

YOUTH messenger

Vol. XXXVI, No. 4

2

Jesus Christ: the Sinner's Advocate

5

The Foundation of Character

8

The Handwriting on the Wall

11

**VICTORY IN THE BATTLE
WITH TEMPTATION**

17

The NCC Music Camp 2017

20

Doors

23

**Experiences from the
Denver Project 2017**

27

Hallowed Be Thy Name

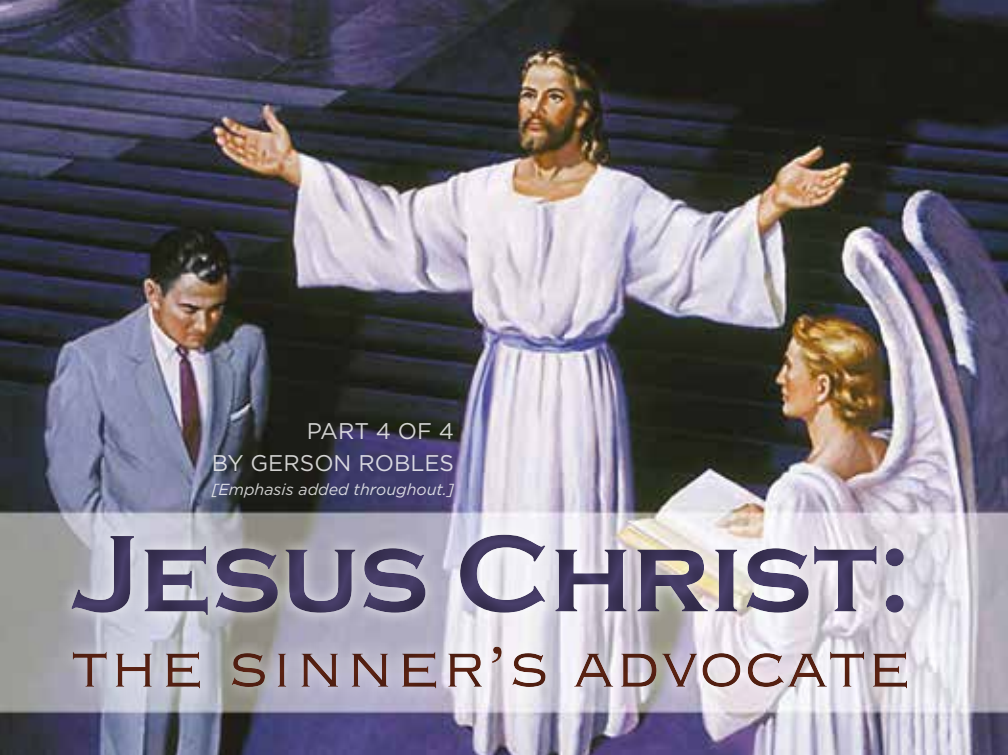
31

How Are YOUTH to Think?

32

The Ocean Rock





PART 4 OF 4
BY GERSON ROBLES
[Emphasis added throughout.]

JESUS CHRIST: THE SINNER'S ADVOCATE

“For every high priest **taken from among men** is ordained for men in things pertaining to God, that he may offer both gifts and sacrifices for sins: **who can have compassion on the ignorant, and on them that are out of the way**; for that he himself also is **compassed with infirmity**. And by reason hereof he ought, as for the people, so also for himself, to offer for sins” (Hebrews 5:1–3).

Here we must be cautious, though. The above verses tell us that the reason priests were selected from “among men” was so that they could have compassion on others because they themselves were “compassed with infirmity.” Before we conclude that Christ must have inherited the same infirmities when He became

human, read verse 3 again, “And by reason hereof [or for this reason] he ought, as for the people, so also for himself, to offer for sins.” But we know that Christ needed not to offer sacrifice for Himself—for His infirmities were not the same as ours. Crucially, they were “like” ours. Ellen White described it like this,

“[Christ] was a mighty petitioner, not possessing the passions of our human, fallen natures, but compassed with **like** infirmities, tempted in all points even as we are.”—*The Review and Herald*, May 19, 1885.

The Scriptures expound this further. We read that “the law maketh men high priests which have infirmity; **but the word of the oath, which was since**

the law, maketh the Son, who is consecrated (perfected) for evermore” (Hebrews 7:28).

So we see that perfection was necessary for Christ’s sacrifice, as well as for His office of High Priest. This does not mean that He commenced life on earth as imperfect and then became perfect—but rather that His humanity, from childhood to the cross, underwent a trial of obedience. The Bible says that He learned obedience “by the things which he suffered” (Hebrews 5:8). Once His life was tested, He was found to be perfect. How do we know?

“Jesus, when he had cried again with a loud voice, yielded up the ghost. **And, behold, the veil of the temple was rent in twain from the top to the bottom**” (Matthew 27:51).

This testified already, that God accepted the perfected and spotless life of His Son upon the cross in the place of all sinners.

RESISTING UNTO BLOOD

Now, let’s look at this thought of how Christ was perfected a little further. We read that “we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honour; that he by the grace of God should taste death for every man. For it became him, for whom are all things, and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the captain of their salvation **perfect through sufferings**” (Hebrews 2:9, 10).

What sufferings are these through which Jesus was perfected? We know that He was “a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief” (Isaiah 53:3). But what did Christ’s sufferings have to do with how He was perfected? Notice carefully the following verse, “For in that he himself hath **suffered (painful experience) being tempted**, he is able to succour them that are tempted” (Hebrews 2:18).

No one has ever suffered as Jesus did under temptation. In rebellion against Christ, the natural mind delights in temptations. We naturally enjoy being enticed to sin. We might revel in the lust of our carnal cravings. But of Christ it is said, “**Thou hast loved righteousness, and hated iniquity**; therefore God, even thy God, hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness above thy fellows” (Hebrews 1:9).

“For such an high priest **became us, who is holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners**” (Hebrews 7:26).

Nobody ever suffered under temptation as Jesus did because nobody ever hated sin and the enticement to sin us much as He did, and also because no one ever resisted temptations to the degree that He did.

“For consider him that **endured such contradiction of sinners against himself**, lest ye be wearied and faint in your minds. **Ye have not yet resisted unto blood, striving against sin**” (Hebrews 12:3, 4).

He resisted unto blood. He was perfected because from the moment He entered the world, Satan was His shadow, trying to get Him to sin. The temptations became stronger and stronger, and greater, and more violent. Yet He learned obedience by the things that He suffered. In Gethsemane, the cup of suffering trembled in His hands, but He still resisted, He yet obeyed. Still, the temptations became stronger, He resisted, and with every resistance, the strength of temptation increased, until at the cross, when Satan put forth his most powerful temptations, and summoned all the power of darkness against Christ—He resisted still. He resisted unto blood striving against sin! As He hung upon the cross, what seemed to be His greatest defeat was His greatest victory. The greater the temptation, the more perfect the sacrifice. He died in resistance—but conquered sin in the process.

