

Youth messenger

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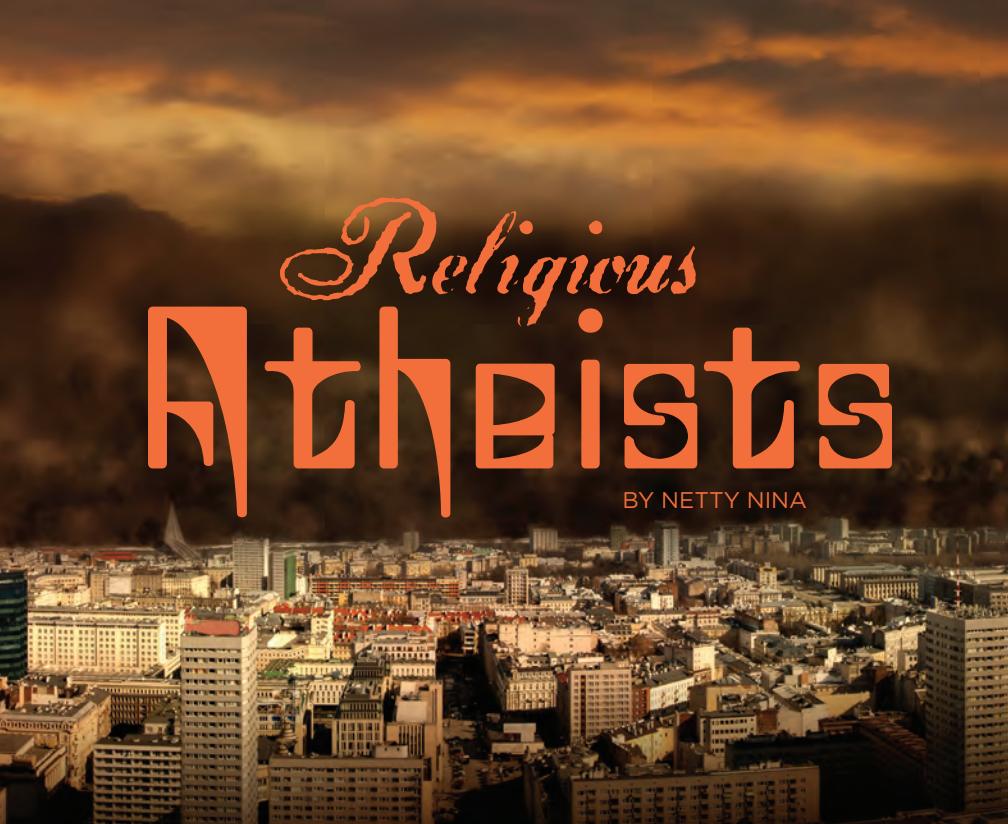
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Religious Atheists

BY NETTY NINA

According to the Pew Research Center, the share of Americans who self-describe as atheists has roughly doubled since 2007. Interestingly enough, though the literal definition of “atheist” is a person that “does not believe that God exists,” 8% of those who self-describe as atheists, also say they believe in some sort of universal spirit.

This discussion of the existence of a higher power is one that is constantly present in the media. Pop culture utilizes religious concepts and imagery to convey one idea or another. Popular atheists and religious apologists

seem to have some major debate from time to time. There has even been a resurgence of biblical epics in Hollywood. World religions are constantly in the spotlight, and their historical context seems to be always causing some controversy or another. Even Adventism has been in the forefront as a result of the current election cycle.

We as Adventists are in a particularly interesting position. I once had a conversation with the spouse of a coworker who asked me if I was part of any religion. When I mentioned I was an Adventist, he told me about an Adventist he knew in his theology

program who was obsessed with eschatology and last-day events. I said to him, “Well, if you take our [Adventist] beliefs out of context, they sound pretty wacky.”

I probably shouldn't have said that, but I think it can seem that way sometimes. So maybe rather than talking explicitly about religious doctrines and beliefs, we focus on doing good works, which is something I think the church absolutely should engage in more and more. Christ Himself time and time again urged His followers to feed the hungry and clothe the poor. Political and natural disasters are producing much suffering; at this point, it is not only a good thing to do, but our imperative duty. But how about the message? What about the faith as part of the equation? What about the work within?

Often we live our lives as Sabbath Adventists. It's good that we have the custom of attending church on a weekly basis; otherwise we might turn into Christmas and Easter Adventists. But even the frequency of our church attendance is not doing much in our ranks. Why not? Because we have lost sight of the grand scheme of things; we have lost our sense of purpose. And as a result too often we live our lives as religious atheists.

Francis Chan, an author and religious leader, shares the following illustration: Imagine a rope with a beginning but with infinite length. The length of the

rope is our life's timeline. The first few inches of the rope are our time here on earth, and the rest of it is our life in eternity. Most of us are preoccupied with what happens in that short time, trying to live the most comfortable life we can without thought to the rest of the infinite length of the rope. But what we do in the first few inches determines what happens in the rest of the length of rope!

Do we really believe that what we do now will determine our eternal future? The thought is foolishness to certain people: “But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned” (1 Corinthians 2:14).

The gospel message is not a comfortable one, so it's easier to ignore the hard bits. There's a reason why the last church in Revelation is the Laodicean church. It is the church where “everything is fine.” “I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing” (Revelation 3:17). We keep our end of the bargain, so to speak: “I've got to make money to tithe and give offerings so that the pastor or Bible worker can do the work. . . . I'll go to church and listen to the sermon and thank God for the beautiful message. . . . Hey, maybe, I'll invite my friend to church. . . . I'll participate and even volunteer in that church program!” and on it goes. These things are great. They are part of our


Self-denial, seeking
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profession as Christians. But what about the things that are a little bit more difficult to swallow? How about the part when Jesus told His disciples, “If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross and follow me”? (Matthew 16:24). How about: “And ye shall seek me, and find me, when ye shall search for me with all your heart”? (Jeremiah 29:13). How about: “Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God”? (John 3:5).

