Recently my wife and I had lunch with a good friend of ours that we have been eating out with, almost on a weekly basis. I finally had the opportunity to broach the subject of religion to see where she was mentally in regard to salvation. She is an Episcopalian by profession.

“The Episcopal Church has retained a Catholic style liturgy with the arch bishops, bishops, and priests. Episcopalians accept the scriptures as pastoral, filled with instruction for Christian living rather than dogmatic statements of authoritative doctrine. There are no rigid rules. Scripture is accepted as interpreted by tradition. The church is extremely tolerant, permissive, and very socially active. As such it is strongly ecumenical.” (Studying Together by Mark Finley)

As I listened to her, I found that she believed that all faiths and religions lead to God; that He has used different understanding with different people groups, and that each group will end up with salvation by following what they believe.

It doesn’t matter whether you are a Buddhist, Hindu, Mormon, or whatever; through your particular belief you can come to God.

As I pondered how to approach her, I found that I was realising how difficult it can be. My usual approach would be to show her through Scripture that Jesus speaks of only one way to salvation—“Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me.” John 14:6.

The Bible also speaks of the broad and narrow paths—“Enter ye in at the strait gate: for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat: because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it.” Matthew 7:13 & 14.

Mark Finley, in his little book, Studying Together, offers the following advice at page 133, “Episcopalians are generally extremely friendly, caring, loving people. As you develop personal relationships with your Episcopalian friends, openly share your testimony. Describe what Jesus means to you. Remember that the love of Jesus will melt hearts when the mere reiteration of doctrine will accomplish nothing. As interest develops through your testimony, share a study on the inspiration of the Bible. This is essential due to the extremely loose Episcopalian view of Scripture. Follow with clearly prophetic studies such as Daniel 2, Matthew 24, and the manner of Christ’s coming. The Spirit will touch hearts. Many will awake to new life in Christ from their spiritual slumber.”

As I read this advice from Brother Finley, I thought back to my own conversion story—I thought of the Bible as a book of fairy tales. I was into far eastern religions and many other off-beat understandings. I, of course, had never read or studied the Bible, although I was aware of certain verses, such as the 23rd Psalm—it was in the little document prepared for my father’s funeral.

My first interest was drawn to Jesus by a testimony as to what He had meant in a man’s life when that man was in the emergency room of the hospital not knowing whether he would live or die. But what really drew me in to wanting to know more about the Scriptures was when I began to see the Scriptures expounded in regard to the Books of Daniel and Revelation at an Evangelistic series. How could history be told so accurately in advance?

Jesus says twice—(1) “Now I tell you before it come, that, when it is come to pass, ye may believe that I am he.” John 13:19. (2) “And now I have told you before it come to pass, that, when it is come to pass, ye might believe.” John 14:29.

In the Old Testament the following statements are made: “I have declared the former things from the beginning; and they went forth out of my mouth, and I shewed them; I did them suddenly, and they came to pass. Because I knew that thou art obstinate, and thy neck is an iron sinew, and thy brow brass; I have even from the beginning declared it to thee; before it came to pass I shewed it thee...” Isaiah 48:3-5.

As Christians seeking to reach others with the gospel, we need to understand more about the people we are trying to reach, although, a personal testimony can appeal to all people if they actually see something different in you—the love factor. The underlying factor is still the action of the Holy Spirit on hearts and minds.

What about you? Are you reaching out to those around you?
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The Bible Museum Opened

The Bible is a museum of true objects that each have a meaning that is deeper than may be thought at first appearance. They have been shared for our learning—objects we are to contemplate with earnest interest and from which we can draw deep spiritual lessons.

The tables of stone

Broken, alas! Shivered and broken! The gift of the Most High—the tables inscribed with the Law which was uttered in the thunders of Sinai, with the commandments which Israel had thrice vowed to keep—all broken through the baseness of man!

The cement of self-righteousness

But man is not willing to own this. He has gathered the broken fragments together, as the shivered pieces of a precious ancient vase were once gathered, and has placed them together, fitting bit to bit, and has fastened them firmly, as he deems, with the cement of his own self-righteousness. He believes that there are few particles missing. Perhaps, indeed, he has not kept the Fourth Commandment in all its integrity; perhaps some fragments are wanting in the Tenth; but still, on the whole, he believes that he can present fair, almost faultless, tables, on which God will look with approval, and fellow-creatures with applause. When the Pharisee’s eye rested on the tables of the Commandments—that proud eye detected no flaw—he cried, “God, I thank Thee that I am not as other men!” When the young ruler was questioned by the Lord, he, too, marked no breach in the heaven-given Law: “All these things have I kept from my youth up”, was the complacent answer of a conscience at rest.

Each Commandment extends to the words of the lip and the thoughts of the heart

The Lord Jesus, the Source and Fountain of Light, threw such radiance on the Law of God, which man had broken, that the flaws and fractures in it became terribly manifest to every unblinded eye. Christ showed that the Commandment extends to the words of the lip and the thoughts of the heart. How self-righteousness melts under the burning power of that declaration from the Saviour, which sums up all the Commandments in two! “Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all they soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength: this is the First Commandment. And the Second is like, namely this, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.” No one, but Him who gave the Law, could keep that Law unbroken!

The Ten Commandments are not stepping stones to heaven

Yet still, even to the present day, man takes self-righteousness to cement the fragments, and in his secret soul believes his work to be successful. He regards the Tables of Stone as holy; he knows that they were given by God; and his object sometimes secret, but sometimes even avowed, is to make of them stepping-stones in the way to Heaven, so that he may pass the river of death without fear. He says, in his heart, that he has so carefully kept the Commandments, that he may safely rest upon them, and so receive the reward of obedience.

Keeping the Commandments will not save us without total surrender to Christ

But woe to man, guilty man, if he trust his safety to that which has been broken again and again, and which never can be effectually joined together again by human effort. Not to his faithfulness in keeping God’s Commandments, can the highest saint look for salvation, without the help received through total surrender to Christ. He knows that he might as well place his foot on a foam bubble floating on a torrent, and trust to that bubble to keep him from sinking, as rest on the broken Law to save him from being swept away to everlasting destruction.

They who have tried most carefully to keep the Law, without the Lord of the Law, are most ready to own this truth. Well does the Church of England make her children’s response to each Commandment a petition for mercy. Then at the close of all comes a prayer that God would write His Laws in our hearts, in allusion to His own gracious promise: “I will put My laws into their mind, and write them in their hearts, and will be to them a God, and they shall be to Me a people.”

No action of the Lord recorded in Scripture can be without significance

When our Lord sojourned upon earth, a sinner was brought before Him who had notoriously broken the Law. Christ appealed to the consciences of her accusers, and conscience convicted them all of having likewise transgressed God’s Commandment. Twice on that memorable occasion, “Jesus stooped down, and with His finger wrote upon the ground.” No action of the Lord recorded in Scripture can be without significance. If we humbly try to penetrate the meaning of this one, may we not find that the Lord would remind man, that though scribe, Pharisee, and those whom they condemned, had all broken the Law contained in the Tables given through Moses, yet that Christ could write that Law so indelibly in dust and ashes, “with the Spirit of the living God, not in tables of stone, but in fleshy tables of the heart”; that it should ever remain there? Thus every true believer becomes in the forcible language of St. Paul, the epistle of Christ; the Law being inscribed therein by “the finger of God”, not as a ground of acceptance, but as a token of adoption.

And let us never forget that what is written in the heart will assuredly be read in the life; none will so earnestly endeavor to keep the Commandments in thought, and word, and deed, as he who has received them in the spirit as well as the letter, whose obedience is the cheerful heart-service of the man “whose transgression is pardoned, whose sin is covered”.

The Ten Commandments are not stepping stones to heaven
France And The Reformation

By Professor P.T. Magan
(Battle Creek College)

“Yet a little while is the light with you. Walk while ye have the light, lest darkness come upon you.” --The Master

It was on October 31, in the year of our Lord 1517, that Dr. Martin Luther walked boldly up to the church which the elector Frederick had built for the people of Wittenberg, and nailed upon its door his ninety-five theses, or propositions, against the doctrine of indulgences. This was the beginning, in a public way, of the great Reformation of the sixteenth century. In the autumn of the year 1530, the Diet of Augsburg closed; and this, in a certain sense, was the end of the Reformation. It was during this period that the precious light from heaven shone down into the hearts of men with a luster that compelled obedience to its rays.

A faith is always purest when it is unpopular

There was a spiritual life and power working with the Reformers, which everywhere called men from the bondage of sin to the liberty of righteousness. After 1530, a certain kind of legality invested the Reformation, and dimmed the radiance of its proffered grace. Consequently the nations which received the Reformation between 1517 and 1530 were the nations which received it in its purity and power. Of these, Germany, Switzerland, the Netherlands, and England are the most prominent examples. It was during these few short years that the doctrines and the power of the primitive Christians reappeared. It was then that the pure, fresh, free breath of religious freedom, as it is in Jesus Christ, was wafted across the fair fields of Europe. And the men who received it then, received it in its strength and beauty. But the second generation of reformers, if I might so use the term, did not possess the deep spiritual power that was possessed by Luther and his comrades. Protestantism had then, to some extent, become popular; but a faith is always purest when it is unpopular, and is loved for its own sake alone.

The rack, the wheel, and the stake were used to enforce the orders of the church and the state

It seemed almost impossible for the Reformation to strike roots in the soil of France. That monarchy, which was founded by the priests, was devoted to the priests. Again and again were attempts made to sow the good seed, and as often as made, they were frustrated. So tremendous was the hold which the Catholic clergy had obtained over the minds of the people, that their mandate to let this new heresy alone was very generally obeyed. They were told to look back to the days of the Albigenses, and behold how great a work God had wrought in their extermination. The French people were everywhere warned by their pastors and spiritual advisors to beware lest they should blindly follow in the footsteps of these deluded sectaries, and thus bring upon themselves the same retributive visitations of an offended Deity. Everywhere the civil power backed up these threats, and used every possible means to thwart the efforts of the bearers of light. The farce of the conversion of Clovis and the usurpation of Pepin now began to be seen and felt. The French
people were told that they had bound themselves to Rome, and in bondage they must remain. The rack, the wheel, and the stake were used to enforce the orders of the church and the state. Thus scores upon scores of noble men and women, who would have brought light and peace and joy to the hearts of thousands of their countrymen, were driven to Switzerland and other lands, and their labors were lost to France.

