



Youth Messenger

*Your
Romantic
Relationship*

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April–June 1999

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Our Need and His Love

*In the Word the Lord has shown
 How the hearts of men have grown
 Hard as adamant within,
 Darkened by a veil of sin.
 Sole of foot to head between
 Is no soundness in them seen.*

*Wounds and bruises, sores are found,
 They have not been closed or bound,
 Nor has ointment been applied
 That they might be mollified.
 Thus describes He sin's vile taint;
 Head is sick, and heart is faint.*

*Then He shows their worship vain
 While they in this state remain,
 But they who rebellious stand
 Still are creatures of His hand,
 And the love of God most high
 Says again, "Why will ye die?"*

*Wash you, make you clean, and turn
 From your sins, and duty learn.*

*Come and let us reason now:
 I can not yours sins allow;
 But tho' scarlet be their glow,
 They shall be as white as snow;*

*And tho' crimson be their stain,
 They shall be as wool again.*

*Wouldst thou share that goodly land?
 Willing then and faithful stand.
 Thus we see the wondrous grace
 Proffered to a fallen race.*

*In that fall we've each our part,
 Needing each a change of heart.
 O, then let us as we read
 Sense our sins and feel our need,
 Earnestly our sins confess,
 And be clothed in righteousness!*

—E. H. Batterson

Editorial

"And by a prophet the Lord brought Israel out of Egypt, and by a prophet was he preserved" (Hosea 12:13).

In 1959 I migrated from the country of my birth, Yugoslavia, and settled in Australia, the country I chose to adopt as my new home.

However, I went back to Yugoslavia in 1979 to visit my parents, brothers, sisters and relatives. I had been 21 years of age and single when I first left Yugoslavia. On my return to this wonderful family reunion 20 years later, I was 41, married and blessed with 3 children.

During those 20 years, major changes had taken place in my life. It was wonderful to see my brothers and sisters and all the relatives (those that were still alive) and many of my old friends. It is difficult to describe my inner feelings as I arrived in the village and home where I was born. Although it was real, it felt like a dream.

My eldest brother was keen to know about my 20 years in Australia, the people there and the way of life. After discussing many interesting things, he asked me to tell him something about the Bible, especially the prophecies. I chose to read to him from Revelation chapter 13. That chapter speaks of 2 beasts. The first beast, as we believe, represents the papal power. Verse 3 says that the whole world will wonder "after the beast," or in other words, the whole world will pay homage to the papacy.

The second beast is introduced in verse 11. It is described as having two horns that are lamb-like but speaking as a dragon.

Prophecy— God's Timepiece

My brother asked me to explain to him the meaning of these two beasts. I proceeded to tell him that the first beast is the papacy and the whole world will accept the pope as the ultimate leader of the religions on earth. The second beast is the USA which will support the papacy and will become the greatest power on earth. To this my brother replied: "Never, never will that happen." He added, "The Soviet Union holds the balance of power. It is more powerful than the USA."

It has taken another 20 years to see the beginning of the fulfillment of that prophecy in Revelation 13. Today we see that the papacy is on the rise and before long the whole world will worship that system.

The United States is the greatest single power on earth; this is a recognized fact. In many ways it is already beginning to speak as a dragon and soon will exercise "all the power of the first beast" and also "cause the earth and them which dwell therein to worship the first beast."

Those who refuse to worship the beast and his image will be dealt with in a manner that is reminiscent of the Dark Ages.

Year after year, events are becoming ever more impressive. God's timetable is being revealed with increasing clarity. We are not to take our eyes off prophecy.

My brother is now a follower of Christ, and God willing, he will be baptized in our church together with his wife this year, in preparation for the heavenly kingdom.

—B. Jaksic

What Is Presumption?

How May It Involve Me?

.....

by Peter D. Lausevic—*Tennessee, U.S.A.*

"And the man that will do presumptuously, and will not hearken unto the priest that standeth to minister there before the Lord thy God, or unto the judge, even that man shall die: and thou shalt put away the evil from Israel. And all the people shall hear, and fear, and do no more presumptuously" (Deuteronomy 17:12, 13).

We often talk about faith and the meaning of faith. This is good, since it is a very powerful subject if we experience true faith. "For whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world: and this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith" (1 John 5:4). Since we all like power, that victorious power that overcomes the

world is something that we need to discuss.

But there is another subject that is so close to faith—and yet so distinctly opposite—that if you possess it, it results in your defeat. Unfortunately, most of the world considers this counterfeit to be genuine faith. We need to know about it because of God's warning given through the psalmist's prayer: "Keep back thy servant also from presumptuous sins; let them not have dominion over me: then shall I be upright, and I shall be innocent from the great transgression" (Psalm 19:13).

"There are many who fail to distinguish between the rashness of presumption and the intelligent confidence of faith. Satan thought that by his temptations he could delude the world's Redeemer, to make one bold move in manifesting His divine power, to create a sensation, and to surprise all by the wonderful display of the power of His Father in pre-

serving Him from injury."—*The Review and Herald*, April 1, 1875.

What is it that we are to be kept back from, and why?

Presumptuous sins

What are the three branches of evil from which all others spring up? "Appetite and passion, the love of the world and presumptuous sins, were the great branches of evil out of which every species of crime, violence, and corruption grew."—*Selected Messages*, book 1, p. 280.

