



The Reformation
Messenger
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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.

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Open The Door

“The True Witness says, ‘Behold, I stand at the door, and knock.’ Revelation 3:20. Every warning, reproof, and entreaty in the word of God or through His messengers is a knock at the door of the heart. It is the voice of Jesus asking for entrance.” —*The Desire of Ages*, p. 489–490

“All who will open their hearts to receive Him may have Jesus as an honored guest.

“Jesus is the perfect pattern. Instead of trying to please self and have our own way, let us seek to reflect His image. He was kind and courteous, compassionate and tender. Are we like Him in these respects? Do we seek to make our lives fragrant with good works? . . .

“It is not enough that we merely profess the faith; something more than a nominal assent is wanted. There must be a real knowledge, a genuine experience in the principles of the truth as it is in Jesus. The Holy Spirit must work within, bringing these principles into the strong light of distinct consciousness, that we may know their power and make them a living reality. . . .

“God has honored His Son by making Him the model after which He molds the characters of all who believe on Him. He takes of the things of Christ and reveals them to us, that we may catch His temper and bear His likeness.” —*In Heavenly Places*, p. 46

“Arouse every spiritual energy to action. Tell those whom you visit the end of all things is at hand. The Lord Jesus Christ will open the door of their hearts, and will make upon their minds lasting impressions.

“Strive to arouse men and women from their spiritual insensibility. Tell them how you found Jesus, and how blessed you have been since you gained an experience in His service. Tell them what blessing comes to you as you sit at the feet of Jesus, and learn precious lessons from His Word. Tell them of the gladness and joy that there is in the Christian life. Your warm, fervent words will convince them that you have found the pearl of great price. Let your cheerful, encouraging words show that you have certainly found the higher way. This is genuine missionary work, and as it is done, many will awake as from a dream.” —*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 9, p. 38

“In every place the sick may be found, and those who go forth as workers for Christ should be true health reformers, prepared to give those who are sick the simple treatments that will re-

lieve them, and then pray with them. Thus they will open the door for the entrance of the truth. The doing of this work will be followed by good results.” —*Medical Ministry*, p. 320

“Kindly words simply spoken, little attentions simply bestowed, will sweep away the clouds of temptation and doubt that gather over the soul. The true heart-expression of Christlike sympathy, given in simplicity, has power to open the door of hearts that need the simple, delicate touch of the Spirit of Christ.” —*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 9, p. 30

“As you open your door to Christ's needy and suffering ones, you are welcoming unseen angels. You invite the companionship of heavenly beings. They bring a sacred atmosphere of joy and peace. They come with praises upon their lips, and an answering strain is heard in heaven. Every deed of mercy makes music there.” —*The Faith I Live By*, p. 276

“It is a case of life or death with us. We have been stricken with spiritual paralysis, and every one needs the help of the Great Physician. He alone can reach our case. He is only waiting to be invited by us with earnest heart, with sincere desire. Nothing is wanting but a preparation of heart, and earnest, believing prayer, to bring Jesus to our side as a mighty helper. He longs to come. If we will but listen to His voice and open the door, He will come in.” —*Gospel Workers*, p. 225–226

Ellen G. White

We Need the Mighty Power of God



Wonderful promises have been given to us in the Bible. "I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me." Philippians 4:13

"Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him that loved us." Romans 8:37

"But thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ." 1 Corinthians 15:57

"Now thanks be unto God, which always causeth us to triumph in Christ." 2 Corinthians 2:14

There is mighty power and help provided for us by God. Why then are there weak Christians? Why do they fail and fall into temptation? Why does not everyone put away sin, and cry to the people, "Jesus is coming, get ready." Something has happened to the power in many Christians. Somehow the connection to the source of power is broken, and weakness and failure are the result.

To delay obedience is to sin. Paul gave Bible studies to Felix and afterwards he said to Paul, "And as he reasoned of righteousness, temperance, and judgment to come, Felix trembled, and answered, Go thy way for this time; when I have a convenient season, I will call for thee." Acts 24:25

There was a man who had Bible studies, and he decided to start keeping the Sabbath. But, he decided to go to work one more Sabbath, and after that, no more. But that was a mistake; that Sabbath at work he had an accident and he died.

If we have one Achan among us, we all lose the power of God. This happened in Ancient Israel. "And the

LORD said unto Joshua, Get thee up; wherefore liest thou thus upon thy face? Israel hath sinned, and they have also transgressed my covenant which I have commanded them; for they have even taken of the accursed thing, and have also stolen, and dissembled also, and they have put it even among their own stuff. Therefore the children of Israel could not stand before their enemies, but turned their backs before their enemies, because they were accursed: neither will I be with you any more, except ye destroy the accursed from among you." Joshua 7:10-12

One man, Achan, had sinned, and because of Him, God said, I am not with you anymore. Everyone lost the power of God. We must keep the church pure so that all members will not lose the power of God.

It was 1914 when the Seventh-day Adventists lost the power of God. They had among them those who joined the army and worked on the Sabbath. The faithful members were disfellowshipped. The church continues this practice of joining the army still today.

Peter lost the power of God from fear. He was afraid that he would have to suffer the same punishment as Jesus had to suffer; and therefore, he denied that he knew Jesus.

Without the power of God our religion is in vain; it will not save us. Paul writes, "Having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof: from such turn away." 2 Timothy 3:5

They have knowledge but no obedience. What good is an electric lamp or electric motor without a connection to the current of power? Many times there are blackouts

and electricity disruptions that cause darkness and power failures. So also a Christian, alone, without the source of power, which is God, cannot fulfil his Christian duties.

During the forty years of wilderness journey the people of Israel suffered power failures. Therefore they were murmuring and complaining. We are surprised at their weakness, but we know that history keeps on repeating itself. Still today we repeat their experiences.

While in Egypt, daily they had been crying to God and reminding themselves of the promise that the Lord had made to Jacob, that He would bring them out of Egypt into their own country.

Then, finally came the day when God, by His mighty hand, set the captives free. Cheerfully, singing songs of joy, with a light step they started their journey. Life in Egypt was only a bad dream now. Their minds were in their homeland, a country that flowed with milk and honey. Now, just after six weeks on their way they were no longer happy.

“And the whole congregation of the children of Israel murmured against Moses and Aaron in the wilderness: And the children of Israel said unto them, Would to God we had died by the hand of the LORD in the land of Egypt, when we sat by the flesh pots, and when we did eat bread to the full; for ye have brought us forth into this wilderness to kill this whole assembly with hunger.” Exodus 16:2-3

They were complaining about the leading of God, and at Moses and Aaron. A little later they murmured again. “And the people thirsted there for water; and the people murmured against Moses, and said, Wherefore is this that thou hast brought us up out of Egypt, to kill us and our children, and our cattle with thirst?” Exodus 17:3

If they had been faithful and obedient to God, they would have been in their homeland in a few days, but because of their murmuring and unfaithfulness, God could not bring them into their homeland yet. God gave them His law, and they promised, “All that the Lord has spoken we will do.” But a few days later when Moses came down from the mountain, they were worshipping an idol, a golden calf. This continued and God had to delay their entering into their homeland for forty years.

Why? Why? It was nothing else but a power failure. From over 600,000 men, only two of them could enter into Canaan’s land, Joshua and Caleb.

“The reason why our people have not more power is

that they profess the truth, but do not practice it. They have but little faith and trust in God. There are but few who bear the burdens connected with His work. The Lord claims the strength of brain, bone, and muscle; but it is too often withheld from Him and given to the world. The service of God is made a secondary matter, while worldly interests receive prompt attention. Thus things of minor consequence are made important, while the requirements of God, things spiritual and eternal, are treated in an indifferent manner.” *–Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 4, p. 613

Sin neutralizes the power of the gospel. Neglected prayer, Bible study, missionary work, health reform, all will make us weak, unable to resist Satan’s temptations. Even the little sin is dangerous. “He that is faithful in that which is least is faithful also in much: and he that is unjust in the least is unjust also in much.” Luke 16:10

If you know that something is wrong, or a sin, but consider so small (like eating a forbidden fruit), that you do it willfully, reasoning to yourself that it does not really matter, you will then lose divine power and be left to try to manage in your human strength.

“The strongest temptation cannot excuse sin. However great the pressure brought to bear upon the soul, transgression is our own act. It is not in the power of earth or hell to compel anyone to do evil. Satan attacks us at our weak points, but we need not be overcome. However severe or unexpected the assault, God has provided help for us, and in His strength we may conquer.” *– Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 421

The blood of Jesus gives us power to overcome every sin; it is a symbol of the greatest love. When Paul took a look at it, he fell in love with Jesus, and sacrificed everything for Him. He became an apostle to the Gentiles, to preach Christ crucified. His blood was the redemption price for him, and also for us, for you and me. Will you



accept His sacrifice, His blood? It is your passport to heaven. It does not matter how great your sins are; there is power in the blood of Jesus to wash you clean, to make you perfect. Our victory depends on the power of God, and He will not give us only half the power we need, but the full power to do all that is needed.