Families were dragged from their houses, and chained and roasted to death over slow fires

In due time an order was issued for the arrest of every Protestant in Paris. “Let all be seized, and let Lutheranism be totally exterminated,” were the words of the king. Morin, the royal detective, accompanied by a Protestant who had turned traitor, passed slowly through the streets of the city. They were preceded by the host and surrounded by a throng of priests, incense bearers, monks, and soldiers. Whenever the house of a Protestant was passed, the betrayer made a sign. Not a word was spoken; but the procession halted, the house was entered, and the family dragged forth and loaded with chains. Then the grim company went forward in search of further prey. “No house was spared, great or small, not even the colleges of the University of Paris. Morin made the whole city quake.” “The Reign of Terror had begun.”

“There is no pulpit like the martyr’s pile”

Over slow fires these innocent victims were roasted to death. If the monarchy and church had not possessed such tremendous power, they dared not have acted thus.

Church and state united to annihilate Protestantism

By a solemn and public ceremony, church and state in France united to commit the country to the utter annihilation of Protestantism. Jan. 21, 1535, was fixed upon for this horrible carnival. People from all over France thronged the streets of Paris. The houses were draped with crape because the mass had been insulted. Before every door a torch was burning in honor of the “holy sacrament”. Altars were erected at intervals along the streets. At the palace of the king the procession formed. Holy crosses and sacred banners were borne in the van. After them came citizens, walking in double file, and bearing lighted torches. Next followed the monastic orders, and after them a great collection of famous relics. Behind them rode bishops, archbishops, and cardinals, in their purple and scarlet and jewel-bespangled robes. Beneath a splendid canopy, supported by four princes of the blood, was borne the host. Behind came King Francis I in the garb of a penitent, with his queen and dignitaries of state.

Three hundred years of the suppression of Protestantism brought dire calamities upon France

Everywhere the priests and the emissaries of the church charged the Protestants with plotting to massacre the Catholics, to overturn the government, and to assassinate the king. These allegations were wholly untrue. Nevertheless the prophecies of evil were to have their fulfillment. “The cruelties that were inflicted upon the innocent Protestants by the Catholics accumulated in a weight of retribution, and in after centuries wrought the very doom they had predicted to be impending, upon the king, his government, and his subjects; but it was brought about by infidels, and by the papists themselves. It was not the establishment, but the suppression, of Protestantism that, three hundred years later, was to bring upon France these dire calamities.”
Light now appeared to be darkness, and darkness appeared to be light

In the great hall of the bishop's palace, the king addressed the high officials of church and state. He bewailed “the crime, the blasphemy, the day of sorrow and disgrace” that had come upon the kingdom. He called upon every loyal subject to aid in the extirpation of the dire heresy which threatened the destruction of the nation. “As true, messieurs, as I am your king,” he said, “if I knew one of my own limbs was spotted or infected with this detestable rottenness, I would give it to you to cut off…. And further, if I saw one of my children defiled by it, I would not spare him…. I would deliver him up myself, and would sacrifice him to God.”

Deep was the darkness that enveloped France when once she rejected the light. To the French, light now appeared to be darkness, and darkness appeared to be light. Upon that fatal day, in the cathedral of Notre Dame, where, three centuries later, a nation of atheists worshiped the “Goddess of Reason”, they took a solemn oath to extirpate heresy. Then the officers commenced the work of destruction. Scaffolds were everywhere erected, and thousands suffered upon them. Too harrowing for recital are the details of their tortures.

Another procession was to pass through Paris, bringing about the Revolution and the Reign of Terror

Thus the gospel of peace was rooted out of France, and terrible were the results which followed. Jan. 21, 1793, two hundred and fifty-eight years from the very day that fully committed France to the destruction of Protestantism, another procession passed through Paris. The king was again the central figure. This time he was led to the scaffold, there to yield up his life, a victim of the angry clamors of the Revolution. And the Revolution was the logical result of the rejection of the Reformation. When France rejected the Reformation, she sowed the seeds of anarchy and ruin; “and the inevitable outworking of cause and effect resulting in the Revolution and the Reign of Terror.”

Wisdom was imparted from on high and differences were adjusted

At the time of the Reformation grave political and social questions were agitating the minds of the people of all the great nations of Europe. The rich were oppressing the poor, and the poor were discontented and threatening revolt. In Germany there were several out-breakings; but the softening, tendering influences of the gospel pervaded society through and through, mollifying the passions of the oppressed, and extinguishing the cruel and rapacious desires of the oppressor. Thus the angry passions of men were soothed, the uplifted hand of violence was stayed; wisdom was imparted from on high, and differences were everywhere adjusted with but little shedding of blood.

No still small voice pleaded for mercy

France had these troubles the same as all the other nations; but France had rejected the gospel. The sweet Spirit of God had been slighted, and the voice of conscience deadened. The internal trouble grew apace, till in the Revolution the pent-up flood of misery and woe—the result of generations of oppression—burst through every barrier, hurling the monarch from his throne, the noble from his castle, and the prelate from his pulpit. In that dread day no “still small voice” pleaded for mercy. In crushing the Reformation, church and state had sown the wind, and in the Revolution they reaped the whirlwind.
“My brethren, count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations; knowing this, that the trying of your faith worketh patience. But let patience have her perfect work, that ye may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing. If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him. But let him ask in faith, nothing wavering. For he that wavereth is like a wave of the sea driven with the wind and tossed. For let not that man think that he shall receive anything of the Lord.”

Satan has been practicing his skills for over 6,000 years

What greater promises could be given us than are found in these verses? A cunning and cruel foe attends our steps, and is working every moment, with all his strength and skill, to turn us from the right way. Ever since he succeeded in overcoming our first parents in their beautiful Eden home, he has been engaged in this work. More than six thousand years of continual practice has greatly increased his skill to deceive and allure.

Every repetition of sin weakens power of resistance

On the other hand, he who once yields to temptation becomes spiritually weak, and yields more readily the second time. Every repetition of sin blinds his eyes, stifles conviction, and weakens his power of resistance. Thus while the power of the human race to resist temptation is continually decreasing, Satan’s skill and power to tempt are continually increasing. This is one great reason why the temptations of the last days will be more severe than those of any other age.

Presumption is a most common temptation

The admonition of the Saviour is, “Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation.” If Satan cannot prevent persons from exercising faith, he will try to lead them to presume upon the willingness and power of God, by placing themselves unnecessarily in the way of temptation. Presumption is a most common temptation, and as Satan assails men with this, he obtains the victory nine times out of ten. Those who profess to be followers of Christ, and who claim by their faith to be enlisted in the warfare against all evil in their nature, frequently plunge without thought into temptations from which it would require a miracle to bring them forth unsullied. Meditation and prayer would have preserved them from these temptations, by leading them to shun the critical, dangerous position in which they placed themselves.

We should not lose courage when temptations come upon us

Although the promises of God are not to be rashly claimed by us when we recklessly rush into danger, violating the laws of nature, and disregarding prudence, and the judgment with which God has endowed us, we should not lose courage when temptations come upon us. If we do not knowingly place ourselves in the way of temptation, it is our privilege to claim the promise of the inspired word: “God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it.”

Church leaders are beset with the strongest temptations

Those who have weighty responsibilities to bear in connection with the work of God are the ones that will be beset with the strongest temptations. If Satan can cause them to waver from the right, he not only takes away their own strength, but he destroys their influence for good over others. They lose their confidence in God, and feel that they hardly dare approach him in prayer; for
they are under condemnation. Acting upon the principle that Christ presented in his prayer, “I sanctify myself, that they also might be sanctified through the truth”, they should take the position that they will be steadfast to God under every circumstance, that they may exert an influence to make others steadfast.

Impatience is the result of a lack of faith

The temptations of Satan are manifold; but those to which our attention is called in the text are unbelief and impatience. “Knowing this, that the trying of your faith worketh patience.” Impatience, then, is the result of a lack of faith. “But let patience have her perfect work, that ye may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing.” If we do not maintain the grace of patience, we shall never reach a state of perfection. Some of us have nervous temperament, and are naturally as quick as a flash to think and to act; but let no one think that he cannot learn to become patient. Patience is a plant that will make rapid growth if carefully cultivated. By becoming thoroughly acquainted with ourselves, and then combining with the grace of God a firm determination on our part, we may be conquerors, and become perfect in all things, wanting in nothing.

Satan does everything possible to keep us from our Source of strength

“If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him.” It is our privilege in our great weakness to take hold of the strength of the Mighty One. If we think to meet and overcome the enemy in our own strength, we shall be disappointed. It may seem at times that we pray the most and try the hardest to do right, we have the greatest temptations. This is because Satan is perfectly satisfied with our condition when we are clothed with self-righteousness and do not realize our need of divine aid; but when we see our great need of help, and begin to draw near to God, he knows that God will draw near to us; therefore he places every possible obstruction in the way so that we shall not come into close connection with the Source of our strength.

