



The Reformation
Messenger

VOLUME 25, NUMBER 8, AUGUST 2018

Dangers on the Christian Pathway
Page 3

Do You REALLY Believe?
Page 6

Never Excuse Sin

WE BELIEVE: The all-wise loving God created all things in the universe by His Son, Jesus Christ. He is the Owner and Sustainer. He met the challenge to His loving leadership and authority by reconciling the world to Himself through the life, death, and resurrection of His Son, the Word made flesh. The Holy Spirit, Jesus' representative on earth convicts of sin,

guides into truth, and gives strength to overcome all unrighteousness. The Bible is the record of God's dealings with mankind and the standard of all doctrine, the Ten Commandments are the transcript of His character and the foundation of all enduring reform. His people, in harmony with God's word and under the direction of the Holy Spirit call all men everywhere to be reconciled to God through faith in Jesus. Bible prophecy reveals that earth's history will soon close with the visible return of Jesus Christ as King to claim all who have accepted Him as the world's only Redeemer and their Lord.

In This Issue:

3 Reflecting Christ

4 Dangers in the Christian Pathway

6 Do you REALLY Believe?

**10 The Lord Hath Laid on Him the Iniquity
of us all.**

13 Physical Exercise

14 Laodicea

16 Never Excuse Sin

**20 Health Matters: How do Divine Principles
Contribute to Our Happiness?**

24 Children's Corner: Nothing Can Separate

PHOTO CREDITS

Helen Marttinen: Front Cover, USA.
Back Cover, Canada.
Inside front cover, Canada.
Page 3, Italy

The Reformation Messenger is published monthly. It is an Official Publication of the International Missionary Society the Seventh-Day Adventist Church Reform Movement, Canadian Field. Subscriptions can be paid online on the website or by mail.

- Telephone: 905-876-2518
- E-mail: imsmessenger@yahoo.com
- Internet: www.imsmessenger.org
- Mail: RR #3, 7899 15 Side Road, Milton, ON L9T 2X7, Canada

COST:

Black & White x \$27.00 per year. Colour x \$47.00 per year.
(Add \$10.00 North America and \$20.00 overseas shipping & handling)

Purchase all 24 years of the Messenger for \$200.00 (shipping included in price). Bound in books by year.

Catalogue is available upon request for all articles for 24 years.



Reflecting Christ

“True Christians are a savor of life unto life because Christ abides in their hearts. Reflecting His image, they are children of the light.” –*Manuscript Releases*, vol. 21, p. 119

“The work of reflecting Christ to the world will not be done boastingly, but in fear and trembling, yet in the power of the Spirit.” –*Counsels to Parents, Teachers and Students*, p. 399

“Our life must be hid with Christ in God, and then the light will be reflected from Jesus to us, and we shall reflect it upon those around us, not in mere talk and profession, but in good works, and by manifesting the character of Christ. Those who are reflecting the light of God, will cherish a loving disposition. They will be cheerful, willing, obedient to all the requirements of God. They will be meek and self-sacrificing, and will work with devoted love for the salvation of souls. In such workers there is an independent love for and a confidence in the truth, united with wisdom to set it before others.” –*The Review and Herald*, October 16, 1888

“He shall sit as a refiner and purifier of silver; and He shall purify the sons of Levi, and purge them as gold and silver, that they may offer unto the Lord an offering in righteousness.’ The refining process is hard for human nature to endure; but only by it can the dross be purged from the character. In the furnace of trial we are purified from the dross that prevents us from reflecting the image of Christ. God measures every trial; He watches the furnace fire that must test every soul.” –*The Signs of the Times*, February 5, 1902

“Christ charges His disciples to shine as lights in the world, reflecting the light of God as they see it in the face of Jesus Christ.” –*The Review and Herald*, May 29, 1900

“We are to be witnesses for Christ, reflecting upon others the light which the Lord permits to shine upon us. We are to be as faithful soldiers marching under the bloodstained banner of Prince Emmanuel. . . . The Captain of our salvation knows the plan of the battle, and we shall come off more than conquerors through Him.” –*Our Father Cares*, p. 302

“The spirit which Enoch, Joseph, and Daniel possessed, we may have. We may draw from the same source of strength, and realize the same power of self-control; and the same graces may shine out in our lives. By reflecting the light of Christ to all around us, we shall become the light of the world. Said Christ, ‘A city that is set on a hill cannot be hid.’ ‘Let your light so shine before men that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven.’” –*The Review and Herald*, September 1, 1885

“All may be equally favored by beholding Him and reflecting His character. The eye of faith sees Him ever present, in all His goodness, grace, forbearance, courtesy, and love, those spiritual and divine attributes. And as we behold, we are changed into His likeness.” –*The Review and Herald*, January 2, 1913

Ellen G. White

“Ye are My witnesses, saith the LORD, and My servant whom I have chosen.” *Isaiah 43:10*



Dangers in the Christian Pathway

People generally understand that money will allow them survival and security. Therefore, their eyes are constantly looking for opportunities to gain more money.

But, Jesus said something very different. “Then said Jesus unto His disci-

Many people say that they love God, but they do not love Him as they love themselves. If their life is in danger, God and His laws are so easily forgotten. In danger, people act without thinking to save their lives. When Peter denied Jesus, he did not think nor reason it out. Suddenly he saw danger, and he had to save himself from it. People lie to save themselves from trouble, and this is what Peter did; three times he lied, saying that he did not know Jesus.

“And when they had kindled a fire in the midst of the hall, and were set down together, Peter sat down among them. But a certain maid beheld him as he sat by the fire, and earnestly looked upon him, and said, This man was also with Him. And he denied Him, saying, Woman, I know Him not. And after a little while another saw him, and said, Thou art also of them. And Peter said, Man, I am not. And about the space of one hour after another confidently affirmed, saying, Of a truth this fellow also was with Him: for he is a Galilaeen. And Peter said, Man, I know not what thou sayest. And immediately, while he yet spake, the cock crew. And the Lord turned, and looked upon Peter. And Peter remembered the word of the Lord, how He had said unto him, Before the cock crow, thou shalt deny Me thrice. And Peter went out, and wept bitterly.” Luke 22:55–62

When a father becomes angry, thundering with a loud voice, “Who has broken my computer?”, then the little children, trembling, answer, “not me, not me.” They see danger, and the best way to save themselves from punishment is to lie.

In the time of war in World War 1, The Seventh-day Adventists decided to join the army, and fight in the war, and that also included on the Sabbath days. Their decision was a matter of survival. They saw a danger—prison and death before them.

ples, If any man will come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me. For whosoever will save his life shall lose it: and whosoever will lose his life for My sake shall find it. For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?” Matthew 16:24–26. Whosoever tries to save his own life here on earth will lose his life in heaven.

We are expecting a strong Sunday law to be enacted soon. How many Sabbath keepers will see a danger in it and start keeping Sunday as the day of worship instead of Sabbath? They will do this because there is the danger of prison or a death sentence. This happened on the island of Tonga, when the government made a law that religious services can only be conducted on Sundays; immediately the Seventh-day Adventists started to keep their meetings on Sundays.

Sometimes I have asked these questions during a Bible study—“Would you sacrifice your life for Christ? Would you rather die than commit a sin? Would you go to prison for Christ?” Normally the answer is, “Yes, I would sacrifice my life for Christ, and rather go to prison and to death than commit a sin.”

Peter said all this, “And he [Peter] said unto Him, Lord, I am ready to go with Thee, both into prison, and to death.” Luke 22:33. But, five hours later he denied Jesus, and said, “I do not know Him”, three times. In the time of our persecution, how many will be like Peter, and deny their faith?

We will be tested in the same way as Peter was tested. Jesus has given us an example as to how that will come upon us. “For even hereunto were ye called: because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow His steps.” 1 Peter 2:21

What will come upon every faithful Christian? “Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution.” 2 Timothy 3:12

Jesus said, “If the world hate you, ye know that it hated Me before it hated you. If ye were of the world, the world would love his own: but because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you.” John 15:18–19

“And others had trial of cruel mockings and scourgings, yea, moreover of bonds and imprisonment: They were stoned, they were sawn asunder, were tempted, were slain with the sword: they wandered about in sheepskins and goatskins; being destitute, afflicted, tormented; (Of whom the world was not worthy:) they wandered in deserts, and in mountains, and in dens and caves of the earth.” Hebrews 11:36–38

When you became a Christian, did you count on these trials to come upon you? We sing so beautifully, “All to Jesus, I surrender, All to Him I freely give.” Are we really willing to give all that we have to Jesus?

In the song, “A Mighty Fortress”, we sing in the fourth verse, “Let goods and kindreds go, This mortal life also; The body they may kill; God’s truth abideth still, His kingdom is for ever.”

Mrs. C.H. Morris, who was blind, wrote a beautiful gospel song, “Nearer, still nearer, close to Thy heart.” In the third verse, we read, “Nearer, still nearer, Lord, to be Thine; Sin, with its follies, I gladly resign, All of its pleasures, pomp and its pride; Give me but Jesus, my Lord crucified.” She did not ask for anything else, only give me Jesus, my Lord crucified.

Also, the prophets suffered affliction. “Take, my brethren, the prophets, who have spoken in the name of the Lord, for an example of suffering affliction, and of patience.” James 5:10

Suffering, disappointments, and sorrows are part of our life here, we cannot get away from them. Then, what must we do? The only thing to do is to learn to live with them. Accept them as part of our life, as something natural.



