AN URGENT HEALTH MESSAGE FROM THE PAST

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As I thought about my editorial for November, it came to me to share again in regard to the brave men and women who in past ages were willing to give their lives that the Bible would be available to each of us as we looked for a closer walk with Jesus. One of the people who stood out in my mind was Martin Luther. It was a blessing to go back in the Great Controversy to re-examine the life of Luther. Even though many of the readers may be familiar with Luther’s life, I believe a review can be helpful to each of us in our own individual growth.

Luther came from a poor family. “His early years were spent in the humble home of a German peasant. By daily toil as a miner, his father earned the means for his education. He intended for Martin to become a lawyer; but God purposed to make him a builder in the great temple that was rising so slowly through the centuries. Hardship, privation, and severe discipline were the school in which infinite wisdom prepared Luther for the important mission of his life.”

Luther entered the University of Erfurt when he was eighteen years of age. “A retentive memory, a lively imagination, strong reasoning powers, and untiring application, soon placed him in the foremost rank among his associates. Intellectual discipline ripened his understanding and aroused an activity of mind and a keenness of perception that were preparing him for the conflicts of his life.”

“While one day examining the books in the library of the university, Luther discovered a Latin Bible. Such a book he had never before seen. He was ignorant even of its existence. He had heard portions of the Gospels and Epistles, which were read to the people in public worship, and he supposed that these were the entire Bible. Now for the first time, he looked upon the whole of God’s Word.” Luther later had other opportunities of reading and studying the Scriptures.

In visiting Rome, he saw the sins and atrocities committed there. After returning from Rome, Luther attended the University of Wittenberg where he received the degree of Doctor of Divinity. “Now he was at liberty to devote himself as never before to the Scriptures that he loved. He had taken a solemn vow to study carefully and to preach with fidelity the Word of God, not the sayings and doctrines of the popes, all the days of his life. He was no longer the mere monk or professor, but the authorized herald of the Bible.”

As Luther looked at the atrocities that contradicted the sure word of God, he rose against them and began taking the truths of the Scriptures to the common people. “He entered boldly upon his work as a champion of the truth. His voice was heard from the pulpit in earnest, solemn warning. He set before the people the offensive character of sin, and taught them that it is impossible for man, by his own words, to lessen its guilt or evade its punishment. Nothing but repentance toward God and faith in Christ can save the sinner.”

Of course there is much more written about Luther, but what about our lives? Are we willing to stand for those truths that have been revealed since Luther’s time, especially the Seventh-day Sabbath? We know as we look at religious history that the papacy has again had tremendous success in changing the day of worship from that given by God, and again it is because many of the Christians out there do not study their Bibles, or if they do, they still allow tradition to speak louder than the Word of God.

Are we willing to stand upon the Bible and the Bible only as we enter the last days of the Great Controversy? The time is short. God again needs people that are willing to prepare others for the soon coming of Jesus. Will you be that people?

Martin Luther: “I cannot submit my faith either to the pope or to the councils, because it is clear as the day that they have frequently erred and contradicted each other. Unless therefore I am convinced by the testimony of Scripture or by the clearest reasoning, unless I am persuaded by means of the passages I have quoted, and unless they thus render my conscience bound by the word of God, I cannot and I will not retract…”

“Here I stand, I can do no other.”

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Our Mission:
It is the mission of Hope International and the editors of Our Firm Foundation to clearly present Christ and His truth. The days remaining for this world are few, and we must work quickly. We must boldly proclaim the historic truths of Adventism that place us on so firm a foundation in the midst of this troubled world. —Editor

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About Hope International:
We are a lay ministry founded, supported, and operated by Seventh-day Adventists to assist God's Church in the proclamation of the Everlasting Gospel in every way that is consistent with the principles of God as revealed in Inspiration.

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We are accepting article-length manuscripts (3000 words) for possible publication in Our Firm Foundation. We prefer that submissions be submitted in Word doc format as a computer file. Include a digital picture and a short bio. Please address all correspondence to Editor, Our Firm Foundation, 151 Ascension Lane, Marshall, NC 28753, or by email to editorial@hopeint.org.

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A key to the abbreviations for Ellen White's material used in each magazine can be found at www.whiteestate.org
Dr. J. H. Kellogg, of the Battle Creek Sanitarium, was asked to address the delegates on medical missionary work, which he did as follows:

The subject of medical missionary work has never occupied a great amount of time in the councils of our General Conference, and I presume it will not be proper to occupy a great amount of your time here to-day. The subject is a very large one, and I want briefly to outline the work that is being done, and needs to be done. To do this fully would occupy more time than you could well afford to devote to it here, where there are so many other subjects that need careful attention. The principles of health reform, or what we call our health principles, have been before this people for thirty-five years, and the more I have studied them, the more I am amazed at their magnitude, and their beauty. During the last three years especially, these principles have grown with wonderful rapidity. The length, and breadth, and depth of these, which God gave us a
third of a century ago, are becoming more and more clearly defined, and more and more thoroughly established on scientific facts.

We find that almost every new discovery in science having any bearing upon health goes to confirm these great principles, and not a single word can be found - not a single fact can be presented - by anybody that in the slightest degree weakens, or in any sense overthrows, a single one of the principles that have been practised all these years. It is a thing that ought to give us faith and hope and confidence, not only in the principles, but in the way in which the Lord brought them to us, as well as in all the other truths they accompany. If there is anything in the world that ought to strengthen one's faith in the Lord's work, it is just to take up these health principles, and see in what a plain, clear, simple way they were first presented, unaccompanied by scientific facts, and note how they have won their way in the world.

I remember that sixteen or eighteen years ago a canvasser in Ohio was introducing Good Health, and he called at a house, and introduced himself as a sanitarium missionary, and said to the lady who opened the door, "I came to talk with you about sanitarium methods." She said, "We have not such a thing in the house, and we don't want any." But the time has come when the people begin to see the need of these sanitarium principles, and they want them in their houses, too. There is one thing to which I would call your attention. I do not remember whether or not I spoke about it two years ago; but it is a very fearful thing, and stares the world in the face, and they can not get away from it. There is a class of people in the world who try to make us believe that we are getting healthier; that human life is getting longer; that we are making such wonderful discoveries of how to prevent disease, and how to antagonize plagues, etc.; and that we are gradually getting the victory over these evils, and by and by, if we can not exterminate smallpox, we shall be able, at any rate, to deprive it of its power by vaccination, and in other ways. Now we have to look this matter squarely in the face. Less than a month ago I found some statistical evidence in one of our scientific journals stating that at the present time there is in the United States one idiot for every five hundred persons, and other statistics I have gathered show that at the present time there is in the United States one idiot for every five hundred persons, and other statistics I have gathered show that there are now, in every million of people, 3,400 idiots, lunatics, and imbeciles; and that this number has increased three hundred per cent in fifty years. Thirty years ago the proportion in England was just what it is in this country at the present time. At this rate we can look ahead, and easily tell what it will be in fifty years more. Fifty years ago there were about one thousand idiots, lunatics, and imbeciles to the million. At the present time we have 3,400 to the million. That is over three times as many. In fifty years more, increasing at the same rate, we would have ten thousand to the million, or three times 3,400. Then fifty years further on, there would be ten thousand to the million, or one per cent of all. Fifty years more, we would have three per hundred, or three per cent. In fifty years more, there would be nine to the hundred; and in another fifty years, twenty-seven to the hundred. In another fifty years we would have eighty-one to the hundred; and in fifty years more,
two hundred and forty-three to the hundred. But the world could not go so far as that, even though it be but three hundred years. Two hundred and sixty-five years would be the farthest point that could be reached, before the whole world would be made up of lunatics, imbeciles, and idiots. But society could not hold together, even to that point, judging of its condition at the present time. Let some political question come up, and it seems to seize half the population with some phase of lunacy. It is the same in many social reforms. People in the world get an idea, and it carries them away off. So we have anarchists, socialists, and various classes of people who are insane in various ways. This is likely to keep going on until we have so many imbeciles that it will be impossible for society to hold together. When we get to going down, our speed will be accelerated, as when you start a ball rolling down hill. That will go faster and faster, until it gets to the bottom, when it is dashed to pieces.

*Mrs. S. M. I. Henry:* Is not that a very strong demonstration of the fact that the Lord is soon to come?

*Dr. Kellogg:* That is the very thing I wanted to bring to your minds. We have statistical proof of the fact that this world is soon coming to an end. The Lord is not coming to destroy the world, but to save it; he is coming to save the world from what would come to it if it went on. We are coming down to a time of absolute confusion and destruction. Men are getting more and more subject to disease all the time. There are fewer old people than formerly. The last fifty years the bottom seems to have dropped out of the constitution of the human race. The Lord made man the toughest animal on the face of the earth. Even to-day you take a man who is in good training, and there is not another beast that can compete with him. A man can travel farther in six days than a horse. A well-trained man can tire out two or three horses in the course of a week. There is no question about it. Man, however, has greatly deteriorated, but no other animal would stand the abuse that he endures, even now. How long could a horse or a cow endure such treatment as human beings give themselves? A man would not dare feed his horse what he himself eats, or his cow either. He would not even feed his dog the same. A woman eats, and feeds things to her child, that she would not give her bird; she takes better care of her cat than of herself, or her child. The world is coming to see that there is a tremendous catastrophe before the race if something is not done. The hearts of the people, the world over, are wonderfully open to receive these principles. Two things are a constant wonder to me. The first is the beauty of these principles, and the other thing is that we do not appreciate them more. How can it be? Just see what these principles can do for this people!