A presumptuous sin is one that a person deliberately chooses, that he is determined to do. An example is given of premeditated murder: "He that smiteth a man, so that he die, shall be surely put to death. And if a man lie not in wait, but God deliver him into his hand; then I will appoint thee a place whither he shall flee. But if a man come presumptuously upon his neighbour, to slay him with guile; thou shalt take him from mine altar, that he may die" (Exodus 21:12–14).

A presumptuous sin occurs when a person knows and understands the will of God but purposely decides to do something else. "The work of Satan is to interpose his sophistry, his lying statements, to lead men to believe a lie rather than the words of God, which are the truth. It is thus that he leads men into presumptuous sins. Satan is ever at work to keep out of our minds the doctrine of the cross of Christ; for this is the counter-influence through which sin is to be vanquished and man be brought back to his allegiance to the law of God."—*The Review and Herald*, Sept. 29, 1891.

One example of presumption occurred shortly after the Israelites had been denied immediate access

to the promised land because of their restless murmuring and complaining. Their rebellious spirit resulted in them having to wander in the wilderness for 40 more years. "One of the people, angry at being excluded from Canaan, and determined to show his defiance of God's law, ventured upon the open transgression of the fourth commandment by going out to gather sticks upon the Sabbath. During the sojourn in the wilderness the kindling of fires upon the seventh day had been strictly prohibited. The prohibition was not to extend to the land of Canaan, where the severity of the climate would often render fires a necessity; but in the wilderness, fire was not needed for warmth. The act of this man was a willful and deliberate violation of the fourth commandment—a sin, not of thoughtlessness or ignorance, but of presumption."—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 409.

"It is the grossest presumption for mortal man to venture upon a compromise with the Almighty in order to secure his own petty, temporal interests. It is as ruthless a violation of the law to occasionally use the Sabbath for secular business as to entirely reject it; for it is making the Lord's commandments a matter of convenience. 'I the Lord thy God am a jealous God,' is thundered from Sinai. No partial obedience, no divided interest, is accepted by Him who declares that the iniquities of the fathers shall be visited upon the children to the third and fourth generation of them that hate Him, and that He will show mercy unto thousands of them that love Him and keep His commandments. It is not a small matter to rob a neighbor, and great is the stigma attached to one who is found guilty of such an act; yet he who would scorn to defraud his fel-

low man will without shame rob his heavenly Father of the time that He has blessed and set apart for a special purpose.”—*Testimonies*, vol. 4, pp. 249, 250.

Disregarding reproof

Another way to sin presumptuously is to disregard the reproofs, based on the word of God, of His faithful messengers. “If there arise a matter too hard for thee in judgment, between blood and blood, between plea and plea, and between stroke and stroke, being matters of controversy within thy gates: then shalt thou arise, and get thee up into the place which the Lord thy God shall choose; and thou shalt come unto the priests the Levites, and unto the judge that shall be in those days, and inquire; and they shall shew thee the sentence of judgment: and thou shalt do according to the sentence, which they of that place which the Lord shall choose shall shew thee; and thou shalt observe to do according to all that they inform thee: according to the sentence of the law which they shall teach thee, and according to the judgment which they shall tell thee, thou shalt do: thou shalt not decline from the sentence which they shall shew thee, to the right hand, nor to the left. And the man that will do presumptuously, and will not hearken unto the priest that standeth to minister there before the Lord thy God, or unto the judge, even that man shall die: and thou shalt put away the evil from Israel. And **all the people shall hear, and fear, and do no more presumptuously**” (Deuteronomy 17:8–13).

The Hebrew word translated as “presumptuously” in verse 12 above

.....

*Presumptuous
people are those
who dare to do
what God has
said not to do.*

.....

literally refers to pride, insolence, or arrogance. We read in Numbers chapter 16 of the presumptuous rebellion of Korah, resulting in the death of 14,000 people. We are warned that “the experience of the Israelites in their travels has been recorded for the benefit of those upon whom the ends of the world are come. Our dangers are not less than those of the Hebrews, but greater. The people of God at the present day will be tempted to indulge envy, jealousy and murmuring, as did ancient Israel. There will ever be a spirit to rise up against the reproof of sins and wrongs. But the voice of reproof should not be hushed because of this. Those whom God has set apart as ministers of righteousness have solemn responsibilities laid upon them to reprove the sins of the people. Paul commanded Titus, ‘These things speak, and exhort, and rebuke with all authority. Let no man despise thee.’ There are ever those who will despise the one who dares to reprove sin. But when required, reproof must be given. Paul directs Titus to rebuke a certain class

sharply, that they may be sound in the faith. And how shall the reproof be given? Let the apostle answer: ‘With all long-suffering and doctrine.’ The one at fault must be shown that his course is not in harmony with the word of God. But never should the wrongs of God’s people be passed by indifferently. Those who faithfully discharge their unpleasant duties under a sense of their accountability to God, will receive His blessing.”—*The Signs of the Times*, Sept. 16, 1880.

Self-willed

Presumptuous people are self-willed, daring to do what God has said not to do.

“The Bible specially teaches us to beware of lightly bringing accusation against those whom God has called to act as His ambassadors. The apostle Peter, describing a class who are abandoned sinners, says, ‘Presumptuous are they, self-willed, they are not afraid to speak evil of dignities. Whereas angels, which are greater in power and might, bring not railing accusation against them before the Lord’ (2 Peter 2:10, 11). And Paul, in his instruction for those who are placed over the church, says, ‘Against an elder receive not an accusation, but before two or three witnesses’ (1 Timothy 5:19). He who has placed upon men the heavy responsibility of leaders and teachers of His people will hold the people accountable for the manner in which they treat His servants. We are to honor those whom God has honored. The judgment visited upon Miriam should be a rebuke to all who yield to jealousy, and murmur against those upon whom God lays the burden of His

work.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 386.

