



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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- 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

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Stand Alone

“In his ministry, Paul was often compelled to stand alone. He was specially taught of God and dared make no concessions that would involve principle. At times the burden was heavy, but Paul stood firm for the right. He realized that the church must never be brought under the control of human power. The traditions and maxims of men must not take the place of revealed truth. The advance of the gospel message must not be hindered by the prejudices and preferences of men, whatever might be their position in the church.” —*The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 199–200

“God designed that Moses should stand out alone, leaning upon His strong arm, that he should learn to pray and to believe. . . . Everyone should have an individual experience. We should ever be learning the lessons that Providence designs us to learn. . . . If we place ourselves where we look to others to brace us and support us, if we depend on finite help, we do not really know our own strength because we do not stand alone, making God our helper. When thrust out where we have to stand alone, the taproot of our faith fastens upon the only sure support—the infinite God.” —*Christ Triumphant*, p. 100

“Every soul of us living upon the face of the earth must have our test and trials. Circumstances will occur in the providence of God when we will be called to vindicate our faith. We shall give decided evidence which side we are on. We shall either be decidedly the vindicators of God’s holy law, or on the side of the transgressors. We shall be tested as Noah was tested. Because the corruption was nearly universal in his age, did he then argue that it would not pay for him to stand separate and alone for God’s law? He took his position as God’s nobleman on the side of right because it was right.” —*Christ Triumphant*, p. 59

“See John the Baptist, the forerunner of Christ, standing alone to rebuke the pride and formalism of the Jewish nation. See the first bearers of the gospel into Europe. How obscure, how hopeless, seemed the mission of Paul and Silas, the two tentmakers, as they with their companions took ship at Troas for Philippi. See ‘Paul the aged,’ in chains, preaching Christ in the stronghold of the Caesars. See the little communities of slaves and peasants in conflict with the heathenism of imperial Rome. See Martin Luther withstanding that mighty church which is the masterpiece of the world’s wisdom. See him holding fast God’s word against emperor and pope, declaring, ‘Here I take my stand; I can not do otherwise. God be my help.’ See John Wesley preaching Christ and

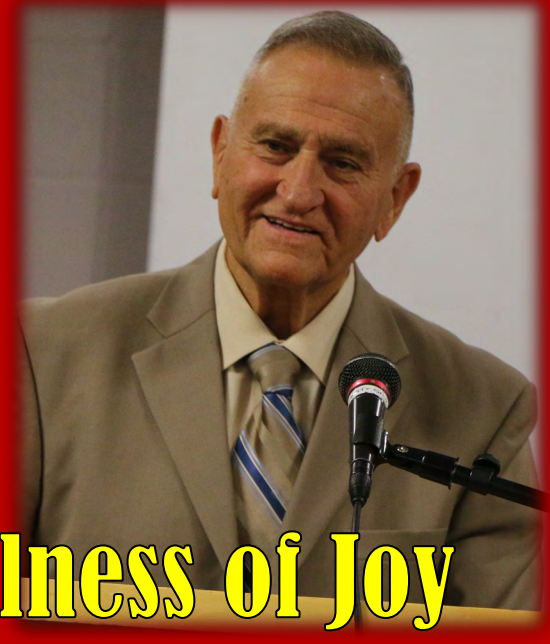
His righteousness in the midst of formalism, sensualism, and infidelity. See one burdened with the woes of the heathen world, pleading for the privilege of carrying to them Christ’s message of love.” —*Christ’s Object Lessons*, p. 78–79

“Let the workers stand alone in God, weeping, praying, laboring for the salvation of their fellow men. Remember that you are running a race, striving for a crown of immortality. While so many love the praise of men more than the favor of God, let it be yours to labor in humility. Learn to exercise faith in presenting your neighbors before the throne of grace and pleading with God to touch their hearts. In this way effectual missionary work may be done. Some may be reached who would not listen to a minister or a colporteur. And those who thus labor in new places will learn the best ways of approaching the people and can prepare the way for other laborers.” —*Counsels for the Church*, p. 61–62

“God is our strength. We must look to Him for wisdom and guidance, and keeping in view His glory, the good of the church, and the salvation of our own souls, we must overcome our besetting sins. We should individually seek to obtain new victory every day. We must learn to stand alone and depend wholly upon God. The sooner we learn this the better. Let each one find out where he fails, and then faithfully watch that his sins do not overcome him, but that he gets the victory over them. Then can we have confidence toward God, and great trouble will be saved the church.” —*Early Writings*, p. 105

“‘Dare to be a Daniel, dare to stand alone!’ Have courage to do the right. . . . ‘Come out from among them, and be ye separate.’” —*Temperance*, p. 189

Ellen G. White



Happiness and

Fullness of Joy

My dear friend, brother and sister, do you want to be always happy, having fullness of joy? It is possible. Everybody is seeking happiness, even criminals, but they often end up in jail. People go to movie theatres, and they are happy for two hours, but when they come out, the happiness is gone again. Happiness is when you reach your goals. Happiness is when you are successful in your work, in your hobbies, and in your efforts.

A sportsman practices day after day, for months and years. Finally becomes good, and wins the race, or the game, and becomes a champion. Now he has reached his goal and he is happy.

A musician practices every day for years, and one day he is noticed, and he becomes famous; now he is happy, he has reached his goal.

ness in profit and in the expansion of his business. Some expect happiness in higher education, others in the purchase of a house, car, or a holiday trip.

But, what does the Bible say? Where does the child of God find happiness and joy? "Blessed are ye, when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for My sake. Rejoice, and be exceeding glad: for great is your reward in heaven: for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you." Matthew 5:11-12

We are to rejoice in persecution and be exceeding glad. "Blessed are ye, when men shall hate you, and when they shall separate you from their company, and shall reproach you, and cast out your name as evil, for the Son of man's sake. Rejoice ye in that day, and leap for joy: for, behold, your reward is great in heaven: for in the like manner did their fathers unto the prophets." Luke 6:22-23

"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. If ye be reproached for the name of Christ, happy are ye; for the spirit of glory and of God resteth upon you: on their part He is evil spoken of, but on your part He is glorified." 1 Peter 4:12-14

"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 pre-

All people are seeking happiness, and they think they know how to reach it. A worldly person will expect happiness in money, riches, fame, success, parties, fun, entertainment, and pleasure.

Some expect happiness in marriage, having a family, and children. A businessman expects happi-



cious 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 1:6-7

"I will be glad and rejoice in Thy mercy: for Thou hast considered my trouble; thou hast known my soul in adversities." Psalm 31:7

"As sorrowful, yet always rejoicing; as poor, yet making many rich; as having nothing and yet possessing all things." 2 Corinthians 6:10

"These things have I spoken unto you, that My joy might remain in you, and that your joy might be full." John 15:11

When the martyrs came to the place of execution, they were smiling and praising God, and singing happy songs. They did not suffer. When the Holy Spirit enters into a person, he is happy; when his name is written in the book of life, he has fullness of joy. Our missionary work is to bring joy and happiness to the people who are sad and unhappy.

All these Bible texts indicate that, God's people can be happy although they are suffering and being hated; Jesus said that we will receive fullness of joy. Jesus also said that there are many things which people expect to give them happiness, but they will not satisfy the soul.

"But woe unto you that are rich! for ye have received your consolation. Woe unto you that are full! for ye shall hunger. Woe unto you that laugh now! for ye shall mourn and weep. Woe unto you, when all men shall speak well of you! for so did their fathers to the false prophets." Luke 6:24-26

The great danger of professing Christians is the love of the world. They are slowly dying spiritually. Jesus saw this happening to the Jewish nation, and there was nothing He could do except weep over them. Also, there was nothing Jeremiah could do except weep over God's people who were turning away from God.

"For these things I weep; mine eye, mine eye runneth down with water, because the comforter that should relieve my soul is far from me: my children are desolate, because the enemy prevailed." Lamentations 1:16

It seems so often in our world that the evil are prospering and the good are suffering. The righteous and faithful are sighing and crying for the abominations done among the people, in the same way that Jeremiah was weeping for the sins of the people.