Self-denial, seeking God, rebirth—these are the things God really wants us to do. Otherwise, we will not be able to have the deep conviction of Joseph who, despite all the suffering he endured, stayed true to God because he believed in Him. We need the steadfastness of Daniel and his friends who stayed true to their beliefs and trusted that God was with them, and that the Babylonians would witness God’s greatness. We need the courage of Elijah who, on pain of death, challenged the pagan

priests and believed that God would honor his sacrifice. And even when, despite God’s grand demonstration, Elijah allowed fear to overwhelm him, this tender God came to his rescue and comforted him. This is the God we should believe in. This is He who is gently calling us to spend time with Him. God is trying to wake us from our slumber because our eternal destiny hangs in the balance. This is He who patiently waits for us to stop hitting the snooze button and come to terms with what is really happening around us. Our churches need revival and reformation because there are many people who need to hear this message. But that requires people who really believe in it: “The message for this time is positive, simple, and of the deepest importance. We must act like men and women who believe it. Waiting, watching, working, praying, warning the world—this is our work.”—*Evangelism*, p. 219.

So can this happen? God begins this work with **one** person. “When churches are revived, it is because some individual seeks earnestly for the blessing of God. He hungers and thirsts after God, and asks in faith, and receives accordingly. He goes to work in earnest, feeling his great dependence upon the Lord, and souls are aroused to seek for a like blessing, and a season of refreshing falls on the hearts of men.”—*Christian Service*, p. 121.

So, do what you believe! 

the Light of the World

BY HULDENI SOUZA

Our Lord and Master Jesus Christ tells us, “I am the light of the world: he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life” (John 8:12).

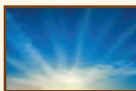
What was actually the first thing God made during the six days of creation? We read, “In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth. And the earth was without form, and void; and darkness was upon the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters. And God said, Let there be light: and there was light” (Genesis 1:1–3).

We are to behold Him who is the light of the world (see John 19:5) and declares, “And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me” (John 12:32).

CHRIST COMPARES HIMSELF TO:



The bread of life
(John 6:48.)



The light of the world
(John 8:12; 9:5.)



The door
(John 10:9.)



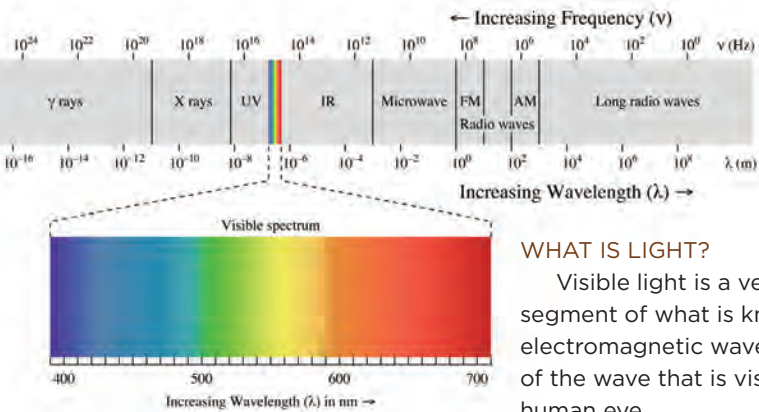
The good shepherd
(John 10:11.)



The way, the truth, and the life *(John 14:6.)*



The vine
(John 15:5.)



WHAT IS LIGHT?

Visible light is a very small segment of what is known as the electromagnetic wave—the part of the wave that is visible to the human eye.

Unlike water waves or sound waves, light waves follow more complicated paths, and light does not need a medium (water or air) through which to travel. **It stands on its own.** (Christ is self-existing.)

What is visible to the human eye, though, is just a very small part of the electromagnetic spectrum which includes, for example, gamma rays (the product of radioactive atoms), x-rays, ultraviolet light, visible light, infrared rays, radar (microwaves, cell phones, garage door openers), radio waves (radar, airplane radio, TV, FM radio, model airplane signals, CB radio, shortwave, and AM radio).

All portions of the electromagnetic spectrum, including light, are waves. **The higher the frequency, the higher the energy;** or the whiter the light the higher the energy.

All electromagnetic waves travel at the same speed, known as the speed of light (186,000 miles per second in a vacuum). Another property of light waves is that they can use the same space.

Light has always been considered to be something that

WHY DOES CHRIST COMPARE HIMSELF TO THE LIGHT?

“I am the light of the world.”

“The feast of tabernacles had just passed when our Saviour uttered these words in the temple at Jerusalem. Around the court were the golden lamps whose brilliant light had illuminated the city. Pointing to these, and beyond them to the glorious sun just risen in full-orbed splendor above the Mount of Olives, He declares Himself to be the light of men.”—*The Review and Herald*, January 24, 1882.

In order to have an idea of why Jesus made this comparison, we must first understand what light is, what makes up light, and its most common properties.

CAN YOU SEE LIGHT?

We can’t touch, taste, hear, nor smell it. **We can’t even see light.** We see light only as it is filtered through the atmosphere and reflected off different surfaces! We can see the **results** of light but not light itself. We catch glimpses of its nature when a sunbeam angles through a dust-filled room or when a rainbow appears after a storm.

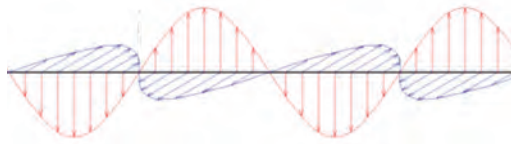
travels faster than anything in the universe. However, in 1999, researchers at Harvard University were able to **slow down a beam of light** to a mere 38 miles an hour by passing it through a state of matter known as a Bose-Einstein condensate. That is almost 18 million times slower than normal! (Christ was made flesh so that the human race could see the glory of God).



WHY IS THE WHITE LIGHT NOT IN THE SPECTRUM?