Conclusion to Part 1

As a people waiting for the coming of Jesus, what are we required to do? “Let us hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering; (for he is faithful that promised;) and let us consider one another to provoke unto love and to good works” (Hebrews 10:23, 24). How can we provoke one another unto good works if we do not fellowship together? So, the next verse tells us, “Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching” (verse 25). And the following verse tells us what type of sin this helps us prevent: “For if we sin willfully after that we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins, but a certain fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation, which shall devour the adversaries” (verses 26, 27).

Dear young people, do not neglect the opportunity to hear God’s word and to strengthen one another up the narrow path by faith. Listen intently to the sermons and studies given by faithful ministers, realizing that they apply to you just as much as to the older ones. In an age infamous for rebellion and presumption, stand fast for the truth, and you will be blessed. We’ll talk more about this subject in the next *Youth Messenger* magazine. Until then, may the Lord grant you faith in Christ and courage to do what is right by His tremendous power! 🌿

My First Test

by Katalin Bokor — Hungary

The first test in my life as an adult came when I was quite young. "My father, thou art the guide of my youth" Jeremiah 3:4 (second part).

In December 1957 when only 16 years old, I was taking a course in stenography. The classes were scheduled to run Tuesdays, Thursdays and Saturdays; but for me, I could go only on Tuesdays and Thursdays. The Director of the school consented with this arrangement because I was a Sabbathkeeper. God helped me to finish this course number one in the class.

Every year in Budapest, the capital of Hungary, there is a stenography competition. The Director knew I did not attend school on Saturdays, but when the people in Budapest asked for persons able to compete in this tournament, the Director of the school, without asking me, turned in my name. There were two candidates. Afterwards, she came and told me what she had done, and ordered me saying:

"You are going to Budapest to compete on May 10, 1958."

When I checked the calendar to see on which day of the week it would fall, May 10 was on a Saturday! I approached the Director and said:

"You know I don't go to school on Saturdays."

"I know that," she replied. "It is nothing wrong though, it is only for this time! And don't tell me you are not going!"

"I beg your pardon, Director, but I cannot go to Budapest on May 10. Even if it is for one Sabbath only, the Sabbaths are all the same—holy. I'm sorry."

I did not tell her anything more and went home to ask my father and mother what I should do next. They told me to inquire directly from God, and that I did.



Again I talked to the Director and told her: "Sorry, Director, you know I never come to school on Saturdays, and you agreed to that. Sabbath is not my day, it is God's day as written in the Bible in Exodus chapter 20."

She became so furious, she screamed at me: "Out of here, now!! I never want to see you again!"

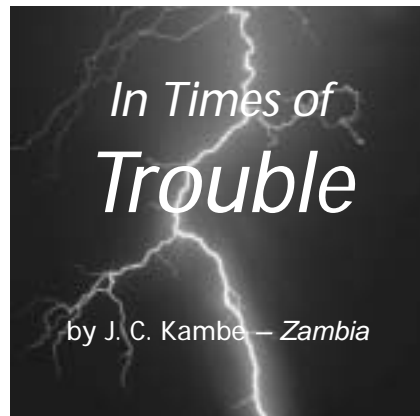
I immediately left the school in Bekescsaba and took the train to my little town of Mezobereny. When my mother saw me home so early she asked:

"Why are you home earlier than usual?" I told her what had happened, but she encouraged me:

"It's OK. You are the only one that must decide what you will do. Just keep in mind that God and His law always come in the first place. Everyday you will have trials, and God will allow you to have only what you can take. He will give you the strength you need. Trust Him."

In the year 1958 no one in the city of Bekescsaba won the competition, and the Director was very ashamed. All the students in the school were supposed to have a final examination on July 22, and two weeks prior to the exam, the Director called me and told me that I would be allowed to take the final examination together with the rest. Immediately I sent a thank you prayer to God because He had changed the heart of the Director.

That was my first trial and I was able to witness for God and for the Sabbath, by His strength. "I will greatly praise the Lord with my mouth; yea, I will praise him among the multitude. For he shall stand at the right hand of the poor, to save him from those that condemn his soul" (Psalm 109:30, 31).



In times of trouble . . .
God's trusting child may say:

- First,** God brought me here. It is by His will that I am in this difficult place. In that I will rest.
- Next,** He will keep me here in His love and give me grace in this trial to behave as His child.
- Then,** He will make the testing a blessing, teaching me lessons He intends for me to learn and work in me the grace He intends to give.
- Last,** In His good time, He can bring me out again—how and when He knows.
- Say:
- I am here
 - 1. By God's appointment
 - 2. In His care
 - 3. Under His training
 - 4. For His time.

"A life of monotony is not the most conducive to spiritual growth. Some can reach the highest standard of spirituality only through a change in the regular order of things. When in His providence God sees that changes are essential for the success of the character-building, He disturbs the smooth current of the life. He sees that a worker needs to be more closely associated with Him; and to bring this about, He separates him from friends and acquaintances."—*Gospel Workers*, pp. 269, 270.

"Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on thee: because he trusteth in thee" (Isaiah 26:3).

"And call upon me in the day of trouble: I will deliver thee, and thou shalt glorify me" (Psalm 50:15).