Character building is a work to be done daily

The exhortation of the apostle is, “Cleanse your hands, ye sinners; and purify your hearts, ye double minded.” It is by engaging in this work, and by exercising living faith in God, that we are to perfect a Christian character. The work of cleansing the soul-temple and preparing for Christ’s appearing must be done while we are in this world of temptation. Just as Christ finds us in character when he comes, so we shall remain. We should make daily advancement in the work of character-building. When we try to separate from us our sinful habits, it may at times seem that we are tearing ourselves all to pieces; but this is the very work that we must do if we would grow up unto the full stature of men and women in Christ Jesus, if we would become fit temples for the indwelling of the Holy Spirit. It is not the will of God that we should remain in feebleness and darkness. He would have us put on the whole armor, and fight valiantly the battle against sin and self. And after we have truly repented of our sins, and done all that we can to overcome them, he would have us manifest a calm, unyielding trust in the merits of a crucified and risen Saviour.

It pleases Satan for us to express a wavering faith

If we make an entire surrender to him, leave our life of sin and passion and pride, and cling to Christ and his merits, he will fulfill to us all that he has promised. He says that he will give liberally to all who ask him. Cannot we believe it? I have tested him on this point, and know that he is faithful to fulfill all his promises. Let not him that wavereth think that he shall receive anything of the Lord. If they would only exercise true repentance toward God, at the same
time possessing a firm faith in Christ, he would cover their sins and pardon their transgressions. But, instead of this, they too often allow themselves to be controlled by impulse and feeling.

**You cannot come near to God by faith unless you realize your sinfulness**

When Satan tells you that your sins are such that you need not expect any great victories in God, tell him the Bible teaches that those who love most are those who have been forgiven most. Do not try to lessen your guilt by excusing sin. You cannot come near to God by faith unless you realize your sinfulness. Then you can place yourselves right on the promises, and with unwavering faith can claim a share in the infinite sacrifice that has been made for the human race. Cling closely to Jesus, and his great heart of love will draw you unto himself.

**The Christian finds constant comfort and strength in Jesus**

I am so anxious that those who labor in the cause shall have all the strength, and peace, and joy that Christ has for them. I want them to have the consolation of the Holy Spirit. The apostle Paul desired that his brethren should be comforted with “the consolation wherewith he was comforted”. The Christian finds constant comfort and strength in Jesus. And when he complains of weakness and darkness, he gives good evidence that he has not a close connection with Jesus.

**We cannot be indolent in seeking perfection of character**

Brethren, let us have an eye single to the glory of God. Let us not allow anything to interpose between us and him. “If we follow on to know the Lord”, we shall know that “his going forth is prepared as the morning; and he shall come unto us as the rain, as the latter and former rain unto the earth”. If we are partakers of the divine nature, we shall reflect in life and character the image of our divine Lord. We cannot be indolent in seeking this perfection of character. We cannot yield passively to our surroundings, and think that others will do the work for us. “Every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as He is pure.” We must be workers together with God. Life must become to us a humble, earnest working out of salvation with fear and trembling; and then faith, hope and love will abide in our hearts, giving us an earnest of the reward that awaits the overcomer.

**Every temptation may be successfully resisted in the strength of Jesus**

A relentless and determined foe has prepared his wiles for every soul that is not braced for trial, and guarded by constant prayer and living faith. We cannot individually, or as a body, secure ourselves from his constant assaults; but in the strength of Jesus every temptation, every opposing influence, whether open or secret, may be successfully resisted. Remember that “your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour.” Therefore “be sober, be vigilant.”

- September 29, 1887

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Ellen G. White, 1827–1915, received the spiritual gift of prophecy, and the fruits of her life and work accord with the biblical tests of a true messenger of God. To this day, her counsels are an incalculable blessing to God’s people around the world.
IN REMEMBRANCE
OF ME

By Pastor Edward A. Collier

This do in remembrance of me,
The Saviour in tenderness said,
My body here broken for you,
Now take as you take of this bread.
O Saviour! With wonder and grief,
Thy body here broken we see;
And though of all sinners the chief,
We eat in remembrance of thee.

This do in remembrance of me;
Oh! Take ye and drink of this cup;
It tells of my blood freely shed,
When high on the cross lifted up.
O Saviour! We see thy blood spilled,
Thy thirst for our sake on the tree;
The cup with thy blessing so filled,
We drink in remembrance of thee.

This do in remembrance of me,
Be this the sure pledge of my love,
The bond of sweet fellowship here,
The seal of a sweeter above.
O Saviour! This feast thou hast spread,
Our hallowed communion shall be;
And one, as we eat of one bread,
We love in remembrance of thee.

This do in remembrance of me,
Until I in glory return,
Fulfilling the prayer of all saints,
Who for my appearing do yearn.
O Saviour! That glory’s foregleam,
Illuming thy cross we can see;
And seeking its fullness supreme,
We live in remembrance of thee.
RESISTANCE UNTO DEATH

By Clark Floyd

A few years ago, I had the privilege of visiting the Desert Museum, a Protestant memorial, founded in 1910, in the house acquired by the Historical Society of French Protestantism, where the French Protestant leader, Pierre Laporte, surnamed Roland, was born. The museum is located in the hamlet of Mas Soubeyran in Southern France. Quite a collection of artifacts recalling the resistance of the French Huguenots to religious persecution and their stand for religious liberty is housed within the walls of this museum.

MILLIONS OF MARTYRS HAVE GIVEN THEIR LIVES THAT WE MIGHT HAVE RELIGIOUS LIBERTY

Many of God’s people today do not remember, or were never informed in regard to, the heritage they have received in being able to worship God in a manner of their own choosing. Millions of martyrs have given their lives that we might have the religious liberty we experience today in many countries.

PROTESTANTISM WAS DRIVEN INTO THE WILDERNESS, WHERE THE WALDENSES FOUND REFUGE

French Protestantism progressed rapidly at first, but was soon almost halted by hostility from the king of France, the Catholic Church, the religious wars, and especially the Saint Bartholomew massacre on that fatal night of August 24, 1572. It was soon driven into the wilderness regions of France, reminding us of the prophecy in Revelation of the pure church as represented by the woman forced into the wilderness. See Revelation 12:6. The wilderness, of course, was one of the strongholds of God’s true church during the 1260 years of papal domination from 538 to 1798. The Waldenses found refuge in the wilderness. God has had His people who, throughout history, have been willing to stand for His Word no matter the consequences—people who are willing to resist the attacks of the evil one, even unto death.

RELIGION IS THE DUTY WE OWE OUR CREATOR

The right of religious liberty is a Bible principle. Religion is the duty we owe our Creator, and the manner of discharging it. Liberty is the state of being exempt from the domination of others, or from restricting circumstances. Religious liberty is therefore man’s exemption from the domination of others, or from restricting circumstances, his freedom to make choices and decide his conduct for himself spontaneously and voluntarily in his duty to his Creator and in the manner of discharging that duty.

The Biblical principles of religious liberty are shown in God’s dealings with His people, and with those with whom they came into contact throughout Bible history.

THE ISRAELITES WERE TAKEN INTO BABYLONIAN CAPTIVITY FOR THEIR DISOBEEDIENCE

The early Israelites, after their settlement in the Promised Land, continued to be disobedient to God’s directions for their lives, and in accordance with the curses for disobedience foretold in Deut. 28:15-16, were to be scattered and taken into captivity by Babylon. The prophet Jeremiah prophesied concerning the Babylonian rule that was to come: “Thus saith the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel; Thus shall ye say unto your masters; I have made the earth, the man and the beast that are upon the ground, by my great power and by my outstretched arm, and have given it unto whom it seemed meet to me. And now have I given all these lands into the hand of Nebuchadnezzar the king of Babylon, my servant; and the beasts of the field have I given him also to serve him. And all nations shall serve him.” Jer. 27:4-7.

GOD MADE NEBUCHADNEZZAR THEIR RULER

Thus God made Nebuchadnezzar an absolute ruler over the Israelites, including Daniel’s three friends, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego. “Thou, O king, art a king of kings: for the God of heaven hath given thee a kingdom, power, and strength, and glory. And wheresoever the
children of men dwell, the beasts of the field and the fowls of the heaven hath he given into thine hand, and hath made thee ruler over them all." Dan. 2:37-38.

And notice what Paul says in regard to this rulership: "Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers. For there is no power but of God: the powers that be are ordained of God. Whosoever therefore resisteth the power, resisteth the ordinance of God; and they that resist shall receive to themselves damnation." Rom. 13:1-2.

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WHAT ABOUT RELIGIOUS LIBERTY?

So what about religious liberty? How may we recognize the authority that God has given to government and still retain the right of freedom of worship?

Chapter 3 of Daniel provides an answer. The king to whom God had given all authority sought to exercise that authority in the area of religion. He sought to control the manner and object of his people's worship. A great image was set before the people on the plain of Dura, and an order to worship was given: "It is commanded, O people, nations, and languages, that at what time ye hear the sound of the cornet, flute, harp, sackbut, psaltery, dulcimer, and all kinds of music, ye fall down and worship the golden image that Nebuchadnezzar the king hath set up." Dan. 3:4-5.

However, Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego, the three Jewish captives, refused to follow the king's order and said, "We will not serve thy gods nor worship the golden image which thou hast set up." Dan. 3:18. Then the God of heaven, who gave Nebuchadnezzar his kingdom and authority, made it very clear by His personal appearance to deliver the three Hebrew youths from the flames of the fiery furnace, that the authority given did not extend to the area of worship.

NO MAN IS TO HAVE POWER OVER OUR MORAL CONSCIENCE

The principle is established without question: No man, whether king or potentate, has power when it comes to the area of the moral conscience of man. Religious liberty is an inherent right of man that is inalienable, undeniable. This principle is extended and reinforced in Daniel, chapter 6, once again in regard to man-made law that is in opposition to the right of freedom to worship God according to one's conscience.

Daniel, because of his honesty and willingness to be subject to the rulership of the Medes and Persians, was placed in a position of leadership in the kingdom. This honor created jealousy among the other leaders. He was too honest for their "good". In order to rid themselves of Daniel they tricked the king, Darius, into entering a law concerning worship in the statutes of the Medes and Persians: "Whosoever shall ask a petition of any god or man for thirty days, save of thee, O king, he shall be cast into the den of lions." Dan. 6:7.