When you look at the sun's visible light, it appears to be colorless, the light we call white. Although we can "see" this light, white isn't considered part of the visible spectrum. That is because **white light is made up of three basic colors.**

Red is the lowest-energy visible light, so in a red-hot object the atoms are just getting enough energy to begin emitting light that we can see. Once you apply enough heat to cause white light, you are energizing so many different electrons in so many



different ways that all of the colors are being generated. They all mix together to look white.

WHAT MAKES UP LIGHT?

The electromagnetic wave is composed of **electricity and magnetism**, which are related, traveling together in the same direction and perpendicular to each other.

Another interesting fact is that in 1905, Albert Einstein introduced to the scientific world the idea that light has a **dual nature**. That is, light is composed of wave and particle. Today, physicists have embraced this idea.

"God is light; and in the words, 'I am the light of the world,' Christ declared His oneness with God, and His relation to the whole human family. It was He who at the beginning had caused 'the light to shine out of darkness' (2 Corinthians 4:6)." —*The Desire of Ages*, p. 464.

This dual nature is also illustrated as Jesus explains, "I and my Father are one" (John 10:30).

HOW DOES LIGHT WORK? (PROPERTIES OF LIGHT)

We can describe, with great accuracy, three well-known light phenomena (properties) of light: reflection, refraction, and scattering.



REFLECTION occurs when a light ray strikes a smooth surface, such as a mirror, and **bounces off**. The light that strikes the surface is the same light that bounces off; that is, it's the same color and intensity.



REFRACTION occurs when a ray of light passes from one transparent medium (air, let's say) to a second transparent medium (water). When this happens, light changes speed and the light ray bends, either toward or away from the normal line.



Diamonds wouldn't be so glittery if they didn't slow down incoming light much more than, say, water does. Diamonds have a higher index of refraction than water, which is to say that those sparkly, costly gems, slow down light to a greater degree.



SCATTERING occurs in many of the objects we encounter every day—objects whose surfaces are not smooth. The surface of paper is a good example. When light hits paper, the waves are reflected in all directions. This allows you to read the words on a printed page regardless of the angle at which your eyes view the surface. The scattering property is what allows us to see the different colors of the light spectrum.

HOW OBJECTS REACT TO LIGHT

Depending on the composition of the object exposed to light, some of the colors that make up light can be absorbed, thus removing them from the white light combination. The absorbed colors are the ones you don't see—you see only the colors that come bouncing back to your eye. This is known as **subtractive color**.

The surface molecules absorb specific frequencies and bounce back, or reflect, other frequencies to your eye. The reflected frequency (or frequencies) is what you see as the color of the object.

For example, the leaves of green plants contain a pigment called chlorophyll, which absorbs the blue and red colors of the spectrum and reflects the green.





It is only when light is reflected or absorbed by the objects that are exposed to it, that we can appreciate its properties. And objects can only be perceived as they reflect light.

Without the properties of light, the splendid hummingbird would be dull; flowers would have no color. Without light, our eyes could not perceive colors or shapes. We would have to touch an object to perceive its shape, but not the colors. **Light is truly the glory of creation.**

What is more amazing? The properties of light, or the fact that our eyes can capture this information and our brains process it?

What do we need to do in order to be able to capture such beauty? Open our eyes!


What do we need to do in order to be able to appreciate the Light that emanates from the cross? Open our hearts!

WHAT IS THE GLORY OF CHRIST, THE GLORY OF THE FATHER?

Jesus prayed to His Father in our behalf, “That they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me. And the glory which thou gavest

me I have given them; that they may be one, even as we are one: I in them, and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one; and that the world may know that thou hast sent me, and hast loved them, as thou hast loved me” (John 17:21–23).

WHERE DO WE FIT INTO THIS PICTURE?

“Were it not for the communication between heaven and earth there would be no light in the world. Like Sodom and Gomorrah, all men would perish beneath the just judgment of God. But the world is not left in darkness. The long-suffering mercy of God is still extended to the children of men, and it is His design that the rays of light which emanate from the throne of God shall be reflected by the children of light.”—*In Heavenly Places*, p. 70. May the Lord enlighten us to this great privilege! 





Thoughts fo

Reverence is greatly needed in the youth of this age. I am alarmed as I see children and youth of religious parents so heedless of the order and propriety that should be observed in the house of God. While God's servants are presenting the words of life to the people, some will be reading, others whispering and laughing. Their eyes are sinning by diverting the attention of those around them. This habit, if allowed to remain unchecked, will grow and influence others.

Children and youth should never feel that it is something

to be proud of to be indifferent and careless in meetings where God is worshiped. God sees every irreverent thought or action, and it is registered in the books of heaven. He says, "I know thy works" (Revelation 3:15). Nothing is hid from His all-searching eye. If you have formed in any degree the habit of inattention and indifference in the house of God, exercise the powers you have to correct it, and show that you have self-respect. Practice reverence until it becomes a part of yourself.

Do not have so little reverence for the house and worship of God as to communicate with



or the Young

Compiled from Ellen G. White articles in *The Youth's Instructor*

one another during the sermon. If those who commit this fault could see the angels of God looking upon them and marking their doings, they would be filled with shame and abhorrence of themselves. God wants attentive hearers. It was while men slept, that the enemy sowed tares.

Nothing that is sacred, nothing that pertains to the worship of God, should be treated with carelessness and indifference. When the word of life is spoken, you should remember that you are listening to the voice of God through His delegated servant. Do not lose these words through

inattention; if heeded, they may keep your feet from straying into wrong paths.

I am sorry to see that many youth who profess religion do not have any knowledge of a change of heart. There is no transformation of character. They do not realize that it is a solemn thing to profess to be a Christian. Their life is entirely inconsistent with a religious frame of mind. If they were of that number who are indeed the sons and daughters of God, they would not be filled with nonsense and pleasantry and trifling; neither would the foolish remarks and conduct of

others awaken the same in them. A mind that is intent upon having the prize, upon securing heaven, will reject with firm, determined purpose every attempt at wit and jest concerning religious things.