Meekness



by Sarah Kimbrell – Virginia, U.S.A.

"Blessed are the meek: for they shall inherit the earth" (Matthew 5:5).

Meekness is one of the most important fruits of the Spirit; it is also a rare trait of character. Does meekness mean to be shy or timid? The dictionary defines the word "meek" as showing patience, humility, gentleness, and also being submissive. So we could say that meekness includes some of the other fruits of the Spirit! In *Thoughts From the Mount of Blessing*, pages 13 and 14, we read: "Throughout the Beatitudes there is an advancing line of Christian experience. Those who have felt their need of Christ, those who have mourned because of sin and have sat with Christ in the school of affliction, will learn meekness from the divine Teacher. . . . Jesus places meekness among the first qualifications for His kingdom. In His own life and character the divine beauty of this precious grace is revealed."


Matthew 11:29 says, "Take my yoke upon you, and learn of Me, for I am meek and lowly in heart; and ye shall find rest unto your souls."

"Meekness is the inward adorning, which God estimates as of great price. The apostle speaks of this as

more excellent and valuable than gold or pearls or costly array. While the outward adorning beautifies only the mortal body, the ornament of meekness adorns the soul and connects finite man with the infinite God. This is the ornament of God's own choice. He who garnished the heavens with the orbs of light has by the same Spirit promised that 'he will beautify the meek with salvation' (Psalm 149:4). Angels of heaven will register as best adorned those who put on the Lord Jesus Christ and walk with Him in meekness and lowliness of mind."—*The Sanctified Life*, p. 16.

Indeed, meekness is not an easy trait of character to develop. We all have carnal hearts; but through Christ we can win the victory over pride of self.

Let not our character adorning be "that outward adorning of plaiting the hair, and of wearing of gold, or of putting on of apparel; but let it be the hidden man of the heart, in that which is not corruptible, even the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit, which is in the sight of God of great price" (1 Peter 3:3, 4).

May the Lord help us as we continue to cultivate a meek and quiet spirit! 

TO ALL YOUNG PEOPLE AROUND THE WORLD

Dear Youth,

"Grace be unto you, and peace, from God our Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ. I thank my God always on your behalf, for the grace of God which is given you by Jesus Christ; that in everything ye are enriched by him, in all utterance, and in all knowledge" (1 Corinthians 1:3-5).

In my last letter to you I announced the Far Eastern Youth Congress to be held in South Korea, May 4-9, 1999. Many of you, I gather, could not attend for various reasons. Those who attended were richly blessed. The manifestation of the Lord's presence was clearly evident in the response to the appeal to live for Christ. It was indeed a convention to be remembered for a long time. The theme "Walk With God as Enoch Walked With God," gave inspiration and assurance that we can all have the same experience. The subjects such as "Righteousness by Faith," "Conversion," "The Experience of Transformation in the Image of Christ," "My Peace I Give Unto You," "Overcoming Self," and many others brought warm responses to the hearts of many young people. Workshops were indeed of great benefit, since the opportunity was given all to actively participate. The South Korean youth leader told me, "From now on this is the way we will conduct our youth meetings."

Another wonderful benefit that we all enjoyed was the almost nonstop praising and singing to the Lord. If you wish to hear very wonderful singing then you must hear our young people in South Korea.

I personally thank the Lord for the great blessings I received. Brother A. Balbach also came and shared with me in the presentations. Brethren N. Brittain from Australia and N. Chang from Japan came toward the end. Their contributions were of great benefit to all. We also had three young people from Japan who, according to their words, had "a most wonderful experience." The young people in Korea are planning to have "more of such meetings." You may be hearing from them.

And, now, regarding the last World Youth Convention before the next G.C. Session later this year: In my last letter I asked you to send me suggestions as to where you think we should have this meeting. Not many replied, but most that did, responded that Hungary was the place they favored. Some said Italy. In the past, quite a number asked for Italy. However, there is difficulty in obtaining visas, especially for those from Eastern Europe. That is why I personally believe Hungary is the best, since it is accessible to all. Another important factor is that the Hungarian brethren have already sent us an invitation to hold a youth convention there. They do have good facilities for the meetings, and they have promised to find good accommodations.

In view of this, I now INVITE all of you, or as many as possible, to come to Mogyorod. Most of you know where Mogyorod is. The dates for this youth convention will be August 16-25, 1999.

The year 2000 is fast approaching, and this will be the last World Youth Convention before the new millennium begins. We do not know what the future will bring. We do know, however, that the final events are very rapidly taking place. The signs are telling us that the Lord is coming very soon. We need to be prepared for the great work before us. The Lord is calling us to be His coworkers in carrying the everlasting gospel to all the world. Matthew 24:14 will be fulfilled in our time. Do you believe this? We need to arise and shine to reflect the image of Christ in our lives.

I have just returned from Japan where I was very impressed with our brethren's zeal for the Lord. They have made a rather bold plan to distribute one million pieces of literature this year, and there are only thirty of them. How many members are in your Field or Union? If you have four times this number, then you can distribute four million leaflets per year. Think of this, how quickly the world would hear the message if we all would "arise and shine" (Isaiah 60:1).

This letter is an invitation to you to come to this Congress to hear and study how each of us can be missionaries for the Lord. We will also dedicate at least one day to spreading the good news in Hungary.