Many will be outside with broken dreams, without salvation, without heaven, and eternal life. What went wrong?

Today the Holy Spirit's voice is calling out to everyone. Today Jesus is offering forgiveness of sin, yet many will choose not to repent and forsake their sins. Thus they lose sight of heaven; they cannot see Jesus anymore, and their happiness is also gone.

So many will be outside with a broken dream, without salvation, without heaven, and eternal life. What

went wrong? It can happen to anyone. Suddenly they fall, and lose sight of heaven; they cannot see Jesus anymore, and their happiness is gone also.

This happened with Ancient Israel. When they left Egypt there were over 600,000 men 20 years and older besides women and children. Several times many fell into sin and died as a result. Finally, of the over 600,000 men, only two men entered into Canaan's Land. All the others perished in the wilderness. Now we understand why only eight people were saved from the flood, from the estimated 100 million people living in the time of Noah.

This will happen also in the time of the end. Starting from the year 1844, only 144,000 of those who heard the Three Angels Messages will be saved. Nowhere are there so many broken dreams as among religious people. Jesus said, "Strive to enter in at the strait gate: for many, I say unto you, will seek to enter in, and shall not be able." Luke 13:24

They were dreaming of eternal life, of peace and happiness, but in the end they hear the words of Jesus, "Depart from Me." Matthew 7:23

How often do we see a brother or a sister failing, sinking as Peter was when Jesus had to lift him up from the water. Many who know God and the Bible are drowning in the sea of sin, and we must rush to their rescue and try to save them. This may bring tears to our eyes, like it brought tears to the eyes of Jesus and to Jeremiah. It is love towards them that brings sorrow upon us, as we see them drowning.

It was love that made Moses offer his eternal life for his people. Love makes us sacrifice for others.





It is the saddest love story between Christ and His people. It starts with everlasting love towards His people. "The LORD hath appeared of old unto me, saying, Yea, I have loved thee with an everlasting love: therefore with loving-kindness have I drawn thee." Jeremiah 31:3

Next comes our response to His love. "He that loveth father or mother more than Me is not worthy of Me: and he that loveth son or daughter more than Me is not worthy of Me. And he that taketh not his cross, and followeth after Me, is not worthy of Me." Matthew 10:37-38

If we do not love Jesus more than everything else, we are not worthy of Him.

After this comes marriage. Following wedding, everything seems happy and joyful; it is a new experience, a new life with Christ. Then something happens, along comes another lover. Eve loved Adam, but along came the serpent, offering something that Adam had never given her, and that was the forbidden fruit. It is so exciting, something new, and she forgot her husband and went along with the new lover.

Then comes separation: "Surely as a wife treacherously departeth from her husband, so have ye dealt treacherously with Me, O house of Israel, saith the LORD." Jeremiah 3:20

God and His people have difficulties. What has happened?

"Nevertheless I have somewhat against thee, because thou hast left thy first love." Revelation 2:4. When the love is gone, then the happiness is gone also.

How important is love in a marriage? "And though I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries, and all knowledge; and though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, and have not charity, I am nothing." 1 Corinthians 13:2

"Not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day that I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt; which My covenant they brake, although I was an husband unto them, saith the

LORD." Jeremiah 31:32. The marriage covenant is broken... and then comes divorce.

"Thus saith the LORD, Where is the bill of your mother's divorcement, whom I have put away? or which of my creditors is it to whom I have sold you? Behold, for your iniquities have ye sold yourselves, and for your transgressions is your mother put away." Isaiah 50:1

Then, next comes anger.

"And I will judge thee, as women that break wedlock and shed blood are judged; and I will give thee blood in fury and jealousy." Ezekiel 16:38

Is this the end of the story? No, this love story has a happy ending. The Lord is not without a bride or a wife.

"Except the LORD of hosts had left unto us a very small remnant, we should have been as Sodom and we should have been like unto Gomorrah." Isaiah 1:9

The Lord still has in His church a very small remnant. What kind of remnant does the Lord still have? "I will also leave in the midst of thee an afflicted and poor people, and they shall trust in the name of the LORD." Zephaniah 3:12

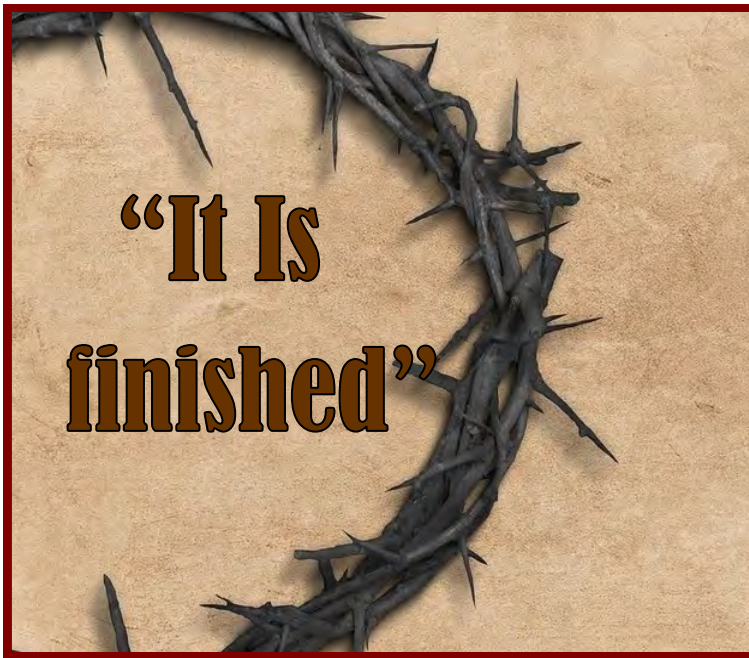
This is the happy ending to the love story. "Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honour to Him: for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and His wife hath made herself ready. And to her was granted that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white: for the fine linen is the righteousness of saints." Revelation 19:7-8

We all can be happy, day and night, but we must watch carefully that we do not lose our happiness. Adam and Eve lost their happiness. When they were outside of the Garden of Eden, we can only wonder how many times they said, "Why did we do this sin, why did we eat of this tree?"

Satan wants us all to lose our happiness, but we must hold on to it, and let it grow greater and greater. When we are taken into the cloud with Jesus to go to Heaven, we will then be truly happy for all eternity. Jesus is still offering fullness of joy; let us all accept it. Amen.

Timo Martin





Shortly before his passing, John Formosa recorded a sermon to be used for the Canadian Field on-line Sabbath School Program. He mentioned that it was to be used in the event that one week there was no sermon available. It was in reserve. The sermon was spoken in the Toronto church in February. After John's passing (March 10, 2021), the sermon was broadcast as the divine service on March 20, 2021. It can be viewed on the 4truth.ca Youtube channel. (The sermon begins at the 1 hour 55 minute mark).

The following is a shortened summary of the sermon. If you wish to have a printed copy of the entire sermon, please contact the publishers.

Three small word—barely a sentence. Three words—yet three powerful words, words of finality, words of closure. Closure is an important concept for human beings. We like to have an ending to things. We like to be sure of things. We like to be comfortable. If someone we love dies, we like to have said good by. How awful a husband feels if he had exchanged some harsh words with his wife in the morning when they parted, only to have something unexpected happen to her during the day, like a car accident. If she died in the car crash, harsh words would have been the last thing that he shared with his wife. How empty that feeling would be, to never have the opportunity in this life to apologize to her, and vice versa for a wife to her husband. Yet scenarios like this play out in our lives every day. It may not be as severe as a death, but there are many things we leave undone in our lives. Things without any closure.

“It is finished.”

While reading this article, I would like you to think about your life—of how you live your life. I would like you to concentrate on *you*. Put out of your mind other people, other places, other things, other cares of this life. Concentrate and do not be distracted by other thoughts.