Let me call your attention to what the world is trying to do. Just as soon as small-pox gets into a community, what do the doctors do? They say everybody has to be vaccinated. Over in India they vaccinate from arm to arm, and people get leprosy and consumption through it. In this country that method is not tolerated. You would not allow your children to be vaccinated from your neighbor’s child’s arm; but you allow them to be vaccinated from a calf, because you know the calf has a great deal better blood than your neighbor’s child has. You are afraid of your neighbor, and you have reason to be afraid of him. In India not long ago there was a case where one hundred and sixty students in a school were vaccinated...
from arm to arm, and sixty of those boys and girls came down with leprosy in three years. Think of that. You see vaccination is not a thing that is entirely safe; but there is some reason in it. But if you are vaccinated from a calf that has tuberculosis, then you get consumption. So you see that is not altogether safe. I believe there is something better on principle than that, and I am going to try to show you some disease with disease, and the man who is vaccinated is a little lower in vitality after he has been vaccinated than before. It is like a boy who becomes immune to the use of tobacco. At first it makes him sick, but afterward he becomes used to it, and it does not affect him; yet it is doing the boy harm all the time. It is thought by some scientists that the time will soon come when vaccination will be employed for all maladies in the earth. It has been said by Dr. Lancaster, of London, that the time will come when a young man taking a course in a medical school would, before he finished, be vaccinated for all diseases that were prevalent in the country. I do not think there would be very much left of that man after he had gone through all that. It has been proved that when a man has had small-pox, he is more subject to consumption than before.

The Chair: Has that been proved, doctor?

Dr. Kellogg: Yes, it has been proved within the last three months by statistics that have been collected that a man is not so good after he has had small-pox as he was before. That is also true of typhoid fever. Very often consumption is fastened upon the victim of typhoid fever. As I said before, this method of obtaining immunity against disease is the method of fighting disease with disease, meeting evil with evil, antidoting poison with poison. It is wonderful to see to what an extent this can be carried. In Chicago a few weeks ago a woman appeared before our medical class; and she had with her a rattlesnake, which she took out of its cage. She held him in her hand and irritated him. She beat him, and stirred him up until he became angry, and then as she bared her arm, the reptile struck it time and again, and fastened his fangs into her arm, until the flesh was all covered with the virus. Then she said, “Take that virus, and inject it into a mouse, and see how quickly it will die.” But yet it did not affect her in the least. The fact is, she has become so accustomed to the virus of the snake’s bite that her body is perfectly immune to it, and it apparently does her no harm whatever. I remember a woman at the sanitarium, who in one day took eight hundred full doses of morphia, - enough to kill forty men.

Apparently it did not hurt her, though in fact it was all the time undermining her constitution. This method of fighting disease with disease is the human way of meeting disease, just as we fight fire with fire. But God has given us a truth that has in it power to lift a man above the power of disease. He has given us principles which, if we obey and follow, will change our bodies so that we shall not have to be vaccinated; that will lift the body above the power of disease, and above the power of sin; for sin and disease go along together. Disease is the consequence of sin, and sin induces a moral disease.

Did you ever hear of such a thing as, when there was to be a fight between pugilists like Fitzsimmons and Corbett the battle was called off because one of the men had a cold, or was down with the grip, or fever, smallpox, or anything of the kind? - Why, nobody ever heard of such a thing. The reason for it is that these men have followed the
laws of health so rigorously that they are proof against any disease. When Fitzsimmons met Corbett, he was just as ready to meet smallpox or any other condition that could come to him. He was just as ready to fight germs as he was to fight Corbett, and that fact is worth considering. I met a gentleman the other day who told me that he was sick; that because he had to do a little extra work, he had broken down. I said: "That is not what broke you down; you are like a man who had a hole in his boot. As long as he went on dry land, he was all right; but as soon as he stepped his foot into water, it got wet. You have been making holes in your constitution by bad habits, and these habits have let you down; then when a little strain like this came, you broke down altogether. But it is not this little work you have just done that did the mischief; it was your tobacco-smoking and gormandizing at the dinner-table, that did the work."

Thirty years ago God gave us principles which, if they had been followed, might have made us the healthiest people in the world, - a power wherever we are, and an example to all the world. The time will come when there will be some people on this earth whom nothing can kill, not even cyclones nor earthquakes nor disease of any kind, - men whom the plagues can not kill, who can stand anything. God has given us a chance to be some of these men; and why can we not lay hold of the principles that will enable us to be this? It seems to me as if we, of all people, ought hardly to be able to contain ourselves when we have such an opportunity presented before us.

A. F. Ballenger: Could Corbett, with all his training and careful work, be kept from these things without faith?

Dr. Kellogg: No; because he is not absolutely obedient. I was speaking of what exists at the present time. This man is only measurably obedient; but there will come a time when these diseases will come with such power and intensity that they will strike down everybody that has not yielded to God. There is a point here. It is not faith alone that avails the man, but that which faith leads the man to do. It is not the holding of faith but the obedience that comes from faith. The man who has complete faith in God believes everything that God says; and when God tells him to do a thing, he will implicitly obey him.

E. J. Waggoner: It is faith that saves a man, because it is faith that leads him to do that which he does.

Dr. Kellogg: Yes; that is so.
as mold grows on a wall; but they are vegetables, and if that stomach has the power to digest those vegetables, the man does not succumb to the disease. When Professor Koch discovered cholera germs, he brought them home with him from Egypt to Germany. A rival professor said he did not believe there was any danger in those cholera germs, - if they were cholera germs, - because he had swallowed a pint of them, and no harm resulted. Well, numberless cases of cholera occurred in Hamburg, where cholera germs had infected the drinking water. Many, however, were not attacked by the disease. Brother Conradi can bear me out in that statement. Is not that true, Elder Conradi?

L. R. Conradi: Yes, sir, that is a fact.

Dr. Kellogg: The reason was that some of those people had stomachs able to digest these cholera germs, and so no ill effects resulted from drinking the water full of germs. Only a small proportion of those who used the water died. Why did not all have the cholera? It is a self-evident fact that these germs were destroyed. It is only necessary for a person to have his body in such a condition that he is able to resist all these germs, to be immune; and that is the kind of opportunity that God has offered to us - to reach a state in which we may be immune from these diseases. Now you may wish me to answer this question: “Do you think that by any attention a man may give to diet, he can become able to resist the seven last plagues?” - No, I do not. I do not believe that a man could live so correctly on a certain diet, as to be free from danger. “Do you think a man, though he exercise so vigorously, and though his manner of living and general conduct be ever so carefully circumscribed, can come into a state where he would not succumb to these plagues?” - No; by no means. I do not think that it is possible for a man to live so healthfully that he could overcome these, unless he has faith in God. He needs that faith, that connection with God, to get the proper instruction and light; and not only that, but the power to obey God. I do not think that we have power enough to suffice, without faith in God.

J. O. Corliss: Do you not think that the more faith a man has, the more healthfully he will live?

Dr. Kellogg: Why, certainly.

J. O. Corliss: I know this: the more faith I have received the more strictly I have lived health reform.

Dr. Kellogg: Yes; that is true faith. It is not a thing that leads us to believe that God will do what we want him to do for us; but true faith will lead us to want to do the things that God wants us to do. Many people have that reversed. They think they can persuade God to do a thing that he does not want them to do: and they think that it is only necessary to have faith enough, and believe hard enough, to bring God to their terms. But it works the other way. It seems to me that real, true faith is that which leads a man to do absolutely as God wants him to do. When he gets that kind of faith, he gets into the line of God’s providence, into the divine order, so that everything goes right with him, and smoothly. He gets into the divine procession, so to speak, and everything marches along beautifully. But it is hard when we try to bring God to our terms.

A Voice: Faith puts a man in the right channel, where the blessing is flowing.

Dr. Kellogg: That is a channel of obedience. It is not a psychological channel, a mental channel, or a theological channel. It is not a channel simply in which a man is protected from danger, neither is it a doctrinal channel; but it is a channel of absolute obedience to God. It is true obedience, that will lead us to do exactly what God asks us to do. It seems to me that it would be profitable to discuss these
principles. First, we might say that this subject divides itself naturally into two heads: (1) the principles of truth that God gave us a third of a century ago in relation to health and philanthropy; (2) our duty to our neighbor and to ourselves. These two principles came to us about the same time, - Christian philanthropy and Christian temperance. Let us consider these principles, and their relation to the other branches of what we call the truth - the third angel’s message. In the second place, let us consider, if we have time, this medical missionary work, - the methods or modes of presenting these principles before the world, and the work that is to be done in presenting these truths to the world; also the relation of these modes and work to the evangelistic and other lines of work which this people have to do.