Without this power of God, we are only formal Christians; we are easily offended, impatient, and selfish. All this is human weakness. There is also another danger, which is to overestimate ourselves, thinking that we are better than others.

“Those who think themselves strongest will prove to be the weakest, unless they make Christ their efficiency.” – *The Desire of Ages*, p. 414

“Man cannot show greater weakness than by allowing men to ascribe to him the honour for gifts that are heaven-bestowed.” – *Prophets and Kings*, p. 68

To feel good and have need of nothing is pride and weakness.

Paul said, “Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses for Christ sake: for when I am weak, then I am strong.” 2 Corinthians 12:10

Jesus Christ is the only hope that we have to receive power to overcome all sin, and to be sons and daughters of God. “But as many as received Him, to them gave He the power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on His name.” John 1:12

God’s people do not go from strength to weakness, but “they go from strength to strength, every one of them in Zion appeareth before God.” Psalm 84:7

We have the prophecy about the church of God in the last days, “And after these things I saw another angel come down from heaven, having great power; and the

earth was lightened with his glory.” Revelation 18:1

This angel is recognized by his power. This angel is made of people like Joshua and Caleb, who knew not the power of failure.

Brothers and sisters, there is no excuse to be weak; no, there is no reason to fail. The power that is greater than all the evil forces is available to us. This angel “cried mightily with a strong voice, saying, Babylon the great is fallen, is fallen.” Revelation 18:2. Are you or am I this angel?

To be this angel we need revival and reformation in our personal lives. Many of the pioneers of our Reform Movement gave their lives for their faith. They became martyrs for the truth they loved. They had the power of God, they remained faithful unto the end. Our work cannot be finished through human strength; our God knows this, therefore He is willing to send a host of angels from heaven to help us when necessary.

The blood of Jesus is still available to cleanse us from all human weakness, and wash us clean. Then we will be whiter than snow, yes, whiter than snow. Jesus is offering His blood to cleanse us completely. Then we can sing: “The cleansing stream I see, I see, I plunge and O, it cleanseth me. O praise the Lord! It cleanseth me, It cleanseth me, yes, cleanseth me.”

Then we all will be like Joshua and Caleb, ready to go into our Promised Land. May the Lord bless us all, and give us His mighty power, then all things will be possible to us. Amen.

Timo Martin



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Preaching of the First Angel's Message in Sweden



"In Sweden, as in other countries, the most bitter opposition to the reformation was from the clergy. As the reformers gained the ascendancy, and Protestantism became the State religion, they grew intolerant and oppressive. The priests of Sweden possess great influence, though their authority is limited. In every town there is a church council, which has power to forbid all preaching that is considered dangerous to the State Church, or that will cause division in it. Of this council the priest is a member; but while he may desire to enforce the law, he can do nothing if the other members of the council are opposed. The law is now very unpopular, and is not often enforced. There is a strong public sentiment in favor of freedom of speech and conscience, but as we have seen, the Lutheran clergy are jealous of any influence which shall weaken their hold upon the people, and the spirit of intolerance and persecution is not extinct.

"The preaching of the first message in Sweden excited much opposition, and the experience of those who took part in the movement is full of interest. The message was brought to this country from England. In the province of Orebro it began to be proclaimed in the year 1843, by several laymen, called "ropare." These preached with great earnestness that the hour of God's Judgment had come, and a wide-spread interest was aroused among the people. In the fall of the same year, two young men were moved to give the warning. The people assembled in great numbers to listen to their preaching, and the meetings were continued both day and night, sometimes in a private house, and sometimes

in the woods. Many were roused from their careless security, and led to confess their sins and to seek mercy and forgiveness in the name of Jesus. But the greater the interest, the greater the opposition and persecution. There were some who declared the preachers to be insane, or laboring under some strange disease. The priest of the State Church made several attempts to stop the preaching, and to lull the people to sleep again; but without avail. Finally the police were ordered to arrest them, and for six weeks they searched for them in the woods, but in vain.

"Through the efforts of the priest they were finally arrested and imprisoned. An account of this is given by one of the young men, as follows: 'At last the priest summoned us to appear before him. In answer to this summons, about forty of us, mostly young men and women, repaired to his house. After a few questions, he felt our pulse to ascertain if we were affected by disease. We assured him that we were in good health. He then became angry, and demanded a reason for our conduct. This we gave him from the Bible. When we had finished presenting our faith, we noticed that nearly all present had been weeping. All, except my companion and myself, were permitted to return home. The next morning we were arrested by the police, and thrown into the prison at Orebro, where we were assigned a cell among the thieves.

"When we were brought before the governor for examination, he demanded by what authority we were sent to preach. We referred him to Joel 2, and Revelation 14:6

-8, and told him further that the Spirit of God came upon us with such power that we could not resist it. After a number of questions he angrily said, "I will cure you of your foolishness." He then lashed us till his strength failed, when he threw the scourge to his private secretary, and ordered him to continue the lashing. After being severely punished in this way, we were returned to our cell. The same treatment was repeated the next day. The governor ended by saying, "If you do not cease your preaching, I will shut you up where neither sun nor moon can ever shine upon you."

"The following day we were taken to the hospital to be examined by the doctors. Two physicians, two ministers, and a chamberlain were present. We were requested to testify concerning our faith, and we complied with this request. While we were speaking, the chamberlain left the room, with tears streaming from his eyes. The ministers and one of the doctors soon after withdrew without saying a word. The remaining doctor then called in his servant, and directed him to shave our heads, but to leave some hair in the form of a cross. This was done, and the next day we were taken to the insane asylum.

"Here we were put in a room which had been left by its previous occupant in so filthy a condition as to be not only unhealthful but indecent. In the morning we were conducted to an antechamber, and exposed to a powerful stream of cold water. We tried to protect our heads by covering them with our hands; but as soon as we lifted our hands for this purpose, our attendant gave us a blow on the head. Finally my comrade fell to the floor in a swoon, and as he fell, his crutch [he was lame] struck me in the side with such force that I also fell, completely exhausted. We lay in the water until we regained our strength, when the same treatment was repeated. This done, we were again taken before the doctor, who noticed that we trembled from cold and exhaustion, and said, "I will soon warm you up." He produced a large bundle of sticks, and beat us with them until he could do so no longer.

"On the second day after this, we were again brought out for trial, and were told that we would be scourged until we should be compelled to swear. After consultation with each other we repeated the curses mentioned in Deuteronomy 28:15-20, which God uttered against those who would not obey his voice. Through the sympathy of the watchman, it was represented to the governor that we had fulfilled the injunction, and we were then set at liberty.'

"They were permitted to return home, but the harsh treatment they had received brought upon both a severe illness, which it was feared, for a time, would prove fatal. Both recovered, however, and afterward preached with greater power than before. Hundreds of people came to their meetings, and the neighborhood for many miles around became stirred. Many hardened and wicked persons were led to seek God, and secret sins and crimes were confessed.

"Efforts were again made to have them arrested; but persons who sympathized with them appealed to the king in their behalf, and secured an order that they should not be molested. From that time they continued to labor undisturbed. About the middle of the year 1844, however, the power which they had before possessed left them. The truths they had presented appeared as clear and forcible as ever; but the warning having been given, the special manifestation of God's Spirit which had been bestowed to aid its proclamation ceased.

CHILD-PREACHERS

"In many places where the power of the clergy was exercised to prevent the preaching of the advent truth, the Lord was pleased to send the message through little children. As they were under age, the law of the State could not restrain them, and they were permitted to speak freely and unmolested. Thus the warning of the soon-coming Judgment was given to the people. This continued about nine months. After that, the influence upon the children was declared by the authorities to be a disease, and some of them were taken to the hospitals; but their mouths were not stopped; for they preached as long as God chose to use them as witnesses.

"The movement began in the fall of 1842, and continued through the winter of 1843. An eye witness, speaking of the work accomplished through these children, says: 'The weather was providentially very favorable that winter. There was little snow, but the marshes, lakes, and rivers were frozen over so that they could be used as a high-road, and the people went in masses to the places where these child-preachers were, who were mostly poor cottagers. A little girl began preaching but a few miles from the place where I lived, and as the news of the wonderful movement was noised about, I went with my wife to see and hear for myself. When we arrived at the cottage, it was filled with people. The child, who was six or eight years old, moved around

among them, and they asked her questions, which she answered as a child usually does. The people flocked together, till the house was surrounded by a great number. When the last had arrived, her manner changed entirely, both in boldness and movements, clearly indicating that she was moved by an invisible power, and not by her own natural gifts. When she commenced speaking, her voice also changed. She said, "Fear God, and give glory to Him; for the hour of His Judgment is come." She reproved sins, such as drinking, theft, adultery, swearing, and backbiting, and also reproved churchgoers for attending church with worldly business in view, instead of listening to God's word and conforming their lives to it. Her voice and words were impressive. Many were weeping and sighing. They were told that time was given them to repent, but they must do it immediately, and not put it off.