In 2005 a category-five hurricane named Katrina smashed the New Orleans coast devastating the city of about ¾ million people. Bridges were down, the entire place was flooded up to the top of homes. Thousands of people were stranded on the roofs of their own homes, and thousands of buildings were lying in ruins. Estimates run that over 50 billion dollars in damage happened within a short period of time. Almost a million people were displaced and this, in the matter of a few

hours time. In a moment, things came to an end. In a moment people's lives changed completely forever. Plans for the future, investments, savings, jobs, even the basic necessities of life like food, shelter, and water were gone. And everything changed. Their lives seemed finished.

But the worst was still to come. The next couple of weeks witnessed thousands of dead bodies floating in the streets. Thousands of dead trapped inside their homes as the entire city shrank into a worse and worse nightmare. Basic law and order deteriorated, and the whole area seemed on the verge of anarchy. The entire place became disease infested, resembling more of an open sewer than a major city in the richest country on earth.

We can learn many things from the events that unfolded in New Orleans.

Warnings: Why were so many people still there in the city when they were warned of how powerful the approaching hurricane was? Why did government officials not heed the warning from experts and engineers that the levees that were built to protect New Orleans from the ocean were inadequate and that they would not stand up to a major hurricane? The plain fact is that most humans do not heed warnings, especially after we have heard them over and over again and have somehow managed to avoid disaster. New Orleans had withstood hurricanes before and had survived just fine. But this time something was different. None of the previous hurricanes that had hit New Orleans were as powerful as Katrina.



How often has God warned humanity through the ages of the coming events in the future? God does not hide things from His people. He puts them out there, in plain view. God does not want His people to perish. He wants His people to live. It is sad that most people choose not to listen. After reading God's word about the Holy Spirit's constant pleadings towards them, they still choose to ignore the words time after time, until they cannot discern the voice any longer.

The voice of the Holy Spirit is still there, but they have stopped listening. "While it is said, To day if ye will hear His voice, harden not your hearts, as in the provocation." Hebrews 3:15

"Today!" God uses the word "Today" in this verse because tomorrow may never come. Today is given to us, not necessarily tomorrow. I now ask, why did He make mention of the immediacy of today and reference it back to the provocation?

After years and years as slaves in captivity in Egypt, the Israelites left Egypt with great fanfare and hope. They followed Moses into the wilderness. After all the experiences they made in the 40 years in the wilderness—of God's wondrous leading and protection, they came a second time to the precipice of the Promised Land. And what did they do? The Israelites provoked Moses to anger by not having faith again in God. Moses got angry and hit the rock rather than speaking to it, and thus he could not enter the Promised Land. This is the event that God references here.

"Today If you hear His voice, harden not your hearts as in the day of that provocation." They provoked Moses and God by not having faith in spite of all that He had done for them. This is a lesson for us that we do not provoke God who has done so much for us. Again I say, God uses the word "today" because tomorrow may never come.

Anarchy: Those days after Katrina, with the food, the shelter, and the fresh water being all of a sudden scarce, the city quickly sank into depravity. It bordered on An-

archy. People looting stores, not for food, but for material goods, like televisions, Play stations, computers, and phones. Where were they going to plug them in? There was no longer any electricity or cellular service. What were they going to do with these goods? People were protecting homes at gun point, refusing to be evacuated. What was there to protect any more? What about the disease that surrounded them? They esteemed property over their own personal

health. Their behaviour was not even logical. Proverbs 1:19 reads, "So are the ways of every one that is greedy of gain; which taketh away the life of the owners thereof." People's greed will destroy their own lives. Fear, hopelessness and anxiety. Many did manage to get out of the city and were housed in temporary shelters scattered across the USA, but they were ripped with fear and anxiety about the future. Fear controlled their lives as they were uncertain about what tomorrow would bring. "Men's hearts failing them for fear, and for looking after those things which are coming on the earth: for the powers of heaven shall be shaken." Luke 21:26

The Blame Game: Soon people started looking for someone to blame. Someone had to be held accountable for this mess. It was the different levels of government that did not respond fast enough to this disaster. The citizens blamed each other and the government. Each level of government blamed each other. Many people do not like to take responsibility for themselves, for their own actions. They always feel a need to blame someone.

"And I heard a loud voice saying in heaven, Now is come salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of his Christ: for the accuser of our brethren is cast down, which accused them before our God day and night." Revelation 12:10. When Satan was Lucifer in heaven, he was the first accuser. He accused God who created him. There was peace in the universe before Lucifer stood up and said, "I have a better plan." "I have a better way." Through this better way, Satan starts his evil by making men blame each other. He is the accuser of the brethren. Accusation comes from the spirit of Satan.

Some were even blaming God. It is His fault as it was a natural disaster. Why does God allow such things to happen anyway? It is Satan's sophistry to use the term, "natural disaster." There is nothing natural about it. God's natural way is one of peace. God did not create the earth to harm people but to be subject to man. Man

was originally given dominion over the planet earth. It was created as his home. It was created beautiful. (See Genesis 1:27-31). God's original creation was perfect; in complete harmony.

These "natural disasters" are the result of thousands of years of sin which has left an indelible mark upon this earth. Through the influence of Satan, man has abused his environment to the point of no return. Experts warn of the effects of overconsumption and pollution, yet their words are ignored. God gave a warning about this approximately 2000 years ago. "For we know that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now." Romans 8:22

Compassion and Love: During Katrina, amidst all the misery and carnage, we also witnessed many acts of love and courage as different people risked their own lives to help others. There were people sacrificing their home, their money and their time. Some who had lost almost everything themselves were sharing what little they did have with others. So here we have two camps, one driven by greed, avarice, accusation, anxiety and fear, and another driven by compassion, love, duty and respect.

I want you to pause here and think to yourself for a moment. What camp would you be in if this had happened, not in New Orleans, but in the city that you live in? Whom do you resemble more? Each of us will have the opportunity to discover this in our life at some point in time.

Today, we need to ask ourselves who we are more like. Today is what have right now. Tomorrow may not be ours. To some of those people, when Katrina hit, that was their last day. No more time. It is finished.

"Now there was set a vessel full of vinegar: and they filled a sponge with vinegar, and put it upon hyssop, and put it to His mouth. When Jesus therefore had received the vinegar, He said, It is finished: and He bowed His head, and gave up the ghost." John 19:29-30

2000 years ago, a Man hung on the cross hewn out of wood. He was God, a Priest, and a King. It was a cross that was meant for a murderer and a thief, a criminal and a sinner. It was Barabbas's cross (Mark 15:6-13)

On that day, the crowd was chanting to Pilate, we do not want Jesus, we want Barabbas. Give us Barabbas. Would we have chanted the same thing if we were in the midst of the crowd that day? Give us the murderer and thief, the one who causes insurrection? Let us not so easily dismiss this thought from our mind. Each time

we commit the smallest sin, we are crucifying Jesus afresh. We are asking for Barabbas, whose spirit was moving among the people that day.

Whose cross was Jesus hanging on that day? "Ye have heard that it was said by them of old time, Thou shalt not kill; and whosoever shall kill shall be in danger of the judgment: But I say unto you, That whosoever is angry with his brother without a cause shall be in danger of the judgment: and whosoever shall say to his brother, Raca, shall be in danger of the council: but whosoever shall say, Thou fool, shall be in danger of hell fire. Therefore if thou bring thy gift to the altar, and there rememberest that thy brother hath ought against thee; Leave there thy gift before the altar, and go thy way; first be reconciled to thy brother, and then come and offer thy gift." Matthew 5:21-24

After reading this verse, I ask, who of you readers is not guilty of being Barabbas? Who is not guilty of killing someone? Who is not a sinner? Who is not in the prison house of sin? Who does not want to be released from that prison? Yes, my friends, it was *me* who was released from prison that day. It was *my* cross that Jesus dragged through the streets that day. It was *my* cross that Jesus hung on that day. Just accept the truth and replace your names with Barabbas. Give us Brother John Formosa, give us John and crucify Jesus. Yes, it was from *my* cross that Jesus looked down in anguish and cried, "It is finished." That is the truth of it, but what did it all mean?