Isaiah writes of Jesus, “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. But He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon Him; and with His stripes we are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the LORD hath laid on Him the iniquity of us all. He was oppressed, and He was afflicted, yet He opened not His mouth: He is brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so He openeth not His mouth.” Isaiah 53:3–7

If our Lord and Saviour had to suffer so much, should we complain if these sufferings come upon us also? It is a great sin to complain and murmur about God’s leading. “And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to His purpose.” Romans 8:28

All the sorrows and sufferings that God brings upon us are for our character development. Ancient Israel were complaining and murmuring, and God said, “Your carcasses shall fall in this wilderness; and all that were numbered of you, according to your whole number, from twenty years old and upward, which have murmured against Me.” Numbers 14:29

With all the trials, sorrows, and sufferings, can we still have joy and happiness? “As sorrowful, yet always rejoicing; as poor, yet making many rich; as having nothing, and yet possessing all things.” 2 Corinthians 6:10

“It is ever God’s purpose to bring light out of darkness, joy out of sorrow, and rest out of weariness for the waiting, longing soul.” –*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 5, p. 216

I had a dream one night in which I was sentenced to death for my religion. As the officer took me to the place of execution, I talked to him about salvation, heaven, the love of God and God’s forgiveness. As we came to the place, I closed my eyes, and said my last prayer. But the strange thing was that I felt great happiness and joy that I could die for Him who died for me. Then I woke up; it was only a dream, but the joy and happiness lasted all throughout that day. If the martyrs felt this kind of joy and happiness in their dying moment, they did not suffer. Whatever comes upon you, as you continue on the way of God, give thanks to Him; it is all for your benefit.

Let not the love of Jesus be one-sided, from Him only to you; let us respond and show the same kind of love towards Him that He has shown to us. Let us walk the hardest road, following Him, and still having joy and happiness. Amen.

Timo Martin



This past Sabbath in our local church, the preacher spoke about the second coming of Christ. It is a familiar topic to those who have been baptized, grown up in the faith or have been attending church for a long time. Is it necessary to repeat this subject? Yes, by all means. This is what we are living for.

I will ask you a question:

“Do you REALLY believe Jesus is coming very soon?” Ask this question to any member in the church around the world and they will answer, “Yes, of course I believe it will be soon.” But then I ask, “If you believe He will come soon, what are you doing to prepare? Do your actions indicate what you really believe? Or is it a passive belief on your part?” Search your own heart and your own life.

“The end of all things is at hand. The Lord is soon coming. Already His judgments are abroad in our land. We are not only to talk of Christ’s coming, but in every action we are to reveal the fact that He is soon to be manifested in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory.” —*Testimonies to Ministers*, p. 187

“Do we believe with all the heart that Christ is soon coming and that we are now having the last message of mercy that is ever to be given to a guilty world? Is our example what it should be? Do we, by our lives and holy conversation, show to those around us that we are looking for the glorious appearing of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, who shall change these vile bodies and fashion them like unto His glorious body?” —*Early Writings*, p. 111

I will now mention three areas where our actions confirm the reality of our belief.

1) DOWNSIZING

Recently I went to lunch with some of the women from my work. At one point in time the conversation was directed to the one woman who was renovating her house. She was planning on making a complete makeover into a very fancy house. This was her focus in life and her dream. The other women shared some advice as to what they did with their renovations. The all-consuming desire seemed to be, to

have a bigger, better, and fancier home, regardless of the cost. You can just borrow the money. Jesus said, “For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.” Matthew 6:21. Clearly, the heart of these women was on their house and home, making it beautiful and fancy. All an inward focus—to make their own environment beautiful and comfortable.

Is this what you are living for? A bigger, fancier house? What did Jesus mean when He said “Sell that ye have, and give alms; provide yourselves bags which wax not old, a treasure in the heavens that faileth not, where no thief approacheth, neither moth corrupteth” (Luke 12:33)?

Jesus is not asking us to sell everything that we have, but He did say “sell that ye have.” Sell what you do not need. Sell your luxuries. “Provide yourselves with bags which do not wax old.” In the time of Haggai, the people had bags that were waxing old. “Ye have sown much, and bring in little; ye eat, but ye have not enough; ye drink, but ye are not filled with drink; ye clothe you, but there is none warm; and he that earneth wages earneth wages to put it into a bag with holes.” Haggai 1:6. Their money was put in bags, and if the bags had holes the money fell out and they were left with little. The reason the people were said to be putting their money in bags with holes is because they were primarily concerned with their own interests—their own houses and properties. The house of the Lord stood unfinished and destitute. If we put our own interests above the interests of God, we are putting our money in bags with holes and it goes through our hands quickly. We lose it faster than we earn it. If we put God’s interests first then the money we have for ourselves is in a new bag; the Lord will bless us to have enough. “Consider your ways.” Haggai 1:7. How often do we purchase something new and nice for ourselves and then when we are ready to donate something old, we think



we will give it to the church to use? The church receives the old worn-out furniture and utensils, while we keep the new for ourselves. There is nothing wrong with having a nice, clean humble home, with nice furniture and utensils, but if we neglect the house of God because we have spent too much on ourselves, then it becomes sin.

King David wrote: "If riches increase, set not your heart upon them." Psalm 62:10. The Lord sometimes blesses some members with more funds, but those excess funds are to be used in His cause, not in building bigger and better homes or having luxurious material goods. "Listen to the words of your Redeemer: ' . . . Riches are Mine. I have placed them in your hands to be wisely employed in My service, to aid the suffering, to invest in opening the gospel to those who are in darkness. Riches must not be your trust, your god, or your saviour.'" –*Reflecting Christ*, p. 269

The next statements show the conclusion to this thought. They are key. Read them carefully.

"It is now that our brethren should be cutting down their possessions instead of increasing them. We are about to move to a better country, even a heavenly. Then let us not be dwellers upon the earth, but be getting things into as compact a compass as possible." –*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 5, p. 152

"If indeed the Lord is coming, it is time to sell what you have and give alms. It is time to put out your money to the exchangers, time to place every dollar you can spare, into the treasury of the Lord." –*The General Conference Bulletin*, October 1, 1896

"Shall we not now have a selling time, in which we shall cut down our possessions, and devote our means to the cause of God? Shall we not make an investment in the missionary line, and lay up treasure in the bank of heaven? Shall we not make a free-will offering to the cause of God, and return a portion of the goods the Master has left in trust for His service? If we love God supremely, and our neighbors as ourselves, we shall give tangible proof of our faith, and souls will be saved in the kingdom of God as the result of unselfish effort." –*The Medical Missionary*, September 1, 1892

"Alas, how many are appropriating to themselves the gifts of God! How many are adding house to house and land to land. How many are spending their money for pleasure, for the gratification of appetite, for extravagant houses, furniture, and dress." –*Christ's Object Lessons*, p. 371

In the not too distant future, all that we have will be burnt up. Of what value will it then be? And what about the time when we cannot buy or sell? What value will our earthly goods have then?

"Houses and lands will be of no use to the saints in the time of trouble, for they will then have to flee before infuriated mobs, and at that time their possessions cannot be dis-

posed of to advance the cause of present truth. I was shown that it is the will of God that the saints should cut loose from every encumbrance before the time of trouble comes, and make a covenant with God through sacrifice. If they have their property on the altar and earnestly inquire of God for duty, He will teach them when to dispose of these things. Then they will be free in the time of trouble and have no clogs to weigh them down." –*Early Writings*, p. 56–57

Are you praying daily, asking the Lord when He wants you to sell what you have? "I saw that if any held on to their property and did not inquire of the Lord as to their duty, He would not make duty known, and they would be permitted to keep their property, and in the time of trouble it would come up before them like a mountain to crush them, and they would try to dispose of it, but would not be able. I heard some mourn like this: 'The cause was languishing, God's people were starving for the truth, and we made no effort to supply the lack; now our property is useless. Oh, that we had let it go, and laid up treasure in heaven!' I saw that a sacrifice did not increase, but it decreased and was consumed. I also saw that God had not required all of His people to dispose of their property at the same time; but if they desired to be taught, He would teach them, in a time of need, when to sell and how much to sell. Some have been required to dispose of their property in times past to sustain the Advent cause, while others have been permitted to keep theirs until a time of need. Then, as the cause needs it, their duty is to sell." –*Ibid*, p. 57

"He who realizes that his money is a talent from God will use it economically, and will feel it a duty to save that he may give." –*Christ's Object Lessons*, p. 352

"Let not the rich man glory in his riches." Jeremiah 9:23. "While it is lawful for us to acquire means, the money that we possess should be regarded as ours only in trust, not to be squandered, but spent in the Lord's service. It should be our determined purpose to obey the orders of our Captain, and thus lay up for ourselves heavenly riches. Then, when everything in this world perishes, we shall have a treasure in the heavens, which faileth not." –*Sons and Daughters of God*, p. 234

2) MUTUAL PRETENSE

The term "Mutual Pretense" is used in the medical field to mean:

"During his training to become a hospital chaplain, a friend of mine was surprised to learn of a phenomenon in the medical community widely known as 'Mutual Pretense.' In many cases, mutual pretense is something that takes place after the period of treatment for a particular patient has run its course and it's become clear to everyone that it's not working and the patient will die. Despite the fact that this the dark reality is clearly known by all parties involved, the doctor, patient, and family of the patient will often deal

with the fact by talk about anything *other* than the fact that the patient is going to die. They'll talk about what will happen once they get out of the hospital, what they are going to do when everything gets better, about sports, about family—anything *but* the truth of the impending death.

“Mutual pretense is a kind of survival mechanism that allows everyone to continue talking to each other while not having to actually talk about what’s going on—like the brute reality of an impending death.” <https://www.preachingtoday.com/illustrations/2014/june/5060214.html>

Many years ago a woman came to the church and was taught the truth about Christ’s Second Coming. It, however, caused her much stress and anxiety and made her physically sick. She went to the doctor and the doctor’s advice was to go to a different church. Sadly, she stopped coming to church. Her life and conversation changed. She now was going to pretend that this would not happen. She was going to live in the pretense that Jesus is *not* coming soon.