"We went home with stricken and trembling hearts. I felt that I must take my Bible, which I thought I had carefully studied, and search it yet deeper. I could hardly work the following week. My thoughts were constantly running on God's word, and the sharp reproofs and expositions I had heard from that little child, who probably had not even learned to read.'

"A great awakening commenced among the people. Many drunkards became sober men; thieves returned stolen property, and confessed their sins; forgiveness was asked for wrongs done. A work was accomplished such as no preacher with learning and great talent could have effected.'

"A girl who resided in Ljung Parish continued also to preach as long as the first angel's message was proclaimed. When that ceased, she was imbued with a spirit of prayer, and often went out into the woods and other solitary places, and these earnestly besought the Lord to have mercy on the fallen race of humanity. She was very quiet and reserved, and showed by her Christian walk and conversation that she loved the Saviour, and was trying to live in obedience to God's holy requirements.

"Years ago, the work of the first message in these countries was presented before me, and I was shown circumstances similar to those related above. It was God's will that the tidings of the Saviour's coming should be given in Sweden, and when the voices of His servants

were silenced, He put His Spirit upon the children, that the work might be accomplished. When Jesus drew near to Jerusalem attended by the rejoicing multitudes who with shouts of triumph and the waving of palm branches heralded Him as the Son of David, the jealous Pharisees called upon Him to silence them; but Jesus answered that all this was the fulfillment of prophecy, and if these should hold their peace the very stones would cry out. The people, intimidated by the threats of the priests and rulers, ceased their joyful proclamation as they entered the gates of Jerusalem; but the children in the temple courts afterward took up the refrain, and, waving their branches of palm, they cried, 'Hosanna to the Son of David!' When the Pharisees, sorely displeased, said unto Him, 'Hearest thou what these say?' Jesus answered, 'Yea; have ye never read, Out of the mouth of babes and sucklings thou hast perfected praise?' As God wrought through children in Christ's day, so He wrought through them in giving the first message. God's word must be fulfilled, that the proclamation of Christ's advent near should be given to all peoples, tongues, and nations.

"God speaks to nations and to cities, sending them messages of mercy, which, if accepted, would save them from great calamities. If they would be guided by His voice, He would be their protector, their front guard and their rear ward. But like the Jews they know not the time of their visitation. In their pride of heart they refuse His guidance, and are left to walk in their own counsels, and, like God's ancient people, to reap the harvest which they have sown."

Historical Sketches of the Foreign Missions of the Seventh-day Adventists (1886), Notes of Travel. By Mrs. E.G. White, pp. 203–207





Those that Oppose Themselves

"It's your own fault." Have you ever done something foolish and it brings negative consequences and someone tells you, "It's your own fault"? You react in one of two ways. You acknowledge it to be true and apologize. Or you make excuses, placing the blame elsewhere, as did Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden (see Genesis 3:12–13).



However, if you continue making poor decisions and doing foolish things, this leads to greater consequences that can affect your entire life. I am sure most of us have heard the cliché, "You are your own worst enemy." Or, in speaking of other people, "they are their own worst enemy." As most of us know, this means continual behaviour in such a way that causes problems for yourself. You are the cause of most of your problems or most of the bad things that happen to you. You really do not need someone else to ruin matters for you because you are perfectly capable of ruining things all by yourself. I am sure we may have heard countless sermons and Bible Studies on this topic.

Even those outside of Christianity use this cliché. An example of being your worst enemy is a man having an anger problem. He beats his wife and children—they leave him and he ends up in jail. He is very sad at losing his family and his freedom, but who can he blame? Himself—he is his own worst enemy.

This phrase was actually used by Ellen White over 100 years ago and was directed to a person refusing to acknowledge their sin. "You are your greatest enemy. Your wrong habits unbalance the circulation of the blood and determine [direct] the blood to the brain, and then you view everything in a perverted light. You are quick and high-tempered, and you have not cultivated self-control. Your will and your way seem right to you. But unless you see the defects in your character and wash your robe and make it white in the blood of the

Lamb, you will surely fail of everlasting life. You love the theory of the truth, but you do not let it sanctify your life. You do not carry out in your daily deportment the principles of the truth you profess." —*Mind, Character, and Personality*, vol. 2, p. 381. I hope none of us can relate to this person.

We can do more harm to ourselves than anybody else can. Any addiction that has negative results can only be blamed on oneself, whether it is a physical addiction (alcohol, tobacco, illegal substance abuse), or an addiction to unhealthy foods (loaded with preservatives, sugar or dairy), or addiction to modern technology (internet or TV abuse). Or, as in the example above, an emotional or mental addiction—uncontrolled, unacceptable, emotional responses and behaviours.

Not only your actions, but your thoughts can also be your own worst enemy. If you find yourself dwelling on negative thoughts about yourself and repeatedly putting yourself down, criticizing yourself, comparing yourself to other people who you think are perfect, your thoughts then are your own worst enemy. Perhaps you make a mistake and think it is so bad that no one else would have done that mistake in that circumstance. Maybe you think your mistake was the result of some permanent flaw you have. You negate everything you do, blowing things up as if your mistakes are the worst that anyone can imagine. Many people who are perfectionists often think this way. Division in the mind actually causes us to fight against our own best interests.

When we make bad choices we are, in reality, destroying ourselves.

This saying, "own worst enemy," has roots in the Bible with the phrase regarding those that "oppose themselves."

The Apostle Paul writes, "And the servant of the Lord must not strive; but be gentle unto all men, apt to teach,

patient, In meekness instructing those that oppose themselves; if God peradventure will give them repentance to the acknowledging of the truth." 2 Timothy 2:24–25. Paul encourages gentle ministry to those who oppose themselves. To oppose oneself is to be one's own worst enemy.

The word "oppose" implies division, disunity, or opposition, with sometimes destructive consequences. It destroys. The term, "oppose themselves," in this verse means that the division is within self and destructive to self.

When you think of the concept of opposition, your initial thought is that opposition comes from another person (an opponent) who is trying to oppose you. Oppose, also, is the root of the word opposite. And, what is an opposite? An opposite is something at completely different ends of the spectrum, for example: black and white. Cold and warm, up and down, etc. This is basic English, which we all learned in elementary school. To oppose then would imply doing something opposite of what you should do or what you intend to do.

The Apostle Paul faced a lot of opposition in his life after his conversion. Wherever he went to preach the truth, his enemies (former brethren—the religious leaders) opposed him. It is ironic to see where the opposition arose. He wrote to Timothy about this group of people who, "oppose themselves" in the verse we just read. It was the religious leaders, who thought themselves perfect, and could do no wrong, who were the ones who opposed Paul and persecuted him. The reality, though, is they were really only opposing themselves as far as their standing before God was. Yes, Christians can oppose themselves. It has been done many times in the past. In the religious world there is seen a lot of unreasonable opposition. With so many Christian churches that cannot agree, with one Bible as their source of existence, one can only wonder how can they oppose each other so much, and in so doing are opposing themselves. Yet they do.

To oppose one's self seems like an odd situation. If you think about it in real life, would anyone knowingly oppose themselves—whether at work, or in their study, or in any interactions with family or friends? Would you oppose yourself when offered a promotion or raise, telling your employer that you are not worthy of such honours and perhaps the position should be given to someone else? People would think you are clearly out of your mind. If you were sick, and were provided the best remedies, would you oppose the doctor and say that it is in

your best interest to remain sick? Again, you would be viewed as out of your mind. This may seem unreal. No one in their right mind would oppose themselves thus, but is this not what many unconverted Christians do in their lives? Are we immune from this danger in God's church? By no means. One small sin puts us in opposition to God and to our own best interests.

Sister White counselled a brother in the faith, and she ended by saying, "All his life he has been trying to build himself up, to save himself, to preserve his own life; and he has lost his labor every time." —*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 2, p. 389. This man was clearly living for himself only and thus opposing himself. Nothing seemed to go right for him. To work and think only of one's self is to oppose self since true Christianity is seen in deeds of kindness towards others.

Those who refuse to live up to the truth they know will bring the penalties of opposition to Christ upon themselves. It is like shooting one's self in the foot, or more seriously, suicide, because the law of God cannot be broken in the smallest detail without deadly consequence, unless it is repented of. Even with repentance, consequences may follow as seen in the life of King David. After he murdered Uriah, he lost four of his own sons to premature death (2 Samuel 11).