The recording of Jesus crying out, "It is finished," is only found in the gospel of John. The apostle John was at the foot of the cross and heard it personally. Thousands of people saw Jesus die on the cross of Calvary that day but only one disciple was at the foot of the cross.

Jesus cried out, "It is finished." He did not whisper it. Even after the thirst and the long torturous events of the day He still cried out, "It is finished." What happened when He cried out, "It is finished"?

"When the loud cry, 'It is finished,' came from the lips of Christ, the priests were officiating in the Temple. The lamb prefiguring Christ--for to Him all the sacrificial offerings pointed--had been brought to be slain. Clothed in his significant and beautiful dress, the priest stood with lifted knife, as did Abraham when he was about to slay his son. With intense interest the people look on. But the earth trembles and quakes, for the Lord Himself draws near. With a rending noise, the veil of the Temple is torn from top to bottom by an unseen hand, throwing open to the gaze of the multitude a

place once filled with the presence of God. In this place the Shekinah once dwelt. Here God had once manifested His glory above the mercy seat . . . The way into the Holy of all is laid open. A new and living way, which has no veil between, is offered to all." –*Manuscript Releases*, vol. 12, page 416

The battle that had gone on from the moment that Lucifer stood up and accused God's law, that His law was unjust, was now over. Now all the created beings in the universe understood the difference between God's law and Satan's plan. The argument was now over. No longer could Satan lay the charge on God that His law was unjust. No longer, would his deceptive charges be believed. The same hand that had written the judgement of God on Belshazzar's palace wall, spelling the doom of the Babylonian empire now, tears the temple veil in two. That same hand.

"Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you?" 1 Corinthians 3:16

You are the temple of the living God. No longer is it made of stone, but it is a living soul. But there is a veil that exists between God and man and unless you allow Christ to tear the veil in two, you will never have a direct relationship and connection with God. The Holy and the Most Holy must be united. Christ will not stay in the outer court and He will not stay in the Holy. He wants to enter the Most Holy of *your* temple. Christ must possess your heart, your body, your mind, and your so. Your entire being must be sanctified by His spirit. Jesus became obedient to His own law. He took *my* place on that cross. He took *your* place on that cross. That is the reality. But unless we are willing to personally accept His sacrifice, it will not do us any good.

"For three hours Christ hung upon the cross, looked upon by thousands. Thousands heard and saw the reviling of the priests and rulers; they heard the challenge, 'Come down from the cross, and we will believe in Thee,' and the taunt, 'He saved others; Himself He cannot save.' . . .

"All who had looked upon Christ during His trial were convicted of His loyalty and royal character. That face, once beheld by humanity, was never forgotten. As Cain's face expressed his guilt as a murderer, so the face of Christ revealed His innocence, serenity, benevolence—the image of God. But His accusers would not heed the mark, the signet of heaven, and that countenance was hidden by the mantle of God." –*Manuscript Releases*, vol. 12, page 385–386

There were two characters on trial there in Jerusalem that day. The character of God and the character of Satan. One driven by greed, avarice, accusation, persecution, anxiety and fear, and another driven by compassion, love, sacrifice, duty and respect. The true character of Satan could no longer be hidden. The true character of God's love and justice was just beginning to be understood.

After 4000 years, all created beings looked on and saw this trial. God's character was beginning to be understood.

"Satan led men into sin, and the plan of redemption was put in operation. For four thousand years, Christ was working for man's uplifting, and Satan for his ruin and degradation. And the heavenly universe beheld it all." –*The Desire of Ages*, p. 759

Before He was crucified, "The soldiers led Him away into the hall, called Praetorium; and they call together the whole band." Mark 15:16. The Praetorium was the place that these battle-hardened soldiers would take their prisoners to conduct their torturous treatment and most prisoners never made it out of there alive.

"It is finished." Those three words were the culmination of Jesus' life here on this earth. It was the culmination of this argument that Satan had brought up; this accusation that God's law was not just. It was the closure to the torture and sacrifice and it culminated in Jesus crucifixion.

"Some have limited views of the atonement. They think that Christ suffered only a small portion of the penalty of the law of God; they suppose that, while the wrath of God was felt by His dear Son, He had, through all His painful sufferings, the evidence of His Father's love and acceptance; that the portals of the tomb before Him were illuminated with bright hope, and that He had the abiding evidence of His future glory. Here is a great mistake. Christ's keenest anguish was a sense of His Father's displeasure. His mental agony because of this was of such intensity that man can have but faint conception of it." –*Testimony for the Church*, vol. 2, page 213–214

Jesus was oppressed by the powers of darkness. He was struggling with the power of Satan who declared to Him that he had Him in his power; that His father in heaven had forsaken Him. It is hard for any of us to comprehend the full mental anguish that Jesus was going through at this time. What we do know is the character of the one who was doing the accusing. Yet through this physical, mental and emotional abuse, and the weight the sins of the whole world upon Him, Jesus prevailed.

Three simple words signaled the victory. "It is finished." The Greek word for the word "finished" used here is *Teleo*. *Teleo* means, to bring to a close, to finish, to end; to perform, to execute, to complete, fulfill, to carry out a command, and to pay for something. "It is finished," or, "it is paid."

Christ satisfied God's justice by dying for all to pay for the sins of the elect. These sins can never be punished again as that would violate God's justice. Sins can only be punished once either by a substitute or by yourself. Christ substituted Himself for you and I. But it is up to us to claim that forgiveness. It is up to *me* to claim that substitution.

The word *Teleo* is used also 2 Timothy 4:6-8 "For I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand. I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith: Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing."

Paul knew that he no longer had much time left. He knew that he would be martyred soon. He now looked back on his life. "*Teleo*".

Paul was happy at what he saw. He had kept the faith. He had closure. The thought of the sacrifice before him did not bother him. He knew that the same Person who hung on the cross for him would still be with him through the final closing events of his life because he already had the experience of Jesus being with him up to this point in time. He had already spent much time with Jesus through good times, through trials and through persecutions; from persecuting Christ's people to, his conversion, and the many of his life events thereafter.

I have finished my course, Paul said. Can we say this? How would it be if today were your last day? What do you see when you look back at your life today? Is it complete? Is there something left undone? Here we come to the crux of the matter. The essential or salient point of it all. We have a choice to make. When the hurricane of life comes upon us, be it real or metaphorical, whom will we resemble? The true nature of the people in New Orleans came out when that hurricane hit. When all the support systems, all the things they took for granted were removed, their true character was seen. When we can no longer rely on people and places that we put our trust in, who will we resemble?

"It is by close, testing trials that God disciplines His servants. He sees that some have powers which may be used in the advancement of His work, and He puts these

persons upon trial; in His providence He brings them into positions that test their character and reveal defects and weaknesses that have been hidden from their own knowledge. He gives them opportunity to correct these defects and to fit themselves for His service. He shows them their own weakness, and teaches them to lean upon Him; for He is their only help and safeguard. Thus His object is attained. They are educated, trained, and disciplined, prepared to fulfill the grand purpose for which their powers were given them." —*Conflict and Courage*, p. 46

God has a plan for each one of us individually. He has a grand purpose for you to fulfill with all your talents that you were born with, and the many more that He will give you. If you have not been faithful, He has given you today to correct these deficiencies and errors.

"Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ: By whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God. 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 unto us." Romans 5:1-5

We cannot justify ourselves. Only Jesus can justify us. If you have accepted justification by faith, you will have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. There will be no anxiety, no fear, no shame and we will glory in tribulations also, just as Paul did. Just as he looked back, and he realized that he had done so through God, through Jesus, who was his helper.

We have a choice to make. "To every thing there is a season, and a time to every purpose under the heaven: A time to be born, and a time to die; a time to plant, and a time to pluck up that which is planted." Ecclesiastes 3:1-2. It is time now to make a real decision for Jesus Christ.