We cannot ignore the fact that the reality is that Jesus is coming soon and if we are not ready, when the earth dies we also will die—eternally. “The wages of sin is death.” Romans 6:23. Have you sinned? If you answer “yes,” you deserve death. Once we sin, we are on the road to death—terminally. But wonder of wonders, Jesus has provided a remedy by paying the penalty of our imminent death. Yes, there is a remedy for this terminal spiritual illness. Praise His worthy name.

The condition of this world is terminal. This earth is so sick that it is dying. Jesus will come soon and put an end to the misery and suffering. Do we talk about it? Or do we practice mutual pretense in our conversations by talking about anything and everything else but the imminent demise of this earth in the near future?



Ask yourself:

- What is your conversation like at church during lunch hour?
- What is your conversation like when you meet during the week with friends or family—whether in the church or not?
- What is your conversation like when you meet with people who are not associated with the church—associates at school, or work or your neighbours?

- What is your conversation like when you meet with people who are totally uninterested in the church? Do you change the subject to something they are interested in? Are their interests more important than yours?
- What is your conversation like when you meet a stranger and strike up a conversation?

The question we need to ask ourselves is—do we change with the circumstances and allow our surroundings and the people in our presence to dictate our conversation? If they do not believe in Jesus, do we join them in “mutual pretense” and talk about anything and everything else, except the reality of the doom of this world?

Here are some important counsels for us:

“As children of the heavenly King, you should educate yourselves to bear testimony in a clear, distinct voice, and in such a manner *that no one may have the impression that you are reluctant to speak of the mercies of the Lord.*” —*Christian Education*, p. 129 (emphasis mine)

“When in the company of those who indulge in foolish talk, it is *our duty to change the subject* of conversation if possible. By the help of the grace of God we should quietly drop words or introduce a subject that will turn the conversation into a profitable channel.” —*Christ’s Object Lessons*, p. 337 (emphasis mine)

May God help us not to be guilty of foolish talk as every word spoken is recorded in the books of heaven and will come back to us in the time of the end. “Angels are watching over and guarding us; we often grieve these angels by indulging in trifling conversation, jesting, and joking, and also by sinking down into a careless, stupid state.” —*Early Writings*, p. 111

“The most intellectual, those who are looked upon as the world’s most gifted men and women, are often refreshed by the simple words of one who loves God, and who can speak of that love as *naturally as the worldling speaks of the things that interest him most deeply.*” —*Christ’s Object Lessons*, p. 232 (emphasis mine)

“Far more than we do, we need to *speak of the precious chapters in our experience.*” —*ibid*, p. 300 (emphasis mine)

“When you are with your associates, talk about Jesus instead of dress and appearance, Do you love Jesus? If you do, you will love to talk about Him. Do you love His appearing? If you do, you will love to dwell upon it. Does heaven charm you? Does it attract you? If so, you cannot hold your peace. You will talk about it; for you will always have it uppermost in your mind, and be ready to converse, when you meet with your friends, upon that which most charms, and engrosses the mind, Talk about your hopes of heaven, your joys, your eternal prospects, and then when you part with

your friends, you will be benefited by each others society, and there will be a sweet satisfaction when you meet and when you part, instead of barrenness of soul, and an empty feeling.” —*The Youth’s Instructor*, January 1, 1856

Are we practicing mutual pretense by talking about anything and everything else that comes to mind besides the reality of the terminal condition of this earth?

3) MISSIONARY ZEAL

Many churches and individuals have an inward focus to their faith. They are always trying to be faithful and fix things internally—themselves or the church. If we would have an outward focus and be more missionary minded, the inward problems would take care of themselves. Ask yourself, how earnest is your missionary zeal? Is it once a week on Sabbath afternoon? It should be daily. “We are rapidly approaching the end of this earth’s history; and as we realize that Jesus is indeed coming soon, we shall be aroused to labor as never before. We are bidden to sound an alarm to the people. And in our own lives we are to show forth the power of truth and righteousness.” —*Counsels to the Church*, p. 355

“Jesus does not bid the Christian to strive to shine, but just to let his light shine in clear and distinct rays to the world. Do not blanket your light. Do not sinfully withhold your light. Do not let the mist and fog and malaria of the world put out your light. Do not hide it under a bed or under a bushel, but set it on a candlestick, that it may give light to all that are in the house.... God bids you shine, penetrating the moral darkness of the world.” —*Our High Calling*, p. 297

“Those who are truly converted are called to do a work which requires money and consecration. The obligations which bind us to place our names on the church roll hold us responsible to work to the utmost of our ability for God. He calls for undivided service, for the entire devotion of heart, soul, mind, and strength. Christ has brought us into church capacity, that He may engage and engross all our capabilities in devoted service for the salvation of others. Anything short of this is opposition to the work.” —*This Day with God*, p. 303

Is missionary work a passion—a fire in your soul? Do you feel an urgency to tell your family, friends, associates, neighbours, fellow students, co-workers of the urgency of your belief? Or is missionary work simply a duty that needs to be performed because it is expected



of you as a church member. Or do you not feel like it because you are too busy with your own interests in your home and your family? Souls are perishing—dying—for want of the saving message that we have been so blessed to be in possession of. Shall we become as the Jewish nation and keep the truth to ourselves, within our own homes and churches?

“Go to work, whether you feel like it or not. Engage in personal effort to bring souls to Jesus and the knowledge of the truth. In such labor you will find both a stimulus and a tonic; it will both arouse and strengthen. By exercise your spiritual powers will become more vigorous, so that you can with better success work out your own salvation. The stupor of death is upon many who profess Christ. Make every effort to arouse them. Warn, entreat, expostulate. Pray that the melting love of God may warm and soften their icebound natures. Though they may refuse to hear, your labor will not be lost. In the effort to bless others your own souls will be blessed.” —*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 5, p. 387

Again I ask, “Do you REALLY believe Jesus is coming soon?” How urgently are you making preparations for yourselves and for those around you? Will you lay your all on the altar of service for God? “I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service.” Romans 12:1. Not just your means, but God wants you. He wants to use you for the salvation of souls—personal work.

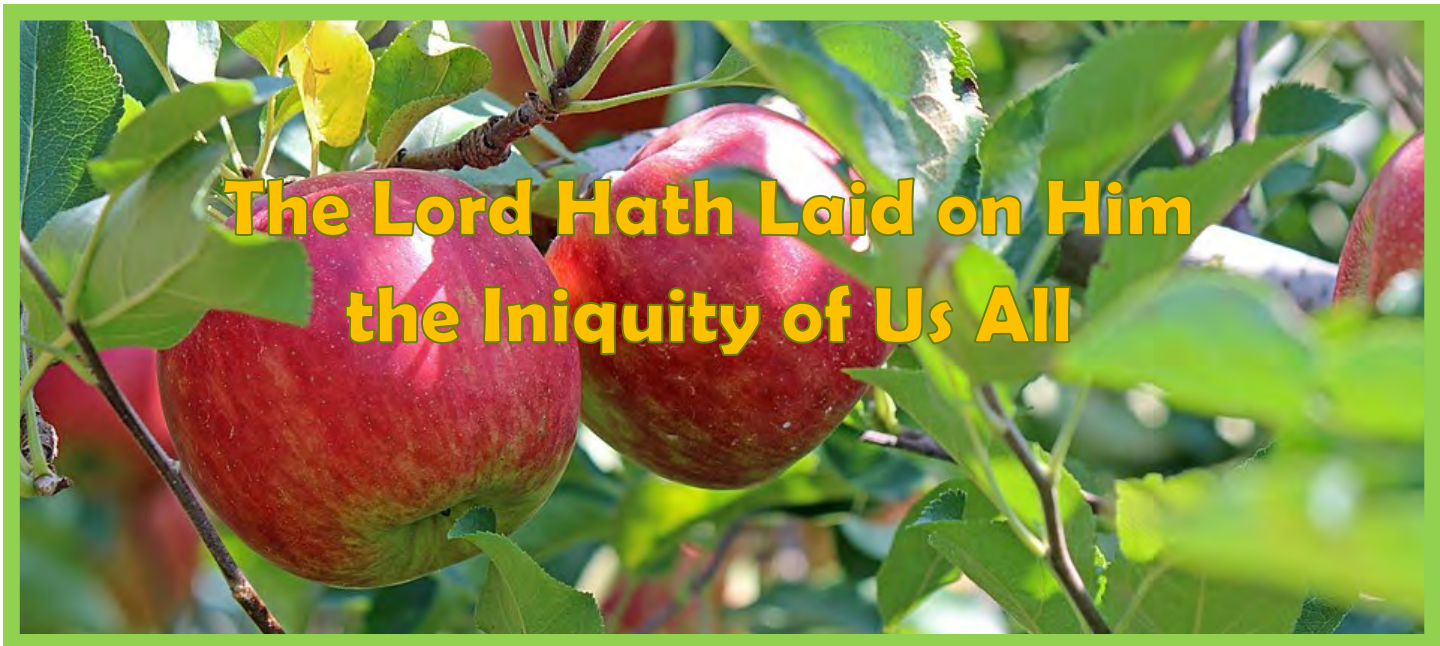
I hope this is not our case: “I fear that we do not believe and realize these things as we should. Those who believe the important truths that we profess, should act out their faith. There is too much seeking after amusements and things to take the attention in this world; the mind is left to run too much upon dress, and the tongue is engaged too often in light and trifling conversation, which gives the lie to our profession, for our conversation is not in heaven, whence we look for the Saviour.” —*Early Writings*, p. 111

“The Lord is coming. You have no time to lose. You are not to do as did the inhabitants of the antediluvian world—plant and build, eat and drink, marry and give in marriage, the same as the careless worldling. Let the books of heaven present a different record from that which now appears. Make haste to redeem the time; provide yourselves bags which wax not old, a treasure in the heavens that faileth not.” —*The Signs of the Times*, January 14, 1886

It is my prayer that we REALLY do believe and that our actions will confirm that belief. Amen.