The question has been asked, What is medical missionary work? As distinguished from purely evangelistic work, medical missionary work represents all those modes and lines of work which will reach men’s souls through attention to their physical needs. Considered by itself, apart from any other mode of Christian activity, the medical missionary work represents the complete gospel, - health, comfort, salvation, redemption for the whole man, - soul, mind, and body. Medical missionary work - not medical work, but medical missionary work - does not confine itself to the administration of medicine as a gospel measure, but employs every sort of means necessary to afford physical help and relief.

Medical missionary work reaches every phase of human need. It seeks to relieve every kind of human woe. The success of medical missionary work can not be numbered by the number of converts or proselytes. If this were not true, what about the success of the great Master Medical Missionary, who went about doing good; who preached the gospel to the poor; and of whom it was said, “He healed all their sick”? At his death, only a few women hovered near the cross, and a bare handful of followers gathered in secret to mourn his loss. The immediate results of Christ’s mission of love and mercy and healing were apparently small, - a failure, - from a human standpoint; but all the centuries since have been bearing fruit to that divinely patient and infinitely wise seed-sowing. The truest measure of the success of a medical mission is its spirit. To what extent does it reflect the image of him who said, “Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my little ones, ye have done it unto me?” How far does it manifest the love and simplicity and sweetness of the Christ-life? If these questions are answered well in any work, the visible results, as regards the number of permanent adherents or converts, may be left to him who has told us, “Cast thy bread upon the waters: for thou shalt find it after many days.” The medical missionary must sow the seed without too anxious thought about the fruitage. God knows where every seed of truth has fallen. His Spirit watches over each, and waters and nurtures it, and the great day of settlement will show the results.

At this point the conference adjourned.

“When we turn away, from some duty or some fellow creature, saving that our hearts are too sick and sore with some great yearning of our own, we may often sever the line on which a divine message was coming to us. We shut out the man, and we shut out the angel who had sent him on to open the door.”

February 21, 1899
General Conference Daily Bulletin, 43-45
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Scientific Studies:

- Studies in Australia and the United States have found a potential link between thiamine and eye health. In a study of 2,900 men and women, published in the March 2000 issue of “Ophthalmology,” the participants who had the most thiamine in their systems were 40 percent less likely to develop cloudy eyes than those who had the least thiamine. Additionally, the April 2005 issue of “Archives of Ophthalmology” reports a study of 468 American women in which it was determined that greater amounts of thiamine in the body led to slower progression of lens opacification, or clouding of the eye’s lens.
- Long-term daily multivitamin supplement use may lower risk of eye health problems in men, according to a study of nearly 15,000 male physicians published in Ophthalmology, the journal of the American Academy of Ophthalmology. While many eye problems become more common as one ages, it is by no means inevitable that your vision will deteriorate. Most senior eye problems are correctable with proper care. If your vision is getting worse, don’t just accept it as part of aging.
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I’d like to address one of the most divisive doctrines of the Bible. If there is one doctrine that seems to get more undue attention than any other, it has to be the doctrine of eternal punishment. And the devil, as he has with every other doctrine, has made a complete and utter mess of it.

**HELL IS A LOVING GIFT FROM GOD**

There are about as many different understandings of hell and hellfire as there are people. And why would the devil want to obscure the truth about hell? Because it would obscure God’s glory and love for each of us. It might seem a contradiction in terms to discuss punishment and love in the same sentence, but that is exactly what it is. At least, it will be seen that way when this doctrine is correctly understood.

You see, God is love, as the scripture says, and God is the one who created hell. So, the only way to properly understand the doctrine of hell in the Bible is to see it as a loving gift from God. I know it sounds strange, but doesn’t it make sense that if a loving God made it, then it has to be good? This is first and foremost to a correct grasp of not just this doctrine, but all of scripture.

If we do not see this through the eyes of infinite love, then we are looking at it in the wrong way. Everything in the Bible and in nature points to a God with an all-consuming love and care for us, His children. Admittedly, the devil has done a wonderful job of obscuring and confusing this idea, but it is there if we will look for it.
THE BIBLE ACTUALLY TELLS US HOW TO STUDY GOD’S WORD

And here is another point about the doctrine of hell and hellfire...To learn the truth, we have to put away what we think or what we have heard, and read the scripture with an open mind. We have to remember that the devil has run with this doctrine to place as many wrong concepts about it as he can. The devil knows that the only way we will come back to our Maker is to see His love and care for us. So, he does all he can to confuse and to distort and to malign God so we will not see our Father for who He truly is. Most of us have heard some concept of hell and we need to put those ideas away as we search for what the Bible actually says. With that in mind, let’s look at what the scripture teaches...And, as we delve into the scripture, we have to follow the scriptural way of studying...The first is to ask the Holy Spirit to enlighten our minds and show us the way. Then we go to the ONLY source of truth there is--God’s inspired counsel, which is the Bible and the Spirit of Prophecy.

The Bible even directs the way we should study it. The Bible actually asks the question about how we should teach and how to understand doctrine... “Whom shall he teach knowledge? and whom shall he make to understand doctrine? them that are weaned from the milk, and drawn from the breasts.” Isa. 28:9. So, to understand the Bible doctrines correctly, one must have a basic understanding of the scriptures and God to start with. We need to be beyond the need for the “milk” of the word, or its basic concepts. We should be old enough in our relationship with the Lord that we can now get into some “chewable food” of His word, if you will.

IF WE WANT TO UNDERSTAND THE TRUTH OF DOCTRINE, WE MUST READ EVERYTHING GOD SAYS ABOUT IT

We all need to read the Bible all the way through, and once we are done, to go through it again and again and again. Each time God reveals new things for our minds to comprehend and understand. We need to read all of the books God has blessed us with from His prophet, Sister White, for these last days as well. And when we are done reading them all, go over them again as well. I cannot convey how important it is to read all God has given to educate and enlighten us. We need to resolve to set aside some time for His word every day, or we just won’t do it. The devil will always have something else get in the way. So, now assuming that everyone has done some of their own studying, and maybe have watched several of Hope’s DVDs over the years, we will forge ahead.

The next step in studying God’s word is in the following verse of Isaiah...“For precept must be upon precept, precept upon precept; line upon line, line upon line; here a little, and there a little” Isa. 28:10. To correctly understand any doctrine of the Bible, we must read everything the Bible says about it. This is a problem for so many people and denominations...
We have a tendency to pick out whatever verse or verses go along with what we already believe, or want to believe, and leave it at that. Well, if you belong to the “Feel Good” denomination and you don’t really care where you end up at the end, then that is fine. But if you want to know the truth and want to live in reality, then you want to know all God says about a particular subject. The more information we have, the better decision we can come to.

**THE FIRST QUESTION WE WILL DEAL WITH IS, “WHAT IS HELL?”**

There are 54 references to the word “hell” in the Bible. And of those 54 references, there are several Hebrew and Greek words that have been translated into the English word “hell”. And that is part of the problem with understanding this doctrine. To correctly understand hell, we have to know what it is according to the writers. Let me give you an example…2 Samuel 22:5,6 says, “When the waves of death compassed me, the floods of ungodly men made me afraid; The sorrows of hell compassed me about; the snares of death prevented me;” The word “hell” here in this verse was translated from the word, “shehole”. That Hebrew word means “the place of the dead, or hades, a subterranean retreat or abode of the dead”. In this verse, David is afraid of the grave, not burning in hell.

Here is another verse that refers to shehole again…Job, in referring to how or where to find out God, or find out about God, says “…It is as high as heaven; what canst thou do? deeper than hell; what canst thou know?” Job 11:8. Once again, the translators took the Hebrew word “shehole” and translated it “hell” where Job is clearly not referring to the place of burning people, but of the grave. He is making the point to his friends that we could go as high as we could, and as deep as we could, and still not find out about God.

**IS HELLFIRE ETERNAL?**

There are many other types of these verses, but it will be very plain in a few minutes that these authors were not referring to hell when we see where hell actually is. But before we address hell’s location, let’s address another aspect of hell that confuses a lot of people. And that is the idea of hell burning forever and ever. I am referring to the concept of eternal hellfire. “And if thine eye offend thee, pluck it out, and cast it from thee: it is better for thee to enter into life with one eye, rather than having two eyes to be cast into hell fire.” Matt. 18:9. There is no doubt, from Jesus’ words here, that there will be a hell fire. But is it eternal? “And if thy hand offend thee, cut it off: it is better for thee to enter into life maimed, than having two hands to go into hell, into the fire that never shall be quenched:” Mark 9:43.

At first glance, we might get the idea that this is an eternal flame, since it shall never be quenched. But the word “quenched” means to be put out. Jesus is saying that the fire cannot be put out. He is not saying that it lasts forever, but that we cannot put it out. There is no fire extinguisher; no amount of water; no chemical that can ever put this fire out. It is unquenchable. It cannot be put out. But that in no way suggests that it lasts forever and ever. Again, that will be made plain as we continue to study what hell actually is.