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MAN'S EXTREMEITY IS GOD'S OPPORTUNITY

Continuing his daily worship of the God of heaven in opposition to this law, Daniel soon came under its punitive provisions in spite of the desire on the part of the king to find a way out. Daniel was thrown into a den of lions to be devoured. But man's extremity is God's opportunity, and deliverance was sent by God in the form of an angel to close the mouths of the lions. Again God overruled when it came to worship. The law of rulers could not stand above the right of conscience of the person.

GOD, CHURCH, OR STATE?

But where does a man stand when there is a conflict between the conscience and the system of worship within the church as sought to be enforced by the church, or by the church and state combined?

Again, we must turn to the Bible and the Spirit of Prophecy for our answer. What does God say?

As our Lord walked the earth for three and one-half years, He gave us His example for our own Christian walk. Where He could be in harmony with God's church for that day, He was. But when the leadership of the church was in conflict with the principles of heaven, Jesus had to follow the principles of heaven and deny the right of the church and its leadership to control His conscience.

Jesus' ministry was an independent ministry for that day in that it was not conducted under the auspices of the leadership of the church. As He was teaching one day, some of the church leaders challenged His right to do so.

"And when he was come into the temple, the chief priests and the elders of the people came unto him as he was teaching, and said, 'By what authority doest thou these things? And who gave thee this authority?" Jesus gave the answers by
asking them a question: ‘The baptism of John, whence was it? from heaven, or men?’ ” Matt. 21:23, 25.

TRUE AUTHORITY COMES FROM HEAVEN
Does the authority to preach, baptize and carry on a ministry come from God or does it come from men? The implications are that true authority comes first from Heaven, and man should be very careful that he does not step in the way of heavenly authority.

The Lord also laid down principles in regard to a man’s conscience in the area of religion and the state.

In Luke 20:22, Jesus was asked, “Is it lawful for us to give tribute unto Caesar or no?” Jesus answered, immortalizing the principle, “Render therefore unto Caesar the things which be Caesar’s, and unto God the things which be God’s.” Luke 20:25.

Certain of these principles were reinforced in the ministries of Peter and John near the time of Pentecost.

PETER AND JOHN DID NOT HAVE THE BLESSINGS OF THE CHURCH LEADERS
Neither Peter nor John was preaching with the blessings of the leaders of God’s church (remember it wasn’t until A.D. 34 that the probation of the Jews as the chosen people of God came to an end). They were giving the straight testimony of “Present Truth” for their day—the story of Jesus, the everlasting gospel. (See Acts, chapter 3). In fact, Peter actually points out the heresy the leadership had been involved in, the crucifixion of Jesus; this accusation did not win for Peter the favor of these men.

In Acts 4, we are told that the leadership, grieved at the straight testimony being preached to the people, laid hands on Peter and John and held them until the next day. The leadership then questioned their authority to preach. (See verses 1-7.)

“And they called them, and commanded them not to speak at all nor teach in the name of Jesus. But Peter and John answered and said unto them, Whether it be right in the sight of God, judge ye. For we cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard.” Acts 4:18-20.

WE OUGHT TO OBEY GOD RATHER THAN MEN
In Acts 5:18, the leadership is so upset with their preaching that Peter and John are thrown into jail.

GOD HAS NOT GIVEN MEN POWER TO INTERFERE BETWEEN A HUMAN BEING AND HIS CONSCIENCE
In regard to liberty of conscience in the Seventh-day Adventist Church, Ellen White had to give strong counsel in her day: “I am unable to put away the anxious thoughts that fill my mind in regard to the work of God. I feel that to weep would be a relief. I am sure that a work must be done for those in positions of trust in Battle Creek. They will never be safe, trustworthy men until they are laborers together with God. The question often comes to me, ‘Has God chosen these men
to devise and plan and execute in behalf of His work, when they have not a vital connection with Him.” The men God chooses to bear burdens in His work are to sit at the feet of Jesus, and learn from Him how to repress their un-Christianlike desires and inclinations. God has not given men power to interfere between a human being and his conscience.

WHO HAS REQUIRED THIS AT YOUR HAND?
“The question of religious liberty needs to be clearly comprehended by our people in more ways than one. With outstretched arms men are seeking to steady the ark, and the anger of the Lord is kindled against them because they think that their position entitles them to say what the Lord’s servants shall do and what they shall not do. They think themselves competent to decide what shall be brought before God’s people, and what shall be repressed. The Lord inquires of them, ‘Who has required this at your hand? Who has given you the burden of being conscience for My people? By what Spirit are you guided and controlled when you seek to restrict their liberty? I have not chosen you as I chose Moses—as men through whom I can communicate divine instruction to My people. I have not placed the lines of control in your hands. The responsibility that rested on Moses—of voicing the words of God to the people—has never been delegated to you.’” MR 1335.

Men have a tendency to want to control the consciences and teachings of other men. It is one thing to warn of apostate teachings; it is quite another to forbid the teachings of others or to control the consciences and teachings of other men. The responsibility for this great gift rests on Jesus Christ, and that comes only by a day-by-day walk with Him and continual time spent in prayer and His Word as found in the Bible and the Spirit of Prophecy. We need to constantly stand, not only for our own right of freedom in regard to issues of religion, but also for the rights of all men, that choices may be made for or against following God as only God would have them made, without compulsion.

WE ARE TO RECEIVE THIS WORD AS SUPREME AUTHORITY
Ellen White tells us: “The banner of truth and religious liberty held aloft by the founders of the gospel church and by God’s witnesses during the centuries that have passed since then, has, in this last conflict, been committed to our hands. The responsibility for this great gift rests with those whom God has blessed with a knowledge of His Word. We are to receive this Word as supreme authority. We are to recognize human government as an ordinance of divine appointment, and teach obedience to it as a sacred duty, within its legitimate sphere. But when its claims conflict with the claims of God, we must obey God rather than men. God’s Word must be recognized above all human legislation. A ‘Thus saith the Lord’ is not to be set aside for a ‘Thus saith the church’ or a ‘Thus saith the state’. The crown of Christ is to be lifted above the diadems of earthly potentates.

OUR WORDS SHOULD BE CAREFULLY CONSIDERED
“We are not required to defy authorities. Our words, whether spoken or written, should be carefully considered, lest we place ourselves on record as uttering that which would make us appear antagonistic to law and order. We are not to say or do anything that would unnecessarily close up our way. We are to go forward in Christ’s name advocating the truths committed to us. If we are forbidden by men to do this work, then we may say as did the apostles, ‘Whether it be right in the sight of God to hearken unto you more than unto God, judge ye. For we cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard.’” AA 68-69.

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By Joe Olson

As I talk to people from all parts of the world, a recurring theme I hear from folks is how harsh the Old Testament seems to them. No one seems to mind the New Testament, but the Old Testament with the wars and death and famine and plagues really bothers a lot of people. They don’t see the same love and compassion and mercy in the old as with the new. But since God says He changes not, if we do not see the love and mercy and compassion in the Old Testament, maybe it is the way we are looking at it.

What is “Egypt”?

I would like to address the 10 plagues of Egypt, and what they were all about. But first, let’s address Egypt and what that nation signifies. In the Bible, Egypt is a place where unbelievers dwell. Egypt is a pagan place of many false gods. Egypt is a place where they know not the true God. Egypt is synonymous with false worship, disobedience and rejection of God. In essence, Egypt symbolizes where everyone lives who does not follow God. And Egypt is the place that God calls His people out of. Egypt is darkness, because a rejection of God is a rejection of light, and God is light. God calls us out of darkness into His marvelous light. God is calling us out of the darkness of Egypt into the light of His eternal kingdom.

What was the purpose of the plagues?

Now, without going into more depth about the symbolism of Egypt, I’d like to address the ten plagues of Egypt. God stated directly what these plagues were for - “And the Egyptians shall know that I am the LORD, when I stretch forth mine hand upon Egypt, and bring out the children of Israel from among them.” Ex. 7:5. You see, the Egyptians did not know the Lord. Pharaoh stated that specifically - “And Pharaoh said, Who is the LORD, that I should obey his voice to let Israel go? I know not the LORD, neither will I let Israel go.” Ex. 5:2.

God never referred to the plagues as punishments

The Egyptians said that they did not know the Lord. God said that they shall know. He would use His “signs and wonders” to make them aware of who He was. Most people view these ten plagues that God brought upon Egypt as punishments. You might find it interesting to know that God never referred to these judgments and signs and wonders and plagues that He did upon Egypt as punishments. But over and over again God says that these things were done that they “might know who I am”. “And the Egyptians shall know that I am the LORD…” Ex. 7:5.

Blood, frogs, lice, and flies

Referring to turning water into blood, God said...“Thus saith the LORD, In this thou shalt know that I am the LORD…” Ex. 7:17. Pharaoh’s heart was still hardened when the frogs came, but he begged Moses to get rid of the frogs...and this was Moses’ reply, “When would you like the frogs removed?” “And he said, To morrow. And he said, Be it according to thy word; that thou mayest know that there is none like unto the LORD our God.” Ex. 8:10. “... that thou mayest know…”

Then the lice came. Then the flies came. But no flies would come to the land where the Israelites dwelt. “And I will sever in that day the land of Goshen, in which my people dwell, that no swarms of flies shall be there; to the end thou mayest know that I am the LORD in the midst of the earth.” Ex. 8:22. “… that thou mayest know…”

The plagues were given that the Egyptians would know God, and to get Pharaoh to let the Israelites go

“For I will at this time send all my plagues upon thine heart, and upon thy servants, and upon thy people; that thou mayest know that there is none like me in all the earth.” Ex. 9:14. “And Moses said unto him, As soon as I am gone out of the city, I will spread abroad my hands unto the LORD; and the thunder shall cease, neither shall there be any more hail; that thou mayest know how that the earth is the LORD’S.” Ex. 9:29. All of these plagues were given to the people of Egypt that they might “know”.