Wendy Eaton





The Lord Hath Laid on Him the Iniquity of Us All

In 2007, Nebraska Democratic State Senator, Ernie Chambers decided to go straight to the top in an effort to stop natural disasters from befalling the world. “Chambers filed a lawsuit against God in Douglas County Court (Omaha) Friday afternoon,” KPTM Fox 42 reported.

The suit asks for a “permanent injunction ordering the Defendant to cease certain harmful activities and the making of terroristic threats.” The lawsuit identifies the plaintiff as, “the duly elected and serving State Senator from the 11th Legislative District in Omaha, Nebraska.” Chambers also cites that the “defendant directly and proximately has caused, inter alia, fearsome floods, egregious earthquakes, horrendous hurricanes, terrifying tornados, pestilential plagues. . .”

Even though this lawsuit was a kind of protest or warning against preventing limitation for lawsuits, it is an example of how we blame God, or Adam, for our calamities. We, human beings, since the moment Adam and Eve committed sin, have always tried to find a scapegoat for our own errors. There is in our nature a strong tendency to blame others for what is our own responsibility. In most cases people regret the consequences of their mistakes, but not the sin itself.

The fact is that because of our rebellion, we became separated from God; we assumed the control of our own life, and chose to live independently from the Life Giver. The result of this rebellious attitude is pointed out in the Spirit of Prophecy:

“This was the position of the human race after man divorced himself from God by transgression. Then he was no longer entitled to a breath of air, a ray of sunshine,

or a particle of food.” —*Faith and Works*, p. 21

I. Why did Adam and Eve not die right at the moment of their transgression?

The Lord had given clear and straight warnings to Adam and Eve about the fall of an important part of the angels of heaven. They were fully updated about the rebellion of Lucifer, and the danger pending to the universe. The ban of eating from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, under penalty of death, was a test of loyalty.

“But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die.” Genesis 2:17

The shocking fact is that they ate of the forbidden fruit, and did not die, at least not the same day, even though the Lord had said: “for in the day thou eatest thereof thou shall surely die.” Why?

From the Biblical record it appears, after all, that the snake was right, and God exaggerated his threat. The Spirit of Prophecy yields light on that regard:

“Adam listened to the words of the tempter, and yielding to his insinuations, fell into sin. Why was not the death penalty at once enforced in his case?—Because a ransom was found. God’s only begotten Son volunteered to take the sin of man upon Himself, and to make an atonement for the fallen race. There could have been no pardon for sin had this atonement not been made.” —*The Review and Herald*, April 23, 1901,

“As soon as there was sin, there was a Saviour. Christ knew what He would have to suffer, yet He became man’s substitute. As soon as Adam sinned, the Son of

God presented Himself as surety for the human race, with just as much power to avert the doom pronounced upon the guilty as when He died upon the cross of Calvary." –*The Review and Herald*, March 12, 1901

It is not that they started dying the day they sinned, as some have proposed. It is not that their death after over 900 years later was the fulfilment of the sentence of death. They did not die because Jesus would suffer, instead of them, the penalty of the transgression of the law of God. Jesus would take the sin and guilt of humanity on Himself. The sentence was fulfilled as God had said, not on Adam and Eve but on Christ. The condemnation was transferred from Adam to Christ. That very day, the death penalty was put upon Christ, and God accepted it as a fact. Jesus granted a second chance to the human race

Prophecy announced it in the following statement: "But He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon Him; and with His stripes we are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the LORD hath laid on Him the iniquity of us all." Isaiah 53:5–6

"God's only begotten Son volunteered to take the sin of man upon Himself, and to make an atonement for the fallen race." –*The Review and Herald*, April 23, 1901

Jesus took upon Himself the sin of Adam, not in part, but in full. The liberation of the fallen couple was complete; their salvation was not partial, but total. As a substitute, Jesus was the sin bearer instead of Adam. Since Jesus made Adam free from sin, although he now had a sinful nature, he had no more sin on him.

Consequently, since original sin was no more on Adam but on Christ, Adam could not transmit such a sin to his posterity. We cannot inherit from Adam what he did not have. It had been taken by Jesus, and it belonged to Him. Conclusively, we can affirm that, although we have a sinful human nature, we do not inherit the sin of Adam.

Some people are snatching away what was taken by Jesus, and saying that they were born with the sin of Adam. It is to blame Adam, and ultimately God, for their sins. It is actually denying personal responsibility, and finding an excuse for their sins.

II. If we do not inherit the sin of Adam, why do we die? Why did we not stop committing sin?

The immortality of Adam was conditional—he did not

have natural immortality—it depended on two factors: Loyalty to God, and eating of the tree of life.

"And the LORD God said, Behold, the man is become as one of Us, to know good and evil: and now, lest he put forth his hand, and take also of the tree of life, and eat, and live for ever: Therefore the LORD God sent him forth from the garden of Eden, to till the ground from whence he was taken. So He drove out the man; and He placed at the east of the garden of Eden Cherubims, and a flaming sword which turned every way, to keep the way of the tree of life." Genesis 3:22–24

If Adam would have been allowed to eat of the tree of life after his sin, he would not have died.

Because of his rebellion Adam lost his right to eat of the tree of life; therefore, even though Jesus had taken sin out of him, he was to die and his descendants as well. The death of Adam was because he was prevented from eating of the tree of life.

"The fruit of the tree of life in the Garden of Eden possessed supernatural virtue. To eat of it was to live forever. Its fruit was the antidote of death. Its leaves were for the sustaining of life and immortality." –*Heaven*, p. 172

"The tree of life had the power of perpetuating life. Adam would have continued to enjoy free access to this tree and have lived forever, but when he sinned he was cut off from the tree of life and became subject to death. Immortality had been forfeited by transgression. There could have been no hope for the fallen race had not God, by the sacrifice of His Son, brought immortality within their reach." –*From Here to Forever*, p. 329

Adam could not transmit eternal life to his children; that is why we die. This death that comes as a direct consequence of the deprivation of the tree of life is compared to sleep. "These things said He: and after that He saith unto them, Our friend Lazarus sleepeth; but I go, that I may awake him out of sleep." John 11:11. All men, good and evil will be awakened from that sleep. "Marvel not at this: for the hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear His voice, and shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation." John 5:28–29

If we do not inherit the original sin, why do we sin?

We commit sin because we choose to sin; we repeat the rebellion of Adam. We chose to eat of the forbidden tree. We do not sin IN Adam, we sin LIKE Adam.

“Adam and Eve transgressed the law of God. They ate of the forbidden fruit, and were driven from Eden. We might well rejoice if this had been the only fall. But since the fall of Adam, the history of the human race has been a succession of falls.” —*The Review and Herald*, July 9, 1901

Every generation, after the sin of Adam, has repeated the rebellion of their ancestor.

III. The whole race was restored to the favor of God

“And He is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world.” 1 John 2:2

“By His wonderful work in giving His life, He restored the whole race of men to favor with God.” —*Selected Messages*, bk. 1, p. 343, 402

“Christ’s atonement includes the whole human family. No one, high or low, rich or poor, free or bond, has been left out of the plan of redemption.” —*The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*, vol. 7, p. 464

Jesus restored for us the privilege of enjoying a ray of sunlight, the privilege of breathing the air, and the privilege of eating a morsel of bread.

IV. What will happen to those that despise the redemption obtained by the sacrifice of Christ?

“How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation; which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed unto us by them that heard Him.” Hebrews 2:3

For those that despise and reject the salvation of Christ there is a second death.

“And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is the book of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works. And the sea gave up the dead which were in it; and death and hell delivered up the dead which were in them: and they were judged every man according to their works. And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death. And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was

cast into the lake of fire.” Revelation 20:12–15

There is no resurrection after the second death; it is the total and absolute annihilation of sin, rebellion, and evil.

Conclusion

A Romanian murderer hit the headlines in 2005 when he decided to take God to court. Arguing that his baptism had been a binding contract broken by God, convicted criminal, Pavel Mircea attempted to sue God for failing “to protect me from all evils”.

Mircea, who is serving a 20-year jail sentence, claimed that God “gave me to Satan, who encouraged me to kill”. He filed a lawsuit against the Romanian Orthodox Church, as God’s representatives, citing five crimes allegedly committed by God—including fraud, breach of trust and an abuse of a position of authority.

Mircea argued that God had not kept His side of the bargain, accepting prayers without offering anything in exchange. Fortunately for the Church, the case was thrown out of court since God does not have a legal residence at which He could be served with the legal papers.

God is blameless of our evils, miseries and ruin. Adam created chaos with his sin, but Jesus took on Himself the sin of Adam, and paid the penalty for it. Jesus found a solution, and restored the human race to the favor of God. But Adam could also not transmit to his children the sin that had been taken by Jesus, neither eternal life, for it depended on the tree of life which was out of his reach.

Pastor Neptali Acevedo



Physical Exercise



Someone once said: I do so little exercise that if any time you see that I am running, you better run because something serious is happening

WHAT A GREAT TRUTH! Sedentary lifestyles are gaining ground in such a way that we run only if there is an emergency.

A sedentary life affects us both physically and psychologically.

In the physical sense, lack of exercise causes our body to deteriorate, it reduces our capacity to move, makes us more sensitive to pain; it affects the ability to enjoy life. There is normal physical deterioration due to time and age, and the other is deterioration because of physical inactivity.

Physical activity keeps us young; it does not matter our age, physical activity boosts our organism to enjoy life at any stage. Lack of physical activity makes us more irritable, impatient and negative, because we lack the production of endorphins that our body releases during physical activity. Endorphins are a key aspect in counteracting negative moods. Therefore, physical exercise is true therapy for the spirit.

A person who never engages in physical activity loses, on average, three years from their lifespan.