"It is finished," It is my wish and prayer that each one of you would choose Jesus and accept His Sacrifice, today. Amen





Genuine Love

You can ask any Christian in the world if they love Jesus and unanimously they will answer, “yes”. How can you be a true Christian and not love Jesus? That is impossible. The centre of the gospel is Jesus Christ. It is Jesus who paid for our penalty on the cross of Calvary. It was Jesus who bore such terrible abuse and suffering that we may be free from our guilt. “Christ was treated as we deserve, that we might be treated as He deserves. He was condemned for our sins, in which He had no share, that we might be justified by His righteousness, in which we had no share. He suffered the death which was ours, that we might receive the life which was His. ‘With His stripes we are healed.’” –*The Desire of Ages*, p. 25

How can this not melt your heart?

Jesus told a parable of a servant who owed 10,000 talents to the king which he was unable to pay. The man pleaded for mercy, and so the king did have mercy and genuine love for his servant and forgave him his debt. This is an example of how Jesus offers us forgiveness for a debt we cannot pay. This same servant then went out and ran into a fellowservant who owed him 100 pence. This man also could not pay and pleaded with the servant for mercy. The servant refused to show mercy and cast his fellowservant into prison until he could pay. What do you think the king did when he heard of this? He took that first servant and delivered him to the tormentors until he would pay (Matthew 18:23–34). “So likewise shall My heavenly Father do also unto you, if ye from your hearts forgive not every one his brother their trespasses.” Matthew 18:35. Who are we like? The king or the wicked servant?

When Jesus spoke the words, “Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these My brethren, ye have done it unto Me” (Matthew 25:40), it goes much further than helping the poor and forsaken, or the neglect thereof. It also includes any mistreatment you may have done to others.

People sometimes get angry at others when they feel that they have been treated wrongly. That is human nature. It is not the spirit of Christ. Christ is genuine love. This king had cause to be angry but was initially compassionate. He later turned and was not so compassionate when he saw how this servant could not show the same compassion and love. Jesus expects us to show the same compassion, forgiveness, and love to our fellow men that He has showered upon us. “Then came Peter to Him, and said, Lord, how oft shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? till seven times? Jesus saith unto him, I say not unto thee, Until seven times: but, Until seventy times seven.” Matthew 18:21–22

Jesus said, “I say unto you, That whosoever is angry with his brother without a cause shall be in danger of the judgment: and whosoever shall say to his brother, Raca, shall be in danger of the council: but whosoever shall say, Thou fool, shall be in danger of hell fire.” Matthew 5:22

Two things we want to glean from this verse. Firstly, what reason would people be angry “without a cause”?

Here is an example: If a co-worker gets the promotion, due to hard work and diligence, that you also wanted and felt you also deserved, how do you feel? Do you

congratulate the person, or do you harbour resentment and anger, “without a cause”? Or in the church, you believe you were the most talented for a specific position and someone else was elected, how do you feel? No one mistreated you so there is no need to feel angry. The unconverted human heart may feel resentment, envy and anger in this situation. However, the servant of the Lord stated, “To be envious and jealous of the brethren means to be envious and jealous of God.” *—The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*, vol. 4, p. 1182. There is no love in envy.

Is that not how all this mess came about on this earth? Satan was jealous of God, and now he tempts people on this earth to become envious and jealous. Crimes of great magnitude have resulted from envy and jealousy, from simple theft to mighty world wars. It can create a world war in your heart also if left unchecked—the good and evil fighting for supremacy. Envy brings no peace to the soul, only torment. “Envy is the rottenness of the bones.” Proverbs 14:30

The second point I want to mention from the above verse is that if you call anyone a “fool” you will be in danger of hell fire. The word “fool” seems so light in comparison with some of the angry names people call each other today when they are enraged. Words that I would not dare to allow to cross my lips, let alone dwell in my mind. People often give little thought to these angry words, but they make deep impressions on the recipients. Untold pain can result that may take years to erase. “For by thy words thou shalt be justified, and by thy words thou shalt be condemned.” Matthew 12:37. Every word is carefully recorded by your recording angel and you will have to meet them again one day, unless you repent. Anger is a terrible sin that opens the door to the control of the enemy who then leads us to commit sins we would not dare to do if we were calm in our spirit. “It is a sin to speak impatiently and fretfully or to feel angry—even though we do not speak.” *—Child Guidance*, p. 95. Jealousy and anger are the opposite of genuine love. They can be hidden in the mind for a time, but “be sure your sin will find you out.” Numbers 32:23. “Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh.” Matthew 12:34

If the love of Christ dwells in the heart of man, he will respect all authority figures. This begins as a child. “*He who rejects the rightful authority of his parents is rejecting the authority of God.* The fifth commandment requires children not only to yield respect, submission, and obedience to their parents, but also to give them love and tenderness, to lighten their cares, to guard their reputa-

tion, and to succor and comfort them in old age. *It also enjoins respect for ministers and rulers and for all others to whom God has delegated authority.*” *—Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 308

All Christians would say they have utmost respect for God, yet in their lives you see some showing disrespect to parents, or church authority figures. It begins when a child rejects the authority of their parents and it goes unchecked. When they grow into adulthood the rejection is even stronger. There comes a time when they believe they are wiser than their parents. When a child is permitted to defy the authority of parents, as adults they learn to lose respect for many authority figures. Church authority figures are included here. Ask yourself, has there ever been a time when you were dissatisfied with the minister or leader of the church; you did not think they were doing a good job and someone else should be in that position? Have you pointed out their faults and errors and talked negatively behind their backs? Then you are rejecting the authority of God, as it is God who permitted these people to be elected into these positions. Of course, open, unrepented sin needs to be disciplined (and it is genuine love to do so), but everyone has faults that trouble them, even church authority figures and we are to help and encourage them, not to degrade their reputation.

“Cease to dwell upon the shortcomings of others. Keep the tongue sanctified unto God. Refrain from saying anything that might detract from the influence of another; *for by indulging in these words of criticism, you blaspheme God’s holy name as verily as you would were you to swear.* . . .

“We need especially to guard against having a tongue that is sanctified to Satan. The tongue that God has given is to be used to glorify Him in speech. Unless it is, we shall be standing directly in the way of God’s work in this world, and the judgments of heaven will surely fall upon us.” *—The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*, vol., 5, p. 1093

This is a very serious statement. As Christians, we would all say that we refrain from using swear words, but if we say anything to detract from another’s influence, Jesus regards it as swearing.

The final point I want to mention is that of love and hate. The apostle John spoke strongly on this point. “But he that hateth his brother is in darkness, and walketh in darkness, and knoweth not whither he goeth, because that darkness hath blinded his eyes.” 1 John 2:11. “If a man say, I love God, and hateth his brother, he is a liar:

for he that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen? And this commandment have we from Him, That he who loveth God love his brother also." 1 John 4:20-21

John went on to explain the severity of hatred. "Whosoever hateth his brother is a murderer: and ye know that no murderer hath eternal life abiding in him." 1 John 3:15. "The spirit of hatred and revenge originated with Satan, and it led him to put to death the Son of God. Whoever cherishes malice or unkindness is cherishing the same spirit, and its fruit will be unto death. In the revengeful thought the evil deed lies enfolded, as the plant in the seed." *Thoughts from the Mount of Blessing*, p. 56

Every person on this earth is related to us and to hate even one would mean we are considered a murderer.

While all Christians say they love God, many wars have been fought in the name of religion. Many Christians join the army and become soldiers, carrying weapons to kill the enemy. How can you kill someone you love? In the military they justify killing, for the sake of safety. The other army is our enemy, so it is justified. But Jesus said, "I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you." Matthew 5:44. And the apostle Paul wrote: "Therefore if thine enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirst, give him drink: for in so doing thou shalt heap coals of

fire on his head. Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good." Romans 12:20-21. Nowhere do we see Jesus or the apostles saying that you should hate or kill your enemy.