There is great danger in indifference upon this subject; no folly is so subtle as thoughtlessness and levity. On every hand we see youth of a frivolous character. All young people of this class should be avoided; for they are dangerous. If they profess to be Christians, they are the more to be dreaded. Their minds have been cast in an inferior mold; and it will be far easier for them to bring you down to their level than for you to bring them up to elevated and ennobling thoughts and a correct course of action. Let your companions be those who observe decorum in words and deportment.

In order to do your best in showing forth the praises of God, your associations must be such as to keep in your minds the sacred distinct from the common. If you would have broad views, noble thoughts and aspirations, choose associations that will strengthen right principles. Let every thought and the purpose of every action

bend to the securing of the future life, with eternal happiness.—*The Youth's Instructor*, October 8, 1896.

Dear Children: We have much to be thankful for. Yes, we have enough to cause our hearts to overflow with love and praise to our Redeemer. We should be very thankful that we are numbered with those who keep the commandments of God.

Do you seek to glorify God, and honor Him in your life? You should seek and pray for a spirit of thankfulness for all the blessings you enjoy, and seek earnestly for the Holy Spirit to dwell in you. If you do not possess the Holy Spirit, there is a fault, and the fault is in you; for Jesus says, "If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children: how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him?" (Luke 11:13). With such an assurance as this of the willingness of your Father in heaven to give you His Holy



Spirit, how can you remain away from Him? How can you longer neglect to ask Him in confidence to perform that work in you so necessary to make you a devoted Christian? O, come to Jesus now, dear young friends, with a broken heart, and with confidence in the mercy and promises of God, plead for pardon for your past wanderings from the fold of Christ—plead in earnest prayer till you feel His pardoning love, and the fullness of His Spirit dwelling in you.

Why are the young generally so backward to talk of a Saviour's love? They can readily talk of dress, the appearance, and of things that are of but little consequence. "Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh" (Matthew 12:34). Those who profess to love God, should delight to talk of Him they love. And if His love is in the heart, the mouth will speak it out. His praise will be in your hearts and on your lips. Your song will be "Hear, what the Lord has done for me." Your hearts can beat with ardent affection and love for Jesus, who first loved you.

Why do we not hear the voices of the young, in praise to God for His love that is shed abroad in their hearts? I fear that things of less importance divert the mind, and that the affections, designed by God to be bestowed upon their Redeemer and Saviour, are placed upon others. There is an affection and attachment

You must be devoted, yes, consecrated to God. He wants the whole heart. . . . t and the warmest affections.


manifested among the young that is wrong. This uniting with a few, to the exclusion of others, and the few uniting together to praise, caress and flatter each other, is a curse to themselves and to all within its influence. It has a blighting effect upon all the young that such associate with. Spiritual death marks their track, and they leave a curse behind them where they go. They act out the foolish affection manifested by the world for each other. Those who do not profess to love God, have chosen poor earthen vessels, or weak mortals, as their gods to place their affections upon, and this is their all and in all. But we profess to have a noble Object on whom to bestow our ardent affection and warmest love.

The young associating together might be a benefit instead of a curse. If they had God's glory in view when they meet, they would watch their opportunity to do good, to correct a selfish, vain, trifling spirit, exaltation and pride, and help one another. But there is but little of this faithfulness manifested among the young.



Many join hands to take the affections from Jesus, and center them upon each other. They unite in trifling and foolish conversation. This affection cherished among them is a curse. Let the affections first center in Christ, pass through the right channel, be purified by His Spirit, then they will lead to a yearning of soul for each other, not to bundle together to their hurt, but an earnest desire to have all share the gift of Jesus and His love.


The young can find words enough to express their ardent affection for each other. They are none at loss for words. But when Jesus is mentioned, many are silent. His name does not arouse the ardent love of the soul. Why are such so dumb to the wondrous love of God? Why, at the mention of Jesus' name whose love was so exalted, so devoted, so pure, do they hold their peace? Dear friends, have you no words to speak in Christ's favor? Have you no ardent affections to

bestow upon Him that was meekly slain to save you from death? Why! O, why! do we not hear your voices in the full gratitude of your soul speak forth His praises? Why are not the praises of God heard gushing from your affectionate hearts, warmed by a Saviour's love? His love should call forth music from the soul and lips. What is the matter children? "Out of the abundance of the heart, the mouth speaketh." A fountain cannot send forth sweet water and bitter. You visit the fountain of salvation too seldom. You must be devoted, yes, consecrated to God. He wants the whole heart. He is a jealous God, and He requires the whole heart and the warmest affections. Children, arouse, to your eternal interest. Your season to lay up a treasure in heaven will soon be past. Awake every energy of thy soul. Awake and love and adore thy Redeemer. Be a living example to others and give full proof that you are Christ's disciples.—Ibid., February 1, 1856. 

THE HUMMINGBIRD'S UMBRELLA



In front of a window where I worked last summer was a butternut tree. A hummingbird built her nest on a limb that grew near the window, and we had an opportunity to watch her closely, as we could look right into the nest from the window. One day there was a very heavy shower coming up, and we thought we would see if she covered her young during the storm; but when the first drops fell, she came and took in her bill one of two or three large leaves growing close to the nest, and laid it over so it completely covered the nest; then she flew away. On looking at the leaf we found a hole in it, and in the side of the nest was a small stick that the leaf was fastened to or hooked on. After the storm was over, the old bird came back and unhooked the leaf, and the nest was perfectly dry.

H.A. in American Sportsman, YI Vol. 32, No. 39. 



Lessons From the Life of a Spider

BY RADU ILIE

“There be four things which are little upon the earth, but they are exceeding wise: the ants are a people not strong, yet they prepare their meat in the summer; the conies are but a feeble folk, yet make they their houses in the rocks; the locusts have no king, yet go they forth all of them by bands; the spider taketh hold with her hands, and is in kings’ palaces” (Proverbs 30:24–28).