THE MOST TRYING HOUR

But with what was Christ actually tempted at His most trying hour and indeed throughout His life on earth? Satan knew Christ's human weakness; notice how Satan spoke through evil human beings at the Lord's weakest hour, as He hung upon the cross:

“And the people stood beholding. And the rulers also with them **derided him, saying, He saved others; let him save himself, if he be Christ, the chosen of God**” (Luke 23:35).

Indeed, this was the hour for evil men to work. This was the hour of “the power of darkness” (Luke 22:53). The reason this temptation was so strong for Christ was because He was familiar with absolute power.

“Christ was put to the closest test, requiring the strength of all His faculties to resist the inclination, when in danger, to use His power to deliver Himself from peril and triumph over the power of the prince of darkness.”—

Confrontation, p. 85.

So it was by His sufferings that Christ was made able to help us in our temptations. He knows the strength of temptation—more so than we will ever be called upon to bear.

“For in that he himself hath **suffered being tempted**, he is able to succour them that are tempted.”

This is what qualifies Christ Jesus to be our Advocate—He is more than qualified to have mercy and be a faithful High Priest.

“Seeing then that we have a great high priest, that is passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our profession. **For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin. Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need**” (Hebrews 4:14-16). 🌟

BY ELLEN G. WHITE

the Foundation of CHARACTER

Never did greater responsibilities await the youth than await them now. Never was it more important that a right mold be given to the character of the rising generation. Upon every youth, God has bestowed varied capabilities, mental, moral, and physical; and He requires that those be cultivated and improved. We are formed for activity; every power of mind and body must be developed, strengthened, and increased by use. No one should feel that he is his own master, and can do as he pleases with his time and his intellect. Time and talents belong to God, and He has entrusted them to us, to be employed for His glory.

Christ has purchased us with an infinite price. All that we are, and all that we

possess, is His. His mercy and tenderness have been exercised toward us throughout our life, and He justly claims our gratitude, our reverence, and love. He claims our obedience also. We should respect His laws in every particular. They are given, not to deprive us of any good but to guide our feet into safe paths—the paths of peace and happiness.

Furthermore, our love and obedience are due to God as our Creator. He who has bestowed upon us every blessing which we enjoy, He who has formed us, who understands our needs, and who rejoices in the happiness of the creatures He has made—He is entitled to our implicit faith and ready obedience. To obey

God is to accept the guidance of infinite love and wisdom. It is to pursue a course which will ennoble the character and strengthen the intellect, and which alone will prepare us for a life of true enjoyment and real usefulness. "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom" (Psalm 111:10).

We are not placed in this world merely to seek the enjoyment of the present life; but, by forming a true and noble character, we are to prepare for the future, immortal life. Dear youth, you have a work to do which no other can do for you. Be determined that you will possess a right character. You cannot receive this as a birthright, you cannot buy it with money, you cannot procure it by fraud; but you may have it, if you will seek it in the right way. A noble character must be formed, must be built up by your own patient, painstaking effort, while you rely in faith upon the merits of Christ your Saviour.

None should look with indifference upon this important matter. We must not leave our character to be formed by circumstances. The farmer who through indolence or neglect leaves his field uncultivated reaps a harvest of briars and thorns. So the youth who slothfully neglects the cultivation of mind and heart will possess a deformed, unlovely character. He will not respect himself, and he will not be happy, try hard as he may.

The youth cannot afford to float carelessly along, exposed

to the many influences that are ready to draw them away from the truth, from religion, from peace, and happiness, receiving any impression that Satan may choose to make upon the mind. There are stern battles to fight against hereditary and cultivated faults of character and disposition. Satan watches every opportunity to divert the mind from thoughts of God. He seeks to prevent us from searching the heart, from studying the law of God and comparing our life and character with its perfect standard. We must guard against his wiles. We should ever remember that life is short, and if we would attain to that perfection of character which Christ requires of us, every hour of our probation must be wisely improved as a treasure more precious than gold.

The formation of a good character involves hard work and severe self-denial; but it richly repays the effort. It is a resistance of the devil. It is the obtaining of daily victory over selfishness, pride, and folly, and the daily cultivation of love, mercy, and beneficence.

Satan is constantly seeking to strengthen the evil traits of character, that your influence may be exerted to lead others to a wrong course. Resolve in the strength of God to defeat his purpose. Set your mark high, and conquer self at any cost. Persevering, well-directed labor will succeed.

While excellence of character can never be attained except by your own exertion, do not forget that at every step you need and may obtain help and grace from Christ. He Himself passed through all the experience of childhood and youth, and He knows how to sympathize with the young. He will never forsake a soul that trusts in Him. He will listen to the prayer of the contrite and will be a present help in every time of need. Do not, then, become discouraged in your efforts. Labor more earnestly for a symmetrical character than for silver or gold. You will meet with disappointments and discouragements. Your efforts may not be appreciated, your failures may call forth severe censure. But do not yield to discouragement. The Saviour pities your weakness, He reads the desire of your heart, and He marks every sincere effort to do the right.

Then be of good courage. Look in faith to Jesus. Be much in prayer. While you are engaged in your work, at home, or at school, or even while walking in the street, let the heart's silent petitions

ascend to God. Have also regular times for prayer, and let them not be neglected. In this course you may be successful in overcoming the evils of your nature; you may enjoy peace, hope, and joy in Christ, and by words and example you may exert an influence to encourage others in the right way.

Do not fear to stand firm for the right under any and all circumstances. Do not think it uncourteous to meet with a decided "No," those who would suggest evil thoughts, or would urge you to any act which God would not approve.

When "sinners entice thee, consent thou not" (Proverbs 1:10). Do they sneeringly call you a coward, tell them that if it is cowardly to fear to do wrong, then you are a coward. The bravery that is evinced in sacrificing principle, for fear of ridicule, is a low, Satanic spirit that you should ever hold in contempt. —*The Signs of the Times*, August 23, 1883. 🕒

Dare to be a Daniel,
Dare to stand alone!
Dare to have a purpose firm!
Dare to make it known!

THE HANDWRITING

PART 2 OF 2
BY STEPHEN N. HASKELL

ON THE

In dealing with men God always uses a language which appeals forcibly to their understanding. This is illustrated in the handwriting on the wall. It is a common belief among idolaters that the gods weigh deeds in balances, and that if the good deeds outweigh the evil, the individual enters into his reward; if the opposite result is obtained, punishment follows. The language, therefore, was familiar to King Belshazzar. "God hath numbered thy kingdom; . . . thou art weighed in the balances, and art found wanting" (Daniel 5:26, 27). To the magicians who stood within hearing, as Daniel gave the interpretation, the words came with peculiar force because of their familiarity with religious customs.