If we have genuine love in our hearts, we will love all people and not hate anyone, regardless of how they have disappointed us, or hurt and wounded us, otherwise we are on the same level as they are of hating. Genuine love "keeps no record of wrongs." 1 Corinthians 13:5 (NIV)

In the end you will be judged, not only by your deeds and neglected duties, but also by the "thoughts and intents of the heart." Hebrews 4:12. Genuine love does good and only good, from pure thoughts and motives.

Jesus can help us to have pure and genuine love for our brethren, our friends, our relations, our co-workers, and even our enemies and those that torment us. Then the peace of Christ will rest in our souls. Amen.

Wendy Eaton

Emphases in quotes added by author



"It was not without a terrible struggle with himself that Luther decided upon a final separation from the church. It was about this time that he wrote: 'I feel more and more every day how difficult it is to lay aside the scruples which one has imbibed in childhood. Oh, how much pain it cost me, though I had the Scriptures on my side, to justify it to myself that I should dare to make a stand alone against the pope, and hold him forth as antichrist! What have the tribulations of my heart not been! How many times have I asked myself with bitterness that question which was so frequent on the lips of the papist: 'Art thou alone wise? Can every one else be mistaken? How will it be, if, after all, it is thyself who art wrong, and who art involving in thy error so many souls, who will then be eternally damned?' 'Twas so I fought with myself and with Satan, till Christ, by His infallible Word, fortified my heart against these doubts.'" – *The Great Controversy*, p. 143



"Many will have to stand in the legislative courts; some will have to stand before kings and before the learned of the earth to answer for their faith. Those who have only a superficial understanding of truth will not be able clearly to expound the Scriptures and give definite reasons for their faith. They will become confused and will not be workmen that need not to be ashamed. Let no one imagine that he has no need to study because he is not to preach in the sacred desk. You know not what God may require of you." – *Last Day Events*, p. 209



Negligence and Retraction

Negligence is failure to take proper care in doing something. Postponing schedules if it is not necessary is also a form of negligence. "There are many who neglect their duties outside the desk, and the condition of the churches testifies to the character of their work. Doubts, unbelief, backsliding, formality, exist in a marked degree." – *The Review and Herald*, October 21, 1884

To retract is to withdraw. It can be considered as "Backsliding" and it begins by neglecting, or unbelieving willingly. "Backsliding." What a terrible sounding word. If I were to ask, "Are you a backslider?" how would you answer the question?

Some would simply say "no" because they do not want to admit that they are not right with God.

Others would say "no" because they do not really understand what it means to be backslidden.

It is possible that someone could say "no" because he or she truly is right with the LORD?

Very few would say "yes". I seriously doubt that any of us would admit that we are, at this present moment, outside of the will of God.

Satan led many of our forefathers to neglect their duties and we today are not free from his temptations. Eve was the first to be tempted and the first to sin. It all began by neglect, which led her to retract (withdraw) into hiding from God's presence, their beloved Creator.

We read of her neglect as follows: "Satan commenced his work with Eve, to cause her to disobey. She first erred in wandering from her husband, next in lingering around the forbidden tree, and next in listening to the voice of the tempter, and even daring to doubt what God had said, 'In the day that thou eatest thereof thou

shalt surely die.' She thought that perhaps the Lord did not mean just what He said, and venturing, she put forth her hand, took of the fruit and ate." –*Early Writings*, p. 147

Eli, the high priest, is another example showing the results of neglect. "Eli had greatly erred in permitting his sons to minister in holy office. By excusing their course, on one pretext and another, he became blinded to their sins. . . . God condemns the negligence that dallies with sin and crime, and the insensibility that is slow to detect its baleful presence in the families of professed Christians. He holds parents accountable in a great degree for the faults and follies of their offspring. God visited with His curse not only the sons of Eli, but Eli himself, and this fearful example should be a warning to the parents of this time." –*Conflict and Courage*, p. 142

"Eli did not manage his household according to God's rules for family government. He followed his own judgment.... Many are now making a similar mistake. They think they know a better way of training their children than that which God has given in His word. They foster wrong tendencies in them, urging as an excuse. 'They are too young to be punished. Wait till they become older, and can be reasoned with.' Thus wrong habits are left to strengthen until they become second nature. The children grow up without restraint, with traits of character that are a lifelong curse to them and are liable to be reproduced in others. . . .

"While some err upon the side of undue severity, Eli went to the opposite extreme. . . . Their faults were overlooked in their childhood, and excused in their days of youth. The commands of the parents were disregarded, and the father did not enforce obedience. The children saw that they could hold the lines of control, and they

improved the opportunity. As the sons advanced in years, they lost all respect for their fainthearted father. They went on in sin without restraint. . . . The Lord Himself decreed that for the sins of Eli's sons no atonement should be made by sacrifice or offering forever. How great, how lamentable, was their fall,—men upon whom rested sacred responsibilities, proscribed, outlawed from mercy, by a just and holy God!" *—Ibid.*, p. 143

DO NOT NEGLECT DUTY

During the time of Christ, His parents neglected their duty to care for the Saviour. They were to regard Him as their most precious gift. "Joseph and Mary had neglected theirs. God had shown them high honor in committing to them His Son." *—The Desire of Ages*, p. 81

It takes only a second to draw away from Christ. We may think that Mary and Joseph were not careful about Christ their Saviour, but this is no different than what we do. You may say to yourself that if I was Mary I could not spend a day away from my Saviour, but many Christians do the same today.

All serious backsliding in religion begins with the neglect of private devotions such as, meditation, self-examination, reading the Scriptures, praise, and prayer. When one backslides, religion is gradually excluded from the important duties of life and is shoved into a corner, no longer needing hourly attention.

The next step is the neglect of family and social religion. Such a soul finds religious duties and meetings unprofitable. He will cease to pray and read his Bible and withdraw from meetings, even from the Lord's Table. He will no longer be seeking for holiness and humility. He will not be watchful, or spiritually minded, and will not be able to resist temptation as before. Sometimes he hopes he will profit, but his conduct soon shows that he is mistaken. His expectation deceives him.

"The very beginning of the evil was a neglect of watchfulness and secret prayer, then came a neglect of other religious duties, and thus the way was opened for all the sins that followed. Every Christian will be assailed

by the allurements of the world, the clamors of the carnal nature, and the direct temptations of Satan. No one is safe.

No matter what our experience has been, no matter how high our station, we need to watch and pray continually. We must be daily controlled by the Spirit of God or we are controlled by Satan." *—Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 5, p. 102

How many times do you neglect your Saviour? How far have you gone away from Him? "Ye therefore, beloved, seeing ye know these things before, beware lest ye also, being led away with the error of the wicked, fall from your own stedfastness." 2 Peter 3:17. Peter here wrote regarding backsliding that, at one point, you knew the right thing to do, but you fell away by some error.

"The standard of piety is low among professed Christians generally, and it is hard for the young to resist the worldly influences that are encouraged by many church members. The majority of nominal Christians, while they profess to be living for Christ, are really living for the world. They do not discern the excellence of heavenly things, and therefore cannot truly love them. Many profess to be Christians because Christianity is considered honorable. They do not discern that genuine Christianity means cross-bearing, and their religion has little influence to restrain them from taking part in worldly pleasures...

"Some can enter the ballroom and unite in all the amusements which it affords. Others cannot go to such lengths as this, yet they can attend parties of pleasure, picnics, shows and other places of worldly amusement; and the most discerning eye would fail to detect any difference between their appearance and that of unbelievers." *—Counsels to Parents, Teachers, and Students*, p. 326

We have the example of Dinah, who wandered into the land of the Moabites. She well knew that it is forbidden to play on dangerous ground. "And Dinah the daughter of Leah, which she bare unto Jacob, went out to see the daughters of the land." Genesis 34:1. How about the neglect of some youth today?