We humans decide what is beautiful or ugly according to what we are used to seeing—according to our culture, our education, and so forth. For instance, there are animals that nearly everyone likes—puppies, kittens, bunny rabbits. But some animals we deem ugly or strange. What do we think about warthogs, bugs, star-nosed moles, or spiders? Well, today I will explain how one of these less favored animals—a tiny spider—saved my life.

I remember reading about spiders in John Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress* many years ago. At one point in Christiana's journey, the Interpreter was teaching the pilgrims lessons they would have to remember in order to succeed in their journey. The Interpreter took the pilgrims to an empty room. There seemed to be nothing in it, until suddenly one of the women in the company saw the ugly spiders covering the walls. Then, she began to cry because she understood the lesson. Those ugly spiders on the walls of the empty room represented them without God's love in them.

Spiders are an excellent example for true followers of Christ. The spider has an instinct to build a house for itself: a web made of one of the most amazing and resistant materials ever studied by scientists. Not only that—it also has many options to adhere to. It likes high places and takes every opportunity it has to build indoors.

**Destroy a web . . .
and the spider will
always rebuild.
When others push
us down, let's be
like spiders and
start again.**

A few years ago I experienced an unhappy season in my life. I was accused of allowing a patient to die in a hospital where I was working, but I had never seen him in my life. I was eventually found innocent, but the wrongful accusation still left me shaken. Then, a director of a company promised me a job because I had saved his life in the hospital, but he never fulfilled his word. At a time in my life when all I wanted was to be respected, and to love and be loved, I was taking plenty of hits. I became depressed. I would cry out to God and ask Him where He was. Like the psalmist, I wondered where God is when the evil prosper, and why when I do the best I can, I am judged like this? One day when I was crying and praying, I opened my eyes, and I saw a very little spider descending in front of my nose over the desk where I was. In that moment I remembered what I learned from those little critters, and I made a resolution: no matter how many times people push me down and try to destroy me without reason, I will build a better

web, a better dream and find a higher place.

We are like spiders. We have dreams, and we don't like to settle for just any corner; we like to go high and be loved by others and have our work appreciated. When we see any opportunity for a better life, we prefer to take it, like the spider in the palace of the king. Yet, we think spiders are ugly, and we kill them or destroy their homes. If its web is destroyed, however, what does the spider do? It weaves another one—and now this web is even better because it has more experience. Destroy a web as many times as you want, and the spider will always rebuild. When others push us down, let's be like spiders and start again.

WHAT CAN THE SPIDER TEACH US ABOUT RELATING TO PEOPLE THAT ARE NOT SO EASY TO RELATE TO?

Despite not being the cuddliest creatures, spiders have a lot to teach us about perseverance. Let us consider humans for a moment.



How do we see other people? Some are nice, and we usually treat them very well, but how do we treat those who are not the cuddliest individuals, either?

Most of the time, we think those who believe and agree with us are beautiful. We judge what we see on the outside—on what people present to us in their appearance and actions. Yet the Bible says that Satan comes in beautiful garments of light with a stunning and peaceful outward appearance, so, we would be tremendously deceived if we are in the habit of judging people solely based on what we see on the outside.

So how do we know if a person is good or bad? What standard should we take to measure even ourselves? After all, the Bible says that even those who believed they were serving God with all their heart were going to be rejected (Matthew 7:21-23). As humans we look at the exterior, but God looks at the heart. Self-examination is necessary before we examine anyone else, but with what standard?

Let's look to Jesus. The Bible says that, outwardly, there was nothing that would attract attention to Him. Isaiah 53:2-4 says: "He hath no form nor comeliness; and when we shall see him, there is no beauty that we should desire him. He is despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief: and we hid as it were our faces from him;

he was despised, and we esteemed him not. Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows: yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted.”

Looking back to what the Gospels recorded, it's easy to say Jesus was good, but if Jesus came today like He did 2,000 years ago, what would we see? With whom do you think He would spend time?

When Jesus arrived on Earth, He did not spend time with the High Priest. The Priest was a powerful man in white garments, with the ephod over his chest—an imposing presence to all in the synagogue and tabernacle. People feared him. He was a holy person, and everyone kept his or her distance.

Jesus, on the other hand, was unassuming. He wore simple, and often dusty, clothes. Yes, “Love” was dusty. People did not fear approaching Him, even little children. Jesus was the greatest model of rebellion against hypocrisy and lies. He didn't speak an ill word against the “immoral” Romans. His words of reproach were directed to the religious leaders of His time, instead.

Yet, somehow today if we see a man wearing a suit going to



church, we say that he is a good person. On the other hand, if we see someone who is different from us, we tend to keep our distance. Often that is wise for safety, of course. But we should realize that sometimes there are “unattractive” people in need of the very help we can give. Jesus was merciful to all kinds of people, and by His grace and love He transformed them.

Let us take some of His love, and spread it to others. Let us examine our own life first and see how it compares to Jesus’—and then in a humble spirit, let us spread His love and grace to our brethren, sisters, and friends around us. 🌸

Stranded in the Middle of a Burning Oil Field

BY ADINA PAUL

“When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee: when thou walkest through the fire, thou shalt not be burned; neither shall the flame kindle upon thee” (Isaiah 43:2).

The promise is given to each one if we obey: The Lord will be with us if we pass through the waters; He will guide us. The waters will not drown us; and if we pass through fire, it will not burn us.

Do you remember the three young men that walked in the midst of the fiery furnace because

they would not heed the king's command to worship an idol? Were they saved? Yes, they were. My grandfather had a similar experience to that of Daniel's three friends, but the difference is that he was not thrown in the fire by the king.

Many, many years ago my grandfather was working in Bucharest (Romania) in an oil field. There were many workers there. One night, my grandfather had a strange dream. He could not understand the meaning of it. In his dream, a man came to him and took him by the hand.