To the one who knows God, the attitude of the Lord toward the sinner is very different, and still the symbol of the weights and balances is applicable. That this subject might be understood, God had sent an explanation by the prophet Ezekiel. When a man sins and dies without repentance, he is cut off from God, because his iniquities separate between him and God, and he cannot be saved. If he loves Christ and accepts Him and His righteousness, Christ's

character is written opposite the name of that man in the books of heaven, and so long as a love of the truth is cherished, the man hides in Christ and is known by the character of Christ. God deals with men in the present. We may have been the worst of sinners, but if today we are hidden in Christ, heaven takes into account only our present position.

So it was that God dealt with the nations, and this answers the question why Nebuchadnezzar might one day be in favor with God and the next day be in condemnation; why Zedekiah's course of action was condemned once, and then again he was told that it lay in his power to save Jerusalem.

God gave the Babylonian monarchs, and through them the entire kingdom, an abundance of time to accept Him. He waited long. The Holy Watcher hovered long near the center of earthly governments; every blessing which Heaven could bestow was given to woo the kingdom to the side of right. But at last the slender cord which connected earth with heaven snapped; there was no channel for the flow of the Holy Spirit; death and death only could

RITING E WALL

result. That there might be no misunderstanding, the last word read, "Thy kingdom is divided, and given to the Medes and Persians."

Scarcely had the scarlet robe been placed on Daniel and the golden chain hung about his neck, when the shouts of the invading army rang through the palace.

In the midst of their feasting and rioting, none had noticed that the waters in the Euphrates were steadily diminishing. The besieging army of Cyrus, which had long been held at bay by the massive walls, was eagerly watching the river. The river had been turned from its course, and as soon as the water had sufficiently subsided to allow the men a passage in the bed of the river, they entered from opposite sides of the city. In their reckless feeling of security, the Babylonians had left open the gates in the walls which lined the riverbanks inside the city. So the Persians, once in the riverbed, easily entered the city through the open gates.

Soon one post was running to "meet another, and one messenger to meet another, to show the king of Babylon that his city is taken at one end." But the news was received too late to save the king.

God had numbered and finished his kingdom. The enemy made a mad rush for the palace. The pen of Inspiration describes the overthrow of the kingdom more vividly than any human historian. Of those guests at the banquet of Belshazzar it is said, "I will make them drunken, that they may rejoice, and sleep a perpetual sleep, and not awake. . . . I will bring them down like lambs to the slaughter" (Jeremiah 51:39, 40). Then as if the eye of the prophet failed to separate Satan from the kingdom which he had so long controlled, he exclaims, "How is Sheshach taken! and how is the praise of the whole earth surprised! How is Babylon become an astonishment among the nations!" (Verse 41). Fire raged through the streets, and as the people realized that destruction was upon them, a cry reached heaven. It was a hand-to-hand fight with fire and sword until men grew weary and gave up the struggle.

"In that night was Belshazzar . . . slain" (Daniel 5:30), and the kingdom was given to Darius,

the aged king of the Medes.

Thus came to an end one of the proudest monarchies that has ever been upon the earth. When an individual or a nation fills up the cup of iniquity, and passes the limit of God's mercy, it is quickly humbled in the dust.


The question naturally arises, Why did not the conquering army destroy Daniel, who was the third ruler in the kingdom, at this critical moment? The answer is simple and natural. When the kingdom was taken and Belshazzar slain, Nabonadius, the first ruler, at the head of an army, was surrounded by the enemy in another part of the kingdom. This left Daniel sole ruler in Babylon. He knowing that over one hundred years before, Isaiah had prophesied that Cyrus should take the kingdom, was ready to welcome him whom God had said should build the house of the Lord at Jerusalem.

There is also good reason to believe that Daniel and Cyrus were not strangers. When excluded from the council of Belshazzar, Daniel had spent a portion of his time at Shushan, the capital of Elam. Elam had revolted from Babylon, in fulfillment of the prophecy of Jeremiah.

Daniel may have formed an acquaintance with Cyrus, and showed to him, as the high priest did to Alexander on a certain occasion, the prophecy that pertained to himself, and also revealed to him the way God had said he should enter Babylon. It is

evident from the wording of the decree given in the first chapter of Ezra, that Cyrus was familiar with these prophecies.

God gives continual opportunities for his people to prepare the way for blessings to come to them, when they are walking in the light. God is never taken by surprise, but His Word is a lamp to the feet and a guide to the life. This illustrates the importance of God's people's "knowing the time" in which they live from the light of prophecy. There is a Witness in every scene of sacrilegious mirth, and the recording angel writes, "Thou art weighed in the balances, and art found wanting." This same Witness is with us wherever we are. Although we may feel that we have liberty to follow the promptings of the natural heart, and indulge in lightness and trifling, yet an account must be rendered for these things. As we sow, so shall we reap.

Nations today are repeating the history of the last years of the kingdom of Babylon. Medo-Persia was the instrument in the Lord's hands to punish Babylon. The next great overthrow of governments will usher in the kingdom of our Lord. For the final battle, nations are now mustering their forces. The cry has gone forth, "Flee out of the midst of Babylon, and deliver every man his soul; be not cut off in her iniquity; for this is the time of the Lord's vengeance" (Jeremiah 51:6). —*The Story of Daniel the Prophet*, pp. 73-76. 

Victory IN THE BATTLE WITH TEMPTATION

BY CALEB MORENO

[Emphasis added throughout.]

“To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in his throne” (Revelation 3:21).

Prior to this verse, there are many other promises given to the overcomer. (See Revelation 2:7, 11, 17, 26; 3:5, 12.) In all these verses God lists many things that will be given to an overcomer—but what is it that we need to overcome?

There’s something called temptation, . . . and we all struggle with it. In Revelation 3:21 we are told that Christ overcame temptation in His human form and He was victorious—which means we can be also!

Our life as Christians is a constant battle with temptation, and we must be victorious over this if we are to enter the kingdom of heaven. You cannot enter heaven if you have a heart full of sin—this is why you have to overcome that urge, desire,

impulse, or inclination to sin. It’s not going to be easy, that’s for sure! “For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places” (Ephesians 6:12).

Against whom are we wrestling? Not against flesh and blood, that is, our fellow human



beings. When you're fighting a war, against whom are you fighting? Humans—your own flesh and blood. But this war is much greater. We're fighting against principalities, powers, rulers of darkness, spiritual wickedness in high/heavenly places. Satan and his army of fallen angels—that's who we're fighting against on a daily basis! This war will not end until Christ's second coming! The question is—**are we going to be the overcomer or the one that is overcome?**

ENDURING TEMPTATION

Until Christ's second coming we have to face temptation. . . . But a promise is given to those who stand that temptation successfully. "Blessed is the man that endureth [*resists*] temptation: for when he is tried, he shall receive the crown of life, which the Lord hath promised to them that love him" (James 1:12).