We also have the example of Jacob. He repented of his sin of deception but he also had to face consequences. "To gain the birthright that was his already by God's promise, Jacob resorted to fraud, and he reaped the harvest in his brother's hatred. Through twenty years of exile he was himself wronged and defrauded, and was at last forced to find safety in flight; and he reaped a second harvest, as the evils of his own character were seen to crop out in his sons—all but too true a picture of the retributions of human life." —*Education*, p. 146–147. He thought he would gain something, but in reality, he lost a lot. By his sin, he was not defrauding his brother as much as opposing himself.

We are encouraged to: "Cast away from you all your transgressions, whereby ye have transgressed; and make you a new heart and a new spirit: for why will ye die, O house of Israel?" Ezekiel 18:31

Seems like a strange question. "Why will you die?" Who is Jesus addressing this question to? It is not to the heathen; it was addressed to the nation of Israel. His own people. Those who had been entrusted with the oracles of the law. Could you or I be included in Jesus' question?

If I were speaking to a roomful of people and asked the question, "Who here wants to die?" I wonder if even one hand would be raised. If I, on the other hand, asked, "Who wants to live forever?" I believe many more hands would be raised. We all want to live forever, I am sure of that, but are we living in such a manner that is pleasing to God? Are we living in a manner that we are opposing ourselves? We oppose ourselves if we live a life contrary to the will of God. One small sin places us in opposition to God and in opposition to our best interest.

We were born to live. We were created by God to live—to live forever. What changed God's plan? Not God. You and I changed the plans. Every person who has lived on this earth has changed the plans. "Behold, the LORD'S hand is not shortened, that it cannot save; neither His ear heavy, that it cannot hear: But your iniquities have separated between you and your God, and your sins have hid His face from you, that He will not hear." Isaiah 59:1–2. The separation is our fault. We opposed ourselves when we sinned. We chose death.

Solomon had a clear understanding of this truth when he wrote: "But whoso committeth adultery with a woman lacketh understanding: he that doeth it destroyeth his own soul." Proverbs 6:32. Although all sin leads to death, this verse addresses premeditated sin. This is very dangerous.

And also he wrote, "The integrity of the upright shall guide them: but the perverseness of transgressors shall destroy them." Proverbs 11:3. Any transgressor is his worst enemy. They destroy themselves.

And further he wrote: "Be not righteous over much; neither make thyself over wise: why shouldest thou destroy thyself? Be not over much wicked, neither be thou foolish: why shouldest thou die before thy time?" Ecclesiastes 7:16–17. The conduct of life determines destiny. Every choice to sin, whether small or large, has eternal negative consequences.

From the mountain, Jesus viewed the city of Jerusalem and wept. He wept, not only for the city, but for you also. "Christ foresaw that Jerusalem would remain obdurate and impenitent; yet all the guilt, all the consequences of rejected mercy, lay at her own door. Thus it will be with every soul who is following the same course." —*The Desire of Ages*, p. 588

"Christ overlooked the world and all ages from the height of Olivet; and His words are applicable to every soul who slights the pleadings of divine mercy. Scorn

of His love, He addresses you today. It is 'thou, even thou,' who shouldest know the things that belong to thy peace. Christ is shedding bitter tears for you. . . . And every evidence of the grace of God, every ray of divine light, is either melting and subduing the soul, or confirming it in hopeless impenitence." —*Ibid.*, p. 588

"Therefore shall they eat of the fruit of their own way, and be filled with their own devices." Proverbs 1:31. It is not an arbitrary act of God that removes the wicked from His presence. It is the impenitent themselves who have placed their wills at cross-purposes with the Source of life, so that His loving presence will be to them a consuming fire.

"The Jews had forged their own fetters; they had filled for themselves the cup of vengeance. In the utter destruction that befell them as a nation, and in all the woes that followed them in their dispersion, they were but reaping the harvest which their own hands had sown. Says the prophet: 'O Israel, thou hast destroyed thyself; 'for thou hast fallen by thine iniquity.' Hosea 13:9; 14:1. Their sufferings are often represented as a punishment visited upon them by the direct decree of God. It is thus that the great deceiver seeks to conceal his own work. By stubborn rejection of divine love and mercy, the Jews had caused the protection of God to be withdrawn from them, and Satan was permitted to rule them according to his will. The horrible cruelties enacted in the destruction of Jerusalem are a demonstration of Satan's vindictive power over those who yield to his control." —*The Great Controversy*, p. 35–36. Who would want to be at Satan's mercy? It is a fearful thought.

"But he that sinneth against Me wrongeth his own soul: all they that hate Me love death." Proverbs 8:36. These are very strong words. You hating the Lord equates with loving death. Very few healthy individuals would state they love death.

We know what happened to Pharaoh in Egypt when he hardened his heart. He clearly opposed himself. "This case is placed on record for our benefit. Just what took place in Pharaoh's heart will take place in every soul that neglects to cherish the light and walk promptly in its rays. God destroys no one. The sinner destroys himself by his own impenitence. When a person once neglects to heed the invitations, reproofs, and warnings of the Spirit of God, his conscience becomes seared, and the next time he is admonished, it will be more difficult to yield obedience than before. And thus with every repetition. Conscience is the voice of God, heard amid the conflict of human passions; when it is resisted, the

Spirit of God is grieved.

"We want all to understand how the soul is destroyed. It is not that God sends out a decree that man shall not be saved. He does not throw a darkness before the eyes which cannot be penetrated. But man at first resists a motion of the Spirit of God, and, having once resisted, it is less difficult to do so the second time, less the third, and far less the fourth. Then comes the harvest to be reaped from the seed of unbelief and resistance. Oh what a harvest of sinful indulgences is preparing for the sickle!

"When secret prayer and reading of the Scriptures are neglected today, tomorrow they can be omitted with less remonstrance of conscience. There will be a long list of omissions, all for a single grain sown in the soil of the heart. On the other hand, every ray of light cherished will yield a harvest of light. Temptation once resisted will give power to more firmly resist the second time; every new victory gained over self will smooth the way for higher and nobler triumphs. Every victory is a seed sown to eternal life." *-Testimonies for the Church, vol. 5, p. 119-120*

Those who have yielded to Satan, even with the smallest of sins, while professing to follow the Lord, oppose themselves and let worldliness invade their lives. If we behave inappropriately, dress in unseemly apparel, speak unbecomingly, partake in habits and practices that are detracting from our health, and attend those places and functions where Christianity seems completely "out of place", then we are opposing ourselves. Even with the time we waste with good TV shows and Internet web sites, to the neglect of Bible study we are opposing ourselves. "Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him." 1 John 2:15

Yet, it is of the greatest importance that we oppose all sin and sinful tendencies. We are to crucify the flesh, which goes against every natural element in our body. The carnal mind loves sin, and we must oppose the carnal inclinations that the enemy tempts us with. "I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave Himself for me." Galatians 2:20

"Those who are saved in the kingdom of God will have

nothing of which to boast in themselves; the praise and the glory will all flow back to God. . . . There is no way by which the heart may be made holy, save through faith in Christ. . . . We have nothing, we are nothing, unless we receive virtue from Jesus Christ." *-That I May Know Him, p. 109*

"Self is our greatest enemy, and day by day each must strive for the victory." *-The Signs of the Times, August 26, 1897.* "No truth does the Bible more clearly teach than that what we do is the result of what we are. To a great degree the experiences of life are the fruition of our own thoughts and deeds. . . . Terrible is this truth, and deeply should it be impressed. Every deed reacts upon the doer. Never a human being but may recognize, in the evils that curse his life, fruitage of his own sowing. Yet even thus we are not without hope." *-Education, p. 146*

No one likes to hear those words, "It's your fault." While this may be true, and you know it to be true, yet those words are not really words of comfort. Often when we tell people, "It's all your fault", it is done in a condemnatory manner. Either in anger, frustration or ridicule. The Devil also tells us, "It's your fault." We have to admit—the situation we are in is our fault.

But the promise is, as we just read, "we are not without hope". What did Jesus do? To Mary, He said, "Neither do I condemn thee: go, and sin no more." John 8:11. The Apostle Paul wrote: "But God, who is rich in mercy, for His great love wherewith He loved us, Even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved;)." Ephesians 2:4-5. "But God commendeth His love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us." Romans 5:8

It is our fault, we are in this together. We all have opposed ourselves many times in our lives. Every sin, whether small or large, we have let go of the hand of Jesus and are choosing death. May God help us to not continue to oppose ourselves, but rather accept the blame and repent. Our sin nailed Jesus to the cross. Our sin has separated us from Him, but thank God He is reaching out for us still today. Let us take His hand, which is still stretched out to us in mercy, and no longer oppose ourselves. He can help you overcome every sin, and resist every temptation, "for why will ye die?" Amen.

Wendy Eaton





Behold the Man!