Some of you have been to Mogyorod. Here is the telephone number so you can contact the brethren there if needed: +36-36-36-7506. This is the number of William Toth, our young people's leader in Hungary. He is a very fine brother—not only a brother in Christ, but also a valued friend of mine. He loves working for the Lord, and he wants to see as many as possible come to the Congress. You can also contact me at the above address, or call me by phone.

Those of you who can pay the cost per day, it is US\$14. This is all inclusive—food and accommodation. Those who cannot pay, we still ask you to come. Do not stay away because of financial reasons. Your costs will be subsidized. You may pay as much as you can. All are welcome to come!

The theme for the Congress will be: IT IS THE TIME, based on Psalm 119:126. Some of the topics will be:

- ✦ Prophecy Speaks for the Last Days*
- ✦ Can Practicing Sinners Enter Heaven?*
- ✦ Will You Receive the Seal of the Living God?*
- ✦ Tell the Good News*
- ✦ Christ's Righteousness*
- ✦ Are You Being Cleansed in the Blood of the Lamb?*
- ✦ He Can Keep You From Sinning*
- ✦ Walking With God — What Does It Mean?*
- ✦ Arise and Shine (Christ's Character Reflected in Us)*

If you have any other themes you would like discussed, please let me know as soon as possible, and we will include it in the program.

I personally look forward to seeing many of you in Mogyorod, and I trust that the Lord will bless you.

*You brother and friend in Christ,
Brian Jaksic*

Your Romantic Relationship



by Mario Alvarado—Peru

As soon as I had completed a talk for the youth on the subject of engagement and marriage, a young lady took me aside and said, "I need to talk with you." Once at the office of the church, she began, "Brother, if I would have known the first steps about marriage—those you just taught, I am sure that I could have avoided a lot of my problems." The conversation continued and, at the end, it was clear that the message to the youth had been profitable, especially for her.

The steps presented which had somehow been new to her, to which she had not given the proper importance before, were basically two:

1. In seeking a future spouse, one should watch for three main characteristics:

- a. *That the person loves God above all things*
- b. *That he or she have good health (no chronic diseases), and*
- c. *That they be good, hard workers.*

2. Before saying "yes" to finalize the engagement, the parents should be consulted in the decision.

When the couple takes into consideration the counsels based on the book *Messages to Young People*, as mentioned above, the marriage has much better chance of being a happy one.

Sometimes it may seem to a young person that no one around them meets the above criteria. So in haste and discontentment, they may fall into the following trap:

"The thought of marriage seems

to have a bewitching power upon the minds of many of the youth. Two persons become acquainted; they are infatuated with each other, and their whole attention is absorbed. Reason is blinded, and judgment is overthrown. They will not submit to any advice or control, but insist on having their own way, regardless of consequences. Like some epidemic, or contagion, that must run its course, is the infatuation that possesses them; and there seems to be no such thing as putting a stop to it. Perhaps there are those around them who realize that, should the parties interested be united in marriage, it could only result in lifelong unhappiness. But entreaties and exhortations are given in vain. Perhaps, by such a union, the usefulness of one whom God would bless in His service, will be crippled and destroyed; but reasoning and persuasion are alike unheeded. All that can be said by men and women of experience proves ineffectual; it is powerless to change the decision to which their desires have led them. They lose interest in the prayer meeting, and in everything that pertains to religion. They are wholly infatuated with each other, and the duties of life are neglected, as if they were matters of little concern. Night after night, these young people burn the midnight oil to talk with each other—in reference to subjects of serious and solemn interest?—O no. Rather of frivolous things, that are of no importance. Satan's angels are keeping watch with those who devote a large share of the night to courting. Could they have their eyes opened, they would see an angel making a record of their words and acts. The laws of health and modesty are violated. It would be more appropriate to let some of the hours

of courtship before marriage run through the married life. But as a general thing, marriage ends all the devotion manifested during the days of courtship. These hours of midnight dissipation, in this age of depravity, frequently lead to the ruin of both parties thus engaged. Satan exults, and God is dishonored when men and women dishonor themselves. The good name of honor is sacrificed under the spell of this infatuation, and the marriage of such persons cannot be solemnized under the approval of God. They are married because passion moved them, and when the novelty of the affair is over, they will begin to realize what they have done. In six months after the vows are spoken, their sentiments toward each other have undergone a change. Each has learned in married life more of the character of the companion chosen. Each discovers imperfections that, during the blindness and folly of their former association, were not apparent. The promises at the altar do not bind them together. In consequence of hasty marriages, even among the professed people of God, there are separations, divorces, and great confusion in the church."—*The Review and Herald*, Sept. 25, 1888.

"Let some of the hours of courtship before marriage run through the married life."

"Unsanctified marriages are filling up the ranks of Sabbathkeepers. God wants His children to be happy, and, if they would learn of Him, He would save them from the daily misery which comes in consequence of these unhappy unions. Many marriages can only be productive of misery; and yet the minds of the youth run in this channel because Satan leads them there, making them believe that they must be married in order to be happy, when they have not the ability to control themselves or support a family. Those who are not willing to adapt themselves to each other's disposition, so as to avoid unpleasant differences and contentions, should not take the step. But this is one of the alluring snares of the last days, in which thousands are ruined for this life and the next. Imagination, lovesick sentimentalism, should be guarded against as would be the leprosy. Very many of the young men and women in this age of the world are lacking in virtue; therefore great caution is needed."—*Testimonies*, vol. 5, pp. 122, 123.