They walked together about 60 miles and then the man left him. The dream ended as he woke up, so he did not think much about it, and just got dressed to go to work. But at work that day an explosion occurred and the whole oil field was set on fire. My grandfather could see the people burning alive and there was no help. Out of 150 workers, only my grandfather and a man standing next to him were saved.

When the field ignited, a small wind started circling my grandfather and the man, and it would not let the fire get near them. The place where they were standing was about 60 feet away from a forest. As they walked through the fire toward the forest, the fire opened up like two wings. Just as the Red Sea opened before the children of Israel on the left and right, the fire now stood aside until they entered the forest. Then it closed back.

A trial was held. My grandfather and the man were called to testify of how and what had happened. The judge asked, "From all the people that were in the field, how come only you two escaped from the fire? I don't understand." The man who was with my grandfather said to the judge, "Your honor, the only thing I can say is that the God of this man was the one who saved us." This person was a worldly man who did not believe in God, but when this thing happened, he knew that only the Lord could have brought them out of that burning oil field.

Whenever my grandfather used to tell us the story, he had tears in his eyes. He always said, "The Lord keeps His promises all the time. He saved my life from sure death."

I am sure that when we get to heaven, the Lord will tell us about how we all have been saved from many different perils and may not have even realized it. 🕯



The following experience comes from a minister in Romania, Brother Ion Anton. You can find this and other interesting stories in the book, *The History of the Seventh Day Adventist Reform Movement* by A. Balbach.

One day, in 1987, Brother Anton picked up the phone and dialed.

When the party answered, he spoke briefly: "Bread will be delivered with Psalm 14:4"; and he hung up. Believers at some distance had not been visited for a long time, and they had not been able to partake of the Lord's Supper. As a minister, Brother Anton was responsible for the spiritual well-being of all the members of our church, which at that time was operating underground because of the terrible oppression of all true Christians in the country. The group that he called had been on his mind, for he had intended to visit them previously, but every time he had begun to lay plans to visit them, something stopped him from doing so. Now, he knew, it could not be delayed any longer.

The believers lived on the other side of the Danube River, which would have to be crossed by ferry. Preparations were made and, on the day indicated by the scripture reference, Brother Anton and his family prepared the family car for the trip.

All was well as they left home, but, when about half way, there was a loud bang and the car skidded to one side. Controlling the vehicle carefully, they stopped and examined the tires. One had blown out; but, more than that, it had almost disintegrated. It was completely irreparable.

Now what to do? They were far from home and knew no one in the locality. They tried to purchase another tire, but that appeared to be an impossibility. They tried here and there, and the day was passing without a solution. No one could help them, no one had a spare tire of the correct size, nor could anyone tell them where they might be able to find someone willing to sell a spare tire if one could be found. At last, in the afternoon, they found another car owner who would sell the spare tire from his own vehicle.

They returned to the car and mounted the new tire, but now it was too late to continue their journey. The only thing left was to return home.

When they pulled up in front of their home and got out of the car, a lady standing at the front of her house saw them and ran screaming into the house. The Antons did not understand. That lady had never done such a thing before, as they knew her well, being good neighbors.

Anyhow, they entered the house and began to settle down after the long trip.

Soon there was a knock on the door. Anton went to see who it was, and there stood a policeman. “Where have you been? What was the purpose of your trip? Whom did you see? What time did you leave there?” Questions and more questions. This was not unusual in Romania at that time. But now the pathetic part of the story was revealed.

The brethren on the other side of the river, who had been waiting for them, had expected them at the time appointed for their arrival. They knew that at a certain hour the ferry that was to cross the river would bring them. But something terrible had happened. The ferry, when in the middle of the river, had suddenly capsized and all those on the ferry drowned, and it was believed that Brother Anton and his family were among the victims. The superstitious neighbor had heard of the tragedy and, on seeing them arrive home, thought it was an apparition—that the ghosts of the dead had returned to their house.

When all was over, the Antons knelt in thankfulness before the all-wise God who had preserved their lives. Now, just why did the tire of their car blow out? And why were they unable to find another one until late in the afternoon? Many things happen, not accidentally, but providentially, because the merciful hand of God is still overruling adverse circumstances in behalf of His chosen ones. 🌿

It Sometimes **pays** to **miss** the **boat**

BY A. BALBACH

MISSIONARY WORK — IN — ROMANIA

PART 3 OF 4
BY GABRIEL SERBAN

A young missionary agreed to share with our readers his journal of experiences. This is the 3rd in a series of 4 journal entries. Enjoy!

As my friend Adrian and I were visiting a community from house to house, we saw a man whom we automatically assumed was not interested. He seemed to have his own vision about life and did not appear likely to accept our message. So we decided just to give him some flyers. But then he asked us, "Do you have a Bible? I will pay for it."

That summer he had lost his house in a fire. He had built another house, a small one, and he said, "I know if I'll have a Bible on the table, my house will be blessed." And we gave him the Bible.

Next we saw a Baptist church, and I told my friend, "Let's go inside." But he expressed his

concern, "We are wasting our time. During the time we would spend there we could do a lot of work around the area."

So we agreed to join in on their church meeting with one condition: If they would ask us to speak, we would remain. But if not, we would leave. We went inside, and after we found a place, the elder came to welcome us, asking if we had a song or a word for the church, and we both responded, "A word." So my partner was able to preach for 30-40 minutes. Afterwards the people wanted to listen to me too; so I spoke for 30-40 more minutes, and the church wasn't tired. We were so happy for this wonderful opportunity to share the gospel!

FACING SOME SHRIEKS

In a morning when we were preparing our literature in the center of a small town, a woman came and asked us: “Are you the people that are sharing all kinds of books here in this area about God and salvation?” We were happy for her question, because we thought she was interested and was thirsty for the truth; so we gladly said, “Yes, we are.”