In the Gospel according to John, two men, John the Baptist, and Pilate, each one twice introduced the Saviour to the people. While one introduces Jesus at the start of His ministry as “the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world” (John 1:29), the latter presents Him during the time of His humiliation at the close of His ministry.

THE PRIVILEGE OF JOHN THE BAPTIST

“When Adam and Eve first heard the promise, [of the coming Deliverer] they looked for its speedy fulfillment. They joyfully welcomed their first-born son, hoping that he might be the Deliverer. But the fulfillment of the promise tarried. Those who first received it died without the sight. From the days of Enoch the promise was repeated through patriarchs and prophets, keeping alive the hope of His appearing, and yet He came not.” —*The Desire of Ages*, p. 31

“When the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth His Son, made of a woman.” Galatians 4:4. Prophets died without seeing the Messiah who came at the fullness of the time. There was, however, one, chosen by God, who was privileged to introduce to the world its Saviour. “For all the prophets and the law prophesied until John.” Matthew 11:13. Born to prepare the people for that event, he was in charge of the transition from his ministry, to that of the Saviour’s. As a guest of honour is introduced at a special

event, so John the Baptist was the chosen instrument to unveil to men the sacrifice that brought salvation to the lost world—Jesus Christ.

Before the grand task of introducing Jesus to the people, he must prepare the hearts of the people to accept the kingdom of grace. His was a message calling the people to repentance. In those days, the voice was heard in the wilderness of Judea: “saying, Repent ye: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.” Matthew 3:2. While prophets had foretold the coming of the Messiah as one to take place in the distant future, his was a message saying, it is at hand. Thus the people were aroused. According to prophecy, he was to “turn the heart of the fathers to the children, and the heart of the children to their fathers.” Malachi 4:6

“In the time of John the Baptist, greed for riches, and the love of luxury and display had become widespread. Sensuous pleasures, feasting and drinking, were causing physical disease and degeneracy, numbing the spiritual perceptions, and lessening the sensibility to sin. . . . He saw his people deceived, self-satisfied, and asleep in their sins.” —*The Desire of Ages*, p. 100, 103

Amid such a crooked and depraved spiritual condition of his day, here is this righteous man, standing as a reformer, yearning to arouse his nation to a holier life! They must be startled from their lethargy and caused to tremble for their wickedness. “Before the seed of the gospel could find lodgment, the soil of the heart must be broken up. Before they would seek healing from Jesus, they must be awakened to their danger from the wounds of sin.” —*The Desire of Ages*, p. 104

INTRODUCING THE SAVIOUR OF MANKIND

It was “in Bethabara beyond Jordan, where John was

baptizing" (John 1:28), that "The next day John seeth Jesus coming unto him, and saith, Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world." (v. 29). John and Jesus were cousins, and much related by the circumstances of their birth, yet they had not seen each other before this day. "And I knew Him not:" John testifies, "but He that sent me to baptize with water, the same said unto me, Upon Whom thou shalt see the Spirit descending, and remaining on Him, the same is He which baptizeth with the Holy Ghost." John 1:33. "Providence had ordered this. No occasion was to be given for the charge that they had conspired together to support each other's claims." *—The Desire of Ages*, p. 109

"Again the next day after John stood, and two of his disciples; and looking upon Jesus as He walked, he saith, Behold the Lamb of God!" John 1:35–36. Twice he gave an affirmative testimony that the Saviour had come indeed. He did all he could do that none be left ignorant. John's work in directing men to Jesus was not without effect. "And the two disciples heard him speak, and they followed Jesus. Then Jesus turned, and saw them following, and saith unto them, What seek ye? They said unto him, Rabbi, (which is to say, being interpreted, Master,) where dwellest Thou? He saith unto them, Come and see. They came and saw where He dwelt, and abode with Him that day: for it was about the tenth hour. One of the two which heard John speak, and followed Him, was Andrew, Simon Peter's brother." John 1:37–40

At some future time, as many left him, gathering themselves to Jesus, some of his disciples "came unto John, and said unto him, Rabbi, He that was with thee beyond Jordan, to whom thou barest witness, behold, the same baptizeth, and all men come to Him." John 3:26. He could have sympathized with them, and tried to take measures to keep the people from following Jesus, to maintain his own ministry. Had he done so, he could have been destroying the very work he



came to establish and Satan could have gladly welcomed the development. In an answer free from selfishness, contrary to what was expected, he told them that

everything comes from above, that he was not the Christ but only going before Him. Giving the example of the relationship between the bride and the bridegroom, he presented himself as the friend of the bridegroom—full of joy (John 3:27–29). Then said he: "He must increase, but I must decrease." John 3:30. Such humility must be emulated by all those who profess to be children of God.

Thus, he had succeeded in his mission of pointing men to the Saviour who alone could heal their depravity, wounds, and spiritual maladies. It is because of this that it was said of him by Jesus, "Verily I say unto you, Among them that are born of women there hath not risen a greater than John the Baptist." Matthew 11:11 (first part)

Yet, it is also said of John that, "he was not permitted to see the result of his own labors. It was not his privilege to be with Christ and witness the manifestation of divine power attending the greater light. It was not for him to see the blind restored to sight, the sick healed, and the dead raised to life. He did not behold the light that shone through every word of Christ, shedding glory upon the promises of prophecy. The least disciple who saw Christ's mighty works and heard His words was in this sense more highly privileged than John the Baptist, and therefore is said to have been greater than he." *—The Desire of Ages*, p. 220. "Notwithstanding he that is least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he." Matthew 11:11 (last part)

PILATE PRESENTS JESUS TO THE PEOPLE

Like John the Baptist, Pilate also presented Jesus to the people, but in a very different scenario. This time, Christ is bound with fetters as a prisoner, condemned to death by the priests and rulers, demanding that Pilate, as the Roman authority, ratify their sentence.

When Pilate came in the early morning from his bed-chamber to attend to the demands of the mob that brought Jesus to his judgment hall, he thought the accused, from the way they had treated Him and brought Him to the judgment hall, was just another worse offender, and that he would quickly deal with Him. He was astonished. "Never before had a man bearing marks of such goodness and nobility been brought before him. On His face, he saw no sign of guilt, no expression of fear, no boldness or defiance. He saw a man of calm and dignified bearing, whose

countenance bore not marks of a criminal but the signature of heaven." —*The Desire of Ages*, p. 724

After a long trial, moving from Pilate to Herod and back to him, Pilate was convinced and constantly testified that Christ was pure and free from guilt. "I find in Him no fault." John 18:38. "Pilate therefore went forth again, and saith unto them, Behold, I bring Him forth to you, that ye may know that I find no fault in Him. Then came Jesus forth, wearing the crown of thorns,



and the purple robe. And Pilate saith unto them, Behold the Man!" John 19:4-5. Finally, Pilate brings before the people Jesus and Barabbas, side by side, and with a voice of solemn entreaty asks whom they would have him release. Now in this presentation of the two people by Pilate, "Barabbas, the robber and murderer, was the representative of Satan. Christ was the representative of God." —*The Desire of Ages*, p. 738

Pilate was a wicked ruler. Yet he recognized in Jesus the King of heaven. In several encounters he saw Jesus as innocent. Yet the Jews were bent upon His death! The priests and rulers had rejected the testimony of the righteous man, John the Baptist, that Jesus was the Lamb of God. Now they had to be preached to by this evil man, Pilate. And here he stands, trying to make them see the person of Christ and convince them of His innocence, but their hearts are hardened. They cannot discern the purity of heaven in Him. Envy and jealousy have covered their hearts. During the trial, the face of Jesus constantly lighted up with the beams of light from heaven, divinity had flashed through humanity but the priests had made themselves insensitive to this. Now these last rays of light and conviction cannot be discerned.

They brought, "Jesus forth, wearing the crown of

thorns, and the purple robe." John 19:5. This was the Lamb of God as described by Isaiah the prophet. "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." Isaiah 53:5. The second time Pilate said, "Behold your King!" (John 19:14) referring to Jesus. But the people said, away with Him, and chose Satan in the person of Barabbas. On which side are you placing yourself, dear reader?

CONCLUSION

In the words of Pilate—Behold the Man!—we see our justification and sanctification. In these words, we see One suffering for our sake, and that through faith in Him we are forgiven of our sins. In the words—Behold the Man!—we see a Purifier of our souls from both inherited and cultivated tendencies that are offensive to God. Can one be so benumbed that he cannot see the beauty of Christ being now introduced in this manner, His body marred with wounds for his sake? Can one still continue to practice known sins while his eyes behold the man Jesus Christ in this form here presented? "Through faith in Christ, every deficiency of character may be supplied, every defilement cleansed, every fault corrected, every excellence developed." —*Education*, p. 257

As we behold the Man, we "are changed into the same image from glory to glory." 2 Corinthians 3:18. Christ in the form here presented, stands as a rebuke to sin—not just from His innocent bearing, but from the condition of His suffering in which He *is* innocent. When we see Christ in His agony, sin appears horrible in its real nature. Then we see how much God has loved us to free us at such an infinite cost.