“Without physical exercise, no one can have a sound constitution and vigorous health.” –*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 601

“Physical exercise is a precious blessing for both mental and physical ailments. Exercise, with cheerfulness, would in many cases prove a most effective restorer to the complaining invalid.” –*Medical Ministry* p. 107

“More people die for want of exercise than through overfatigue; very many more rust out than wear out. Those who accustom themselves to proper exercise in the open air will generally have a good and vigorous circulation.

“Morning exercise, in walking in the free, invigorating air of heaven, or cultivating flowers, small fruits, and vegetables, is necessary to a healthful circulation of the blood. It is the surest safeguard against colds, coughs, congestions of brain and lungs, inflammation of the liver, the kidneys, and the lungs, and a hundred other diseases.

“Go out and exercise every day, even though some things indoors have to be neglected.” –*Ibid.*, p. 136

I was very impressed when I read the paragraph above. I think all of us have a long to-do list every day. And many times we postpone doing physical activity because we are too busy. But here Sister White is emphasizing the importance of making time for physical activity, even if things indoors have to be neglected. So, let us give physical activity a priority in our everyday life.

A path of a thousand miles begins with one step. What will be your first step? A walk? Some time in the gym? Going back to practice your favorite sport? Let’s start exercising!

Raquel Sosa

LAODICEA

REVELATION 3:14-20



Jesus' solemn appeal to the last church, longing to reach each heart.
Wake up, Laodicea sluggish, or soon be doomed to perish!
Sleep on in your complacency, be deaf to Heaven's ardent plea.
Get on your feet, arouse from slumber, why would you be among the number—
Be spewed out of the mouth—of Him who speaks to you—the Witness fair and true?
Because you say: I have, am rich, need nothing,
I am content and am at ease—but cease to see your wretchedness,
poor blind, miserable nakedness!
O Yes, this truly is your state, for Jesus gives this estimate, and judged you thus.
But grace divine offers counsel to amend your ways.
My judgment will be carried out, if you do not yield, give up your proud
Self-sufficient state of mind—that plainly proves how very blind
Through lukewarmness you have become,
Depraved of love with which at first you have begun!
Do not point the finger to the fault of others, you have no right to judge your brothers,
But rather seek to counsel, pray and show compassion,
Love, restoring dignity, for this is true Christianity.
I am the Lord—I know the hearts—and yours, I am the Judge, this is MY part!
Those I love rebuke and chasten, be zealous therefore, hasten
To repent and search your heart, who thought to be so smart.
That this shameful lukewarmness, be transformed to righteousness.
Buy My gold—not that of weight. It is the priceless gold of faith,
Of nobler value than the worth of all the treasures in the world.
Take my eyesalve that you see indeed your dire need of help from Me,
who only is your Remedy!
Jesus makes it very clear, heed His words and hear: Oh, My child, I speak to you,
My rebuke—it is so true!
I cannot save you, plead your case before My Father, when you not feel the burden
of your sins, but rather cherish, covet worldly idols, pleasures,
Boast in Bible knowledge but forget what is most precious,
A character endowed with virtues, meekness, pity, love, humility,
a spirit void of pride and vanity.

Your zeal is not for Me but for own ambition, it is corrupt, for selfishness
has tainted what formerly was sheer devotion.

You have no concept of the grave and dreadful peril, that soon awaits you—
continue thus—you will be ending up in hell!

I have to speak such words, so stern, severe, to shock you, stir,
For I cannot, will not let you go. —Your sins, how they weary Me, My heart it aches,
My wounds still bleed, My soul it grieves, how deep the pain.

Was all My sacrifice for you in vain?
Did I resurrect for you in vain, ascending to the Father for you to gain
Perfect acceptance through My name?
As your High Priest to intervene before the Law,
Does not this make you be in awe, by forgiving, pardon your transgressions,
When you with broken-hearted, sore confessions, you come to Me in deep contrition?
I long for you, I yearn for you, how I desire you, you are the apple of Mine eye,
My most choice, beloved jewel too!

I gave you all and suffered all that you might live.
Will you not come to Me and give yourself with all your sins and wretched nakedness,
That I may wash you, cleanse unrighteousness, put on you my own Righteousness?
Strive to overcome and be victorious, the end result—it will be glorious.

My law I write then in your heart, thus with love obey Me; make you take part
In My blessings to transform, pour on you My Spirit—For I envision
To use you in the solemn mission the last church is waiting for:
Once more shaking to the core, all churches in their message of false peace,
That I may save them and release the true and humble souls deceived,
The wine of Babylon so terribly achieved.

You shall be My tool, to give The Loud Cry with power from on high,
to tell the world My coming nigh.

Open your door, O let Me in, how long must I still wait?
The night is on—it is so late!

I yearn to sup with you, to shower you with love and grace and joy divine,
for eternally you will be Mine.

And share My throne and reign with Me as I have promised—through eternity! Amen.

Edda Tedford, Canada

NOTE: Please read the chapters in *Testimonies for the Church*, vol. I,
p. 185–195 (The Laodicean Church);
p. 164–168 (Church Trials)

Never Excuse Sin

*When church discipline/
disfellowshipment is needed!*



In part one of this topic, it described how Jehovah, the God of mercy, never tolerates or excuses sin. This is to be carefully adhered to by those who claim to be followers of Christ. Throughout the Bible we find many cases of dealing with sin.

In this article, let us examine together how to deal with sin and sinners, in Christ's stead.

WHY IS THIS SO SERIOUS?

One of the cases of a traitor recorded in the Bible is that of Achan; because of his sin the whole nation of Israel suffered under the displeasure of God.

"Achan's sin brought disaster upon the whole nation. For one man's sin the displeasure of God will rest upon His church till the transgression is searched out and put away." —*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 497

The search for the sin and the sinner was commanded by the Lord. After searching first for the tribe, then for the family, and then for the household and finally for the man, Achan was pointed out as the guilty one (Joshua 7:14–18). The time was one of searching the heart as well. The tribes were passing before the Lord, one by one, followed by the families, households, and individuals, with the purpose that the sin be eliminated.

Then questions arise: Is it possible, in our day, that there may exist, in the church of Christ today, someone who is causing the displeasure of God to rest upon the whole camp? A Judas—traitor of the Lord in the company of believers? If yes, what to do so that the displeasure of God be not upon us all? About Jonah, it was asked, "What shall we do unto thee?" And his answer was, "Take me up, and cast me forth into the sea" (Jonah 1:11–12). But the insubordinate Jonahs of today would say, "Who has the authority to cast me out

of the ship?" And the Achans, "Who is worthy to cast the first stone at me?" But, the Lord said, "Verily I say unto you, Whatsoever ye shall bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever ye shall loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven." Matthew 18:18

Sister White wrote about a brother with the same spirit: "I then saw Brother J. He had wounded and torn the hearts of God's people. I saw he had been stubborn and rebellious, and unless he changed his course entirely, the church should disfellowship him, for he has been a dead weight to the church." —*Manuscript Releases*, vol. 5, p. 202

NO COMPROMISE LEST WE PERISH

Let us read the experience of Aaron: "'Moses said unto Aaron, and unto Eleazar and unto Ithamar, his sons, Uncover not your heads, neither rend your clothes; lest ye die, . . . for the anointing oil of the LORD is upon you.' The great leader reminded his brother of the words of God, 'I will be sanctified in them that come nigh Me, and before all the people I will be glorified.' Aaron was silent. The death of his sons, cut down without warning, in so terrible a sin—a sin which he now saw to be the result of his own neglect of duty—wring the father's heart with anguish, but he gave his feelings no expression. By no manifestation of grief must he seem to sympathize with sin. The congregation must not be led to murmur against God.

"The Lord would teach His people to acknowledge the justice of His corrections, that others may fear. There were those in Israel whom the warning of this terrible judgment might save from presuming upon God's forbearance until they, too, should seal their own destiny. The divine rebuke is upon that false sympathy for the sinner which endeavors to excuse his sin. It is the effect

of sin to deaden the moral perceptions, so that the wrongdoer does not realize the enormity of transgression, and without the convicting power of the Holy Spirit he remains in partial blindness to his sin. It is the duty of Christ's servants to show these erring ones their peril. Those who destroy the effect of the warning by blinding the eyes of sinners to the real character and results of sin often flatter themselves that they thus give evidence of their charity; but they are working directly to oppose and hinder the work of God's Holy Spirit; they are lulling the sinner to rest on the brink of destruction; they are making themselves partakers in his guilt and incurring a fearful responsibility for his impenitence. Many, many, have gone down to ruin as the result of this false and deceptive sympathy." – *Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 361

THE AUTHORITY OF THE CHURCH

"God has invested His church with special authority and power which no one can be justified in disregarding and despising, for in so doing he despises the voice of God." – *Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 3, p. 417

"Whatsoever ye shall bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever ye shall loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven."

"This statement holds its force in all ages. On the church has been conferred the power to act in Christ's stead. It is God's instrumentality for the preservation of order and discipline among His people. To it the Lord has delegated the power to settle all questions respecting its prosperity, purity, and order. Upon it rests the responsibility of excluding from its fellowship those who are unworthy, who by their unchristlike conduct would bring dishonor on the truth. Whatever the church does that is in accordance with the directions given in God's word, will be ratified in heaven." – *Gospel Workers*, p. 501

DEALING WITH PRIVATE SINS

The Jonahs and Achans of today not only question the authority of their brethren and sisters to act on this hard and unpleasant task, but also question the way it is to be done. But all should remember the words of Christ in Matthew 18:15–17: "Moreover if thy brother shall trespass against thee, go and tell him his fault between thee and him alone: if he shall hear thee, thou hast gained thy brother. But if he will not hear thee, then take with thee one or two more, that in the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established. And if he shall neglect to hear them, tell it

unto the church: but if he neglect to hear the church, let him be unto thee as an heathen man and a publican."