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Of course, there were other reasons as well ~ mainly to get Pharaoh to let the Israelites go ~ but God could have done it any other way He wanted. He could have beamed them all to the desert. He could have made all the Egyptians blind. He could have killed the first born right off and saved a lot of time. He could have used an army of angels to escort them out of Egypt. He could have done anything, but He decided on the plagues. Why? Well, we were told why a half dozen times - “That they might know who I am.”

**God wants even the Egyptians to be saved**

These miraculous events were not just for the Israelites! Actually, we are told over and over again that God was trying to get those who did not know Him, to know Him. These were not so much plagues as they were pleas. God wants everyone to be saved. All of this earth’s people are His children… including the Egyptians! And remember, everyone who has not chosen God is symbolically an Egyptian. Those who do not know God are in the dark. Those who have not given their hearts to Jesus are pagan. They have a god, but not the God of the Hebrews. This is just as applicable today as it was in the days of Pharaoh. This applies to us right now. With that in mind, let’s see if these events are more pleas rather than plagues.

It seems to me that God uses these same trials to reach each one of us. Before the “pleas” even really started, the first thing that was done was that God revealed His power. Moses’ staff was turned into a snake and then ate up the magician’s snakes. Do you see how merciful that was? No one was hurt; no one suffered; no one even lost any money.

**God wants to reach us the easy way**

God first tries to get our attention by the miracles we see around us each and every day. I cannot emphasize this too much. God wants to do it the easy way! We are all dead in trespasses and sins. We will all die eternally if God cannot reach us. But He would rather reach us in a good way than in a bad one. The miracle might be a newborn baby, a gorgeous sunrise, a beautiful flower, the limitless universe, the microscopic atom. These are all miracles that we see every day, and God would prefer that we “know” Him that way. If that does not work, God will try another approach. Unfortunately, so many of us are comfortable with our lives that it takes something a little more serious to move us off dead center.

**When the water was turned to blood, all the fish gods died**

So, God tries turning water to blood. This “plea” is still so mild that we barely notice that it is something bad. Oh, it’s inconvenient; we have to do a little digging for water because the rest of the water is blood now. But God didn’t even let that last more than a week. It was just to get our attention.

Without going too far off track, another reason for these specific pleas, or plagues, is to address what people were putting their faith in. You see, one of the most famous gods of the Egyptians was Dagon, the fish god. When the water turned to blood, all the fish died. The Nile was considered to be their mother, and hence, another god.

**God’s snake ate their snake gods**

The Egyptians revered, or worshipped snakes too. So God’s snake ate up the magician’s snakes. The real God was trying, ever so gently, to reveal that what they put their trust in was not real. Now, how many Egyptians came to the faith after these manifestations we are not told.

**Pharaoh had to ask Moses to ask the real God to remove their frog gods**

For those who needed more “pleas”… God provided. Now God brings frogs to them. Still, the frogs were nothing more than an inconvenience as well. The Egyptian sorcerers seemed to create frogs too, like Moses’ snake, but they cannot get rid of the frogs… they can only seem to make more. More frogs is not what Pharaoh wanted… he was looking for less frogs. So he has to ask Moses to ask the real God to remove them. “Then Pharaoh called for Moses and Aaron, and said, Intreat the LORD, that he may take away the frogs from me, and from my people; and I will let the people go, that they may do sacrifice unto the LORD.” Ex. 8:8. Do you see how God used just a little more effort to get their attention? Ironically, frogs were also worshipped as gods in Egypt, and here the king of the Egyptians has to ask the real God to get rid of their “gods” for them.

It is no accident that God chose these plagues, or pleas, as He did. Still… no real suffering; no loss of property; no real harm done. But there was the additional revelation that it took God… the real God… the only true God… to remove the frogs. To get our attention, God will allow us to get in situations where only He can help. He wants to help us. He wants to take away the frogs in our lives.

**God’s ways are merciful**

There were several different frog gods that the Egyptians worshipped. Once again, the real God is trying to show us that the gods we trust in are not real, and cannot help us. If this does not work, God does not give up on us, He continues trying to
reach us. Praise God that He puts more and more effort into saving us! He tries something a little more inconvenient for us. Now it is lice; and then flies. Now these things are itching and biting. Flea and fly bites are usually not extremely painful, but they do get our attention. This is what God is trying to do - to get our attention in the lightest, easiest, least intrusive way possible. Can you begin to see the mercy now?

He would prefer we just see the miracles and then believe. But for those of us who are a little more hardheaded, God has to use more attention-grabbing means. At this point, even the magicians were willing to admit that this was “the finger of God”. Ex. 8:19.

The up-coming plague on the cattle in the fields was announced

Still, up to now, there has been no pecuniary or monetary loss to any of the people. They still have full bellies, beautiful fields, lots of animals, etc., etc. Even the water is back to normal. But now comes something a little more serious. The plea, or plague, on the cattle in the field. Mind you this was not on all the cattle, just the ones left out of the barns in the field. “Behold, the hand of the LORD is upon thy cattle which is in the field, upon the horses, upon the asses, upon the camels, upon the oxen, and upon the sheep: there shall be a very grievous murrain.” Ex. 9:3. Even in this pronouncement, God was merciful, God was… well… pleading. “And the LORD appointed a set time, saying, To morrow the LORD shall do this thing in the land.” Ex. 9:5. Why wait until tomorrow? Remember, this plague only affected those cattle that were not indoors. Only if they were in the field were the cattle affected.

At this point, if you were Egyptian, and you had seen what had happened so far, and the next prediction is going to kill your cattle if you don’t get them indoors, what would you do? God, in mercy, gave them a whole day to get their cattle indoors so they would not be destroyed. Do you see His goodness here?

In spite of being forewarned, the Egyptians still refused to listen

This is the Ten Plagues we are talking about! They really were Ten Pleas! Do you see how badly He wants to avoid causing any problems for us? He really, really wants to do it the easy way. But… for all of those who refuse to believe; refuse to accept; refuse to acknowledge… God took their cattle away.

Please remember that He is doing all of these things so that we will not die eternally. He wants to save us! That is the whole and entire point here. Now, for those Egyptians who have not humbled themselves, or who refuse to believe, they have suffered a major financial blow. This plague addresses our trust in money and wealth and financial prosperity. God will show us, if He has to, that money will not help us; that money cannot be our god either.

No one was exempt from the plague of boils

Now comes the plague of boils. Please notice that even with the loss of the cattle, thus far, no one has suffered physically other than minor bites from fleas and flies. “And they took ashes of the furnace, and stood before Pharaoh; and Moses sprinkled it up toward heaven; and it became a boil breaking forth with blains upon man, and upon beast.” Ex. 9:10.

You might not have had cattle; you might have had your money in the bank instead of in animals, but this disease was upon all the Egyptians. No one was exempt. “And the magicians could not stand before Moses because of the boils; for the boil was upon the magicians, and upon all the Egyptians.” Ex. 9:11.

Beauty, wealth, position, and education cannot save you

A few things to notice here: Number 1, this plague was upon all of the Egyptians…in other words, no one was left un-impacted by this plague. Number 2, the magicians, who were part of the reason everyone else hardened their hearts in unbelief, could not stand before Moses. God was showing all the Egyptians that any trust they placed in man was misplaced. You see, the magicians were the educated class, the powerful men, the upper crust, if you will. And God would have all the people recognize that wealth and position and education cannot help you either. And number 3, these boils made everyone ugly. The beautiful, the handsome, the suave and sophisticated don’t look so good now. This world is filled with people who strive to be dashing and sleek and debonair. Hard to be debonair when your body has boils all over it. God is trying to convey that we should not make beauty our god either. We are often our own worst enemy!

God is, and always has been, our only defense against ourselves and the world and the devil. This is the first plague, (number 6 of ten), that actually impacted everyone. Can you see the mercy here, too? Not everyone is so bad and so hardened and so lost in sin that they each need the same treatment. The first 5 plagues did nothing more than cause some irritation; unless of course you left your cattle outside.

Then there was hail mingled with fire on everyone and everything in the field

Hopefully, we have begun to learn who God really is. But if after 5 tries to get your attention, you still remain obstinate, God cares enough to keep trying, but He’s going to have to get more
serious. “And Moses stretched forth his rod toward heaven: and the LORD sent thunder and hail, and the fire ran along upon the ground; and the LORD rained hail upon the land of Egypt. So there was hail, and fire mingled with the hail, very grievous, such as there was none like it in all the land of Egypt since it became a nation. And the hail smote throughout all the land of Egypt all that was in the field, both man and beast; and the hail smote every herb of the field, and brake every tree of the field.” Ex. 9:20.

They were warned to bring everything in from the field

Now this has become “potentially” deadly again. I say “potentially” because it only happened to those in the field. This time it was man and beast… everyone and everything… in the field. But once again, God showed His wonderful mercy to every one of the Egyptians. He did not want this. He wanted no one to die. So, He made an announcement… “Behold, to morrow about this time I will cause it to rain a very grievous hail, such as hath not been in Egypt since the foundation thereof even until now. Send therefore now, and gather thy cattle, and all that thou hast in the field; for upon every man and beast which shall be found in the field, and shall not be brought home, the hail shall come down upon them, and they shall die.” Ex. 9:18,19.

Again God warns the people what will happen. He tells them how to avoid it. He even gives them another day to collect their families, their flocks, all their beasts and everything that they have in the field. “Get it now,” God said, because the storm is coming.

Now, say you are an Egyptian, and you have already seen how all the animals in the field earlier were plagued and died… what would you be doing? Man, you have to be hardboiled not to bring everything you own in from out in the fields… including yourself! Just in case! Do you think anyone brought their stuff in? “He that feared the word of the LORD among the servants of Pharaoh made his servants and his cattle flee into the houses: And he that regarded not the word of the LORD left his servants and his cattle in the field.” Ex. 9:20, 21.