Let us now put aside every sin, lest we crucify the Son of God afresh, "and put Him to an open shame." Hebrews 6:6. "In the time of trouble just before the coming of Christ, the righteous will be preserved through the ministration of heavenly angels; but there will be no security for the transgressors of God's law. Angels cannot then protect those who are disregarding one of the divine precepts." —*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 256. Amen.

*Joel Msiska,
Malawi*



CHRIST'S APPEAL



I AM standing outside thy door to-night,
Seeking thine heart to win;
The world for awhile has withdrawn its light—
Wilt thou open and let Me in?
I have traveled far on a lonely road,
In sorrow and agony;
I have borne sin's heavy, crushing load,
All, all for the sake of thee!

I am standing to plead with thee to-night,
While the dews of evening fall;
O'er the moaning and surging waves of life
Dost thou hear My yearning call?
I would free thy soul from the chains of earth,
From its care, its sorrow, its sin;
I would give thee joy, for its hollow mirth—
Wilt thou open and let Me in?

From the glorious heights of Heaven I came
To seek thee and to save;
But the world, it gave me a cross of shame,
And a lonely, borrowed grave.
I left My radiant home above,
All for the sake of thee;
I have died to prove my deep, deep love,
Wilt thou open the door to Me?

Thou hast wandered far in the paths of sin,
Thou art weary, and sad, and lone;
But My blood can cleanse, and My love can win—
May I make thine heart My own?
The world, it has given thee care and pain,
Often famine and misery;
I offer the treasures of priceless gain—
Wilt thou open the door to Me?

—*Helps by the Way* .

Taken from:

The Signs of the Times, August 23, 1883

“All around us are afflicted souls. Let us search out these suffering ones, and speak a word in season to comfort their hearts. Here and there-- everywhere--we shall find them. Let us ever be channels through which may flow to them the refreshing waters of compassion. To those who minister to the necessities of the hungry and afflicted, the promise is, ‘Then shall thy light rise in obscurity.’ . . .

“The heart, filled with the Spirit of God, glows with warmth toward every fellow being. Every such an one is no longer in darkness; for his ‘darkness’ is ‘as the noon day’” —*The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*, vol. 4, p. 1151

HEALTH MATTERS:

Physical Fitness: Do You Measure Up?



“One of the first laws of being is that of action. Every organ has its appointed work, upon the development of which depends its strength. The normal action of all organs gives vigor and life; inaction brings decay and death.” –*The Youth’s Instructor*, February 27, 1902

There are many definitions and states of being that encompass physical health. The World Health Organization (WHO) describes a widely accepted definition of health, which states that “health is a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity.” Lately, this statement has been modified to include “the ability to lead a socially and economically productive life.” As we can see by this statement, health includes our physical health. And physical health includes physical activity.

From last month’s article we learned that God gave physical activity and labour to mankind as a blessing. Even before man’s fall, God gave Adam and Eve the instruction to take care of the garden that they were placed in. After sin entered into the world, physical labour became even more important, to prevent sin caused by idleness.

For thousands of years, men and women engaged in tough, physical labour to provide for their families. But, what is the problem now, in the year 2020? Do most of us work with the “sweat of our brow?” Worldwide there has been a large shift towards less physically demanding work. This has been accompanied by the increased use of mechanized transportation and a greater prevalence of labour saving technology in the home. Much of the tasks that our ancestors had to do by hand are now done by machines. How much easier it is nowadays to wash our clothes, our dishes, clean our



houses, and travel from place to place. Most of the items that we need have been built by machines. No longer do we have to build our own houses, our own furniture, etc. Much of the objects we have in our homes have been made by machines, on assembly lines, not requiring us to physically tax ourselves to produce. Then, in providing food for our families, how many of us have to plow our fields, plant our gardens, grow and harvest our own food? We do not need to gather wood to heat our houses, wash our clothes by hand, etc.



Most of the world has an abundance of food, and no effort is needed to produce it. We travel to the grocery store, which supplies us with all our food. Technology has evolved to the point where most of us do not tax our physical strength to provide for our daily needs.

The increase in technology that speeds up all the tasks needed to survive has led to more free time to engage in activities outside of work—but, what are people doing with all this extra time? Some people engage in various physically active recreational pursuits. However, the majority of people spend their free time in sedentary activities. Is all this increase in technology a blessing or a curse? If we lived even 100 years ago, we would not be talking about how to get enough exercise, but it is a product of the time that we live in that we need to make a concerted effort to get the exercise that we need to keep our bodies healthy.

For those of us who live in cities, the opportunities that we have for physical exercise is limited. Since it is no longer a vital or even necessary part of our lives to get daily exercise, we need to seek out opportunities for

exercise. Those who live out in the country have more opportunities for physical exercise as a normal part of life. Studies have shown that farmers have a level of physical health that most other people do not. Many of the physical tasks needed **to run a farm** takes care of all the exercise that a person needs. But, if we do not do those tasks, we need to consciously exercise to get the health benefits that our body needs. Many people do not know what types of exercises are needed to ensure healthy functioning of every part of our body. And, those of us who live in cities, who do not even have room for a garden, have very little opportunity to get exercise as part of our daily living, and we need to go out and consciously “get exercise” in whatever way we can. Many people have gym memberships, and work out on treadmills, elliptical machines, and weights to improve their physical activity. Many people have exercise machines in their homes.

How has the decrease in physical activity impacted the world population? The impact of all the aforementioned variables is that the majority of the world is physically unhealthy.

At least 60% of the world's population does not get sufficient exercise. Statistics notes that 70% of North Americans do not exercise on a regular basis. More alarmingly, teenagers are spending all of their time indoors, neglecting to get outside and exercise. This can have serious health consequences, not only during adolescence, but throughout life. According to one recent study, children aged 6–7 tend to get an average of 45 minutes of physical activity per day. By age 12, that number declines to 30 minutes, and by age 16 many children do not exercise on a regular basis at all. Childhood obesity, which is a direct result of lack of exercise, is a serious problem throughout the world, and it affects teenagers as much as children of any other age. Poor physical health is starting at a much younger age now than it used to in the past, which means that the life-long implications of lack of exercise is that much worse. These exercise trends are contributing to the rising rates of chronic diseases, attributed in part to an increase in obesity, and also in general poor health. Each year at least 1.9 million people die as a result of physical inactivity, which makes inactivity one of the leading preventable causes of death worldwide.

“The living machinery is not to be allowed to rust from inaction.” –*Daughters of God*, p. 172

For those of us who are Bible students, we know that physical labour was a blessing from creation. Even in

the secular world, the benefits of exercise have been known since antiquity. Marcus Cicero, around 65 B.C., stated: “It is exercise alone that supports the spirits, and keeps the mind in vigor.”

Then, the Spirit of Prophecy, in 1886, stated, “The human body may be compared to nicely adjusted machinery, which needs care to keep it in running order. One part should not be subjected to constant wear and pressure, while another part is rusting from inaction. While the mind is taxed, the muscles also should have their proportion of exercise. Every young person should learn how many hours may be spent in study, and how much time should be given to physical exercise.”—*Healthful Living*, p. 127. Not only did Sister White expound on the benefits of physical exercise, she mentioned that a balance needs be present between the amount of time spent in mental labour and physical labour.

In modern times, the link between physical health and exercise (or lack of it) was “re-discovered” in 1949 and reported in 1953 by a team led by Jerry Morris. Dr. Morris noted that men of similar social class and occupation (bus conductors versus bus drivers) had markedly different rates of heart attacks, depending on the level of exercise they got: bus drivers had a sedentary occupation and a higher incidence of heart disease, while bus conductors were forced to move continually and had a lower incidence of heart disease. This link had not previously been noted and was later confirmed by other researchers. This research initiated the thinking that physical activity produces a level of fitness that can resist diseases.



One famous quote states, “Some exercise is better than none, more exercise is generally better than less, and no exercise can be disastrous.”

People have varying degrees of health, based on many factors, some of which are listed on the following figure. In fact, it would be too simplistic to state that one is either healthy or unhealthy. The figure at the top of the next page shows that health can be defined as running along a continuum. At the one end of the health continuum is “sickness”, and at the other end is “fitness”. In the middle, we have “wellness”. The assumption made by this figure is that if everything that we can measure about health will conform to this continuum, then sickness, wellness, and fitness are different measures of a



against the ravages of time and disease. Fitness is and should be “super-wellness.” Sickness, wellness, and fitness are measures of the *same entity*. A fitness regimen that does not promote wellness does not work.