Do you want to be a blessed man or woman? Then resist temptation! It's easy to say, but a lot harder to do! We need to face reality—we need to overcome temptation if we are to enter heaven. No sinful heart will enter! The only other place we'll be going if we don't overcome temptation—**is Hell!** No tree of life, no external life, no second chance—It's now or never! If we endure

temptation (not falling into it), we will receive a crown of life—which is eternal life—that the Lord has promised to us! How many of us want that?

WHO TRIGGERS TEMPTATION?

"Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God: for God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth he any man" (Verse 13). The word "of" here indicates the origin of something. Temptations to sin do not originate with God. Temptation originated in heaven—yes! But not with God. . . . It originated with Lucifer, known today as Satan or the devil. In Matthew 4:3, the Bible calls Satan the tempter. It's very important that we understand this. . . . God cannot be tempted, neither does He tempt anyone, for it goes completely contrary to everything God is!

The only person tempting you and me today is **our adversary—the devil.**

"But every man is tempted [*by Satan*], when he is drawn away of his own lust [*desires*], and enticed" (James 1:14).



THREE TYPES OF TEMPTATION

“For all that is in the world, the **lust of the flesh**, and the **lust of the eyes**, and the **pride of life**, is not of the Father, but is of the world” (1 John 2:16, emphasis added).

The lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life are the three avenues which Satan has used to tempt every person on earth, including Jesus Christ.

Lust is an intense longing. It is not necessarily a sexual desire—it could be a lust for anything. The devil is so cunning—he uses our own lustful desires or our own weaknesses, our own pet sins—the things we struggle with most—against us, to make us fall. There are things that the devil knows about you that are not temptations for me and vice versa. He figures out what he can and can’t use to trap each one of us. Once he knows our weak points, we’re in grave danger because the struggle becomes harder!

WHAT IS THE LUST OF THE FLESH?

“Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these; **adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like**: of the which I tell you before, as I have also told you in time past, that they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God” (Galatians 5:19–21).

*God will not allow
us to be tempted
beyond what we
can handle.*

I think it’s pretty safe to say that each one of us has been guilty of one of these lusts of the flesh at one time or another. These are strong words—because if these things are found in us, we will not inherit the **kingdom of God**. I believe this is clear! **A heart filled with any one of these lusts of the flesh will not be permitted to enter heaven.**

THE LUST OF THE EYES

This is simply a temptation to look at something wrong, for example coveting—which we are warned against (Exodus 20:17). Coveting is simply a strong desire to have something that is rightly not yours to have—because it belongs to someone else. A prime example is when David saw Bathsheba, as recorded in 2 Samuel 11:2.

THE PRIDE OF LIFE

The pride of life is that sinful temptation for excess greatness or power that we’ve probably all have the desire to attain at one time or another. This is one of the sins that God truly hates most! The Bible says that “pride goeth before destruction” (Proverbs 16:18).

Pride of life is what made Lucifer (that beautiful angel) turn into Satan—the tempter, the deceiver, our adversary—the one that wants to destroy us!

Every sin we commit will involve at least one of these three temptations, but it may include all three. Thankfully, we have a Saviour who understands, “for in that he himself hath suffered being tempted, he is able to succour them that are tempted.” “For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin” (Hebrews 2:18; 4:15). In Matthew 4:1–11 we read that Christ was tempted with the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, yet He did not sin. Since He was victorious, we can be, too!

HOW CAN WE OVERCOME TEMPTATION?

“There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will

with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it” (1 Corinthians 10:13).

Temptation is a common thing; there is nothing unique about it. Yet everyone has a different temptation tolerance level, and because God is a God of love and mercy, by His providence, He will not allow us to be tempted beyond what we can handle.

The best part of this verse is that God personally has made a way of escape in the time of temptation—so that we can bear it! How?

“Wherefore take unto you the **whole armour of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand.** Stand therefore, having your **loins girt about with truth**, and having on **the breastplate of righteousness**; and your **feet shod with**



the preparation of the gospel of peace; above all, taking the **shield of faith**, wherewith ye shall be able to **quench all the fiery darts of the wicked.** And take the **helmet of salvation**, and the **sword of the Spirit**, which is the **word of God**" (Ephesians 6:13-17).

What do we need in order to overcome temptation? The armor of God! Human-made armor can be penetrated or destroyed and is no guarantee of safety. But not so with God's armor! When those temptations come flying at us, they will bounce off our armor and will not even affect us! The only reason Satan gets so many people to fall into temptation is because they don't have the impenetrable armor. We need to watch and pray without ceasing (Luke 21:36; Matthew 26:41; 1 Thessalonians 5:17); our spirit is willing not to fall, but our flesh is weak. Again, watch and pray lest you fall to temptation. Our spirit is willing not to fall, but our flesh is weak!

Satan doesn't come in the ugliness that he is! He comes wrapped in a beautiful package.

THE EXAMPLE OF EVE

When Eve heard the voice of a beautiful serpent coming from the tree of knowledge of good and evil, what should have been her first inclination? She should have been out of there faster than lightning. Satan uses beautiful packages like this to tempt us today, hoping that we fall.

If we merely crawl away from temptation, it's because we are secretly hoping that it catches up with us. The idea is to run or flee, as the Bible says. And don't leave a forwarding address. "Draw nigh to God, and he will draw nigh to you. Cleanse your hands, ye sinners; and purify your hearts, ye double minded" (James 4:8).

When we have on the armor of God and are focused on Him in constant prayer, our protection is bullet-proof.

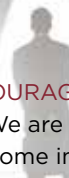
"It is not safe for us, when going into battle, to cast away our weapons. It is then that we need to be equipped with the whole armor of God. Every piece is essential."—*My Life Today*, p. 309.

If we fail to maintain this whole armor, we are casting off our weapons of mass destruction against Satan.

ARE WE SLEEPING?

"The experience of the disciples in the Garden of Gethsemane contains a lesson for the Lord's people today. . . . They did not realize the necessity of watchfulness and earnest prayer in order to withstand temptation. Many today are fast asleep, as were the disciples. They are not watching and praying lest they enter into temptation. Let us often read and give careful study to those portions of God's Word that have special reference to these last days, pointing out the dangers that will threaten God's people."—*In Heavenly Places*, p. 97.

FAITH



The second coming of our Lord and Saviour is near, and Satan knows this!

Christ had told His disciples to watch and pray lest they entered into temptation. But they didn't listen. They were too busy sleeping.

Are we sleeping? Everywhere we see the signs pointing to Christ's soon return, and Satan is now working harder than ever!

"Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour" (1 Peter 5:8). The enemy is trying to destroy our lives so that we can't go to heaven; that's all that matters to him.

BUT WHAT IF WE DO FALL INTO TEMPTATION?