God refers to the plagues as signs

Here now, is the seventh time God says why He is doing these things to, or actually for, the Egyptians… “And that thou mayest tell in the ears of thy son, and of thy son’s son, what things I have wrought in Egypt, and my signs which I have done among them; that ye may know how that I am the LORD.” Ex. 10:2.

Often what happens to us is, no doubt, for ourselves, but not just for ourselves. They are for future generations of people that will have the same hard hearts; the same trust in false gods; the same doubt about who and what God is.

These plagues, God called “signs”. Signs point the way. Signs guide us in the right direction. Signs tell us where we are going. These pleas from God are signs for us and our children and grandchildren. God will not allow anything to stand in the way of His children coming back to Him. And if the people are still trusting in wheat and rye and orchards and vineyards… then He will take them away too. But even then, God says that He will do it tomorrow to give the people an opportunity to gather up what they can. It won’t be enough to trust in, but it might make life bearable a while longer.

Now it’s all gone, and Egypt is destroyed

Now God really puts the hammer down… “And the locusts went up over all the land of Egypt, and rested in all the coasts of Egypt: very grievous were they; before them there were no such locusts as they, neither after them shall be such. For they covered the face of the whole earth, so that the land was darkened; and they did eat every herb of the land, and all the fruit of the trees which the hail had left: and there remained not any green thing in the trees, or in the herbs of the field, through
all the land of Egypt.” Ex: 10:14-15. Now it’s all gone.

Surely now the rest of the Egyptians will acknowledge the one true God. Even Pharaoh’s servants were beginning to voice their opinions... The servants, now! “And Pharaoh’s servants said unto him, How long shall this man be a snare unto us? let the men go, that they may serve the LORD their God: knowest thou not yet that Egypt is destroyed?” Ex. 10:7. And they said this before the plague had even come!

“Egypt is destroyed!” they said. Does it really have to come to that? Is it really that hard to give in to a God who loves this much that He would not quit trying to reach you? But some people, no matter how much you do for them or how much you give them, will simply not straighten up and fly right. They will not turn to do right instead of wrong. They refuse submission and obedience to God, the God who has done all of this to save them. These were not plagues... these have all been pleas to come home.

A sign from God that they were in total darkness

Then one more try... one more jolt to try to get them to wake out of their stupor. The plea of darkness. “And Moses stretched forth his hand toward heaven; and there was a thick darkness in all the land of Egypt three days:” Ex. 10:22. There are few things as terrifying as darkness. Three days means that God controlled the sun, moon and stars as well, which again... the Egyptians considered to be gods. Not only that, but this was a sign from God that they were in total darkness, from which it was impossible for them to escape. They were powerless to do anything.

Except one thing...You see, the Israelites had light! “They saw not one another, neither rose any from his place for three days: but all the children of Israel had light in their dwellings.” Ex. 10:23. They were able to see, in this total darkness, one thing, and one thing only... that God’s people had light! This was a huge plea, and the final one. After this, if one did not acknowledge God, death was the result. Now you had to acknowledge that the God of the Hebrews was the true God and that everything and everyone else was a lie. God alone could save. God alone could keep death and destruction at bay.

It matters to God if you are a Christian

One final test would prove who accepted God for who He was, or reject Him finally. The plea/plague on the firstborn. “And Moses said, Thus saith the LORD, About midnight will I go out into the midst of Egypt: And all the firstborn in the land of Egypt shall die, from the firstborn of Pharaoh that sitteth upon his throne, even unto the firstborn of the maidservant that is behind the mill; and all the firstborn of beasts. And there shall be a great cry throughout all the land of Egypt, such as there was none like it, nor shall be like it any more. But against any of the children of Israel shall not a dog move his tongue, against man or beast: that ye may know how that the LORD doth put a difference between the Egyptians and Israel.” Ex. 11:4-7.

This is final. If you will not listen; if you will not forbear; if you will not obey... death will be the result. Please notice the last few words in those verses - “…that ye may know how that the LORD doth put a difference between the Egyptians and Israel.” It matters if you are a Christian or not. It might not matter to you, but it matters to God. There is, and always has been, just one God, and it matters to Him. In a world of many religions and many gods and many supposed ways to heaven, this needs to be fastened into our minds. It matters to God! It mattered so much that He used ten different ways to reach His children, the Egyptians. They were in darkness and He wanted them to come into the light.

Some finally decided to leave Egypt, and they were saved

But once again... one final time, mercy is still extended. The Jews were to take the blood of a lamb and apply it to the doorposts and lintels of their homes. Jesus is the Lamb of God, and everyone who allows Him to come in and give Him their hearts, will be saved. “And the blood shall be to you for a token upon the houses where ye are: and when I see the blood, I will pass over you, and the plague shall not be upon you to destroy you, when I smite the land of Egypt.” Ex. 12:13.

Well, that takes care of the Jews... but what about the Egyptians? Were all of them to lose their first born... no matter what? This statement is quite revealing - “There was quite a large number of the Egyptians who were led to acknowledge, by manifestations of the signs and wonders shown in Egypt, that the God of the Hebrews was the only true God. They entreated to be permitted to come to the houses of the Israelites with their families, upon that fearful night when the angel of God should slay the firstborn of the Egyptians. They were convinced that their gods whom they had worshiped were without knowledge, and had no power to save or to destroy. And they pledged themselves to henceforth choose the God of Israel as their God. They decided to leave Egypt, and go with the children of Israel to worship their God. The Israelites welcomed the believing Egyptians to their houses.” 1SDABC 1101.

God wants all of us in His kingdom

Praise the Lord! Some were “getting it”. And they were saved! Ten times, ten pleas, ten plagues. If we are not Christians, committed to God Almighty, then we are Egyptian. God wants all of us in His kingdom. Let’s not make Him go through all of His pleas to bring us home. Let’s take a moment, right now, to commit our lives to God, and resolve to put our trust in Him so we can be saved from the angel of death as well.

Joe Olson serves as the executive director and chairman of the board of Hope International. He also travels as an international speaker.
ONE LOOK

By Sarah G. Stock

Only take one look at Jesus,
And the heavy weight of grief,
Bowing down the soul and spirit,
Shall give way to sweet relief.

Only take one look at Jesus,
And thy restless thoughts shall cease;
Thou shalt find thy feverish longings
Hushed to calm and hallowed peace.

Only take one look at Jesus,
And the heart, that craved and cried
In its loneliness and hunger,
Shall be sweetly satisfied.

Only take one look at Jesus—
Earth itself transfigured lies;
Every whisper of the breezes
Wakens heavenly harmonies.

Only rest thy gaze on Jesus—
Life and health and joy are thine;
Thou hast here the blessed foretaste
Of the heritage divine.
The children of God are commanded, “As he which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation. . . . And if ye call on the Father, who without respect of persons judgeth according to every man’s work, pass the time of your sojourning here in fear.”

**Men must be found who will not manifest anything but a Christ-like spirit**

Never was there a time when we needed more special connection with God than at the present time; for there is a constant tendency in human nature that makes men lean on their own understanding. Men trust in men, leaving God out of life and character. There must be more earnest efforts to live out the life of Christ, and the advocates of the truth must learn not to lean upon any man or set of men. There must be repentance of sins, Christ-like meekness, and lowliness of heart. Men must be found who have an individual experience, who cannot be enticed from the path of right, of justice, of meekness, of patience, of forbearance.

**Men are needed in this time who know that the evidences which God has given are to be relied upon in the face of all the assertions that will come from the enemies of the faith.** Talk is very cheap; it is a common article of commerce, and is much more largely dealt in than is prayer or the words that God has spoken through his chosen apostles and prophets.

We may have faith in men who profess to be followers of Christ, only as we see that they are meeting God’s great standard of righteousness, not some ideal of their own, but that they are actually copying the perfection of the character of Jesus Christ.

The Lord will choose men who will stand forth as examples of undaunted devotion

Let not any man feel that the work of God is under his special guardianship; but realize that it is under the control of Omniscience. The Lord will choose men for these times who will be workers together with him. He will choose men of resolute minds, who will follow his guidance, and act in harmony with the great I AM; who will be actuated by heroic principles, and will accomplish the will of God in preventing evil and promoting good in the world. Privations, trials, and hardships will not discourage them; but they will stand forth as examples of undaunted devotion. It is this class that to all intents and purposes are the defenders of the faith once delivered to the saints. In times of proving and trial, in the day of trouble such as never was, it will be revealed who have built their characters from material that will stand the test.

**Servants of the Lord will be ready to promote the interests of truth under every circumstance**

God’s true workmen will be forced to speak the truth and unmask hypocrisy and deception in defending every portion of the word of God. Accusation upon accusation from men of high position will come against those who would be true to God, and they will be compelled to stand in defense of the truth. But the servants of the Lord will be men of opportunity, of energy and tact, and will be ready to promote the interests of truth under every circumstance. They will not be selfish, self-important, self-sufficient persons; they will be men who have the mind of Christ. They will be kind, affectionate, loving, prompt, tender, yet resolute. They will be God-fearing men, and in the face of opposition they will move forward, firm and steadfast, to defend Bible truth. Such men will press the triumphs of the cross of Christ to the very end of the conflict. They will boldly, and yet in the Spirit of Christ, confront the agents of Satan who will seek to suppress religious liberty, and they will not give place to them for an hour.