"It is the special work of Satan in these last days to take possession of the minds of youth, to corrupt the thoughts, and inflame the passions; for he knows that by so doing he can lead to impure actions, and thus all the noble faculties of the mind will become debased, and he can control them to suit his own purposes. All are free moral agents, and as such they must train their thoughts to run in the right channel. The first work of those who would reform is to purify the imagination. Our meditations should be such as will elevate the mind. 'Whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things

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It is safe to put all our plans in the hands of God because He will work in our behalf.

.....

are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things' (Philippians 4:8). Here is a wide field in which the mind can safely range. If Satan seeks to turn it to low and sensual things, bring it back. When corrupt imaginings seek to gain possession of your mind, flee to the throne of grace, and pray for strength from heaven. By the grace of Christ it is possible for us to reject impure thoughts. Jesus will attract the mind, purify the thoughts, and cleanse the heart from every secret sin. 'The weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God; . . . casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ' (1 Corinthians 10:4, 5.)"—*Christian Temperance and Bible Hygiene*, p. 136.

Seeking Mature Counsel

Youth should seek the advice of the older brethren, and this should be done with prayer, confidence and respect; not only on matrimonial subjects but also on many other aspects of life. "Ointment and perfume rejoice the heart: so doth the sweetness of a man's friend by hearty counsel" (Proverbs 27:9).

In the days of Elisha, a group of students from the school of the prophets, worrying that the place of studies was too small, decided to go to the river Jordan and cut wood to remodel the school. Elisha, their teacher, was invited to accompany them in this project. He happily accepted the invitation. For sure, he was a pleasant companion and a great helper in time of need.

When one of the students lost the axe in the Jordan, no one knew what to do and nearly considered it to be lost. In distress, the young man involved went to the prophet: "Alas, master! for it was borrowed. And the man of God said, Where fell it? And he shewed him the place. And he cut down a stick, and cast it in thither; and the iron did swim. Therefore said he, Take it up to thee. And he put out his hand, and took it" (2 Kings 6:5-7).

This is a Bible account showing the importance of the presence of older ones among the youth, above all, when influential and important projects are to be accomplished.

It is always wise to consult family members and older brothers in Christ, because they have already traveled most of life's road, and some may be ending their journey. Therefore they are ready to guide the youth and point out dangers along the way or show them what precautions to take, or provide encouragement on the pathway ahead.

It has been repeated over and over that after God, the greatest love shown is that of a mother

toward her child—we can add, the parents' love toward their children. They are always ready and anxious to grant the best counsel and to help their children, because they want them to be happy.

God and His holy angels are watching for the well-being of our souls, and they also want our joy and eternal happiness. Therefore, besides giving us all the guidance and counseling, it is safe to put all our plans in the hands of God because He will work in our behalf.

"My son [or daughter], hear the instruction of thy father, and forsake not the law of thy mother: For they shall be an ornament of grace unto thy head, and chains about thy neck" (Proverbs 1:8, 9). ❧



Hearing Ears

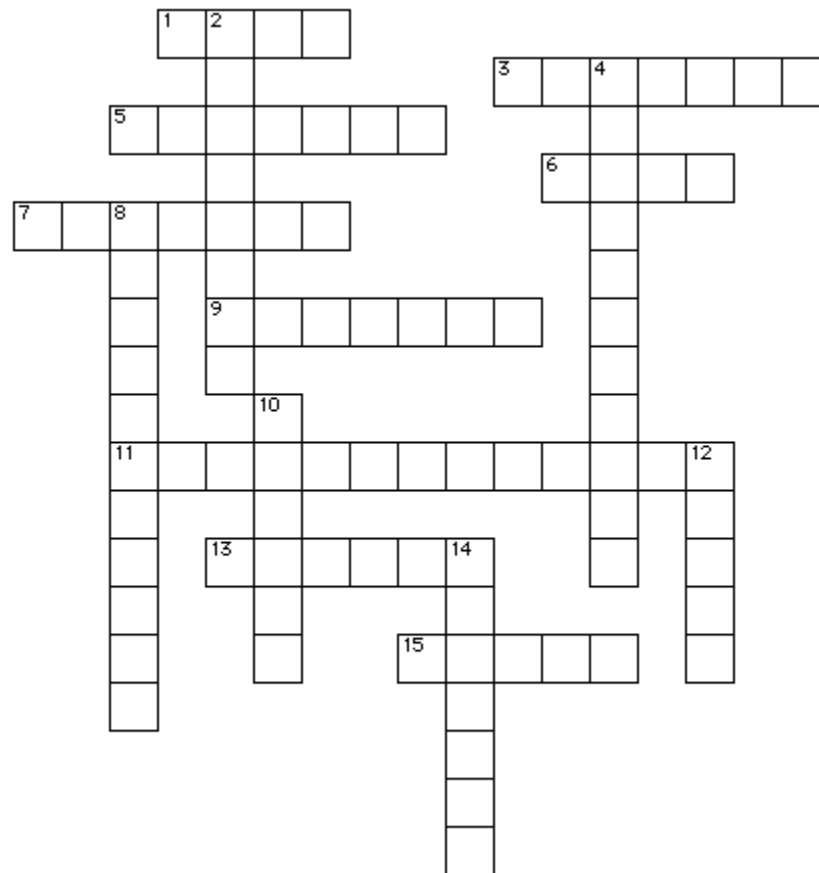
There is a saying, that when someone tells us to do differently than we are used to or would like (even if it would be better for us), their words seem to go "in one ear and out the other." But since often such advice would really make us much happier in the long run, it is good for us to become more as the apostle James bids, "swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath" (James 1:19). Likewise, the book of Proverbs, on which the following puzzle is based, encourages us to cultivate "hearing ears." The chapter and verse are given for each clue.