**HOW LONG DOES THE PUNISHMENT LAST FOR THE WICKED?**

Now, let’s address the eternal punishment aspect of hell. How long does the punishment last? “And these shall go away into everlasting punishment: but the righteous into life eternal.” Matt. 25:46. There is no question that the punishment of the wicked is forever and ever… or everlasting and eternal. But what exactly
is the punishment? Oh, there is a fiery pain from the hell fire, to be sure, but is the burning fire the everlasting part, or is there another punishment… even worse than the fire? “Let the sinners be consumed out of the earth, and let the wicked be no more…” Ps. 104:35. According to this verse, are sinners still going to be burning, or do they cease to exist at some point? “As the whirlwind passeth, so is the wicked no more: but the righteous is an everlasting foundation.” Prov. 10:25. In this verse, you will notice, there ARE those that live everlasting, but they are the righteous. You see, if you burn forever and ever, then you live everlasting as well. But the Bible says the wicked are “no more”. “I will make thee a terror, and thou shalt be no more: though thou be sought for, yet shalt thou never be found again, saith the Lord GOD.” Eze. 26:21. Another verse that talks about the wicked being “no more”. This one goes on to say that even if someone were to look for the wicked, they will never be found again. They can never be found because as the Bible says, they are “no more”.

Then what about the eternal punishment? It is obvious that the Bible says repeatedly that the wicked will be “no more”, so what is eternal about their punishment? Well, how long do they stay “no more”? Forever. How long do they stay separated from God? Forever. Then how long would their punishment be? Forever. The Bible is very clear that there is a punishment or maybe better stated, a payment for all the wickedness that someone has done. When you sin, there is a direct and proportionate amount of payment for that sin. All sin separates us from God. I am not talking about that part of the punishment. I am referring to the “payment” aspect of sin here. If you tell a little lie, there is a specific amount of payment that will be applied to your account in heaven. If you commit mass murder, there again is a specific payment that will be required for what you have done. All of that is written down and when we are judged, we will be required to pay our “debt”, if you will. All will be judged according to what we have done. “And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is the book of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works. And the sea gave up the dead which were in it; and death and hell delivered up the dead which were in them: and they were judged every man according to their works.” Rev.

20:12,13. Please note, here is another translation of a Greek word into “hell”, when it is obviously the grave that is meant. How could hell give up its dead to be judged when you have to be judged to be sent to hell in the first place?

**HELLFIRE BURNS AS LONG AS IT NEEDS TO**

Anyway, everyone who does not have his name written in the Lamb’s Book of Life will be judged according to how much sin they have done, and they will burn commensurately. “And that servant, which knew his lord’s will, and prepared not himself, neither did according to his will, shall be beaten with many stripes. But he that knew not, and did commit things worthy of stripes, shall be beaten with few stripes. For unto whomsoever much is given, of him shall be much required: and to whom men have committed much, of him they will ask the more.” Luke 12:47,48. What Jesus is saying is that God is completely fair. Anyone who is not a true Christian pays for what they have done. No one pays more than their share for their sins, no one pays less. God is totally just and righteous. But once the unrepentant sinners and angels have paid their “debt”, they are burned up and are gone… eternally gone.
You see, the fire burns as long as it needs to. When sinners are burned up, the fire is done. “Thou shalt be for fuel to the fire; thy blood shall be in the midst of the land; thou shalt be no more remembered: for I the LORD have spoken it.” Eze. 21:32. Once the fuel, the wicked, is spent, the fire will be “no more”. There is no eternal burning, but there is eternal punishment.

The main punishment is to no longer exist. What could be more just? If we, during our lives here on earth, choose not to be with God, then He allows us that choice eternally. In exactly the same way, if we choose to be with Him here and now, we will get to be with Him eternally.

**GOD WILL RAIN DOWN FIRE ON THE ENTIRE EARTH**

Now that we have cleared up who burns and for how long, let’s address where hell is. When God destroyed the earth the first time, how did He do it? With a flood. After He destroyed the earth with a flood He promised He would never do that again, and He gave us the rainbow as a sign that the world would never again be destroyed by water. But the Bible is very clear that the earth will be destroyed again. This time… by fire. “Whereby the world that then was, being overflowed with water, perished: But the heavens and the earth, which are now, by the same word are kept in store, reserved unto fire against the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men.” 2 Pet. 3:6,7. Peter says that the world was once destroyed by water, but that soon, the heavens and earth are “reserved unto fire”. Everything will be destroyed by fire, just like it was destroyed by water 4,000 years ago. “But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up.” 2 Pet. 3:10. It is all going to burn very, very soon. Remember in Revelation where God said everyone is judged according to their works? Here in Peter, God says their works will be burned up. Fire purifies, and all that man has done to destroy and disfigure and to distance himself from his Creator will be no more. When God cleans and purifies the heavens and the earth, He will make new ones… “Nevertheless we, according to his promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness.” 2 Pet. 3:13. You see, hell is not a current physical location, but it soon will be. When God rains down hellfire, just like He did with Sodom and Gomorrah, all unrepentant sinners and all their works will be burned up. “Then the LORD rained upon Sodom and upon Gomorrah brimstone and fire from the LORD out of heaven;” Gen. 19:24. He will do this again. God will rain down fire, not just upon a few towns, but the entire earth. “And turning the cities of Sodom and Gomorrha into ashes condemned them with an overthrow, making them an ensample unto those that after should live ungodly;” 2 Pet. 2:6. God says through Peter that Sodom and Gomorrah were an example of what will happen to the ungodly.

**THERE IS NO FIRE STILL BURNING IN SODOM AND GOMORRAH**

Jude said the same thing about those two cities being an example… “Even as Sodom and Gomorra, and the cities about them in like manner, giving themselves over to fornication, and going after strange flesh, are set forth for an example, suffering the vengeance of eternal fire.” Jude 1:7. Jude called the fire that destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah "eternal". But there is no fire still burning Sodom and Gomorrah. The fire went out when everything was burned up. It will be the same way with sin and sinners.

When it is all burned up, like Peter referred to, it will be done, just like in Sodom and Gomorrah. When God rains down fire and brimstone, all the wicked will be cast into the fire… “And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire.” Rev. 20:15. And this
fire is not just for the wicked men and women, but for the devil, too. “And the devil that deceived them was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet are, and shall be tormented day and night for ever and ever.” Rev. 20:10. The “for ever and ever” refers to never-ending… until it is ended. It is the same concept as the eternally burning fire that burns until it is all burned up. Just like Sodom and Gomorrah.

WHEN IS HELL?

Hell is not under the earth or in the belly of the earth, but ON the earth. Hellfire is rained down from heaven and covers the earth just like the flood did. Once the water destroyed everything, it went away. Once the fire destroys everything, it, too, will go away. But when everything is burned up -- sin, sinners, the devil, his angels, the elements, everything tainted by sin -- then everything will be made new. “And I saw a new heaven and a new earth: for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away; and there was no more sea.” Rev. 21:1. God is going to cleanse this world of sin. This is when hell is. There is no burning hell now, but there will be soon enough.

Hell is not some underworld location, but the entire world, as God rains down fire on it, like in the example of Sodom and Gomorrah. And this fire, this “lake”, that God causes to overspread the earth, will burn as long as there is anything to burn. And, as soon as everything is burned up, hell will no longer exist, just like the sinner will no longer exist. Just as the Bible says, even if you were to look for the sinner, you could not find him because he is gone… eternally gone.

GOD LETS THE SINNER HAVE WHAT HE WANTS...SEPARATION FROM HIM

Isn't that fair? Isn't that just? And isn't that God's love? What would be loving about making someone stay with you for ever and ever when they don't want to be with you? No… in love… God lets the sinner have what he wants… separation from Him… eternally. Those that want to be with Him, get to be with Him for ever and ever. And all the universe will be clean and pure and holy again, without a trace of sin or sinners. “And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away. And he that sat upon the throne said, Behold, I make all things new. And he said unto me, Write: for these words are true and faithful.” Rev. 21:4,5. In order for the “former things” to be “passed away” there cannot be an ever-burning hell with sinners screaming and writhing in pain eternally. He said specifically that there would be no more death… no more pain! God said He makes ALL things new. There will be nothing “old” left.

THE CHOICE TO BE WITH GOD, OR BE SEPARATED FROM HIM, IS OURS

And He told John to “Write” for these words are true and faithful. Who goes to hell? Who suffers the unquenchable fire? All those who didn’t ask Jesus to take their place. All those who don’t want Jesus as their Lord and Saviour. All those who refuse to let Jesus in their hearts to be made clean.

For all those who don’t want Jesus, here is where God answers their request. They will be forever separated from God by no longer existing.