Then we saw her face changing as she started screaming louder and louder, “Why are you wasting money buying paper and books instead of helping the children or doing something better with them? People do not need all the lies you have here; you are wasting your time. Both of my sons are priests. They studied theology, and the country needs people like them!”

We patiently answered, “We studied theology, too.”

“Yes, but you changed the Bible, and you wasted time going to a school like this!” She continued to scream.

During this time, a lot of people came around to see what was happening. After she saw that we were not angry with her, she left. And now we were scared because of those other people. What were we going to do with them? She had left, but would we be able to leave safely from there? Then we started



to share the books with them, and we started preaching. All of them were amazed. And when we wanted to leave, I heard one of the people there talking to somebody else. He commented, “That woman thinks that because her sons are priests, that she is saved, but things are not like she thinks.”

THE IMPOSSIBLE MISSION

In January we started a new project in the southeast part of our field (Galati). When my uncle told me about his plan to start working in this new area, I wondered how we would begin. We have no brethren there, we have no church, we have no foundation. There actually are two families in the area, but one of them is usually gone because the husband is a minister and he has to travel all the time—and for the Sabbaths he takes his family with him. And the other family is just a couple without children and they are around 60 years old—not close to my age.

I started asking where I would stay there and what I would eat,

because in the country you have your own garden, and you can take everything you want. But there in town there is no garden, and no brethren to help you. Another problem was where we would get the money to buy all the books we would need.

Then my uncle told me about a woman in that town who is not a member of our church. Apparently, when she heard what we were trying to do there, she offered to us one of her apartments to go and live there for three months. We were so happy and thankful to God because this place was in the middle of the town—a center from which the light could shine to the whole town. Then the woman said that after three months we could stay there three more months. Then after those three more months we could have the apartment as long as we were working there. So God answered the first request.

Now, where were we going to get food? After we got the place to stay, the brethren from the Field sent us a lot of food; we weren't able to eat as much as they had sent.

Then, in a very short time, we had donations of about U.S. \$4,000 just to buy books. In Romania \$4,000 is a lot! Now we had everything we needed, so we started to work.

THE GOSPEL IN THE GYM

In town, it is more difficult to knock on doors because

everybody is tired, busy or stressed. We scheduled a cooking class too, and started to call the people to the Gospel. Because I had no friends there that were my age, I asked God to give me a friend there. Then after only one day, the pastor's son came with a friend of his. He introduced to me his friend and then he started to ask me where I was from and what I was doing there. I explained that I was a missionary and I was looking to make some friends there.

"Good," he said. "If you want some friends, come with me to the gym."

Actually, I am not used to going to gyms to spend time there—but because I wanted a new friend I decided to go. I paid the monthly entrance fee and met his friends there. So they asked me, "What kind of work are you doing here?"

"I am a missionary," I said.

"Oh, are you a priest?" Then they started to make jokes because of me, telling everybody, "Look there, the priest is coming to the gym, the priest is coming to the gym."

I was very upset about these new friends, but because I had paid a lot of money for that entrance fee, I continued going to the gym, but I was doing my exercises, and not talking to anybody.

Then one day, a young man came to me and said, "Gabby, listen, I have always wondered whether or not the Bible is true. I

read some things from there and it looks like it contradicts itself. So I am asking you about this, thinking that you know something more and you can explain it to me.”

“Well,” I said, “What do you think is not true?”

He gave me some examples.

So that day I

stopped doing my exercises and I started to preach in the gym. We started to talk deeper and deeper, and when we got to talking about Christ’s second coming, his friends began listening to me, too. Then I told them about *The Great Controversy*. And for the next day I had to come with my bag full of *The Great Controversy* books to give them. That friend that had made a lot of jokes at me became a good friend, and a student of heavenly things.

GOOD NEWS IN GALATI

At the cooking classes in Galati we had a lot of experiences, but I want to share with you about a man that enjoyed our meetings. He used to be an engineer and then, when he retired, he had a lot of money and started to drink. After he attended our meetings, within a very short time he quit the alcohol, replaced the coffee with water, and he quit eating



meat. All these things in only a few weeks! Then he started to come and worship with us; because we have no church there we were gathering in an apartment—so he asked us to go and worship in his apartment. His wife was not so interested in the truth, but because her husband was not drinking any longer she was happy every time she would see us. She used to teach at a school, and she told us she would go to the school director to ask him to give us a room to worship there on the Sabbaths because there was more space. Meanwhile this man is always praying for himself and for his wife, too, to decide to follow him, and to get baptized together.

All these experiences have kept me in the church, because when you’re out doing missionary work, you realize you have no friends. You cannot trust anybody on this earth, only Jesus. 🍎

Bible ABC's

T

Where Jonah tried to flee,
but failed (Jonah 1:1-3).

The father of one of Christ's
disciples (Matthew 10:3).

Some New Testament books
are addressed to this person
(Luke 1:3; Acts 1:1).

The city where Lydia
lived (Acts 16:14).

Paul's letter to Philemon
mentions this man's
name also (Philemon 1:1).

Elijah was also known by this
other name (1 Kings 17:1; 21:17, 28).

This man's arrival brought
comfort to Paul
(2 Corinthians 7:6).

A troublemaker against
Nehemiah's work of restoration
(Nehemiah 4:7, 8).

An expert craftsman in brass
and iron (Genesis 4:22).

The birthplace of the apostle
Paul (Acts 22:3).

The following quiz will test your knowledge of certain Bible names and places which begin with the letters T, U, and V. Some answers are easy, others are more challenging. After you go through them all, pick out the ones you could not answer. Look up the verse prayerfully and read the entire context, asking God to give you greater spiritual understanding from what you find.

Try to discover more about that subject and about God's love shining through it by using a Bible concordance or the Spirit of Prophecy index. It may take a bit more time, but this is what turns what might have seemed as only trivia into richer spiritual treasure. Enjoy!

U, V

Abraham's hometown
(Genesis 11:31).