There is a remedy if we yield to temptation and break God's law. "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness" (1 John 1:9).

If we fall, all we have to do is get back up, ask the Lord for forgiveness, have faith that He will forgive us, put back on the armor of God, and continue fighting the battle.

ENCOURAGEMENT

"We are not required to overcome in our own strength; by living faith we can grasp the hand of Infinite Power, and when Satan comes with his temptations, we can point to the cross of Calvary, and say, 'Christ died for me; in His name I can and will overcome. I want the Eden home that Adam lost. I must, I will, fight the battles of the Lord and become a victor and have a place in the kingdom of glory.' "—*The Signs of the Times*, August 4, 1890.

The only way we can overcome is if we have Jesus Christ as our personal Friend and overcome as He did.

There are in the Bible many promises to the overcomer beside those cited earlier. The reading of these promises makes you want to overcome temptation and make it to the kingdom of heaven. We don't have to overcome by our own strength. . . . And even if we wanted, we couldn't! But with God's help, let us keep these promises in mind, because we must be victorious over temptation if we are to enter the kingdom of heaven. 🍎



THE NCC MUSIC CAMP 2017



BY HEIDI ALONSO

The NCC (Northern California Conference) Music Camp which took place from July 5-16, 2017, on the church property of Moriah Heights, California, brought musicians from around the world. Participants came from Australia, various parts of Europe, and South and North America, all with the single purpose of glorifying God and touching people's hearts with godly, uplifting music.

A typical day at music camp would begin at 6:00 A.M. with an exercise class directed by Ebert Fountain. This class not being mandatory, attendance did fluctuate in the following days as the music camp progressed, yet there were several students that endured till the end. Following the class, morning worship took place at 7:30 during which David Zic presented a series of studies where the message of Christ Our Righteousness blended perfectly

with the topic of music. Now, one of the most notable challenges presented during these series of studies was that of Social Media and Bible Study. The challenge consisted of spending the same amount of time in social media as one spends in the study of God's word. Many young people accepted the challenge, and it was amazing to see them reading the Bible as soon as they woke up or even in their free time.

Next in the schedule came breakfast (a process of preparation which began in reality so much earlier). There was always an army of sisters in the kitchen every single morning. Some of the students of the music camp could also be seen voluntarily helping in the kitchen, taking out the garbage, and helping with the cleaning.

After breakfast, a tent—be it girls or boys—was assigned the clean-up before classes

began. Classes were divided into Advanced and Developing Orchestra, and Choir. The advanced orchestra was headed by Barbara Montrose (1st violinist) and Isaac Terceros (conductor). Kevin Whang was in charge of the developing orchestra and music theory class, assisted by Brigitte Portalanza and Marco Alonso. Vera Schiopu directed choir classes with Brigitte as the pianist. Brigitte also taught the dynamic music history classes in the afternoon that were enjoyed by old and young alike.

Each day there was a special free time allotted to the students. Interestingly enough, there was a great number of students who were not seen using this time for their own pleasure. One could see students practicing in the hallways, singing under the shade of the trees, groups gathered around the piano learning their parts, and in various rooms were also gathered other students just practicing the songs. David Zic said it was amazing to see students from the advanced orchestra taking students from the developing orchestra “under their wing and teaching them in their free time.” He also pointed out how only God could create such an environment.

In the evening after dinner, there was the general rehearsal of orchestra and choir combined, where the conductor patiently took time to work on certain areas that needed some much

needed polishing with the choir and also the orchestra. Evening worship was followed by the rehearsal, and the day was concluded.

Friday, July 14, gave place to the final official rehearsal before the concert. Wilson Barros was the bus driver that took the majority of the students. The rehearsal began as the sound engineer, Nathan Polke, adjusted the sound system. The following day, churches around the area gathered together at Folsom to worship together. Nathan Polke was also there to control the sound system along with Isaac Senior. Later in the evening, back in Moriah Heights, during worship, David Zic reported that Polke had expressed interest in the work being done, and hence he was the first contact of the music camp. It was encouraging for everyone to hear that, and also to know that the next day we would be meeting more visitors.

July 16 marked the day of the concert; all over the camp individual and group practices could be heard very early in the morning. At 2:30 the bus left for the auditorium in order to get in time to set up, rehearse, and set the sound and light systems. At 6:55 a group prayer was conducted backstage; at 7:00 the concert began, and the rest was in God's hands.

The concert ended, pictures were taken and then it was time to meet the visitors. One of the

many visitors that came said,
“Thank you for inviting me to the concert. . . . It really touched my heart. I heard God speaking to me through your music.”

The goal of the concert was met: to touch people’s hearts through “the song of our

experience,” as David Zic summed it up. It is indeed true that when words fail, God uses music to speak through us.

“Song is one of the most effective means of impressing spiritual truth upon the heart.”—

The Voice in Speech and Song, p. 443. 



“I have experienced something unique that I had not felt in decades.”

—Keven Whang (U.S.A.)

“I felt the spiritual warmth of the brethren and sisters here. . . . It was truly a great blessing.”

—Elena (kitchen cook)



“I want to thank God for this opportunity. I learned very much here, and I plan to share what I have received. . . . I sure don’t want to go back to Hungary.”

—Oliver Toth (Hungary)



“I would encourage others to come, for I could really feel the presence of God. The purpose for which I came was to know musicians from all over the world, and also to increase my spirituality as a musician.”


—William Santos (Brazil)



“This music camp was a huge blessing.”

—Daniela Balarezo (Australia)





BY JENNIFER TUDOROIU

DOORS

Oftentimes I like to make doors a representation of life because they are a symbol of opportunity, choice, and experience. People encounter those things every day, and every day constructs our life.

For a canvasser, doors have special significance. Why? Because they are direct opportunities to share truth, meet people, and gain experiences. The work is about sharing the love of Jesus to many who don't know that they are loved.

Canvassing has a special place in my heart. God drew me to have a relationship with Him during the first project I went to, located in Los Angeles, (U.S.A.).

The most recent project where I went was this year. A group of about twenty-three youth gathered in Denver, (U.S.A.). They came from various cities in the U.S.A. such as Las Vegas, Los Angeles, Sacramento, and even the nation of South Africa.

A unique part of the experience was becoming family with a group of new and old friends. We lived together in Rampart Ranch for a month—a property embraced by forest and hidden by mountain. The atmosphere that was created from being surrounded by nature is something I miss. It was breathtaking to have the vast mountains always within view, and exciting to have them remind us of our Creator’s wisdom. We became as brothers and sisters there. However, the greatest blessings we received were the experiences we got to bring home to our church families.

One of my favorites to share is about a special woman I met. Just as I was introducing myself, she said, “Come inside, it’s hot out here.” Feeling that the Lord was with me, I stepped into her home. She did not have a luxurious house as the ones I had seen before in other neighborhoods; but she offered me her time. Time is precious.