Across:

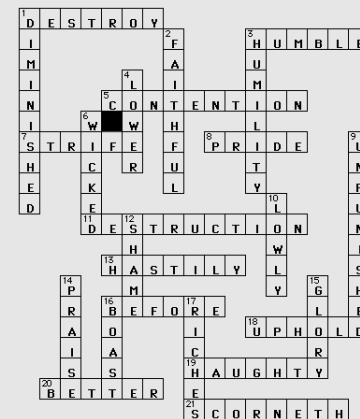
1. Hear instruction, and be _____, and refuse it not (8:33).
3. A wise son _____ his father's instruction: but a scorner heareth not rebuke (13:1).
5. Hear counsel, and _____ instruction, that thou mayest be wise in thy latter end (19:20).
6. The ransom of a man's life are his riches: but the _____ heareth not rebuke (13:8).
7. The ear that heareth the reproof of life _____ among the wise (15:31).
9. The heart of the prudent getteth knowledge; and the ear of the wise _____ knowledge (18:15).
11. Hear, ye children, the instruction of a father, and attend to know _____ (4:1).
13. Harken unto thy father that begat thee, and despise not thy _____ when she is old (23:22).
15. _____ thine heart unto instruction, and thine ears to the words of knowledge (23:12).

Down:

2. A wise man will hear, and will _____ learning; and a man of understanding shall attain unto wise counsels (1:5).
4. He that turneth away his ear from hearing the law, even his prayer shall be _____ (28:9).
8. My son, hear the _____ of thy father, and forsake not the law of thy mother (1:8).
10. He that answereth a matter _____ he heareth it, it is folly and shame unto him (18:13).
12. Hear thou, my son, and be wise, and _____ thine heart in the way (23:19).
14. He that refuseth instruction despiseth his own soul: but he that heareth _____ getteth understanding (15:32).



Answers to last issue's puzzle entitled, "Pride vs. Humility."



Music

What Is Awesome Music?

by Brian Dozier — Texas, U.S.A.

Growing up in an Adventist community when I was a young boy is an experience that I will never forget. In a little Arkansas town secluded by rolling hills and sparkling creeks, a young boy could find adventure and explore the great beauty of God's creation. I had many questions in regard to life, and the world seemed to me a vast undiscovered country. I had a fascination for all of God's creatures and I would love to watch them in nature.

Unfortunately, the peace that I found in nature was not found in my home. Without realizing it, I was attracted to the things outside of the home. Home for me was the last place I wanted to be. My mom and dad had divorced and remarried and my dad would come to visit me every other weekend. My parents tried to do their best, but, to be honest, they were really too busy with the world to teach me to serve the Lord. They kind of took it for granted that since they took us kids to church that we would automatically understand and know everything essential for salvation. But spiritual things became less and less attractive to us because we listened to worldly music, watched the latest movies, and sought the entertainment that the world had to

offer. My classmates at school were consumed with the latest fashions and trends and looking for boy-friends or girlfriends. Today, both young and old do not realize how hard the enemy is seeking to destroy the character building that children need in their first years of life. Satan is seeking to impart his character to the young people to destroy any possibility that they may come to the Lord.

From early youth we would always listen to the latest songs on the local pop/rock station. We did not think that it was wrong, or at least no one told us any good reason why we should stop listening to it. We were blind to the effects that this music had upon our characters. We could not see the changes that it was making in us. The songs that we listened to each day taught us the morals and principles that were considered popular or "cool" to have. The music of the world appealed to the immature emotions and high hormone level of the youth by captivating us with song and dance.

When I was about 15, I began to learn how to play the guitar. My father and brother played the guitar, but I was not much into what they liked to play. I wanted to play hard

rock just like the guys on TV. The TV musicians became my role models instead of Jesus Christ. Each day I would come home from school and begin to beat on my dad's electric guitar. At first I sounded terrible, but over time I began to learn more chords, and instead of exploring the outdoors I was exploring how to play rock music.

I still thought that I was a Christian while doing all of these things because no one said anything about it, and even if they did, I would just think that they were being old-fashioned, judgmental or overly strict. So, nothing they could say would change my mind anyway. Then I began to listen to a local Christian contemporary station and for the first time, I discovered a rock group that sounded like the world but was singing about Jesus. I thought, "Hey, I can really reach the young people for Christ by putting Christian words to this exciting rock music, making the gospel more appealing than with the old-fashioned hymns. The only thing is that I was trying to mix paganism (rock) with Christianity (the gospel). I thought it wouldn't matter what kind of music you play just as long as you are praising the Lord. Little did I know that I was doing exactly the work of the enemy. By using rock music to reach the Christian youth I was telling them that it is okay to be like the world as long as you have a form of godliness. Little did I know the meaning of James 4:4:

"Ye adulterers and adulteresses, know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God? whosoever therefore will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God."

My music became more satanic and evil as I continued to play and listen to hard rock. The hard grunge and heavy reverb, full of anger, sor-

row, and hate fed the beast of an unclean spirit. Evil was gaining control over me until I was blinded to the fact that, to a point, I was actually possessed or controlled by the enemy of souls. I was under the conviction of God that my music was not acceptable, but it was a real struggle to give up this idol that I had set up in my heart. Music was my life. I could not seem to give up the music that I loved so much.