In the same way Samson, who was the anointed one of God, one who would bring victory to Israel, also wandered away from God. He thought himself wise and did not listen to his parent's counsel. "And Samson went down to Timnath, and saw a woman in Timnath of the daughters of the Philistines." Judges 14:1

Many unconverted Christians go astray, even in God's church. They neglect their duties, their prayers, missionary work, or they neglect the need to keep the body healthy. "Some of our brethren engaged in business have not kept the Sabbath according to the command-



ment. Some have been in partnership with unbelievers, and the influence of these Sabbathbreaking associates has had its effect upon them. Some have been so blinded that they could not discern the danger in such connections, but it is only the greater because unperceived. While one partner is professedly observing the Sabbath, the other, with the laborers employed, is carrying on the business of the firm. The Sabbathkeeper, though not outwardly engaged in labor, cannot keep his thoughts from business matters. While he may endeavor to keep the Sabbath, he does not keep it. The Lord looks upon him as a transgressor." –*Testimony Treasures*, vol. 2, p. 180

Examine yourself to see if you are neglecting your duties or you have already retracted (backslidden).

Is Bible study not interesting to you anymore? You might be backslidden. Are you no longer engaged in some form of study of the word of God? You might be backslidden. Does good preaching bore you? Do the doctrines not interest you? Does reproof or correction offend you? Does instruction annoy you? You might be backslidden. Another dangerous sign is a neglect of prayer. Prayer is one of our basic spiritual nutrients. We are encouraged to pray without ceasing. Do not allow your connection to heaven to be broken. True prayer requires discipline; but it is the strength of the believer.

Another indication of backsliding which leads to retraction is church attendance. Some attempt to offer an acceptable excuse for why they do not attend like they should, however, they are just excuses. Coming to church should be a delight; not just a duty.

Neglecting even small duties can lead to serious backsliding. It may be the repeated committing of many seemingly small, hardly noticeable disobediences. But the truth is that these gradually harden the heart making one less sensitive to the Holy Spirit's convicting and guiding voice. It can be busy with things which are not in themselves sinful, for example, sport, church musicals, or hobbies, which prevent us from having time to do the things God has called us to do.

Slow backsliding can result from things like continually telling "innocent" lies. It can also result from becoming extremely interested in our house and material possessions to the point of idolatry.

Gradually, the first love for Jesus will be lost and the Christians become spiritually lukewarm. Once someone becomes lukewarm towards God, the next step is they have to make a choice: They either repent and become on fire for Him again or they become cold and will perish.

TAKE HEED

In the Bible the words, "take heed", appear many times. To take heed means to be careful or pay attention. It is the opposite of "neglect." "But take diligent heed to do the commandment and the law, ... to love the LORD your God, and to walk in all His ways, and to keep His commandments, and to cleave unto Him, and to serve Him with all your heart and with all your soul." "Take good heed therefore unto yourselves, that ye love the Lord your God." Joshua 22:5; 23:11. If you do not take heed, you will neglect and retract.

Neglecting to pay attention is a very big challenge for us today. God gave His people the following warnings:

"Take heed to thyself, lest thou make a covenant with the inhabitants of the land whither thou goest, lest it be for a snare in the midst of thee." Exodus 34:12. If you do not pay attention you will find yourself copying their habits without noticing it. This is easy to do if you have been negligent and been guilty of retraction.

"Take heed to yourselves, that your heart be not deceived, and ye turn aside, and serve other gods, and worship them." Deuteronomy 11:16

"Take heed to thyself that thou forsake not the Levite as long as thou livest upon the earth." Deuteronomy 12:19. This is the duty of each Christian. Levites were appointed to take care of the tabernacle services and had no inheritance among the 12 tribes.

In the following paragraph God has two questions for His people that they need to take heed of. "In the various departments of secular labor, mental and physical, faithful workmen can earn good wages. Is not the work of disseminating truth, and leading souls to Christ, of more importance than any ordinary business? And are not those who faithfully engage in this work justly entitled to ample remuneration?" –*The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 341

"Take heed now; for the Lord hath chosen thee to build an house for the sanctuary: be strong, and do it. 1

Some attempt to offer an acceptable excuse for why they do not attend like they should, however, they are just excuses. Coming to church should be a delight; not just a duty.

Chronicles 28:10. This verse concerns your support for the prosperity of the church. You can help the gospel go forward by supporting church buildings or any other project in God's cause. If you neglect this, you are in danger.

"Take heed, regard not iniquity" Job 36:21. Do not neglect to repent and forsake your besetting sins. Decide to separate yourself from sin. Resist the devil. Pray much and work diligently to overcome.

"Take heed to yourselves, and bear no burden on the sabbath day, nor bring *it* in by the gates of Jerusalem; Neither carry forth a burden out of your houses on the sabbath day, neither do ye any work, but hallow ye the sabbath day, as I commanded your fathers." Jeremiah 17:21-22

Neglecting true Sabbath observance is manifested in different ways. The Sabbath is a sign of the relationship existing between God and His people. The fourth commandment begins with the word, "Remember." The Lord knew that amidst the multitude of cares and perplexities that people face every day, they would be tempted to be too busy from meeting the full requirement of the law, especially the Sabbath. Therefore, He said: "Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy." Exodus 20:8

When the Sabbath is thus remembered, temporal matters will take second place to spiritual matters. No duty pertaining to the six working days will be left for the Sabbath. It is possible to do this if you make a firm decision to do it. Circumstances will not justify anyone in working upon the Sabbath for the sake of worldly profit. If God excuses one man, He may as well excuse all.

"Therefore, take heed to your spirit, and let none deal treacherously against the wife of his youth." Malachi 2:15 "If those who are contemplating marriage would not have miserable, unhappy reflections after marriage, they must make it a subject of serious, earnest reflection now. This step taken unwisely is one of the most effective means of ruining the usefulness of young men and women. . . . No one can so effectually ruin a woman's happiness and usefulness, and make life a heartsickening burden, as her own husband; and no one can do one hundredth part as much to chill the hopes and aspirations of a man, to paralyze his energies and ruin his in-

fluence and prospects, as his own wife." *-The Adventist Home*, p. 43

"Take heed that no man deceive you. For many shall come in My name, saying, I am Christ; and shall deceive many." Matthew 24:4-5

"Take heed what ye hear." Mark 4:24. "But take ye heed: behold, I have foretold you all things." Mark 13:23

"Take ye heed, watch and pray: for ye know not when the time is." Mark 13:33

"Take heed therefore that the light which is in thee be not darkness." Luke 11:35. By not using the light you have received, your heart soon become cold and insensitive.

People spend much time earning money and building up their business and they can easily forget the words of Jesus. "Take heed, and beware of covetousness: for a man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth." Luke 12:15

"We should pray in the family circle, and above all we must not neglect secret prayer, for this is the life of the soul. It is impossible for the soul to flourish while prayer is neglected. Family or public prayer alone is not sufficient." -Steps to Christ, p. 98

Pure negligence has the following results. "And take heed to yourselves, lest at any time your hearts be overcharged with surfeiting, and drunkenness, and cares of this life, and so that day come

upon you unawares." Luke 21:34

"Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which He hath purchased with His own blood." Acts 20:28. This verse refers to pastors, church elders, church leaders, evangelists and workers. Parents and teachers are also direct representative of God to those under their care. Do not neglect your responsibilities. "Take heed to the ministry which thou hast received in the Lord, that thou fulfil it." Colossians 4:17. "Take heed what ye do: for ye judge not for man, but for the LORD, who is with you in the judgment." 2 Chronicles 19:6

"Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall." 1 Corinthians 10:12. Examine yourself and serve God with fear and trembling. "Take heed unto thyself, and unto the doctrine; continue in them: for in doing this thou shalt both save thyself, and them that hear thee." 1 Timothy 4:16

"Therefore we ought to give the more earnest heed to the things which we have heard, lest at any time we

should let them slip." Hebrews 2:1

"Take heed, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God." Hebrews 3:12. This is what leads many into apostasy or resignation from truth or God's church.