While in her home, I noticed that she owned many books. This meant that there could be an interest in what I had to offer her. I continued to explain why I was knocking on people’s doors, and she listened intently. While flipping through the cookbook, I mentioned why we focus so much on health. After catching sight of *The Desire of Ages* and *The Great Controversy*, she told me that she had been an Adventist for the past 50 years and already had those books. However,

there was interest in the cookbook and *Peace Above the Storm*, (which is *Steps to Christ* in a style that is meant to help people with depression, stress, and so forth). I was told to wait a moment until she found the checkbook.

During those minutes, I contemplated the idea of praying with her; hesitating, because the thought in my mind argued, “she’s already an Adventist. How would she react if I asked her to pray with me?” But the Holy Spirit impressed upon me the fact that **everyone** needs prayer. I realized that this was another **door**; an opportunity that I could choose to take and gain experience!

I let her know that the *Peace Above the Storm* she wanted was a *Steps to Christ*. It was a matter of honesty to ask if she was interested in paying for something she might already own. I was afraid she would decide not to get the spiritual book anymore. But the response was, “Yes, I have that one. . . . I’ll still get it. If I don’t read it, I’ll pass it along.”

Some words were exchanged before I said my “thank you.” Then I asked, “Do you mind if I pray with you, to leave a blessing with you before I go?”

She nodded in acceptance of the offer.

The Holy Spirit gave me words to speak that hopefully helped her believe in God’s love. I am grateful for that door.

Remember that all doors have someone different on the

When we
experience that
peace, it becomes
our duty to share
the Source
with others.

other side. There are enthusiastic people, reserved people, rude people, and kind people. Sadly, the majority of people behind doors are **hurt**.


I realized this when I knocked on one where a man opened it. The expression on his face revealed someone with a painful and distressed state of mind. Before I handed him my second health book, he began to object. With tears in his eyes he attempted to speak, "I'm sorry, my wife just recently died and I don't want to be reminded of her. I don't want anything. Sorry." I tried to offer him *Peace Above the Storm*, but he didn't want to listen anymore.

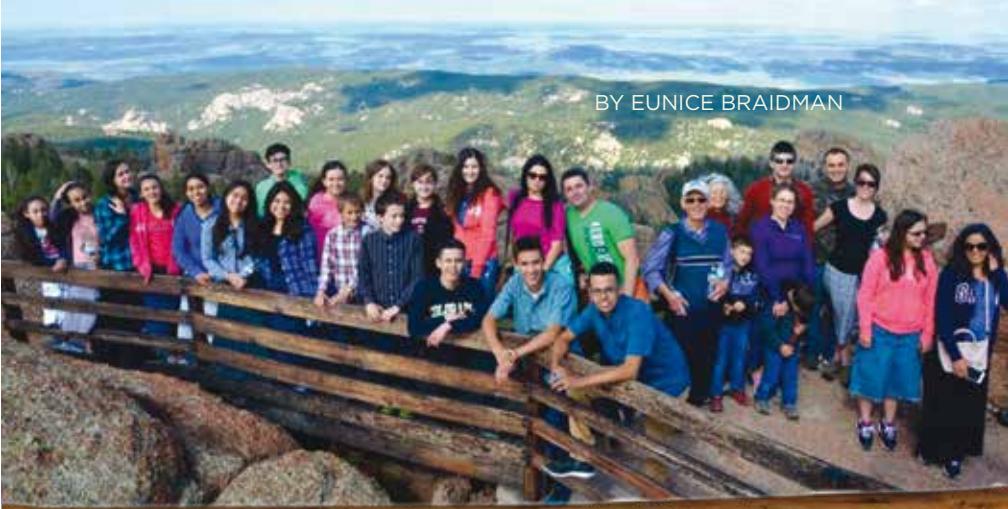
I apologized and backed away from the door as he shut it. But my mind was stayed on the man, even while knocking at the next door. I decided that I and my partner must go back and leave him a *Happiness Digest*, which is a small copy of *Steps to Christ*. On the inside cover I wrote a few words

telling him that God loves him. Leaving it on a chair on his porch, I walked away towards the gate. He must have seen me through the window because he came outside, apologizing and reminding me that he didn't want anything.

I pray that he will read that little book we left him. And that though I was unprepared to help that person who was hurting in ways I have not experienced personally, Jesus will use that little book to reveal His love.

So many people like this man are earnestly seeking to find peace. When we ourselves experience that peace, it becomes our duty to share the Source with others. As Paul says, "How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things!" (Romans 10:15). Whether your calling is to be a canvasser, or some other kind of missionary, He asks, "Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men" (Matthew 4:19).

During this Denver Canvassing Project Jesus gave us the promise in Habakkuk 1:5, saying, "Behold ye among the heathen, and regard, and wonder marvellously: for I will work a work in your days, which ye will not believe, though it be told you." He fulfilled it by helping us reach approximately 11,000 homes. That means at least 10,000 hearts. God can open doors for you to do wonderful things in His strength. Today He wants you to believe in His promise, "Knock, and it shall be opened unto you" (Luke 11:9). 



EXPERIENCES *From the* DENVER PROJECT 2017

“Canvassers are needed to take up the work of carrying these silent messengers of truth to the people—canvassers who feel a burden for souls, and who can speak words in season to those who are seeking for light.”—*Christian Service*, p. 147.

“All who consecrate themselves to God to work as canvassers are assisting to give the last message of warning to the world. We cannot too highly estimate this work; **for were it not for the efforts of the canvasser, many would never hear the warning.**” —*The Colporteur Evangelism*, p. 5. [Emphasis supplied.]

The Denver Project 2017—just to think I hadn’t even planned on participating in the canvassing aspect of it. I had actually signed up as a cook. In reality, I hadn’t planned on going in the first

place. But somehow I ended up in Colorado, and a few days later I found myself walking down sidewalk after sidewalk, knocking on countless doors with a pile of books held tightly in my left arm. And I thank God for the way things happened because I was blessed with many memorable experiences, of which I will share two.

PEACE ABOVE THE STORM

It was the early afternoon and the heat was becoming intense. An occasional wind would swoosh by and provide some temporary relief. We were on our second street when my canvassing partner and I came to a quaint, two-story house with a small fenced front yard. To my dismay, two large dogs lay resting, one near the front door and the other near the gate where

we were standing. They didn't bark or as much as flinch—which I wasn't sure was a good thing. But they kept a watchful eye on us as we stood there pondering what to do. I love dogs—I always have. And these were two gorgeous dogs, one of which was half wolf, as we came to find out later. However, regardless of how much I loved dogs, I wasn't sure I was in the mood to get bitten by one that day, but I couldn't get the phrase "Skip a house, skip a blessing" out of my head.