How is this fitness achieved? Physical exercise increases one’s fitness level. This gives you the ability to go

single quality: health. Those individuals who are the healthiest are those that have a level of fitness to their health.

For example, a blood pressure of 160/95 is “sickness”, 120/70 is “wellness”, and 105/55 is consistent with an athlete’s blood pressure, or “fitness”. Body fat of 40% is “sickness”, 20% is “wellness”, and 10% is “fitness”. We observe measure-



ments for bone density, blood pressure, triglycerides, muscle mass, flexibility, HDL or “good cholesterol”, resting heart rate, and dozens of other common measures of health to determine an individual’s level of health.

Therefore, physical health is vital to our overall health, and having physical fitness is considered the optimal level of physical health. Let us look at what defines physical fitness. What exactly is meant by physical fitness? What is the definition of a “fit” person? Is there a difference between a well person and a fit person?

In previous years, *fitness* was commonly defined as “the capacity to carry out the day’s activities without undue fatigue.” However, as automation increased leisure time, changes in lifestyles following the industrial revolution rendered this definition insufficient. These days, *physical fitness* is considered a measure of the body’s ability to function efficiently and effectively in work and leisure activities, to be healthy, to resist hypokinetic diseases (diseases arising from a sedentary lifestyle), and to meet emergency situations.

“Health-related fitness refers to the state of physical and physiological characteristics that define the risk levels for the premature development of diseases or morbid conditions presenting a relationship with a sedentary mode of life.” –*Bouchard and Shepard, 1993*. In other words, fitness is the ability of the body to resist disease that arises from inactivity.

Done right, fitness provides a great margin of protection

through each day with less relative energy expenditure. This enables a “fit” person to have more energy left at the end of the day and to get more accomplished during the day with less fatigue.

Physical fitness allows you to perform daily activities and face physical and emotional stress during moments of increased intensity. Being physically fit helps people to perform exercise well in all circumstances despite of age. Therefore, fitness can be explained as a state that allows each and every person to feel, look and perform well in every action they do. Physical fitness trainers often describe fitness as the capability to carry out day to day functions energetically and vigilantly, and keeping extra energy to do other leisure-time activities and dealing with emergency needs.

Therefore, physical fitness is more than just physical health. By its definition, it considers not only the ability to function on a physical level, but to fight disease and to react to emergencies effectively.

Physical fitness comprises two related concepts: general fitness (a state of health and well-being) and specific fitness (a task-oriented definition based on the ability to perform specific aspects of sports or occupations).

When we look at specific fitness, physical abilities can be separated into a number of abilities and skills. Peak physical fitness is when an individual is able to perform the following efficiently and effectively. I will use examples from sport, as they are easily identified by most readers.

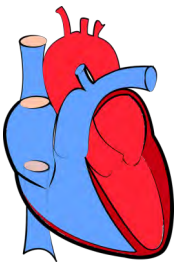
Muscular Strength: Muscular strength is the ability of a muscle to exert a maximal force through a given range of motion or at a single given point. This component is present when the person has the ability to lift a heavy box, examples from sport include weightlifting, and javelin and discus throw in track and field events. This component can also include “power”, the ability of the muscle to ap-



ply maximum force in minimum time.

Muscular Endurance: Muscular Endurance refers to the capacity of a muscle to exert a submaximal force through a given range of motion or at a single point over a given time. Endurance refers to the ability of a muscle to carry a less than maximum weight, but to carry it for a length of time, such as carrying a lighter box but carrying it for a longer period of time. This component can also be defined as stamina, the ability of the body to process, deliver, store, and use energy over a period of time. Sports that require endurance and stamina include skating, skiing, and long-distance running.

Cardiovascular Endurance: Cardiovascular Endurance is the ability to continue training the cardiovascular system (heart and lungs) for a period longer than twenty minutes (on average). This can be shown when someone can run or play a sport continuously for at least 20 minutes that puts stress on the heart, often indicated by an increase in blood pressure, pulse, and breathing. This is also defined as the ability of the body to gather, process, and deliver oxygen.



Flexibility: Flexibility is the ability of a joint to move through a full range of motion, to move one's joints freely. Those who do not have good joint flexibility can easily be hurt when trying to use their joints. Throwing a ball, swimming, and gymnastics are examples from sport.

Coordination: The ability to combine several distinct movement patterns into a single distinct movement, using different parts of the body together smoothly and efficiently. Coordination applies in sports such as tennis and racquetball.

Balance: The ability to control the placement of the body's centre of gravity in relation to its base of support; an even distribution of weight that enables one to remain upright and steady. This would include activities such as standing on one foot, walking on a balance beam, or surfing.

Agility: The ability to minimize the time it takes to go from one movement pattern to another; able to move quickly and easily. An example of agility is in team sports such as soccer, where a person must quickly respond to the movement of other players and the ball.

Reaction time: The ability to respond quickly to a stimulus. Table tennis (ping pong), baseball, and badminton are some examples. Quick reaction times are vital in

emergency situations, such as jumping away from a car coming towards you.

Speed: The ability to minimize the time it takes to do a repeated movement. This could include running, or skipping a rope.

Accuracy: The ability to control movement in a given direction or at a given intensity. This is useful in sports such as basketball, bowling, and archery.



The final item to take into consideration is one's body composition. Body Composition is the ratio of lean body mass to fat body mass. The more lean body mass a person has is a better indication of their overall fitness. An obese person cannot be fit as he has too many limitations in being able to perform the components listed.

You are as fit as you are competent in each of these ten skills. The essence of this model is the view that fitness is about performing well at any and every task imaginable, even unfamiliar tasks, and tasks combined in infinitely varying combinations. This model suggests that your fitness can be measured by your capacity to perform well at these tasks in relation to other individuals. Nature frequently provides largely unforeseeable challenges, and fitness prepares for all eventualities.

"In the children and youth an ambition should be awakened to take their exercise in doing something that will be beneficial to themselves and helpful to others. The exercise that develops mind and character, that teaches the hands to be useful, that trains the young to bear their share of life's burdens, is that which gives physical strength and quickens every faculty. And there is a reward in virtuous industry, in the cultivation of the habit of living to do good." –*Counsels to Parents, Teachers, and Students*, p. 147

NEXT MONTH: HEALTH BENEFITS OF PHYSICAL EXERCISE



CHILDREN'S CORNER:



Working for Jesus



Every Sabbath afternoon, after the morning service at their church, the Church Leader and his 11-year-old son would go out into their town and hand out religious pamphlets. This particular Sabbath afternoon, as it came time for them to go to the streets with their tracts, it was very cold outside as well as pouring down rain. The boy bundled up in his warmest and driest clothes and said "Okay Dad, I'm ready."

His father asked, "Ready for what?"

"Dad, it's time we gather our tracts together and go out."

His father responded, "Son, it's very cold outside, and it's pouring down rain."

The boy gave his father a surprised look, asking, "But Dad, aren't people still going to be lost, even though it's raining?"

Father answered, "Son, I am not going out in this weather."

Despondently the boy asks, "Dad, can I go on my own then? Please?"

His father hesitated for a moment but said, "You can go. Here are the tracts; be careful, son."

"Thanks Dad!"

And with that, he was off and out into the rain. This 11-year-old boy walked the streets of the town, going door-to-door and handing everybody he met in the street a pamphlet. After hours of walking in the rain, he was soaking bone-chilled wet and down to his very last tract. He stopped on a corner and looked for someone to hand a tract to, but the streets were totally

deserted.

Then, he turned toward the first home he saw and started up the sidewalk to the front door and rang the doorbell. He rang the bell, but nobody answered. He rang it again and again, but still no one answered. He waited, but still no answer. Finally, this 11-year-old trooper turned to leave, but something stopped him. Again, he turned to the door and rang the bell and knocked loudly on the door with his fist. He waited, something holding him there on the front porch. He rang again, and this time the door slowly opened. Standing in the doorway was a very sad looking elderly lady.

She softly asked, "What can I do for you, son?"

With radiant eyes and a smile that lit up her world, this little boy said, "Ma'am, I'm sorry if I disturbed you, but I just want to tell you that JESUS REALLY DOES LOVE YOU! I came to give you my very last Gospel tract which will tell you all about Jesus and His great love." With that, he handed her his last tract and turned to leave.

She called to him as he departed, "Thank you, son! And God bless you!"

The following Sabbath morning in church, the church leader was in the pulpit and as the service began he asked, "Does anybody have a testimony or want to say anything?"

Slowly, in the back row of the church, an elderly lady stood to her feet. As she began to speak, a look of glorious radiance came from her face. "None of you in this church know me. I've never been here before. Be-

fore last Sabbath, I was not a Christian. My husband passed on some time ago, leaving me totally alone in this world. Last Sabbath, being a particularly cold and rainy day, it was even more so in my heart as I came to the end of the line where I no longer had any hope or will to live.