God ultimately gives everyone their desire. You cannot be more loving than that. How can we not love a God who loves us that much? Hell is not forever… separation is forever. Hellfire is a punishment that lasts as long as one is guilty of. Perfectly fair; perfectly just; perfect love. Let’s give our hearts to the only One who really does love us completely. The One who loves us enough to give His own Son so we would never have to suffer either hellfire or eternal separation.

Joe Olson serves as the executive director and chairman of the board of Hope International. He also travels as an international speaker.
We must have greater wisdom than we have yet manifested in regard to the manner in which we treat those who in some points of faith honestly differ from us. It is unbecoming in anyone who claims to be a follower of Christ to be sharp and denunciatory, to stoop to ridicule the views of another. The spirit of criticism unfits men for receiving the light that God would send them, or for seeing what is evidence of the truth. Should the Lord reveal light after his own plan, many would not respect or comprehend it; they would ridicule the bearer of God’s message as one who set himself up above those who were better qualified to teach.

The first step on the road to the Inquisition was that of ridicule

The papal authorities first ridiculed the reformers, and when this did not quench the spirit of investigation, they placed them behind prison walls, loaded them with chains, and when this did not silence them or make them recant, they finally brought them to the fagot and the sword. We should be very cautious lest we take the first steps in this road that leads to the Inquisition. The truth of God is progressive; it is always onward, going from strength to a greater strength, from light to a greater light. We have every reason to believe that the Lord will send us increased truth, for a great work is yet to be done. In our knowledge of truth, there is first a beginning in our understanding of it, then a progression, then completion; first the blade, then the ear, and after that the full corn in the ear. Much has been lost because our ministers and people have concluded that we have had all the truth essential for us as a people; but such a conclusion is erroneous and in harmony with the deceptions of Satan; for truth will be constantly unfolding.

Men should dig in the mine of truth

The greatest care should be exercised lest we do despite to the Spirit of God by treating with indifference and scorn the messenger, and the messages, God sends to his people, and so reject light because our hearts are not in harmony with God. When Christianity is truly received, it will always transform the heart and mould the character. Let those who have been accounted worthy to be expositors of God’s word, who have been intrusted with the care of the flock of God, like humble, wise men, open their Bibles with grateful hearts and study its precious utterances. The messenger of God should not only
search the Scriptures, but he should also urge the people to study the word of truth. As the miner seeks for gold in the rocks and the mountains, so men should dig in the mine of truth, that they may find out what God has revealed concerning the salvation of man.

**We need to lay down our prejudices which have for years bound us about**

If you come to the Bible to find texts simply to prove your theory or vindicate your opinion, you will not be enlightened by the Spirit of God; but if you come with fasting and humiliation of soul, with love for man and God in your heart, your prayers will be answered, and light will break upon you. We every one need to seek the Lord with our whole heart and in humble prayer. We need to lay down the prejudices that have for years bound us about. If you have been in the truth for many years, and some brother who is much younger in years and in the faith is called upon to teach, your age, your position, your intelligence, and understanding of the Scriptures, will not give you license to treat this brother with indifference and disrespect. Timothy learned many things of Paul. Although a young man, he obtained knowledge of the word of God by patient industry. He put his powers to the task of understanding the word of God, and he was richly rewarded. Paul writes to Timothy: “If thou put the brethren in remembrance of these things, thou shalt be a good minister of Jesus Christ, nourished up in the words of faith and of good doctrine, whereunto thou hast attained.... Meditate upon these things; give thyself wholly to them; that thy profiting may appear to all. Take heed unto thyself, and unto the doctrine; continue in them; for in doing this thou shalt both save thyself, and them that hear thee.”

Grave responsibilities were laid upon Timothy, who was a mere youth. The injunction comes sounding down to our time concerning him and other youthful disciples of Christ, “Let no man despise thy youth.”

**Self must not assume prominence, or the Lord cannot use us**

Samuel was chosen as a servant of God even from his childhood. God could communicate to him his word, although he had to pass by the ancient Eli, who had not been careful to do the will of God or to carry out his instruction. It will not answer to think that unless messages shall come from old and honored servants of God, they cannot be authoritative and God-given. With all deference to the youthful agent, Eli accepted the word of God from the lips of the child Samuel. Great care should be manifested by those who have acted a prominent part in the work, that they may not think that light cannot come to God’s people except through them. When they are meek and lowly of heart, without prejudice or self-exaltation because they have been highly privileged, they will be one with youthful men whom God has educated to act a special part in his work. These young men would find a great blessing in depending upon the experience of older brethren, if those who have been long in the work do not stand upon their dignity, if self does not assume prominence, and the younger brethren seem insignificant. But if this is the case, the Lord cannot use them in the work.

**You should remember that the Master of assemblies is always with you**

There is a witness ever present with you who reads the motives, who knows the thoughts and purposes of the heart. It is safe to be always kind and courteous, to manifest a hearty friendship and love for your brethren. In counsels or assemblies where differences of views are to be discussed, you should remember that the Master of assemblies is with you. Unfairness, hard speeches, and efforts to turn others away from an impartial decision, will all be recorded in the books of heaven. If, upon a candid investigation, your cherished ideas should be weakened by a comparison with the law and the testimony, do not let a willful, hard, stubborn spirit rise up in opposition to that which you see to be evidence against your views. If
a brother differs with you, do not become provoked; treat him with candor; do not overwhelm him with assertions. Do not handle the word of God deceitfully, presenting detached passages of Scripture which you think favor your ideas, and withholding other passages which seem to weaken your position. Let God speak in his word. If you think your brother believes an error, you should deal with him considerately, manifesting tenderness, patience, and courtesy. You should reason with him from the word of God, comparing scripture with scripture, considering carefully every jot of evidence. In no case should his words be made a matter of ridicule, for "with what judgment ye judge, ye shall be judged; and with what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you again."

You have before you the example of Christ
Paul charged Timothy: "Flee also youthful lusts; but follow righteousness, faith, charity, peace, with them that call on the Lord out of a pure heart. But foolish and unlearned questions avoid, knowing that they do gender strifes. And the servant of the Lord must not strive; but be gentle unto all men, apt to teach, patient, in meekness instructing those who oppose themselves; if God peradventure will give them repentance to the acknowledging of the truth; and that they may recover themselves out of the snare of the devil, who are taken captive by him at his will."

"Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual, restore such an one in the spirit of meekness; considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted. Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ. For if any man think himself to be something, when he is nothing, he deceiveth himself. But let every man prove his own work, and then shall he have rejoicing in himself alone, and not in another." Let every man obey these directions. You have before you the example of Christ. Although the homage and service of all was his due, yet he sought not honor of men; he came not to be ministered unto, but to minister. "He came unto his own, and his own received him not." All the world belonged to him; but when he was rejected in towns and cities, he did not assert his right to his own, he went to another village to teach the truth whether men would hear or whether they would forbear. Let every soul be careful lest he prove himself to be among those who despise and wonder and perish, who turn from Christ in the person of his saints, and bring upon themselves the condemnation that fell upon the Jews.

The rulers in Jesus’ day sought to hold Him up to ridicule before the people
The teachers of the people in the time of Christ were fully satisfied with themselves. They held counsels and strengthened one another in their ideas and opinions, and Satan was in their assemblies controlling their decisions. They strove to make the people afraid of hearing the words of Christ. They threatened to turn those who would heed his doctrine out of the synagogue, and this was regarded by the people as the greatest curse that could fall upon them. The scribes and Pharisees had formed their plans, and they did not intend to change their course of life or their manner of teaching. They would hear Christ, but they refused to let his teachings have any weight with them. They feigned to be his friends in order to draw him out
on different subjects. They questioned him concerning difficult problems, that whatever he might answer, they would be able to turn his words against him.

On one occasion the scribes and the Pharisees "brought unto him a woman taken in adultery; and when they had set her in the midst, they say unto him, Master, this woman was taken in adultery, in the very act. Now Moses in the law commanded us, that such should be stoned; but what sayest thou? This they said, tempting him, that they might have to accuse him. But Jesus stooped down, and with his finger wrote on the ground, as though he heard them not. So when they continued asking him, he lifted up himself, and said unto them, He that is without sin among you, let him first cast a stone at her. And again he stooped down, and wrote on the ground. And they which heard it, being convicted by their own conscience, went out one by one, beginning at the eldest, even unto the last."

Although Jesus gave evidence of his divine power, yet he was not permitted to teach his lessons without interruption. The rulers sought to hold him up to ridicule before the people. They would not allow him to state his ideas and doctrines in a connected way, but, although frequently interrupted, light flashed into the mind of hundreds, and when the rulers heard the words of Jesus, that were clothed with power and held the people spell-bound, they were angry, and said, "Thou art a Samaritan, and hast a devil." Jesus met these charges with quiet dignity, fearlessly and decidedly claiming that covenant rights were centered in himself, and were not received through Abraham. He declared, "Before Abraham was, I am." The fury of the Jews knew no bounds, and they prepared to stone him, but the angels of God, unseen by men, hurried him out of their assembly.

Satan is seeking to keep from our knowledge the very things that God would have us know.