**The steadfastness of Christ’s followers will be tested to the uttermost**

There will be those, who, after a feeble resistance, will yield one point of truth after another. The reason they will do this...
is that they have never valued truth as they should. They have never enthroned the truth in the inner sanctuary of the heart, and they have not been sanctified through the truth. They will give way to the powers that be, and render obedience to men rather than to God. But those who stand firm to the truth will answer those who demand their surrender to the traditions of men and their compliance with the customs of the majority, that they owe allegiance to a higher authority than that of the State. They will declare that they cannot set aside the Sabbath of the great Creator for a man-made institution. They will declare that as partakers of the divine nature, they are placed in a position where the ordinances of men, when conflicting with the commands of God, are of no force nor value. Those who are empowered with authority will say to them as they said to Paul, “Thou art beside thyself,” and when persuasion and entreaty are in vain, heavier pressure will be brought to bear, and the steadfastness of Christ’s followers will be tested to the uttermost. Every conceivable device that men and demons can invent will be brought to bear against them to overcome them; but those who have learned how to cling to God will not abate one jot or tittle of truth.

Let the gems of divine light be reset in the framework of the gospel

The fact that times of trouble and persecution are before the people of God must not deter them in the least from proclaiming the truth. They are to proclaim the truth because it is truth. Gems of truth are to be gathered up and redeemed from their companionship with error; for by their misplacement in the association of error, the Author of truth has been dishonored. The precious gems of the righteousness of Christ, and truths of divine origin, are to be carefully searched out and placed in their proper setting, to shine with heavenly brilliancy amid the moral darkness of the world. Let the bright jewels of truth which God gave to man, to adorn and exalt his name, be carefully rescued from the rubbish of error, where they have been claimed by those who have been transgressors of the law, and have served the purposes of the great deceiver on account of their connection with error. Let the gems of divine light be reset in the framework of the gospel. Let nothing be lost of the precious light that comes from the throne of God. It has been misapplied, and cast aside as worthless; but it is heaven-sent, and each gem is to become the property of God’s people and find its true position in the framework of truth. Precious jewels of light are to be collected, and by the aid of the Holy Spirit they are to be fitted into the gospel system.

Gems of truth are to shine as stars amid the moral darkness of the world

God has poured his Spirit upon his servants, and qualified them to use their ability and talent in revealing truth to those who sit in darkness; but the very ability God has given by which to reveal truth to others, men, perverting their talents, employ to deceive; for they use their gifts as did Satan when he deceived the angels of heaven, and exalt self, causing their God-given abilities to administer to their own glory. These become confused by error, their minds are darkened by the enemy, and the truths which God imparted to them are buried by them in a mass of error, or basely perverted to serve the cause of evil. But these heaven-given rays of light are not to be lost to the world. These truths are to be as a lamp unto our feet, and as a light unto our path. It is these gems that will give attractiveness to the gospel plan, and they are to shine as stars amid the moral darkness of the world.

Gather up every fragment of truth, and live...
life and example to those with whom you associate. He has filled every position, from the humblest to the most exalted, with acceptance to the Father, and you are to gather up the fragments of his words and works, that nothing be lost. As you advance heavenward, make use of every common, every-day habit and custom to illustrate truth, and in every calling, however menial, live out the life of Christ. In this way you will be to men a continual revelation of what Christ would have men be in your position.

There is too much following of men

The great plan of human redemption is as yet but faintly understood, because men do not place themselves in the divine channel of light. There is too much following of men, and limiting the light by men’s opinions and traditions. The wonderful truth of God is to be sought out by every mind, and the results of many minds are to be brought together from many sources as God’s hereditary trust, and the divine power will work in such a way that true harmony will exist. In the revelation of Christ to the world of those who receive it, in order that glory may redound to God. Truth that has found its proper setting, flashes brilliant rays of divine light into darkened minds, and meets the wants and necessities of the minds and hearts of fallen men who could not be reached by any other agency. It is by living out the truth in human life that souls are to be reached.

Christ requires that his followers shall be perfect in their lives

As the Son of God in human form was perfect in his life, so he requires that his followers shall be perfect in their lives. He was made in all things like unto his brethren. He hungered, he thirsted, he

Truth is to be molded into the life and character of those who receive it

Through all ages God has spoken and worked by human instrumentalities. God has given to men their faculties, and he expects them to use them and by use to improve their abilities. They are to employ these faculties in rescuing truth from the rubbish of error where it has been made to serve the cause of the great adversary. The gems of truth are imperishable, and the Lord would have them gathered up and placed in their proper relation, that they may embellish and adorn the doctrine of Christ our Saviour.

Ellen G. White, 1827–1915, received the spiritual gift of prophecy, and the fruits of her life and work accord with the biblical tests of a true messenger of God. To this day, her counsels are an incalculable blessing to God’s people around the world.
Christian Crossword

ACROSS
4. The prophet that tradition says was sawn asunder
6. Who in his epistle spoke negatively about outward adornment?
9. The 7th church of the 7 churches of Revelation
12. Christ is both the Priest and the _____
14. The total number of the tribes of Israel
17. Christ is our eternal high Priest according to the order of _____
19. How many sanctuaries are there?
21. The prophet that followed Elijah
22. A form of angel that stands at God’s right hand
25. Who is the beast that was wounded and healed?
26. The name of the runaway slave that Paul asked his master to accept as a brother
27. We must be _____ of the word, and not hearers only
28. Genesis is the Book of _____

DOWN
1. If someone says, I love God, and hates his brother, he is a _____
2. Who was able to open the scroll in Revelation 5?
3. “A belief that does not lead to obedience is _____”
5. A term that is used for Christ in relation to our defense in the judgment
7. John and James were nicknamed, Sons of _____
8. The king that had a prophet of God sawn asunder
10. One of the tribes of Israel not mentioned in the 144,000
11. Titus was assigned to the church in _____
13. Revelation is the Book of _____
15. Paul called this man a beloved son
16. Paul asked this man to accept a runaway slave as a brother in Christ
18. The 3rd church of the 7 churches of Revelation
19. One of the people that wanted Nehemiah to come down from the rebuilt wall of Jerusalem
20. The trials of life are God’s _____ to remove the impurities and roughness of our character
24. In his epistle, he spoke of Enoch’s prophecy

Answers from Christian Crossword published in the December 2010 issue of Our Firm Foundation

Volume 26, Number 1 25
**Health Gem**

**Asthma**

Dr. Olson comes from a long line of health professionals including MDs, naturopaths, and osteopaths. Having always wanted to help people, especially in the area of health, she was a missionary to Belize and Korea. A national speaker, an RN for years, a certified herbologist, and a naturopathic doctor, Dr. Olson is utilizing this experience and wealth of knowledge for the benefit of people all over the world.

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**TREATMENT PROTOCOL FOR NUTRITIONAL THERAPIES**

| **GENERAL DIET** | Strengthening the immune system is the primary concern in the treatment of asthma. Avoid all meat, fish, eggs, and dairy products, as these have been linked to the cause of asthma. Eliminate all coffee, tea, chocolate, sugar, and salt. Drink pure spring water rather than chlorinated water. Each day, eat large portions of fresh/raw fruits and vegetables. Limit or eliminate all cereals except for buckwheat and millet. Identify all food allergies. Particularly in infants and children, elimination diets (the identification of allergens by eliminating foods on a trial basis) have been successful in the treatment of asthma. Some of the most common allergens include: milk, chocolate, food colorings, eggs, fish, shellfish, and nuts (particularly peanuts). Remove all food additives from the diet. Many preservatives and dyes have been reported to cause asthma attacks. Examples of additives include tartrazine, benzoates, sulfur dioxide, and, particularly, sulfites. For adults (not children under 17) a juice fast is recommended. |
| **HELPFUL FOODS** | Onions and Garlic – Generously include in the diet, as they have been found to ward off an enzyme that generates an inflammatory chemical. (Also, you can juice one red onion and mix with small amount of honey. Take one teaspoon every hour during an attack to relieve symptoms.) Chili pepper – Has been used naturopathically to break an asthma attack. This food has been shown to have components that desensitize the airways to various irritants. Lemon - Mix 2 tablespoons of lemon juice with water, and drink before meals. |
| **NUTRIENTS THAT HELP** | Vitamin B6 – May be deficient in asthmatics. This supplement has been shown to decrease frequency and severity of wheezing and asthma attacks. Vitamin B12 – May be deficient in asthmatics. With the addition of vitamin B12, patients in one study showed less shortness of breath during exertion. Vitamin C – Is an antioxidant that can provide an important defense against bronchial constriction. Beta-Carotene – Is effective in healing the epithelial lining of the respiratory tract. Vitamin E – Is an antioxidant that can inhibit the formation of inflammatory compounds. Selenium – Is effective in inhibiting the production of leukotrienes, substances that stimulate bronchial constriction. Magnesium – Relaxes smooth muscle, serves as a natural bronchodilator and antihistamine. |
| **JUICING THERAPY** | Sources of Vitamin B6 – Kale, spinach, and turnip greens. Sources of Vitamin C – Kale, parsley, broccoli, and spinach. Sources of Beta-carotene and other carotenoids – Carrot, collard greens, kale, and parsley. Sources of Vitamin E – Spinach, asparagus, and carrot. Sources of Selenium – Red Swiss chard, turnip, garlic, and orange juice. Sources of Magnesium – Beet greens, spinach, parsley, and garlic. |
**TREATMENT PROTOCOL FOR SELF-CARE THERAPIES**