"No church officer should advise, no committee should recommend, nor should any church vote, that the name of a wrongdoer shall be removed from the church books, until the instruction given by Christ has been faithfully followed." – *Gospel Workers*, p. 501

According to the above text, there are 3 steps to take:

1. The first lesson is not to go in haste, but with searching of heart, "considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted" (Galatians 6:1), "lest thou know not what to do in the end thereof, when thy neighbour hath put thee to shame." Proverbs 25:8

He might say: "Behold, a beam is in thine own eye." Matthew 7:4. But there is still another danger of being put to open shame, and the instruction of the Lord is: "Debate thy cause with thy neighbour himself; and discover not a secret to another: Lest he that heareth it put thee to shame, and thine infamy turn not away." Proverbs 25:9–10

Therefore, "Let us take the words of Christ. If the man has done you an injury, go to him, and between you and him alone seek to set the matter right. Do not go to anyone but himself. If he refuses to hear you, then take two or three others, and go to him again; but do not publish it in the church or out of the church. When you have done your duty, if he still refuses to hear you, then let the church take it up; but let them deal gently with the erring. Do not even listen to the gossiping tongue. If one comes to you with an evil report, ask him if he has been to the offending brother, as the Bible directs. If he has not, refuse even to hear him. Nineteenths of the church trials might be avoided, if all would, in the spirit of kindness and love, pursue the course marked out by Inspiration." – *The Signs of the Times*, January 6, 1887

"Men have no right to surmise evil in regard to their fellow-men. Church-members have no right to follow their own impulses and inclinations in dealing with fellow-members who have erred. They should not even express their prejudices regarding the erring; for thus they place in other minds the leaven of evil. . . . Do not tell others of the wrong. One person is told, then another, and still another; and continually the report grows, and the evil increases, till the whole church is made to suffer. Settle the matter 'between thee and him alone.' This is God's plan." – *Gospel Workers*, p. 498



And the result of the work of a wise reprov-er will be as “apples of gold in pictures of silver . . . upon an obedient ear.” Proverbs 25:11–12. “All heaven is interested in the interview between the one who has been injured and the one who is in error. As the erring one accepts the reproof offered in the love of Christ, and acknowledges his wrong, asking forgiveness from God and from his brother, the sunshine of heaven fills his heart. The controversy is ended; friendship and confidence are restored. The oil of love removes the soreness caused by the wrong; the Spirit of God binds heart to heart; and there is music in heaven over the union brought about.” —*Gospel Workers*, p. 499

2. The second step then comes: “If he will not hear thee,” the Lord says, “then take with thee one or two more, that in the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established.” As a result of our great desire to do the will of God in this matter, blended with our love for the erring one stepping on dangerous ground, there arises a great concern: Who am I going to take with me on this important mission of rescuing our brother or sister? But we thank the Lord He has given us instruction, for He says: “Brethren, if a man be overtaken

in a fault, ye which are spiritual, restore such an one in the spirit of meekness.” Galatians 6:1

“Take with you those who are spiritually minded, and talk with the one in error in regard to the wrong. He may yield to the united appeals of his brethren. As he sees their agreement in the matter, his mind may be enlightened.” —*Gospel Workers*, p. 500

3. Then step number three may occur: “If he shall neglect to hear them,”—those in the second step, the spiritual brethren—then and only then “tell it unto the church: but if he neglect to hear the church, let him be unto thee as an heathen man and a publican.” Matthew 18:17. “What then shall be done?” and who only can do it? “Shall a few persons in a board meeting take upon

themselves the responsibility of disfellowshipping the erring one? . . . Let the church take action in regard to its members.” —*Gospel Workers*, p. 500

In John 20:23 Christ “gives no liberty for any man to pass judgment upon others. In the Sermon on the Mount He forbade this. It is the prerogative of God. But on the church in its organized capacity He places a responsibility for the individual members. Toward those who fall into sin, the church has a duty, to warn, to instruct, and if possible to restore. ‘Reprove, rebuke, exhort,’ the Lord says, ‘with all long-suffering and doctrine.’ (2 Timothy 4:2).”—*Gospel Workers*, p. 502

In this process we are brought “to the general assembly and church of the firstborn, which are written in heaven, and to God the Judge of all, and to the spirits of just men

made perfect, And to Jesus the mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling, that speaketh better things than that of Abel.” Therefore “see that ye refuse not him that speaketh. For if they escaped not who refused him that spake on earth, much more shall not we escape, if we turn away from Him that speaketh from heaven: Whose voice then shook the earth: but now He hath promised, saying, Yet once more I shake not the earth only, but also heaven. And this word, Yet once more, signifieth the removing of those things that are shaken, as of things that are made, that those

things which cannot be shaken may remain.” Hebrews 12:23–27. “A kingdom which cannot be moved” (verse 28) has been established by God, and to refuse its counsels and appeals is to refuse the voice of God, because “God has invested His church with special authority and power which no one can be justified in disregarding and despising, for in so doing he despises the voice of God.” —*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 3, p. 417

Therefore, brethren and sisters, “let us have grace, whereby we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear.” Hebrews 12:28

AND WHEN THE SIN IS PUBLIC?

“Whatever the character of the offense, this does not

*“Deal faithfully with wrongdoing. Warn every soul that is in danger. Leave none to deceive themselves. Call sin by its right name. Declare what God has said in regard to lying, Sabbath-breaking, stealing, idolatry, and every other evil. ‘They which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God’ (Galatians 5:21). If they persist in sin, the judgment you have declared from God’s word is pronounced upon them in heaven. In choosing to sin, they disown Christ; the church must show that she does not sanction their deeds, or she herself dishonors her Lord. She must say about sin what God says about it. She must deal with it as God directs, and her action is ratified in heaven. He who despises the authority of the church, despises the authority of Christ Himself.” —*Gospel Workers*, pp. 502–503*

change the plan that God has made for the settlement of misunderstandings and personal injuries.” —*Gospel Workers*, p. 499

How can these words be applied to public sins? The Bible says, “Them that sin rebuke before all, that others also may fear.” 1 Timothy 5:20. There is one case on record in the experience of Ellen G. White and her husband that gives us a perfect example of public discipline in *Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 2, p. 14–15: “The next morning, as we were about to leave for the house of worship to engage in the arduous labors of the day, a sister for whom I had a testimony that she lacked discretion and caution, and did not fully control her words and actions, came in with her husband and manifested feelings of great unreconciliation and agitation. She commenced to talk and to weep. She murmured a little, and confessed a little, and justified self considerably. She had a wrong idea of many things I had stated to her. Her pride was touched as I brought out her faults in so public a manner. Here was evidently the main difficulty. But why should she feel thus? The brethren and sisters knew these things were so, therefore I was not informing them of anything new. But I doubt not that it was new to the sister herself. She did not know herself, and could not properly judge of her own words and acts. This is in a degree true of nearly all, hence the necessity of faithful reproofs in the church and the cultivation by all its members of love for the plain testimony.

“Her husband seemed to feel unreconciled to my bringing out her faults before the church and stated that if Sister White had followed the directions of our Lord in Matthew 18:15–17 he should not have felt hurt. . . . My husband then stated that he should understand that these words of our Lord had reference to cases of personal trespass, and could not be applied in the case of this sister. She had not trespassed against Sister White. But that which had been reproved publicly was public wrongs which threatened the prosperity of the church and the cause. Here, said my husband, is a text applicable to the case: 1 Timothy 5:20: ‘Them that sin rebuke before all, that others also may fear.’”

This is what the apostle says: “Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual, restore such an one in the spirit of meekness.” To restore is one of the main purposes of church discipline, as well as to free herself from the wrong influence of unworthy members. “Toward those who fall into sin, the church has a duty, to warn, to instruct, and if possible to restore. . . .”

A SOLEMN WARNING

Here is a warning from the Lord: “Many appear to be

steadfast in the truth, firm, decided on every point of our faith; yet there is a great lack in them,—the tenderness and love which marked the character of the great Pattern. If a brother errs from the truth, if he falls into temptation, they may make little or no effort to restore him in meekness, considering themselves lest they also be tempted. They seem to regard it as their special work to climb upon the judgment seat and condemn and dis-fellowship. They do not obey God’s word, which says, ‘Ye which are spiritual, restore such an one in the spirit of meekness.’ The spirit of this passage is altogether too rare in our churches. It is the lack of it that shuts out the Spirit of God from the heart, from the home, from the church. Shall we not henceforth practice the Bible plan of restoring erring ones in the spirit of meekness? Shall we not have the spirit of Jesus, and work as He worked?

“Keep back that disposition to crowd out a brother, even if you think him unworthy, even if he has hindered your work by manifesting a spirit of independence and willfulness. Remember that he is God’s property. Err always on the side of mercy and tenderness. Treat with respect and deference even your most bitter enemies, who would injure you if they could. Let not a word escape your lips that would give them opportunity to justify their course in the least degree.” —*The Review and Herald*, December 16, 1884

However, we must “call sin by its right name. Declare what God has said with regards to lying, Sabbath-breaking, stealing, idolatry, and every other evil. ‘They which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God.’ (Galatians 5:21). . . . She [the church] must say about sin what God says about it. She must deal with it as God directs, and her action is ratified in heaven. He who despises the authority of the church, despises the authority of Christ Himself.” —*Gospel Workers*, p. 502

May the Lord keep us so that we may overcome the world in doing good, serving Him in fear and doing what He commands. Amen.

Victor Shumbusho DR Congo





How do Divine Principles Contribute to our Happiness?

