to be going on in a certain place.

“Pure, sinless angels cannot delight to come into a dwelling where so much iniquity is practiced.”<sup>2</sup>

“There is a work to be done for some who feel no special need of help. . . . Unless evil is put away from the life, they cannot be welcomed to the presence of holy angels.”<sup>3</sup>

Even if we have a faithful life that honors God, if we go to places we shouldn’t, we leave the atmosphere of grace and will easily fall. The holy angels don’t enter with us. The garment of righteousness becomes spotted and stained with the sins of the world. Then the wicked jeer, the demons of darkness mock the angels of light, and heaven weeps because of the shame brought on the beautiful name of Jesus. We should never let ourselves get caught in such a trap!

“My little children, these things write I unto you that ye sin not. If any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous” (1 John 2:1).

Some may have been snared by the enemy. Like the feather, before we can again sit together with Christ in heavenly places, the guilty stain must be washed away by His own precious blood and the Sun of Righteousness must beam again into our hearts His

life-giving rays. Then, praying in the Spirit, we soar again to heaven’s own light, above the world and sin.

“Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall”; but “God is able to make him stand” (1 Corinthians 10:12; Romans 14:4).

## References

- <sup>1</sup> *The Faith I Live By*, p. 94.
- <sup>2</sup> *Testimonies*, vol. 2, p. 399.
- <sup>3</sup> *The Upward Look*, p. 269.