I still couldn't decide what to do, so I reluctantly walked away from the gate and approached the next house. No one answered my knock. I turned my head and stared long and hard at the dogs in the adjacent yard. What to do? In my head I said a fervent prayer that went something like: "Lord, I'm not feeling very brave at the moment, but I'm determined not to skip this house! Please, please help someone come out of that house and save me a trip through that small 'valley of the shadow of death.' In Jesus' name I pray, Amen." I continued to stand there on the porch of the other house as I intensely waited for the answer to my prayer.

I didn't have to wait long. It was no more than a minute or two later when I heard the door of the house in question creaked open. I literally flew down the

three stairs that led to the grass and out the gate onto the sidewalk. I reached the yard with the dogs in no time and noticed the owner had come out to give them fresh, cold water. I called out: "Hello ma'am! How are you doing today?" After she finished pouring the water, she walked over to the gate, opened it, then closed it behind her, and joined us on the sidewalk. I canvassed her the cookbook and health books but noticed she wasn't interested. I decided to canvass her *Peace Above the Storm*. I was excited to notice this book had caught her attention. But I was just as disappointed when she said she most likely didn't have money and also didn't use checks. I told her we could wait while she went inside to check if she had any cash laying anywhere. She agreed and headed inside as my partner and I engaged in fervent prayer for her to find money. After what felt like an eternity, the front door opened, and she came out with a green bill tucked away in her hand. My mind was screaming, "Thank you, Lord!" She bought the book and wished us a good day full of success. I was beaming. God was so good. He had answered two prayers so clearly, so amazingly. In my moment of human cowardice, He had answered my prayer so quickly and rescued me from my dilemma.

THE DESIRE OF AGES

The second experience I will share took place on my very last day of canvassing. I would say that day was one of the best canvassing days I have ever had. My partner and I had sold 8 books in the span of a few hours, and we had met so many kind people. But we would soon find out that the blessings for that day were not over yet. We were nearing the end of the day as well as the end of our street when we approached a lovely house with a well-kept yard and knocked on the door. No one answered, so I knocked again. Finally, a friendly, older gentleman opened the door and greeted us warmly. After canvassing the first book, he politely asked us to wait while he called his wife, who was just as charming as he was. Eventually, we ended up in their living room being introduced to their dogs and parakeets. When I got back to canvassing the books, *The Desire of Ages* caught his eye. Was this book written by a lady named Ellen G. White?" he asked. "Yes!" I said excitedly, "How did you know?" "I was raised Seventh Day Adventist," he replied. "Wow! Really?! That is so interesting!" I exclaimed. However, at that moment I wasn't sure if I should be excited or worried. I didn't know if that would make him more open

"Blessed are
you who sow beside
all waters."

to us and what we were offering, or if it would raise prejudice in his mind. Again I started praying fervently in my mind. I prayed that this wouldn't dampen their apparent interest in buying our books. Once more, God heard my prayers. They decided to buy three books, including *The Desire of Ages* and another spiritual book called *Lessons for Living*. For some reason I was sure they would no longer be interested in buying *The Desire of Ages*, so I could hardly contain myself when she wrote a check for the three books! We thanked them over and over for their time and their kindness as we headed out the door. I prayed a prayer of thanks in my heart as we continued down the sidewalk to finish canvassing the last houses.

BLESSED BY A CHRISTIAN HOME


A few minutes later we saw the same lady whose house we had just left, walking towards us. I couldn't imagine why she was following us. So my first thought was that she wanted to return the books for some reason, even



though she didn't have them with her. That thought made my heart sink. She reached us and asked in a serious tone, "Are you Seventh Day Adventists?" I felt a little nervous as I wasn't sure my answer would please her, but I bravely answered and said, "Yes." She proceeded to say, "You had my husband sold the moment he suspected you were Seventh Day Adventists." At that point I wasn't sure if she meant that in a positive way or as something akin to a reprimand. But I kept the smile on my face and was able to finally relax when she said, "I hope you realize how blessed you are to have been raised in a Christian home. Not many have that privilege." I wholeheartedly agreed with her. She wished us a good evening once more and went on her way. I smiled even bigger as I thought to myself that God clearly must have planned this meeting. Sometimes we start on the right

path and life diverts us from this path. Then many years later God uses situations, experiences, or people we don't even know to help bring us back to that road we wandered from. I hope and pray that God will use these two books, *The Desire of Ages* and *Lessons for Living*, to accomplish just that in the life of this older gentleman and to touch his wife's heart as well. I pray these books will one day help bring him back to the God of his childhood! How wonderful it would be to meet him and his wife in heaven!

I leave you all with a verse I happened upon while preparing morning worship during the Denver canvassing project: "Blessed are you who sow beside all waters" (Isaiah 32:20, NKJV).

May this be our life's mission—to sow beside all waters and to collect as many stars as we can for our crowns with God's help and for His honor and glory! 

Hallowed Be Thy Name

Charlie Ellie woke up one morning with the pleasant consciousness that something was going to happen that day, and as soon as his eyes were fairly opened he remembered all about it. He was going to Sabbath school for the first time in his life, with a kind lady whom his mother sometimes did a little cleaning and scrubbing.

She had sent him a suit of clothes which her own little boy had outgrown, and Charlie took a much longer time to put on these clean, neat garments than he usually did in donning the ragged pants and jacket that were his everyday attire.

He went down to the sink and dashed the clear, cold water over his face until it fairly shone and brushed his brown curls vigorously; then his grooming was completed and he looked admiringly at his altered appearance in the three-



cornered bit of mirror which stood on the shelf.

Charlie expected to have such a happy time at Sabbath school, and he was at Mrs. Lee's door fully ten minutes before the time when she had told him to come.

When at last they reached the church and Mrs. Lee ushered him into a class where five boys of his own age were seated, Charlie smiled brightly at them, expecting that they would welcome him to their number; but his happy face clouded over when he found that they drew themselves away and refused to have anything to do with him.

Charlie had a slight acquaintance with Walter Foster, and when he saw him whispering to the boys as he came up the aisle, he guessed at once that it was something he had said which made the class treat him so unkindly. Mrs. Lee was sorry when she saw the reason for Charlie's clouded face, and she tried to atone for his classmates' unkindness by sharing her own book with him and trying to interest him in the lesson as much as possible.

When school was dismissed she said good-bye

to Charlie but asked the others to wait a moment.

"Boys, I want to know why you were so unkind to the little boy I brought with me today," she said gravely when Charlie had gone.

Some of the boys fidgeted about uneasily with red faces, but as their teacher was waiting for an answer, one of them stammered,

"Walter told us he was an awful wicked boy, and we oughtn't to speak to him."

Now it was Walter's turn to blush, but as Mrs. Lee looked toward him, he answered her inquiring glance by saying,

"Well, he is wicked; indeed he is. One day some boys took some marbles away from him, and he said awful bad words. I wouldn't speak to such a wicked boy, and I wouldn't say swear words for anything," and Walter drew himself up virtuously.