“So I took a rope and a chair and ascended the stairway into the attic of my home. I fastened the rope securely to a rafter in the roof then stood on the chair and fastened the other end of the rope around my neck. Standing on that chair, so lonely and brokenhearted, I was about to leap off. When suddenly, the loud ringing of my doorbell downstairs startled me. I thought, ‘I’ll wait a minute, and whoever it is will go away.’ I waited and waited, but the ringing doorbell seemed to get more insistent and then the person ringing also started knocking loudly. I thought to myself again, ‘Who on earth could this be?! Nobody ever rings my bell or comes to see me!’ I loosened the rope from my neck and started for the front door. All the while, the bell rang louder and louder. When I opened the door and looked, I could hardly believe my eyes! There on my front porch was the most radiant and angelic little boy I had ever seen in my life! His smile! Oh, I could never describe it to you! And the words that came from his mouth caused my heart that had long been dead, to leap to life as he exclaimed with a cherub-like voice, ‘Ma’am, I just came to tell you that JESUS REALLY DOES LOVE YOU.’ Then he gave me this Gospel tract that I now hold in my hand. As the little angel disappeared back out into the cold and rain, I closed my door and read slowly every word of this Gospel tract. Then, I went up to my attic to get my rope and chair. I wouldn’t be needing them anymore.

“You see, I am now a happy child of the King, and since the address of your church was on the back of this Gospel tract, I have come here to personally say, ‘Thank you to God’s little angel who came just in the nick of time and by so doing, spared my soul from an eternity in Hell.’”

There were now no dry eyes in the church. As shouts of praise and honour to the King resounded off the very rafters of the building, the church leader descended from the pulpit to the front pew where the little angel was seated. He took him in his arms and sobbed uncontrollably.

Probably no church has had a more glorious moment and probably this Universe has never seen a father that was more filled with love and honour for his son,

except for one: This Father, in heaven also allowed His Son, Jesus, to go out into a cold and dark world. He received His Son back with joy unspeakable, and as all of Heaven shouted praises and honour to the King, the Father sat His beloved Son on a throne far above all principality and power and every name that is named.

There may be someone, reading this, who is also going through a dark, cold and lonely time in your soul. You may be a Christian, for we are not without problems. Whatever the case, and whatever the problem or situation you find yourself in, and no matter how dark it may seem, know that, “JESUS REALLY DOES LOVE YOU.”

You do not need to have a great knowledge of the Bible to work for Jesus. You only need a love for Jesus and a willingness to work for Him. It is not difficult to give out gospel pamphlets, whether you give them in person, or put them in people’s doors.

Everyone can carry gospel pamphlets with them at all times and be giving them out regularly as the opportunity presents itself. If you have a little time to spare, rather than just sit and look at your phone on social media—go give out a few pamphlets. Every moment is precious and we will have to answer for each moment wasted.

People will be lost, whether it is raining or the sun is shining. “Heavenly angels have long been waiting for human agents—the members of the church—to cooperate with them in the great work to be done.” – *Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 9, p. 46–47. Will you be one of those human agents that will cooperate with heavenly angels? “Every day there is something to do for our Lord and Master. Every day we are to point souls to the Lamb of God, who taketh away the sin of the world.” – *Ibid.*, p. 48

“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.” – *Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 5, p. 387



Health Habit

The medical/health ministry is very important to missionary work. The Spirit of Prophecy states that the Health reform is the right arm of the Third Angel's Message. It is also stated that if our missionaries and Bible workers were to be twice as successful they should cultivate a knowledge of health and healing the body with natural methods.

Sanitariums have been opened up in different parts of the world today for the purpose of educating and encouraging healthful living. This goes together with the gospel ministry. "Those working in them should have at hand publications on health and temperance topics and on other phases of gospel truth." —*Manuscript Releases*, vol. 8, p. 397

The health ministry goes hand in hand with working for the salvation of souls. We are called to go about as our Master Jesus did, healing the sick and suffering, alleviating both their emotional burden of sins by pointing the way of Salvation and also their physical burden of ailments. To truly care for and love someone's soul, it is necessary to care for their physical health as well.

Over 100 years ago, Sister White wrote that there were health food stores in existence to educate the public about health and sell health products. She mentioned the cities of Nashville, Tennessee, "They have treatment rooms, a health food store, and physicians' offices." (*The Review and Herald*, August 18, 1904, par. 1), San Francisco, "In the same locality was a health food store." (*The Review and Herald*, September 1, 1906), and Salt Lake City, "In a prominent part of the city our brethren are conducting a vegetarian cafe and a health food store." (*The Review and Herald*, February 16, 1905).

Just over one year ago Sister Sandy Nelson, and her husband, Christian were led by the Lord to follow the counsel of the Spirit of Prophecy. The Lord opened up the way for them to purchase a health food store that had been in business for over 30 years in Valley Springs, California. This was a giant leap of faith and they have made many personal sacrifices, but the Lord has been good. God not only opened the way and provided the means to be able to purchase the store but



also has provided His spirit to lead in blessing each person who enters their doors.

The Lord has sustained them and provided grace for each new day. Sister Anna Petrovich and Sister Sharon Eaton are running the store. They feel a great sense of both responsibility and privilege to be able to work in such an environment where they are able to provide help for their fellow human being's physical and spiritual health.

Young Megan Petrovich and Stephen Nelson help out in the store every couple of days. One of the goals of the store is to mentor and train new medical missionaries, providing internships to members in other cities and countries so that they can come and learn about running a business and also about natural health and healing methods. The aim is that the interns would carry this knowledge back to their home towns to share the experience they have gained and use the healing methods they have learned to continue to help and bless more people.

The store has a small clinic as well, where Sister Sharon Eaton practices Iridology and gives health counsel using the knowledge she has obtained from her studies in Iridology and years of experience in various health food stores.

The store also has a small but growing restaurant with Vegan Nacho's and Vegan Hot Dogs and several tables for customers to eat at. There is a large bulk herbs and spices section, spiritual themed gifts, aromatherapy, health groceries and frozen goods, natural personal

care products such as natural soap, and home cleaning products, health supplements and vitamins, and a farm stand where fresh local produce is delivered once a week. There have been several cooking classes conducted at the store to help educate people on how to prepare meals that are both nutritious and delicious. More cooking classes and health talks are being planned to provide simple steps people can take to achieve optimum health. There are also plans to incorporate this information on the store's website (<http://www.health-habit.com/>) and onto Sharon's business website (<https://www.eyeloveeveryone.com>), as well as onto Sharon's Facebook business page (<https://www.facebook.com/EyeLoveEveryone>)

Anna and Sharon have found on days that they pray more at the store they are able to be a much greater blessing. They recently decided to pray as many times as possible and have noticed even bigger blessings in the way they are able to help the people who come in as well as in the amount of sales made. They ask that every member work with them by remembering this missionary endeavor in their prayers as often as possible. Let us pray that the Lord will continue to sustain and prosper the business that they may be a blessing for every soul who enters.

Sharon says *"It's such a privilege to be able to live the life that Jesus lived, to follow in our Master's footsteps in caring for the sick, the sad, and all those who desperately need hope. We get to pass on the love that was given to us by Jesus."*

Sharon's Iridology Office



**The Owners and Employees:
From left to right,
back row:
Anna Petrovich,
Megan Petrovich,
Sandy Nelson,
Christian Nelson,
Sharon Eaton,
Stephen Nelson.**

**In front row:
Jonathan and
Jeremiah Nelson.**

Many believers in Malawi gathered at a conference in Blantyre to bid farewell to their faithful and beloved president, Brother Libamu. Brother Libamu has been the faithful president of the Malawi Union for many years and is now being transferred to Somalia. The people thanked Brother Libamu for his service and his kind heart. They will miss him very much. Let us keep Brother Libamu and his family in our prayers as they will face many challenges ahead in a largely Muslim country.



Left: Brother Libamu with his wife and Sister Chunga (a long time reformer)



Right: Brother Libamu with Brother Mtikama who will replace him as president of the Malawi Union

Some of the youth at the Mexican Conference—December 2019



India



Part of a new group of believers who are studying with Brother Ruban David (on right) in the Maharashtra and Telangana region of India. This group of believers all come from a Sunday keeping background and many have accepted the Sabbath and are ready to be baptized into the church. Let us keep them in our prayers.

American Union Conference—December 2019



“I entreat you to open the door of your heart and let your Saviour in. Give Him the whole heart--that which He has purchased. Ever bear in mind that it is you who must choose. God forces no man. He has chosen you, and engraven your name in the palms of His hands. Will you not give yourself fully to Him? Time is short. You have not a moment to lose in hesitation. The divine Word is in your hands, to be a lamp to your feet and a light to your path.”
— *The Upward Look*, p. 25