Meanwhile, my aunt and uncle had become SDA Reformers and I really didn't have a clue as to what that meant until I went to a Bible worker's house while visiting my grandmother who was staying there to receive natural health treatments. Somehow the conversation came up on the subject of music and that day I left their house with 3 videotapes in my hand. I was staying in my grandmother's home at the time and was only working part time so I had plenty of time to watch these videos. I really didn't want to give up my music and I would make every excuse that I could to justify myself in my own mind, but the convicting power of God was working on me to just hear out the guy on the tapes. As I began to watch these videos, it seemed like the enemy was just



working in my heart to totally reject everything. I was very defensive at first, but the Lord was convicting me to continue watching. My heart was wrestling the whole time with the plain truth that the Lord brought to me. I could not argue or dispute God's word. I knew that the Bible was right and I couldn't argue with God. At the end of these videos I was convinced that I needed to surrender to the Lord the bad music that I cherished so much. I believe it took a little more than a month, wrestling back and forth, before I realized that I could not give up this music. I was hooked! I put the guitar down for a few days, but one evening I began to play a song that I was working on, and it just didn't seem right. I heard so much hurt and anger in the songs that I played.

I cried out to God with all my heart to deliver me from myself. I poured out my heart, crying to the Lord that He would help me to give up this music that had such a hold on me. I did not realize my own condition, and how far away from Him I really was. I praise the Lord, for He came to set the captives free. I praise God and His Son Jesus Christ, for His longsuffering and mercy toward me. Blessed is the man that is forgiven and cleansed from sin. God is awesome, for He came to save us from our sins. (See Matthew 1:21.)

The Spirit of God broke my heart when I asked the Lord to forgive me for my sins, and help me give up my cherished idols. That's a day I will never forget, because the Lord helped me overcome by His power. When I tried to do it, I got discouraged, but as the Lord promised, He came to save us from our sins. The power of the enemy is not strong enough to keep the weakest soul, no matter what the addiction or decep-

tion. The Gospel is "the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth" (Romans 1:16). By trusting in the Lord that He had the power to give me the strength to break the chains of sin, I was set free. Christ has made it possible for us to overcome the power of the enemy, for with Him sin shall not have dominion over us. See Romans 6:14. If you find yourself struggling with something in your life, give it to Jesus and surrender yourself to Him. Don't make the mistake I did in trying to do it all by myself. Remember, "God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble" (Psalm 46:1).

A Christian music professor described to me the difference between melody and rhythm. He explained how the music of the world has heavy rhythm as its central foundation, in contrast to most classical music and hymns that have melody as the most distinct sound. Tell me if you have ever heard any of today's popular music—it does not matter whether it be country, jazz, blues, rock—doesn't it usually have a lot of drums, bass, and heavy rhythm? The professor went on to explain how music is a language. Before, I believed the lie that music by itself is not bad—that it all depends on the way you interpret it. But the language of music is very similar to the English language in that you can say bad words or you can say good words. Music can make one happy, sad, relaxed, or angry. It is only a tool to express what's in the heart. If the heart is wicked, then the music that comes from the heart is wicked also, and if the heart is holy then the music is holy. My so-called Christian music was actually worse than the world's because it was glorifying Satan. The Lord revealed to me that the only music that is acceptable to Him is described in Ephesians 5:10, 17, 19–21:

"Proving what is acceptable unto the Lord. . . . Wherefore be ye not unwise, but understanding what the will of the Lord is. . . . Speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord. . . . Submitting yourselves one to another in the fear of God."

I had to ask myself some questions. Would the Lord listen to my music? Is it really His will that I listen to whatever I want? Does my music fit the description of a psalm, hymn, spiritual song with singing, making melody in my heart to the Lord for His honor and glory? Then, after all this, would I be willing to submit myself to hear what others think of my music—whether it is good or bad?

Another conviction that the Lord brought to my heart was the fact that I am not my own. I have been bought with a price and belong to God. Would it glorify Him for me to hear, eat,

touch, or smell, anything that would defile me in any way? No. If I could not play the music I love in the house of God, then I need not play it at all. Ask yourself, "What would Jesus do?" and then ask for power to do it.

I hope and pray that my testimony will strengthen a young person who may be struggling with something similar or even something different than my experience with music. Music is awesome and God is the creator of music. If you think of your favorite musicians and how good they are, just think of how God is infinitely better. He can play music that will melt your heart, amaze your mind, inspire, and fill you to the utmost with love and adoration to Him as the great Almighty. May this be your experience, and may the Lord's will work in you to do of His good pleasure (Philippians 2:13)!

"Let every thing that hath breath praise the Lord. Praise ye the Lord." Psalm 150:6.



“Is There a God?”

*There is a God! On every flower
Is stamped the Maker's face,
But doubters are not given power
His image there to trace.*

*Faith can, alone, gaze 'neath the veil
That covers sea and land;
Doubt dare not, lest the Truth assail
With an o'erpowering hand.*

*There is a God! all nature cries,
Beseeching us to look
Into her golden, sunny eyes,
And read the open book.*

*Upon the sea—within the air—
His adumbrations are;
Look where you will, His face is there
Reflected like a star.*

*There is a God! Pause in thy doubt
And study man and plants—
Behold the proofs that lie about—
Do these things come by chance?*

*Creation's voice—the foaming sea,
The gentle winds that blow,
The birds that sing from every tree—
Sounds forth an endless, “No!”*

—T. Shelley Sutton

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