Last month we were introduced to the topic of happiness. Most people would agree that finding happiness is a priority in their lives. However, many are misled by the world's idea of finding happiness, thinking that it can be found in possessions, in one's living situation, or in engaging in pleasurable activities. Jesus tells us in the parable about a rich man, whose ground brought forth many fruits. In order to hold all his goods, he pulled down his existing barns, and built bigger barns, and then said to himself, "Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years; take thine ease, eat, drink, and be merry. But God said unto him, Thou fool, this night thy soul shall be required of thee, then whose shall those things be, which thou hast provided?" Luke 12:19-20. All the goods that this world can provide, the ease and comfort that money can bring is worth nothing when a life that has been wasted in enjoying the pleasures of this world, dies without having laid up treasures in heaven. Solomon, who had riches and glory, was lauded by the world for his wisdom, and what did he say? "I have seen all the works that are done under the sun; and, behold, all is vanity and vexation of spirit." Ecclesiastes 1:14

Very few people find true, lasting happiness. Why is this? And how can we ensure that we can live a life filled with happiness that lasts, and that is not dependent on what we have, our position in life, or who we are with?

Researchers have been studying the concept of happiness, and to determine what is needed for people to be happy. What science has recently "discovered" about happiness has been known for 6,000 years, and it can be found in the Bible.

What has been found is that those with religious beliefs are happier than those who do not ascribe to any religion. They are better able to handle life's stresses. They are less de-

pressed and anxious. A 2015 Dutch study found that participating in a religious organization was the only social activity associated with sustained happiness. Religion provides a greater sense of purpose and meaning in life, helps to carry you through low periods and elevates the high ones. Belief in an afterlife can make you happier in this life, knowing that you are heading for something better. Many religions also have guidelines that provide for a healthier and happier life, e.g. vegetarianism, abstaining from alcohol.

We learned last month about the trend towards consumerism, theorizing that the more you have, the happier you will be. The problem arises when there are an abundance of possible choices in a free, consumer-driven society. The term for this is called the "paradox of choice", when there are too many options, and people cannot choose from so many. The rules of religion can relieve this burden of "choice", by reducing these options, especially when it discourages unhealthy behaviours.

Strong social ties are one of the greatest guarantors of happiness. Religion is practiced in groups, with close emotional connections between group members; this sense of community works best when those who attend church are close friends with others who also attend. In living conditions where fear, poverty, and hunger are present, the connection between religious faith and happiness is the strongest. The hope of a better life to come and communal support drive this increase in happiness. Even in rich countries such as the United States, areas with lower life expectancies and higher poverty rates have a higher proportion of religious followers. And, added to all this, happiness has always been one of the main goals of religion. Belief in God and the happiness that this belief brings is what makes religion so attractive. The Dalai Lama posed a question, "Isn't a life based on seeking personal happiness by nature self-centred,

and even self-indulgent?” He countered by stating that it is unhappy people who tend to be most self-focused and often socially withdrawn, brooding, and even antagonistic. Happy people are found to be more loving and forgiving, more flexible and creative, and more sociable.

There are specific guidelines and behaviours, based in the practice of religion, that have been linked to higher levels of happiness. Let us look at the first of them this month.

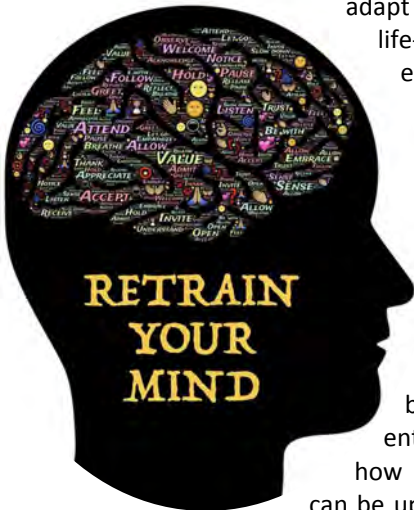
RESILIENCE

“Resilience is the process of adapting well in the face of adversity, trauma, tragedy, threats or significant sources of stress — such as family and relationship problems, serious health problems or workplace and financial stressors. It means ‘bouncing back’ from difficult experiences.”

<http://www.apa.org/helpcenter/road-resilience.aspx>

Many people react with strong emotions when faced with severe stress, yet many people are able to adapt well over time to these often life-changing experiences. Resilience is not a trait that people either have or do not have. It involves behaviors, thoughts and actions that can be learned and developed in anyone. It is known that stressful situations can change the structure and function of the brain. Training is possible to change the brain to become more resilient. If you train your brain, then how you respond under pressure can be up to you. Resilience allows an individual to not only get through hard times, but allows one to thrive during hard times and afterwards. A resilient brain seems to shut off the stress response and return to a healthy baseline quickly, and is able to regulate the fear circuits which are triggered with everyday stressors. Many modern diseases have stress as a common risk factor; with the resilient brain, overall health is improved.

The primary factor in resilience is having caring and supportive relationships within and outside of the family. This includes the family circle, being part of a tight-knit community, and having stable role models that you can look up to. How does this relate to the Christian experience? God has a church on this earth, and each member is closely connected to others. We are counselled to uplift and encourage each other,



er, to strengthen the other members, and to support each other during difficult times. We are our brothers’ keepers, and their happiness is the responsibility of each of us. “We are children of God, mutually dependent upon one another for happiness.” —*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 4, p. 71. “Bear ye one another’s burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ.” Galatians 6:2. We are given a similar counsel for our marriage relationships. “In your life union your affections are to be tributary to each other’s happiness. Each is to minister to the happiness of the other.” —*The Adventist Home*, p. 103. Not only do we benefit by accepting help and support from those who care about us, but helping others in their time of need also benefits the one who helps. “He that hath mercy on the poor, happy is he.” Proverbs 14:21. We need to focus less on our own troubles, to avoid feeling pity for ourselves, and help others instead. “Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others.” Philippians 2:4

How can we ensure happiness in our family relationships? “Whether the home be humble or elegant, . . . there will be no happiness within its walls unless the spirit of its inmates is in harmony with the divine will.” —*ibid.*, p. 154. Happiness within families, and within the church will exist only when Christ is the center of the relationship. “The presence of Christ alone can make men and women happy. . . . The home then becomes as an Eden of bliss; the family, a beautiful symbol of the family in heaven.” —*ibid.*, p. 28

We not only need the support of other Christians, of our families, but we will only be truly happy unless we have Jesus in our lives. This relationship is the most important to us, in ensuring our happiness, not only in this life, but for our eternal life. Our Saviour, who died for us, wants to have a relationship with us, so that we can be forever with Him. “For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life.” John 3:16. God’s love for us inspires love towards Him. “We love Him, because He first loved us.” 1 John 4:19. We love Him because of what He has done for us. “But rejoice, inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ’s sufferings; that, when His glory shall be revealed, ye may be glad also with exceeding joy.” 1 Peter 4:13. Though we will suffer as Christ suffered, the end of all things is joy forevermore.

Resilience also comes from accepting the circumstances that we are in. We may have had goals that we were striving for, plans we had made for our lives, but sometimes our goals can no longer be attainable. We may not be able to change our lot in life; however, acceptance brings happiness, as then we do not spend our time mourning the loss of that which we cannot have. Job lost his children, his flocks, even his health. But he did not focus on his losses. He accepted what had become of him, and continued to praise God. “The LORD gave, and the LORD hath taken away; blessed be the name of the LORD.” Job 1:21



Paul gives us the reason for the resilience that Christians have during hard times. "And not only so, but we glory in tribulations also: knowing that tribulation worketh patience; And patience, experience; and experience, hope: And hope maketh not ashamed; because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given to us." Romans 5:3–5. We know that trials are not given to us to make us miserable and unhappy, but they serve a purpose in purifying our characters. Knowing this, the Christian accepts trials as part of the process in preparing for heaven, and they are glad for the trials that they must endure.

Having stable role models helps us be more resilient. We can look to those who have been through similar circumstances, and learn from their experience. Who should be our role models? Who should we look to for examples of resilience? The Bible has many stories of people who endured great hardships, whose love towards God was unwavering, despite the circumstances they found themselves in. We can see this resilience in David, Daniel, Esther, Job, Paul, Peter, and many others who were brought through great trials, yet were able to endure and even succeed. And who is our greatest example of resilience, the role model that we need to emulate to endure to the end? Is it not Jesus? "He shall see of the travail of His soul, and shall be satisfied." Isaiah 53:11. "Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God." Hebrews 12:2

Why was Jesus so resilient, why was He willing to endure the suffering and humiliation of the cross? Because He had a purpose to His coming to this earth, and that was to save those whom He loves; and this brought Him great joy. He also wants His children to be happy, and He alone knows what we need in order to find true happiness. "What sustained the Son of God during His life of toil and sacrifice? He saw the results of the travail of His soul and was satisfied. Looking to eternity, He beheld the happiness of those who through His humiliation had received pardon and everlasting life." *—Heaven*, p. 174

When under stress, many people worry about the future and they fret about the past. The more the brain dwells on these, the stronger the pathways become that reinforces this type of thinking. Eventually, negative thinking is the default that the brain utilizes. However, people can train their brain to build and strengthen new connections that do not reinforce this sense of fear and regret, and; over time, if these pathways are used, this becomes the new response to stress. An important pathway in our brain is from the prefrontal cortex (where our thinking and planning happen) to the amygdala (the emotional part of the brain that responds to threats). A stronger connection means that the prefrontal cortex can more quickly tell the emotional amygdala to quiet down, that there is nothing to fear. A resilient brain responds to emotions differently than a brain that is

wired for fear. People who suffer depression and anxiety have a hard time letting go of emotions, and allow the amygdala to take over, often perceiving threats where they do not exist. However, focusing on what you want to achieve, and having an optimistic, hopeful outlook enables you to see the good things that can happen, and doing this prevents you from worrying about your fears.