A region where fine gold was
found (Jeremiah 10:9; Daniel 10:5).

The man whom David grievously
wronged (2 Samuel 12:9, 10;
1 Kings 15:4, 5).

The homeland of Job (Job 1:1).

A key part of the high priest's
apparel (Exodus 28:30).

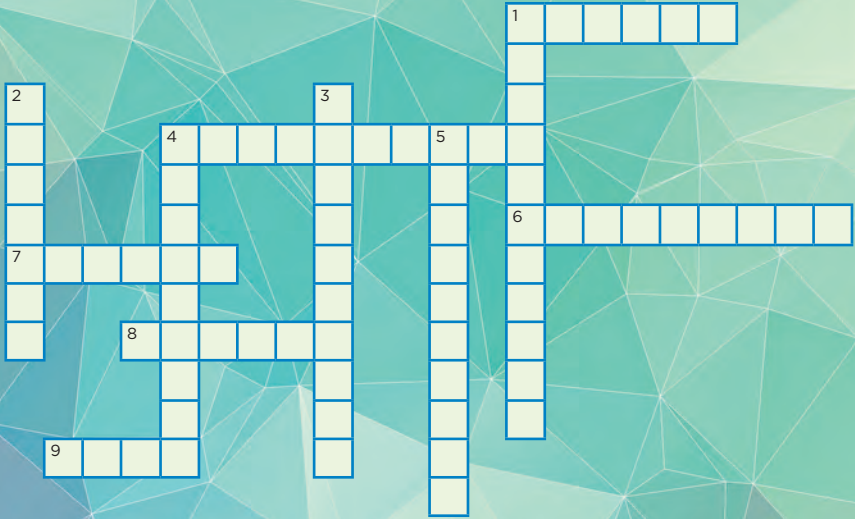
Priest who made a heathen altar
for king Ahaz (2 Kings 16:10-16;
2 Chronicles 28:22, 23).

One smitten by presumption (2
Samuel 6:3-7).

The firstborn son of
Samuel (1 Chronicles 6:28).

Daniel was taken off in vision
on the banks of this river
(Daniel 8:2).

A queen unwilling to put herself
on display before intemperate
men (Esther 1:10-12).



ACROSS

1. A young man in the gym in _____ was seeking after truth.
4. _____ occurs when rays of light hit a smooth surface and bounce off.
6. _____ young people should be avoided.
7. A _____ can teach us much about rebuilding after disaster and disappointment.
8. Instead of actually seeing light, we see the _____ of light.
9. The Antons missed the boat because of their _____.

DOWN

1. The one who told of being delivered from the burning oil field was the author's _____.
2. In the missionary experience from Romania, one lady had religious pride because her sons were _____.
3. _____ occurs when light passes through one transparent medium to another, causing a change in its speed.
4. _____ is greatly needed among the youth of today.
5. If churches are revived, it is because some _____ is earnestly seeking God.

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Cherishing the Rays

It's interesting to notice the difference: The unbelieving atheist vs. the soul who believes in Jesus Christ as the Hope and Saviour of all who come to Him.

From my early years, I remember the sight of sunbeams trying to peek their way through a gray, overcast sky and pessimistically thinking, "Look at those ugly clouds blocking our view of the sun."

But after inviting Jesus into my heart, the same scene would evoke a totally different response:

"Amazing! Isn't it beautiful to see how God sends those few glorious rays of sunshine to manage to pierce their way through the clouds and bring us hope in the midst of darkness and gloom!"

It all depends on your perspective—and Christ changes the perspective of all who come to Him in sincerity.


Indeed, as the Creator declares, "There is no God else beside me; a just God and a Saviour; there is none beside me. Look unto me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth: for I am God, and there is none else" (Isaiah 45:21, 22).

So when things are looking bleak, remember the words of the prophet, "When I fall, I shall arise; when I sit in darkness, the Lord shall be a light unto me" (Micah 7:8).

God has a great plan to enlighten the pathway of every youth. The messenger of the Lord writes:

"I wish every young man and woman could appreciate the value of the human soul. If they would give themselves to Jesus just as they are, though sinful and polluted, He will accept them the very moment that they give themselves to Him, and Jesus will put His Spirit in the humble seeker's heart. Whosoever cometh unto Him, He will in no wise cast out. You may love Jesus with your whole heart, and He will never disappoint that love and confidence."—*Our High Calling*, p. 98.

"Live up to every ray of light that you have received. Your eternal interests are involved here, and that is why I say, 'Cherish every ray of light.' On your knees ask Christ to impress your heart by His Holy Spirit, and turn not away from His law."—*Evangelism*, p. 243.

The *Youth Messenger* magazine is designed to speak to your spiritual needs and realistically nurture your faith. The messages it contains are to be as sunbeams of hope and cheer to brighten your pathway heavenward. So, cherish the rays! 

When He COMETH

BY BELLE ROSE BALLARD

Can it be those eyes, so often
Filled with sad repentant tears,
Shall behold Him in His glory,
When the Judge of earth appears?
Shall they view the wondrous brightness
Shining from that heavenly face?
Shall they see the old earth wither,
Having no more time or place?

Every eye shall see Him coming;
Every ear shall hear the sound
Of the awful trumpet thunder;
Earth and heaven shall both resound!
Dread and solemn will the thunder
Of that last loud trumpet be!
Fierce the lightning of His anger!
Where, O Christ, can sinners flee?

Rocks and mountains, shelter! Shelter!
Hide transgressors in that hour!
Rocks and hills are unavailing
In the presence of His power.
Oh, I long for Thy whole armor,
Helmet, shining sword, and shield,
And the faith which never wavers
On the fiercest battlefield.

Mighty hosts of doubt and darkness
Ever meet me on my way.
Oh, for light among the shadows!
Oh, to dwell in perfect day!
All too soon may come the summons;
Mortal, time for thee must cease!
Oh, to feel that to my spirit
That last summons shall bring peace!