| HERBS | Ginger Tea – Make ginger tea by juicing a piece of ginger and simmering it in water. Drink this before meals to ward off asthma attacks.  
Ephedra (it’s natural, rather than synthetic, form) – Is a very effective bronchodilator, especially when combined with Thyme (an antispasmodic).  
Mullein Tea – Soothes the mucous membranes and is especially good for night attacks. Can be combined with marshmallow and slippery elm tea for an additional mucus-secreting effect.  
Passionflower Tea or Tincture – Can be used for cases of asthma due to tension or nervous conditions.  
Licorice Root, Indian tobacco, capsaicin (from cayenne pepper), skunk cabbage, horse chestnut, jujube plum, green tea, onions, and garlic – Are valuable aids for those suffering from asthma. |
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<tr>
<td>EXERCISE</td>
<td>Exercise has actually shown to help prevent exacerbation of asthma attacks. If no environmental allergies are present, exercise outside in the fresh air and sunshine is best.</td>
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<td>REST</td>
<td>During deep sleep, the production of growth hormone is at its peak. Growth hormone speeds the absorption of nutrients and amino acids into your cells and aids the healing of tissues throughout your body. The hormone also stimulates your bone marrow, where your immune system cells are born. Melatonin, often called the sleep hormone, is also produced during sleep. This hormone inhibits tumors from growing, prevents viral infections, stimulates your immune system, increases antibodies in your saliva, has antioxidant properties, and enhances the quality of sleep. Much of the body’s healing occurs during the night-time hours. It is very important that you get plenty of rest at night (especially between 8pm-midnight).</td>
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<tr>
<td>STRESS RELIEF</td>
<td>Some cases of asthma are due to tension or nervous conditions. Prayer, meditation, reflection, and other stress-reducing techniques are beneficial.</td>
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| POUltICES & APPLICATIONS | During an asthma attack, put your hands in hot (NOT SCALDING) water.  
A poultice of Swedish bitters mud over the chest, or clay mixed with Swedish bitters liquid can help break up chest congestion and give relief. |
| ADDITIONAL THERAPIES | Hydrotherapy  
- Hot fomentations to the chest, especially during acute attacks. For best results, combine these with hot footbaths, with the head kept cool using a fan or cool water. The body should be covered up with wool or cotton blankets.  
- A 20-minute hydrogen peroxide bath can help relieve asthma attacks as well. Rest afterward. Put 1 pint of 35% hydrogen peroxide in a full tub of very warm water. |
| PERSONAL FAVORITES | Additional Supplements I Have Had Success With: Swedish bitters taken internally, has a blood cleansing and anti-inflammatory effect, which I have found beneficial. European Clay taken internally can also reduce the body’s sensitivity to allergens and reduce the risk of attacks. Eyebright and Congesta-Clear help to loosen secretions and open up the bronchial passageways. Congesta-Clear can be used as a preventative or taken at the onset of an attack to open up the airway. |

Red Alert in the Yellow Sea—“With tensions on the Korean Peninsula threatening to boil over, the U.S. urged China—North Korea’s major ally—to bring the wayward hermit kingdom to heel for its provocative actions. But rather than rein in Pyongyang, China called to resume the much belabored six-party talks among East Asia’s key stakeholders. The talks are largely seen as a p.r. show that will do little to improve a deteriorating security situation. On Dec. 1, the U. S. and South Korea concluded four days of joint naval drills in the Yellow Sea, exercises Pyongyang said were a prelude to an invasion. South Korea’s intelligence chief warned there was a high possibility the North would soon stage another provocation much like the Nov. 23 artillery attack on a South Korean island that killed four people.”

End Time Perspective: See Editor’s note and end time perspective under #2.


Nuclear Program Under Attack—“As U.S. diplomatic cables released by WikiLeaks revealed that Iran’s Arab neighbors were increasingly concerned over Tehran’s nuclear ambitions, two top Iranian atomic scientists were killed in daytime car bombings—which some allege were carried out by Israel’s Mossad spy agency. Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, who blamed the U.S. and Israel for the attacks, acknowledged that a computer worm many believe was created in Israel had successfully damaged nuclear centrifuges used to enrich uranium. He vowed the program would go ahead even as Iranian officials announced they would rejoin stalled nuclear talks.”

Editor’s Note: Both 1 and 2 above are just further signs of the unrest in the world. Every month we have these same signs multiplied.

End Time Perspective: “The nations are in unrest. Times of perplexity are upon us. Men’s hearts are failing them for fear of the things that are coming upon the earth. But those who believe in God will hear His voice amid the storm, saying, ‘It is I; be not afraid.’” ST Oct. 9, 1901.


“Fed by drought, Africa’s deserts are spreading, bringing with them hunger, disease and tribal conflict….The U.N. Food and Agricultural Organization says that on the southern edge of the Sahara, an area the size of Somalia has become desert in the past 50 years. The U.N. Environment Programme (UNEP) says 14 African countries currently experience water scarcity or stress, a number that will rise to 25 by 2025….Desertification is ‘the greatest environmental challenge of our times….The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change says that by 2020, agricultural production including access to food, in many African countries is projected to be severely compromised.”

End Time Perspective: “But to the obedient is given the promise, ‘He shall dwell on high: his place of defense shall
be the munitions of rocks: bread shall be given him; his waters shall be sure.’ Isa. 33:16. By this promise the children of God will live. When the earth shall be wasted with famine, they shall be fed. ‘They shall not be ashamed in the evil time: and in the days of famine they shall be satisfied.’ Ps. 37:19. To that time of distress the prophet Habakkuk looked forward, and his words express the faith of the church: ‘Although the fig tree shall not blossom, neither shall fruit be in the vines; the labor of the olive shall fail, and the fields shall yield no meat; the flock shall be cut off from the fold, and there shall be no herd in the stalls: yet I will rejoice in the Lord, I will joy in the God of my salvation.’ Hab. 3:17, 18.” DA 121.

Editor’s Note: No matter where we live, or what our race or nationality is, God’s people shall be “satisfied”.

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“Not infrequently the minds of the people, and even of God’s servants, are so blinded by human opinions, the traditions and false teaching of men, that they are able only partially to grasp the great things which He has revealed in His word. Thus it was with the disciples of Christ, even when the Saviour was with them in person. Their minds had become imbued with the popular conception of the Messiah as a temporal prince, who was to exalt Israel to the throne of the universal empire, and they could not understand the meaning of His words foretelling His sufferings and death…

“From their very birth their hearts had been set upon the anticipated glory of an earthly empire, and this blinded their understanding….  

“The experience of the disciples who preached the ‘gospel of the kingdom’ at the first advent of Christ, had its counterpart in the experience of those who proclaimed the message of His second advent…

“Like the first disciples, William Miller and his associates did not, themselves, fully comprehend the import of the message which they bore. Errors that had been long established in the church prevented them from arriving at a correct interpretation of an important point in the prophecy. Therefore, though they proclaimed the message which God had committed to them to be given to the world, yet through a misapprehension of its meaning they suffered disappointment…

“With these believers, as with the first disciples, that which in the hour of trial seemed dark to their understanding would afterward be made plain. When they should see the ‘end of the Lord’ they would know that, notwithstanding the trial resulting from their errors, His purposes of love toward them had been steadily fulfilling. They would learn by a blessed experience that He is ‘very pitiful, and of tender mercy’; that all His paths ‘are mercy and truth unto such as keep his covenant and his testimonies.’” Mar 16.

“This message [Rev. 14:6, 7] is declared to be a part of ‘the everlasting gospel’. The work of preaching the gospel has not been committed to angels, but has been entrusted to men. Holy angels have been employed in directing this work, they have in charge the great movements for the salvation of men; but the actual proclamation of the gospel is performed by the servants of Christ upon the earth.

“Faithful men, who were obedient to the promptings of God’s Spirit and the teachings of His word, were to proclaim this warning to the world. They were those who had taken heed to the ‘sure word of prophecy’, the ‘light that shineth in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the day star arise’. 2 Peter 1:19. They had been seeking the knowledge of God more than all hid treasures, counting it ‘better than the merchandise of silver, and the gain thereof than fine gold’. Proverbs 3:14. And the Lord revealed to them the great things of the kingdom. ‘The secret of the Lord is with them that fear him; and he will show them his covenant.’ Psalm 25:14.

“It was not the scholarly theologians who had an understanding of this truth, and engaged in its proclamation. Had these been faithful watchmen, diligently and prayerfully searching the Scriptures, they would have known the time of night; the prophecies would have opened to them the events about to take place. But they did not occupy this position, and the message was given by humble men. Said Jesus: ‘Walk while ye have the light, lest darkness come upon you.’ John 12:35. Those who turn away from the light which God has given, or who neglect to seek it when it is within their reach, are left in darkness. But the Saviour declares: ‘He that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life.’ John 8:12. Whoever is with singleness of purpose seeking to do God’s will, earnestly heeding the light already given, will receive greater light; to that soul some star of heavenly radiance will be sent to guide him into all truth.” Mar 17.

“In the prophecy of Jerusalem’s destruction Christ said, ‘Because iniquity shall abound, the love of many shall wax cold. But he that shall endure unto the end, the same shall be saved. And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come.’ This prophecy will again be fulfilled. The abounding iniquity of that day finds its counterpart in this generation. So with the prediction in regard to the preaching of the gospel. Before the fall of Jerusalem, Paul, writing by the Holy Spirit, declared that the gospel was preached to ‘every creature which is under heaven’. Col. 1:23. So now, before the coming of the Son of man, the everlasting gospel is to be preached ‘to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people’. Rev. 14:6, 14. God ‘hath appointed a day, in which he will judge the world’. Acts 17:31. Christ tells us when that day shall be ushered in. He does not say that all the world will be converted, but that ‘this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come’. By giving the gospel to the world it is in our power to hasten our Lord’s return. We are not only to look for but to hasten the coming of the day of God. 2 Peter 3:12, margin. Had the church of Christ done her appointed work as the Lord ordained, the whole world would before this have been warned, and the Lord Jesus would have come to our earth in power and great glory.

“It is the unbelief, the worldliness, unconsecration, and strife among the Lord’s professed people that have kept us in this world of sin and sorrow so many years…

“We may have to remain here in this world because of insubordination many more years, as did the children of Israel; but for Christ’s sake, His people should not add sin to sin by charging God with the consequence of their own wrong course of action.” Mar 19.
May the beginning of this year be a time that shall never be forgotten--a time when Christ shall come in among us, and say, "Peace be unto you." John 20:19.
Brethren and sisters, I wish you, one and all, a happy new year.

"We live in deeds, not years; in thoughts, not breaths; In feelings, not in figures on a dial. We should count time by heart-throbs. He most lives Who thinks most, feels the noblest, acts the best." OHC 7