How do we improve this connection between the two parts of our brain, to become more resilient? Facing the situation that scares you relaxes the fear circuitry. But, we know that we never need to face our fears on our own. Jesus tells us, "My peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid." John 14:27. "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. For I am the LORD thy God, the Holy One of Israel, thy Saviour." Isaiah 43:2–3. We have the assurance that as we pass through life's trials, we are not alone; Jesus is with us every step of the way. He removes all fear. He knows the heartaches and sorrows that we experience; He suffered so that He could understand our suffering. "Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened unto you. But rejoice, inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ's sufferings; that, when His glory shall be revealed, ye may be glad also with exceeding joy." 1 Peter 4:12–13. "Weeping may endure for a night, but joy cometh in the morning." Psalm 30:5. We rejoice in sufferings, because we know that joy will follow when we are redeemed. Happiness is possible in the greatest tribulations we may face.

Resilient people also recognize that there are times that they need to re-energize, to take time away from stress. Jesus often left the disciples to sleep while finding a quiet place where He prayed to His Father for strength. "And it came to pass in those days, that He went out into a mountain to pray, and continued all night in prayer to God." Luke 6:12

Another criteria that has been identified to promote resilience is having a strong belief in one's ability to solve problems; this helps people do well, despite difficult circumstances. This is what the world believes. But, as Christians, how should we consider our own abilities? "I am the vine, ye are the branches: He that abideth in Me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without Me ye can do nothing." John 15:5. Believing that we can rely on our own abilities is to fail. However, "I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me." Philippians 4:13. "For with God nothing shall be impossible." Luke 1:37. This is a great promise given to us; through Christ we have all the power we need to endure hardships, and to be resilient.

Another way to develop resilience and turn off the fear re-

sponse is in developing a core set of beliefs to guide daily decisions; it is when people have too many choices, that they often do not know which one is the best one for their happiness. The Bible was given to man, and its main purpose is to guide men to salvation, and to find true happiness on this earth. Its pages provide us with a set of rules and beliefs that are our counsel when making decisions. We will never doubt that we have made the right decision when the Bible is our guide. "Trust in the LORD with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding. In all thy ways acknowledge Him, and He shall direct thy paths." Proverbs 3:5-6

People often learn something about themselves and may find they have grown in some respect as a result of their struggles. Many who have experienced tragedies and hardship have reported better relationships, a greater sense of strength, and a deeper spiritual connection with God.



When difficult circumstances occur, resilience improves when we search for meaning in them. There is a well-known verse that assures us

that everything that happens to us is for our benefit. "And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to His purpose." Romans 8:28. "Wherein ye greatly rejoice, though now for a season, if need be, ye are in heaviness through manifold temptations: That the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honour and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ." 1 Peter 1:7

The trials that we go through are to purify us, to make us fit for heaven; therefore, we are to rejoice when they come upon us. We are happy during the times when we are also in the greatest despair, knowing that Jesus is purifying us in the fire of affliction. Paul and Silas were singing when they were imprisoned in Jerusalem. "And at midnight, Paul and Silas prayed, and sang praises unto God: and the prisoners heard them." Acts 16:25. Our happiness in trials can also be a witness to others, who long for that same happiness for themselves.

We must not dwell on the past, as that prevents us from accepting that we must move past our mistakes. Resilience comes from learning from our mistakes and then moving on. Our wrong choices can teach us lessons. As Christians, when we make mistakes, we become aware that making any decision on our own without

God will most likely be the wrong decision. And when we have remorse for our sins, and we ask for forgiveness from God, does He keep reminding us of our past mistakes? No, He tells us that "As far as the east is from the west, so far hath He removed our transgressions from us." Psalm 103:12. We need to also do the same, forgetting about the past and looking toward a brighter future, a heavenly home and eternal life. "Remember ye not the former things, neither consider the things of old." Isaiah 43:18

Resilience involves identifying what makes us strong. Where do we get our strength? When we feel strong in the strength of our Lord, we feel that we can conquer anything, that nothing is impossible for us. Moses said in Exodus 15:2, "The LORD is my strength and song, and He is become my salvation." "Be strong and of a good courage, fear not, nor be afraid of them: for the LORD thy God, He it is that doth go with thee, He will not fail thee, nor forsake thee." Deuteronomy 31:6. One of my favourite Bible verses is in the book of Nahum: "The LORD is good, a strong hold in the day of trouble; and He knoweth them that trust in Him." Nahum 1:7. David recognized the power of the LORD when he was fleeing from Saul, who wanted to take his life. "The LORD is my light and my salvation; whom shall I fear? the LORD is the strength of my life; of whom shall I be afraid?" Psalm 27:1. When we accept our weakness, we rely on God's strength to sustain us. "And He said unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness. Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me." 2 Corinthians 12:9. This same power we can all have; and when God is on our side, we can truly be resilient, happy Christians.

"The true principles of Christianity open before all a source of happiness, the height and depth, the length and breadth of which are immeasurable." -*The Adventist Home*, p. 493

NEXT MONTH: HOW DO DIVINE PRINCIPLES CONTRIBUTE TO OUR HAPPINESS? Part 2



Nothing Can Separate



From her bedroom window, Emily enviously eyed the children playing in the snow. How she longed to play with them!

“Now, Emily,” she remembered her father telling her that morning, “You can’t play in the snow today.”

“Why not, Father?” Emily had asked. Every day, the neighbourhood children gathered at a park just behind Emily’s house.

“Just trust me, Emily. It’s not what’s best for you today,” her father had replied.

At the time, Emily had responded by kissing her father on his cheek and assuring him that she would stay inside and read. But now she was having second thoughts.

It is beautiful outside, she thought to herself. It was true: the sun *was* shining brilliantly. Why wouldn’t her father let her go play? Why should she have to miss out on all the fun?

When a snowball exploded just outside her window, Emily decided she couldn’t stand it any longer. She simply had to go join the others! Leaving her book on the table, Emily slipped outside. She tried to tell herself she was having a good time, but all the while her heart felt uncomfortable. She kept looking this way and that, fearful that her father might see her. After a few hours, Emily finally said her goodbyes and headed back towards the house. She wanted to be safely in her room before her father came home.

Intent on getting to her room as quickly as possible, Emily didn’t see the mitten someone had left on the stairs until her foot slipped on it. The next thing she knew, she had fallen several stairs. To her horror, she noticed that she had hit her father’s favourite picture when she fell! A huge gash ran along the front of the picture.

Normally, Emily would have hurried immediately to her father after such a fall so he could doctor her up and make her feel better. But not this time. How could she face her father right now? She had disobeyed him and ruined his favorite picture! Biting her lips to keep from crying out, Emily grabbed the ruined picture and hobbled to her room.

For the remainder of the day she lay in agony. Her body ached from the bruises she received on her fall. But her heart—ah, that ached worst of all! She felt certain that her father would no longer love her. She had messed up in the past, but surely this time she had gone too far! He would probably never want to speak to her again. How could he still love her?

She sobbed uncontrollably on her pillow. She had always been close to her father. They had played and studied together. They had laughed and cried together. But not now. No, she felt certain that all those wonderful times were over.

Who knows how long she would have lain there had not her nanny come in to check on her. Emily’s nanny had a way about her of finding out exactly what was

wrong and offering solid, wise counsel. Tonight was no exception.

“Emily, dear,” she said firmly, but gently. “You’ve been very wrong. But you must not continue in your wrongness by sitting here. You must go to your father with the broken picture in your hand and tell him everything.”

“Oh, but I can’t! I’m not worthy of his love!” Emily sobbed.

Her nanny sighed patiently. “You were no more worthy of it yesterday than today, child. Your father loves you because you’re his daughter, not because of anything you do or don’t do. Hasn’t he told you every day since you were a little girl, ‘I love you’? Do you doubt his word? Do you really think his love is dependent on you?”

Doubt his word—that was an angle Emily had never thought of before. Maybe she should go see her father. . . yes, she must go see him, for if she didn’t, she’d never be able to rest.

So, still shaking and trembling with fear, Emily limped down the hall to the living room. She paused at the doorway. Her father was sitting in his favorite chair, just like he did every night. He looked up when she entered, and a smile radiating with love illuminated his face.

“Ah, you’ve come at last! I’ve been waiting. Come, sit here on my lap.” As he spoke, he opened his arms widely.

Emily couldn’t stand it. “Oh, you don’t understand, Father! You can’t love me anymore. I’ve been terribly wicked and—” Emily held up the picture frame for her father to see.

“I know, Emily—more than you think. I watched you go outside. I watched you fall and hit the picture frame. I saw it all.”

“You did?” Emily was flabbergasted. “But-but weren’t you at work?”

Her father shook his head. “I took the day off to spend some special time with you. That’s why I told you not to go outside to play. Ever since I saw you fall, I’ve been longing for you to come to me so I could bandage your wounds and help you. Won’t you come now?”

Emily could hardly believe her ears. Her father had planned to spend the afternoon with her. . . and she had missed it. Oh, what foolishness! Yet her father knew it all. . . and loved her anyway. Could it be? “But, Father, how can you love me now?”

Emily’s father smiled a smile she would never forget. “Emily, dear, I loved you before you were born. You’re my daughter. And I will always love you. Although sometimes your actions will result in consequences you could have avoided, nothing can ever separate you from my love. Now won’t you come and let me help you with those bruises?”

“Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? As it is written, For thy sake we are killed all the day long; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter. Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us.” Romans 8:35–37



LOOKING FOR YOU . . .

If you are interested in submitting an item for publication in *The Reformation Messenger*, please submit by email or mail.

Submit: Drawings, Announcements, Reports, Articles, Poems, Photos, Personal Testimonies and Experiences.

**Ministers, Workers and Leaders Seminar
in Ethiopia, June 18–25**



**Sydney, Australia, church visiting
a nursing home on Sabbath**




Members and visitors in Edmonton, Canada



Leaders and Workers in Ghana





“By beholding the character of Christ you will become changed into His likeness. The grace of Christ alone can change your heart and then you will reflect the image of the Lord Jesus. God calls upon us to be like Him—pure, holy, and undefiled. We are to bear the divine image.”

—God’s Amazing Grace, p. 299