Mrs. Lee's face wore a sorrowful expression as she listened to the little boys' self-righteous speech.

"I am glad you do not say wicked words, Walter," she said gravely, "but you must remember that you have been carefully taught, and know how wrong it is to do so. I am afraid,



however, that you do not hallow God's name in every way, even though you may not dishonor it by using it as Charlie does."

"Me?" and Walter opened his eyes in amazement.

"Why, how, Mrs. Lee?"

"A little boy who whispers when the superintendent is praying, is now hallowing God's name, for he is taking the time that is set apart for us to speak to God, to talk about his own affairs," answered the teacher, and an added tinge of color crept into Walter's rosy cheeks, for he remembered that only last Sabbath he had been so restless and whispered so much that he had disturbed the whole class.

"Hurrying through one's morning devotions, and reading a verse in the Bible hastily, so that more time may be given to play or homework is another way of dishonoring God," continued Mrs. Lee, gravely. "Before you treat a little classmate as unkindly as you treated Charlie today, I want you to stop and consider whether you have not been guilty of the same sin of which you condemn him so severely."


Five faces were rosy with blushes now, and the boys were ashamed as they remembered how they had refused to have anything to do with Charlie in spite of his wistful looks and evident disappointment. And after all, they had not been so much better than the little boy they looked down upon, for each one

*"Hurrying through
one's morning
devotions . . . is
another way of
dishonoring God."*

of them had been carefully taught all their lives, both at home and in Sabbath school.

There was silence for a moment, then Walter looked up bravely.

"It was all my fault we acted so, and we'll be good to him next Sabbath, Mrs. Lee. I didn't think about my doing the same thing in a different way, and I just thought how wicked he was, without thinking about myself too."

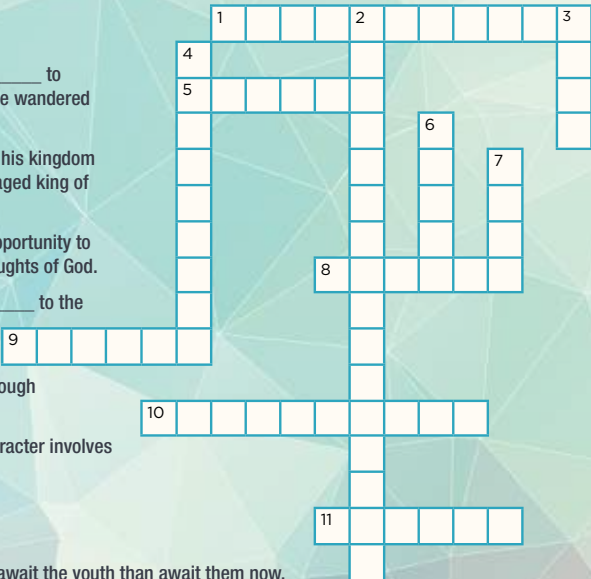
"Try to help each other instead of condemning each other's faults," said Mrs. Lee, smiling kindly at the flushed, boyish face. "Remember too, that there are more ways of dishonoring God than by taking His holy name in vain, and try to pay reverent attention whenever His word is read, or petitions are uttered, that we may always hallow His name, and not take lightly and unthinkingly upon our lips the words in the Lord's prayer which we repeat so often, 'Hallowed be thy name.' "—*Youth's Evangelist.* 

ACROSS

1. God uses situations and _____ to bring us back to that road we wandered from.
5. When Belshazzar was slain, his kingdom was given to _____, the aged king of the Medes.
8. Satan is looking for every opportunity to _____ the mind from thoughts of God.
9. We are invited to come _____ to the throne of grace.
10. As the Son of man, Christ was made perfect through _____.
11. The formation of a good character involves _____ self-denial.

DOWN

2. Never did greater _____ await the youth than await them now.
3. _____ is one of the most effective means of impressing spiritual truth upon the heart.
4. The only person tempting us today is our _____.
6. _____ and the other boys were reprov'd for their behavior in Sabbath school.
7. The majority of people behind doors are _____.



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how are YOUTH to think?



In the apostle Paul's epistle to Titus, there are vital instructions to be given to the young:

"Young men likewise exhort to be sober minded. In all things shewing thyself a pattern of good works: in doctrine shewing uncorruptness, gravity, sincerity, sound speech, that cannot be condemned; that he that is of the contrary part may be ashamed, having no evil thing to say of you" (2:6-8).

To be sober-minded means more than simply not being drunk or high on drugs. The above verses actually describe the result of sober-minded thinking.

What is really amazing is that the apostle is specifically telling the young to think this way; this exhortation is for youthful people full of energy, zeal, and ambition. None are exempt.

Further, this sober-mindedness is not only for young men—verse 4 tells us that young women are to be sober, too. That means they're not to be silly, seeking out foolish ways to amuse themselves. There's a warning in 2 Timothy 3:6 about silly women. Such women are not models of what a God-fearing young lady should become.

Is this call for young men and women to be sober really supposed to apply to our generation living in the last days of earth's history? The following verse says plainly: "The end of all things is at hand: be ye therefore sober, and watch unto prayer" (1 Peter 4:7).

We often think of the church as just a bunch of older people who carry all the influence. Many youth wonder what kind of effect they could possibly have on the church. But let's read:

"When young men and women are sober-minded and cultivate piety and devotion, they will let their light shine forth to others, and there will be vital power in the church."—*Counsels on Sabbath School Work*, p. 69.

Vital power in the church! Just think! You can make a big difference! Wouldn't that be amazing? It starts with the faith God has already given you: No one is "to think of himself more highly than he ought to think; but to think soberly, according as God hath dealt to every man the measure of faith" (Romans 12:3).

That means you! It's something to think about. 

The Ocean Rock

In lonely grandeur, mid old ocean's wastes,
There stands a rock, against whose iron sides
The wrathful waves continuously beat.
Around its towering head the shrill winds roar,
Adown its sides the salt spray dripping falls
Amid the sea-drift cast up at its feet.
Unnumbered ages have the billows broke
In foam against the echoing bulwark strong,
And shrieking whirlwinds round it swept in wrath,
Yet still, scarred, worn, it stands as firm today
As when God's voice first called it from the depths,
And flings back from its base the leaping wave,
As though it laughed at its vain strength in scorn.

So, like a rock uplifted from the sea,
Shall that man be whose trust is in the Lord;
Whose faith is strongest and whose love most firm
When passions rise like surges to o'erwhelm,
And when temptations fierce his soul assail,
Like that mid-ocean rock he, too, shall stand.
Unharm'd, unshaken by each rude assault;
The tempter's wiles, his vengeance, and his smiles,
Alike shall fret themselves beneath his feet.
His firm foundations are down deep in God,
His peace, his strength, and his reward above.

—William G. Haeselbarth