There are men among us who profess to understand the truth for these last days, but who will not calmly investigate advanced truth. They are determined to make no advance beyond the stakes which they have set, and will not listen to those who, they say, do not stand by the old landmarks. They are so self-sufficient that they cannot be reasoned with. They consider it a virtue to be at variance with their brethren, and close the door, that light shall not find an entrance to the people of God. It will require heavenly wisdom to know how to deal with such cases. Light will come to God's people, and those who have sought to close the door will either repent or be removed out of the way. The time has come when a new impetus must be given to the work. There are terrible scenes before us, and Satan is seeking to keep from our knowledge the very things that God would have us know. God has messengers and messages for his people. If ideas are presented that differ in some points from our former doctrines, we must not condemn them without diligent search of the Bible to see if they are true. We must fast and pray and search the Scriptures as did the noble Bereans, to see if these things are so. We must accept every ray of light that comes to us. Through earnest prayer and diligent study of God's word, dark things will be made plain to the understanding.

ST, May 26, 1890

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.
I would like to share my personal testimony with all the readers. I was just an average guy, growing up with pretty much the same dreams and aspirations as most people. I wanted to get a job that paid well enough to raise a family, pay my bills and maybe have a few extra dollars left over for the good things in life, and taking the kids to do fun things. I enjoyed going fishing with the guys, and after work hanging out with the boys and having a few beers. I didn't really have big dreams for myself, just having enough money was my main focus.

We had the perfect little family

Right out of high school at the age of nineteen, I got married and had a son, Chad. It was difficult at the time, I was only making four dollars an hour as a house painter, so it was tough paying the bills; but as I got better at my job things were looking up. The guy I worked for was pretty good to me. He saw that I was always on time and did my job the best I could and as time went on I was making pretty good money. My wife, at the time, was a stay-at-home mom. Three years after my son was born we had a little girl, Andrea. That was one of my dreams — to have a boy and then a little girl so the boy could look after his little sister. It was the perfect little family. However, it was tough at times; we had to work a lot to make ends meet. Now there were two kids to take care of! I don't want to get into too much of the dark areas of my life, but I will say I had a problem with alcohol and tobacco for a time. As I look back on my addictions I know, of course, that was not a very good example to my kids and it had a negative impact on my marriage, too. I wish now I would have come to the Lord back then; my life would have been so much better, not only for me, but for my kids and my marriage. If you do not currently have a relationship with the Lord, don't wait, seek Him now and your life will change for the better; trust me, I know.

I felt there was something not quite right in the church we joined

As the kids grew up they both enjoyed playing sports. I got into coaching them in softball for a few years. We had a pretty normal life, or what I thought was normal. My wife, at that time, and I did see the value of taking our kids to church. So we joined the local Lutheran church that was close to our home. I remember going almost every Sunday. The kids would go to Sunday school and we would go to the adult Bible study. They always served coffee and donuts. I did really enjoy the free donuts; can't beat that, huh! It wasn't a bad experience; we met some good people. The pastor was a nice guy and all, but I always felt like something wasn't quite right. You know what I mean? You are at this place and everything seems normal but you get this feeling in your gut that makes you go hmmmm. We continued going to this church for a few years, but then it just kind of fizzled out. I always felt that something was missing. I just couldn't put my finger on it though. They would always talk about how much God loved us and how He wants all of us to go to heaven one day. And when we die, if we were good, that's where we would go; if we were bad, well, then you end up in hell where you would burn forever. I never really understood that and it really bothered me. God loves us and we are his children. Well, I'm a dad and for me to think no matter what my kids did or how bad the thing was that they did, sure they need to be punished… but forever? God is going to burn His disobedient children forever? And somewhere He has this place where the children that He created, who did something bad, are burning in a lake of fire forever? And every so often He goes to see if they are still burning? What is that all about? It didn't make sense to me at all. So for a time I didn't want anything to do with a God. Who would do something so terrible? Yes, our children need to be corrected when they misbehave but not like that. Not forever.

As the years went by, my marriage
started to get a little rough. As I said earlier, I had a problem with alcohol, and yes, it took a toll on my marriage. It’s funny how it goes sometimes, God is always there for us but we don’t think about Him until bad things start to happen in our lives. Even when we are not doing things right in our lives, He is still there waiting for us to open our eyes and see how much He cares for us. Without Him we can’t even breathe; our very breath comes from Him. When I look back at my life I can see how many times, I know without a doubt, God was there for me.

My world was beginning to unravel

I remember driving home one night, after having too many beers, knowing I should not have been driving. I rolled my car three or four times then landed on the roof, smashing the car so bad I couldn’t get out. I should have been dead! I see now that the Lord was not done with me. He saved me from what should have been my last day on earth. Somehow I was able to find my way out of the car, so I started walking home. A car came up behind me and asked if I was ok. They had gone by the car and stopped to see if anyone was in it, thinking there’s no way that person who was in the car could be ok. They kindly gave me a ride home. After this I started really looking at my life. What was it I was missing? Why do I do the things I do? Not just to myself, but to my family, too.

Then there was a third child that came, Tyler. Andrea was ten when Tyler was born. She was so excited to have a baby to help take care of. Financially, at that time we were ok. I still worked a lot to make ends meet but we did what we had to do. After a time I got out of the painting business and went to work for my other brother in-law who ran a large hog farm. I only did that for a short time, less than a year. At that time my brother, Mark, worked as a tile setter. The company he worked for was growing and was looking for help. I had helped Mark in the past so I knew a little about setting tile, so they hired me as Mark’s helper. It was only a few years and we were doing really well with that company. The pay was good and we had plenty of work.

This is when my life started to go downhill. My marriage was getting worse. I knew I needed to do something different; something had to change! My little world was falling apart all around me and I didn’t know how to fix it.

So I called my weird brother, Joe

I don’t know why, but I started spending time on my knees asking God why…why is this happening to me? Now here’s the best part – I have three brothers, Mark, who I worked with; David, who at this time was a tile setter, too, but lived in a different city; and Joe, who lived in a different state. Joe was a little different than the rest of us. He didn’t drink or smoke and he was a vegetarian, too, which really flipped us out! No meat, oh dude you don’t know what you’re missing! How can you not eat meat? Where do you get the protein your body needs? We all thought he was in some kind of cult. And pretty soon he’s going to try and talk us all into drinking the purple Kool-aid! He doesn’t eat meat, he doesn’t go to church on Sunday like everybody else, he doesn’t have a drink even once in a while… it’s a cult, it has to be! He’s not like any of us or for that matter he wasn’t like most of the world’s population! It’s just plain weird…What is he into? Well, he’s a Seventh-Day Adventist. Everybody knows they are all part of some kind of cult. Even my Lutheran Pastor said to stay away from them, they teach some really strange stuff. But I still had some kind of gut feeling that I needed to at least look into it and find out for myself. So I called my weird brother, Joe. Why did he go to church on the wrong day, was the first thing I wanted to know. He explained it to me, but he said the best thing to do was look it up for yourself in the Bible.

This is where my life started to change in a good way. Joe sent me this book called Bible Readings for the Home. It’s a question and answer book. That book and the other little book he sent me called Steps to Christ changed my life. After I went through those two books, I could see that things were starting to make sense now. I was thirsty. But who wrote this
stuff? Who wrote *Steps To Christ*? Who was Ellen White? Joe told me she was a prophet. A prophet? Uh-oh, here we go again, weird stuff coming from my weird brother! After reading some more of Ellen White and comparing it with the Bible, I began to understand the love God has for us. Reading the story of how Ellen White became a prophet helped me tremendously. The way she wrote and the words she used, with only a third grade education! Oh yeah, I was hooked! I started reading everything I could get my hands on. I would get up sometimes at 4 or 5 in the morning and read for hours before I had to go to work. I knew without a doubt Ellen White was inspired by God.

**I began keeping Sabbath, and tithing**

Then I began thinking about the Sabbath. How do I do it? Where do I begin? What church do I go to? How am I going to tell my brother, Mark, who was my partner in our little tile setting business, that I’m not working on Saturdays any longer? Well, God worked it all out. Mark didn’t have a problem with it at all. And it turned out there was a Seventh-Day Adventist church only 5 miles away. It was very hard for me the first time I went there. In the back of my mind I was thinking what if I walk in and they’re all sitting around doing some kind of weird séance or something. Well, it wasn’t like that at all. It was normal. In fact, they were very nice and everyone welcomed me. Oh, what a relief! After the service they all invited me to stay for potluck. What in the world is that, I wondered? Uh-oh, here’s where the weird stuff happens – in the basement of the church! It wasn’t like that at all. It was very comfortable in fact. After the meal a lot of people came up to me and asked if I was coming back next Sabbath. It had been such a nice experience, so I said of course.

I want to tell you about my experience with tithing, too. Before I started going to church my brother, Mark, and I in our little tile setting business were doing pretty well, we thought (money-wise that is). I was the guy in our business who paid the bills, so I knew exactly how much we were making. After I started tithing, the very next year our income went from 35 thousand to 70 thousand – it doubled! I couldn’t believe it! We weren’t doing anything different, just going to work everyday, doing what we always did. That was very exciting! I couldn’t wait to tell everyone about it.

**I knew God had a plan for me!**

After about a year I was baptized into the Seventh-Day Adventist church – I was on fire! But my wife didn’t see it that way, so she wanted a divorce. It was a very hard time for me. We had been married for 25 years ... now it’s just over. But I knew God had a plan for me! In the middle of all my problems I got a call from my brother, Joe. He had quit his job and had gone to work for a ministry in Illinois. They needed help in the maintenance department. After about 6 months of thinking about it and praying about it, I decided to go. It was the best thing I ever did. Here I am today, working with God’s people, doing all that we can to bring people to the truth of God’s love. And on top of that He brings, *right to my door*, a wonderful Christian woman for me. When you do everything you can in your power God will bless you beyond your wildest imagination. I am living proof of that. Jesus is my rock. I go to Him with everything now, from the smallest things, to the big things. He always gives me peace in my heart. And I want to thank my brother, Joe, for never giving up; for the years he spent praying for me. I believe that God answered his prayers. Let’s remember that. Never stop praying for all of God’s children – it works. I am here today because of prayer. I want to add something here, since we are talking about prayer and how it works. Remember me telling you about my kids? Well, my daughter, Andrea and my grandson, Caiden, are here with us working in God’s ministry. She has given her heart to the Lord. God hears our prayers. I know it works. I am here today because I listened to that still small voice.

Dan is the Maintenance Director of Hope International. He loves the Lord and uses every opportunity to tell others about His wonderful God. He enjoys the work of ministry in his capacity and plans on working until the Lord comes.
The times which are to precede the coming of the Lord are to contain an abundance of evidence that He is near. There are to be signs in the heavens—the darkening of the sun and moon and the falling of the stars. There are to be signs on the earth—sin, wickedness, and unbelief in a marked degree. Vast armies preparing for battle are to tell that the nations are angry. From all these things we are to understand that God’s wrath is soon to be poured out.

Excessive militarism accents the nearness of Christ’s return

Of the nations the Lord has said they shall have “distress” with “perplexity”. A glance at the peoples of the earth will make it appear to every one that such a condition prevails, and that the statesmen of the world are greatly troubled to know what to do to alleviate the distress.

One of the causes of this condition of things is the militarism which prevails causing distress in two ways: First, by withdrawing so many men from peaceful pursuits, and putting their labor upon women, while the men lie idle in the camp; secondly, because of the enormous taxation by which the immense armies of the world are maintained. Every nation of Europe groans under these two closely allied burdens.

This excessive militarism, and the consequent enormous burden of taxation, dates from the Franco-Prussian war of 1870-71. France had been the first military power in Europe, but in measuring swords with Prussia was defeated. Prussia thus suddenly becoming great and powerful, the head
of Germany, exacted a severe penalty from France. A vast sum of money and the two provinces of Alsace and Lorraine were taken by Germany. This deeply wounded the national spirit of France, and a determination to at some time regain those provinces took possession of her.

**Alliances and vast armies necessitated increased taxation**

The rapidity with which the French nation recovered from the defeat of that terrible war astonished the world. Germany, alarmed, increased her army. Then France increased hers. So the race began. Germany made Austria an ally. Then the triple alliance was formed of Germany, Austria-Hungary, and Italy. By the terms of this alliance these powers were pledged to keep up vast armies. France, isolated and threatened by all her immediate neighbors finally formed an alliance with Russia. So the armies of all these powers, and the taxation necessary to support it goes on. Other nations, seeing the inevitable conflict coming, and the necessity of being prepared, have increased their armies, and thus added to their taxation.

The statesmen of these nations, knowing that war with such armies and weapons as are now used means less than wholesome destruction, exert themselves to prevent war, but still the expectation of it is so widespread that from the king’s palace to the peasant’s hut there is constant fear of a conflict.

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**Distrust of one another and dissatisfaction of government are other causes of distress among nations**

Another phase of the distress of the nations lies in the fact that those powers which are in alliance distrust one another, each suspecting the others of contracting secret alliances. The feeling of the nations one toward another is well expressed in the words of the poet describing Fitz James and Red Murdock, his guide, as they went up the mountain together:

“Jealous and sullen, on they fared,  
Each silent, each upon his guard.”

Such a strained condition of affairs cannot but lead to distress of nations.

Another cause of distress closely connected with the preceding is the dissatisfaction of vast masses of the peoples of Europe, and also, to some extent, of all the world, either with their present systems of government, or the way the laws are administered.

**Submitting to the king and the priest was the sole duty of the common people**

Before the American Revolution, the idea that the common people had any rights was confined to a few advanced thinkers. To submit the body to the exactions of the king and the soul to the priest was the supreme and only duty of the common people. In 1776 a new age—an age of the people, dawned. Liberty, driven by persecution from the Old World, fled to the wilds of America, and there undertook to defend the rights of the common people. She claimed the right to erect a church without a pope and a state without a king. Europe felt the reaction from this movement, and the French Revolution, the greatest event of modern history, was helped forward by it. Since that time the spirit of liberty, though often cast down and crushed, has been gaining ground in Europe. At times, as in 1848, it has swept kings from their thrones and popes from their altars.

At the present time, kings and priests are endeavoring to tighten their grip on the people, and the result is a spirit of opposition to the present conditions. The nihilists of Russia, the communists and anarchists...
of France, Spain, and Italy, are parts of a dissatisfied public, which sometimes honorably, and sometimes in the worst possible way, strives to bring about a new order of things. The better class of these agitators aim in their parliaments, and in other legitimate ways, to bring about greater liberty; the worst of them use the dagger and dynamite to terrorize kings to gain what they desire.

This feeling of unrest has crossed the Atlantic, and is being widely diffused throughout this country.

**Happy is he whose hopes are withdrawn from this troubled world and placed upon Christ**

The marvelous aggregations of capital, popularly known as "trusts", by which business and the profits of business being gathered more and more into the hands of a few, necessarily ruin thousands of men of smaller means. The laboring people do not believe that the rewards of toil and honest endeavor are equally distributed. Thinking men, who have studied history in a way to understand its philosophy, hold that the times are similar to the years immediately preceding the French Revolution; hence they look for some terrible outbreak in the near future. Unrest is certainly a precursor of revolution.

With the nations joined in alliance, burdened with debt, and still, by enormous preparations for war, adding debt to debt; with universal jealousy pervading all nations; with statesmen at their wits end to know how to guide their ships of state past the rocks that threaten to crush them in pieces; and with a restless, dissatisfied, and often rebellious people, the nations of the earth at the present day are full of the "distress" which was predicted by our Lord as one of the evidences of His soon coming.

In such days as these, happy is he whose hopes being withdrawn from this troubled world are placed upon Christ and His kingdom, which soon will take the place of all earthly kingdoms.

**Editor's Note:** When this was written by James Edson White, Ellen White and others thought that Christ's coming was near, but it was delayed because God's people were not ready. See COL 69. Many of the conditions that existed then exist again today; are we ready? Are we reaching out to others? What about our own lives?

"Christ is waiting with longing desire for the manifestations of Himself in His church. When the character of Christ shall be perfectly reproduced in His people, then He will come to claim them as His own.

"It is the privilege of every Christian not only to look for but to hasten the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. Were all who profess His name bearing fruit to His glory, how quickly the whole world would be sown with the seed of the gospel. Quickly the last great harvest would be ripened, and Christ would come to gather the precious grain."

COL 69.
End Time Perspective: “In the days of Noah the… land was filled with violence. War, crime, murder, was the order of the day. Just so will it be before Christ’s second coming.” 1 BC 1090 (1891)

“The perversity and cruelty of men will reach such a height that God will reveal Himself in His majesty. Very soon the wickedness of the world will have reached its limit and as in the days of Noah, God will pour out His judgments.” UL 334 (1907)

Disaster, page 15—Flooding caused by Kashmir’s heaviest rainfall in 50 years killed more than 400 people.

2nd End Time Perspective: “We are standing on the threshold of the crisis of the ages. In quick succession the judgments of God will follow one another—fire and flood and earthquake with war and bloodshed.” PK 278 (1914)
Turmeric is a popular spice for cooking, but it has a long history of medicinal uses too. It is one of the most researched natural remedies available and there are numerous studies validating its amazing properties. Turmeric provides a wide variety of benefits. Once you know more about these benefits you will be eager to try Turmeric!

**Turmeric Benefits Include:**

- Powerful anti-inflammatory effects that may help to relieve painful joints and other inflammatory conditions.
- A powerful antioxidant – antioxidants scavenge molecules in the body known as free radicals, which damage cell membranes, tamper with DNA, and even cause cell death. Antioxidants can fight free radicals and may reduce some of the damage they cause.
- It may boost levels of the brain hormone BDNF, which increases the growth of new neurons and fights various degenerative processes in the brain.
- It has been shown to lead to several changes on the molecular level that may help eliminate unhealthy cell growth and promote healthy cell growth.
- It is an antiseptic and helps eliminate yeast and parasites.
- Stimulating the gallbladder to produce bile, which may help improve digestion.
- Turmeric contains a wide range of antioxidant, antiviral, antibacterial, antifungal, and anti-inflammatory properties. It is also loaded with many healthy nutrients such as protein, dietary fiber, niacin, vitamin C, vitamin E, vitamin K, sodium, potassium, calcium, copper, iron, magnesium, and zinc. Due to all these factors, turmeric is often used to help a wide variety of health problems.

**Scientific Studies:**

Turmeric has shown some effectiveness in helping with digestive disorders, and there is some suggestion it helps to promote healthy cell growth. In one study of human saliva, turmeric interfered with cell signals that drive the growth of unhealthy cells, according to the 2011 study published in a Clinical Research Journal.

Turmeric may also help prevent bone loss. In a 2010 study, researchers induced menopause symptoms in rats, because menopause often leads to bone loss. Half of the rats were then given turmeric. The rats given turmeric showed up to 50 percent less bone loss during the two-month experiment, according to the study, published in the Journal of Agricultural and Food Chemistry.

Early studies suggested that turmeric might help prevent the buildup of plaque that can block arteries and lead to severe problems. In animal studies, an extract of turmeric helped to maintain healthy cholesterol levels. Because it stops platelets from clumping together, turmeric may also prevent blood clots from building up along the walls of arteries.

One of the most comprehensive summaries of turmeric studies to date was published by the respected ethnobotanist James A. Duke, PhD., in the October 2007 issue of Alternative & Complementary Therapies, and summarized in the Journal of Psychopharmacology found that turmeric improves the activity of serotonin and dopamine, two brain neurotransmitters that are often deficient in patients with mood disorders. Turmeric improves function in areas of the brain responsible for reacting to stress. Turmeric also protects against damage to the energy-producing parts of cells, which commonly occurs in these disorders. Researchers concluded that turmeric might be a useful natural alternative to conventional medications.

**Testimonials:**

Turmeric is great! I have been using it for 6 months now, let me tell you; there is no more joint pain, back pain, swelling of the feet, bloating or indigestion! – T.H.

Turmeric is a powerhouse herb for sure! It is the best herb I have ever used, my face has never been clearer, and my over all health is much, much better! ~ J.K.

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The Lord has shown us the evil of depending upon the strength of earthly organizations. He has instructed us that the commission of the medical missionary is received from the very highest authority. He would have us understand that it is a mistake to regard as most essential the education given by physicians who reject the authority of Christ, the greatest Physician who ever lived upon the earth. We are not to accept and follow the view of men who refuse to recognize God as their teacher, but who learn of men, and are guided by man-made laws and restrictions.

Medical missionaries are to be guided by divine instruction

During the night of April 26 many things were opened before me. I was shown that now in a special sense we as a people are to be guided by divine instruction. Those fitting themselves for medical missionary work should fear to place themselves under the direction of worldly doctors, to imbibe their sentiments and peculiar prejudices and to learn to express their ideas and views. They are not to depend for their influence upon worldly teachers. They should be “looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith.”

The Lord has instructed us that in our institutions of education we should ever be striving for the perfection of character to be found in the life of Christ, and in His instruction to His disciples. Having received our commission from the highest authority, we are to educate, educate, educate in the simplicity of Christ. Our aim must be to reach the highest standard in every feature of our work. He who healed thousands with a touch and a word is our physician. The precious truths contained in His teachings are to be our front guard and our rereward.

Christ was sent of the Father to represent His character and will. Let us follow His example in laboring to reach the people where they are. Teachers who are not particular to harmonize with the teaching of Christ, and who follow the customs and practices of worldly physicians, are out of line with the charge that the Saviour has given us.

If they consecrate themselves to the Lord, He will make them skillful

It is not necessary that our medical missionaries follow the precise track marked out by the medical men of the world. They do not need to administer drugs to the sick. They do not need to follow drug medication in order to have influence in their work. The message was given me that if they would consecrate themselves to the Lord, if they would seek to obtain under men ordained of God a thorough knowledge of their work, the Lord would make them skillful. Connected with the divine Teacher, they will understand that their dependence is upon God and not upon the professedly wise men of the world.

Some of our medical missionaries have supposed that a medical training according to the plans of worldly schools is essential to their success. To those who have thought that the only way to success is by being taught by worldly men and by pursuing a course that is sanctioned by worldly men, I would now say, put away such ideas. This is a mistake that should be corrected. It is a dangerous thing to catch the spirit of the world; the popularity which such a course invites will bring into the work a spirit which the Word of God cannot sanction. The medical missionary who would become efficient, if he will search his own heart and consecrate himself to Christ, may be diligent in study and faithful in service, learn how to grasp the mysteries of his sacred calling.

It is a lack of faith in the power of God that leads our physicians to lean so much upon the arm of the law, and to trust so much to the influence of worldly powers. The truly converted man or woman who will study these words of inspiration spoken by the apostle Paul may learn to claim in all their depth and fullness the divine promises.

I am charged to present these Scriptures to our people, that they may understand that those who do not believe the Word of God can not possibly present to those who desire to become acceptable medical missionaries the way...
by which they will become most successful. Christ was the greatest physician the world has ever known; His heart was ever touched with human woe. He has a work for those to do who will not place their dependence upon worldly powers.

**God's true commandment-keeping people will be instructed by Him**

The true medical missionary will be wise in the treatment of the sick, using the remedies that nature provides. And then he will look to Christ as the true Healer of diseases. The principles of health reform brought into the life of the patient, the use of nature's remedies, and the co-operation of divine agencies in behalf of the suffering, will bring success.

Satan will try to place barriers in the way of the true medical missionary. He will seek to bring discouragement upon those who recognize the commandments of God, and are determined to obey them. We must be careful not to carry our views of health reform to extreme, thus making it “health deform.” Our food should be plain and free from all objectionable elements, but let us be careful that it is always palatable and good.

A time will come when medical missionaries of other denominations will become jealous and envious of the influence exerted by Seventh-day Adventists who are working in these lines. They will feel that influence is being secured by our workers which they ought to have. We should have in various places, men of extraordinary ability, who have obtained their diplomas in medical schools of the best reputation, who can stand before the world as fully qualified and legally recognized physicians. Let God-fearing men be wisely chosen to go through the training essential in order to obtain such qualifications. They should be prudent men who will remain true to the principles of the message.

These should obtain the qualifications and the authority to conduct an educational work for our young men and our young women who desire to be trained for medical missionary work.

MedEv, April 1, 1910
ACROSS
1. King of Syria, who attacked King Ahaz with King Pekah of Israel
2. Elder son of Isaac and Rebekah
3. Nephew of Abraham
4. The greatest of the archangels
5. The daughter of Aiah who was one of King Saul’s concubines
6. The son of King Josiah of Judah
7. He lived to the age of nine hundred sixty nine years
8. The Roman emperor mentioned in Acts
9. Bearer of Paul’s letter to the church in Rome
10. The probable writers of the dead sea scrolls
11. The personal name of Bartholomew, an apostle
12. The husband of Bathsheba [Uriah]
13. One of the great cities of paganism in Asia
14. Present with her brother Herod Agrippa II with Paul at Caesarea
15. The harlot of Jericho who dealt kindly with Joshua’s spies [Rahab]
16. An ancient Canaanite tribe descended from Heth
17. Father of the great hero and judge of Israel, Gideon [Joash]
18. A prophet who was the trusted adviser of King David
19. He founded a race of giants known as Anakim
20. Father of Rebekah and Laban
21. The brother of Mary and Martha [Lazarus]
22. He broke his father’s heart by leading a revolt against him [Absalom]
23. The Greek name for the messenger of the gods
24. Enrolled as a disciple in place of Judas
25. Judge over Israel for eight years
26. He was one that deserted Paul on his last arrest
27. A companion of Daniel
28. The husband of Ruth in Bethlehem
29. Husband of King Saul’s daughter, Merab
30. He was eight years old when he succeeded his father on the throne

DOWN
1. Rebekah’s nurse [Deborah]
2. Elder son of Isaac and Rebekah
3. She married Naomi’s son, Mahlon [Ruth]
4. Sarah’s Egyptian servant girl [Hagar]
5. The disciple of and successor to Elijah [Elisha]
6. The high priest during David’s reign [Abiathar]
7. He lived to the age of nine hundred sixty nine years
8. The greatest of the archangels
9. She was hired to nurse David in his old age
10. Abraham’s grandfather [Nahor]
11. The personal name of Bartholomew, an apostle
12. The tables of law were stored in what kind of container?
13. A wife of Jacob
14. Present with her brother Herod Agrippa II with Paul at Caesarea
15. The elder brother, whom Absalom murdered
19. He founded a race of giants known as Anakim
20. Father of Rebekah and Laban
21. The brother of Mary and Martha [Lazarus]
22. He broke his father’s heart by leading a revolt against him [Absalom]
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