Take heed to not worship the beast or receive his mark. "Here is wisdom. Let him that hath understanding count the number of the beast: for it is the number of a man; and his number is Six hundred threescore *and* six." Revelation 13:18 "If any man worship the beast and his image, and receive his mark in his forehead, or in his hand, The same shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God." Revelation 14:9-10. Whoever knows the truth but does not keep the Sabbath according to the commandment is on the enemy's side. There is no neutral ground in the great controversy.

Do not turn from God's requirements by neglecting little things. "Escape for thy life; look not behind thee, neither stay thou in all the plain; escape to the mountain, lest thou be consumed." Genesis 19:17. Take heed to not forget the experience of the patriarchs. "Remember Lot's wife" (Luke 17:32). She perished by disobeying a simple requirement. (Genesis 19)

Great victories are gained from faithfulness in little things. "How little we appreciate this fact. Actions make habits, and habits, character." -*Fundamentals of Christian Education*, p. 194

"It is conscientious attention to what the world terms 'little things' that makes life a success. Little deeds of charity, little acts of self-denial, speaking simple words of helpfulness, watching against little sins—this is Christianity." -*Messages to Young People*, p. 143

There is hope still of turning back and being vigilant.

"For if ye turn again unto the LORD, your brethren and your children shall find compassion . . . For the LORD your God is gracious and merciful, and will not turn away His face from you, if ye return unto Him." 2 Chronicles 30:9. Christ is ready to assist all who have backslidden to return to the vineyard to do His work. He will forgive their sins. "Your compassionate Redeemer is watching you in love and sympathy, ready to hear your prayers and render you the assistance which you need in your lifework." -*Child Guidance*, p. 173

Departing from the presence of God, there is not the joy or peace that people think the world will give them. Instead there is only sorrow and suffering, but the Lord promises joy to those who come back to Him. When Samson asked forgiveness and repented, the Lord

granted him strength once again and he killed more Philistines in his death than he did during his life. "And I will make them and the places round about My hill a blessing; and I will cause the shower to come down in his season; there shall be showers of blessing." Ezekiel 34:26

The call to repentance was sounds with unmistakable clearness, and all are invited to return. "Seek ye the LORD while He may be found, call ye upon Him while He is near: let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts: and let him return unto the LORD, and He will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for He will abundantly pardon." Isaiah 55:6-7

"Have you, reader, chosen your own way? Have you wandered far from God? Have you sought to feast upon the fruits of transgression, only to find them turn to ashes upon your lips? . . . Return to your Father's House." -*Prophets and Kings*, p. 319-320

"Do not listen to the enemy's suggestion to stay away from Christ until you have made yourself better, until you are good enough to come to God. If you wait until then you will never come. When Satan points to your filthy garments, repeat the promise of the Saviour, 'Him that cometh to Me I will in no wise cast out.' John 6:37. Tell the enemy that the blood of Jesus Christ cleanses from all sin. Make the prayer of David your own: 'Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean: wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow.' Psalm 51:7." -*Ibid.*, p. 321

"Take heed, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God. But exhort one another daily, while it is called To day; lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin. For we are made partakers of Christ, if we hold the beginning of our confidence stedfast unto the end." Hebrews 3:12-14. Amen

***Sister Sherfield Bright (Kenya)
and
Victor Shumbusho (DR Congo)***



HEALTH MATTERS:

Ancient Grains

This month we will continue the topic of whole grains and look at sorghum and teff, two grains that may be uncommon to readers in North America and Europe, but are well known in other parts of the world. These ancient grains are originally native to Africa; they have been domesticated and consumed by people for 1000's of years and continue to be a healthy staple for people in Africa and other parts of the world today. Sorghum and teff are readily found in their whole form, which increases their value as a nutritious food. Both grains are gluten-free, making them a healthy, nutrition-packed option for those who are unable to consume gluten, either because of celiac disease or gluten intolerance.

SORGHUM (See Photo Above)

Sorghum, also called milo, has approximately 25 different species with one species grown specifically as a grain for human consumption. The other species are either used as feed for livestock, or as a biofuel. *Sorghum bicolor*, the species grown for food, was originally domesticated in West Africa, then moved to other countries; it is now grown extensively throughout the world. It is considered an ancient grain, and has been cultivated for thousands of years. In 1757, when sorghum was first introduced to North America, Benjamin Franklin wrote that it was a grain that was useful in making brooms. The grain's sturdy stalks make it useful also as a building material. Sorghum is also grown for its sugar content, similar to sugar cane. The sugary juice of the sorghum is extracted by crushing the stalk. While sorghum is unknown to many North Americans, it is the fifth-most important cereal crop worldwide.

Sorghum is one of the most drought-resistant crops, needing only 1/3 of the water needed by many other crops in order to grow and mature. In extreme drought conditions, it can go into a dormant stage instead of dying. Interestingly, it is also water-resistant, and can survive in waterlogged conditions. It is also very heat-tolerant. Sorghum is also known as a nitrogen-efficient plant; it is able to extract nitrogen from the soil readily, which is needed for growth and development of the plant, allowing it to be grown in poor soils. Because of this, sorghum can be planted in dry regions, moist tropical areas, in high altitudes and toxic

soils, providing an important staple food crop for many countries in Africa, Central America, and South Asia. Sorghum grows and matures quickly in as little as 75 days; it can produce a harvest up to three times a year. Over 40% of sorghum is grown in Nigeria, Mexico, United States, and India. As a food, sorghum is not well known in North America, however the United States has now become the top grower of sorghum worldwide, mostly for use as animal food, for export, and in making ethanol. It is becoming more popular as a human food in North America because it is gluten-free. Because of its hardy nature, and its ability to grow in many different climates, research is being done into the role of sorghum in meeting worldwide food demands.

The sorghum kernels look similar to corn, but are much smaller in size, from 2-4 mm in diameter (less than 1/4 inch). The plants produce hearty stalks, with many spikes containing the seeds; they grow in clumps up to 4 meters (13 feet) high. The sorghum kernel cannot be used for food until the indigestible outer husk is removed. Traditionally, sorghum grain was made into flour by hand pounding to remove the husk.

Sorghum is very high in healthy and diverse phytochemicals, which protect the plant from pests, UV radiation, and diseases. These same phytochemicals supply healthy nutrients to those who consume sorghum, as antioxidants. In fact, sorghum's antioxidant levels are high compared to other grains and vegetables. Flavonoids and phenolic acids prevent free radical damage to the body which is a significant contributor to diseases that correlate to the aging process. Its various phytochemicals also help control cholesterol levels and reduce the risk of diabetes. It is high in resistant starch, which slows down digestion and acts as a fibre, improving the health of the digestive system by feeding the good bacteria in the gut. Resistant starch also regulates blood sugar and aids in weight control.

Sorghum is a nutrient-rich grain. One half-cup of uncooked sorghum contains: 316 calories; 10 g protein; 3 g fat; 69 g carbohydrates; 7 g fibre (20% Daily Value or DV); 26% DV Vitamin B1; 7% DV Vitamin B2; 7% DV Vitamin B5; 25% DV Vitamin B6; 30% DV copper; 185 DV iron; 70% DV

manganese; 37% DV magnesium; 22% DV potassium; 14% DV zinc; 22% DV selenium. It is also a good source of phosphorus, Vitamin B3, and manganese. The protein content is similar to quinoa, which is known as a cereal grain high in protein.

In its whole form, sorghum grain can be cooked, similar to quinoa or rice. Milled sorghum flour is used to make flatbreads. Because of its resemblance to corn, it can also be popped to produce a product similar to popcorn. Ground sorghum can also be used in a porridge. In Central America, tortillas are made from sorghum. Its syrup is used similarly as molasses to sweeten foods. Sorghum contains up to 55% fat and can be made into a vegetable oil, similar to corn.

TEFF

Teff originated in the Horn of Africa, and is also considered an ancient grain. It is the world's smallest grain, but it packs quite a nutritional punch. As of 2016, teff was mostly grown in Ethiopia and Eritrea (90%); it is one of their most important cereals. It is cultivated for its edible seeds and its use as straw for cattle. Teff consists of 70% of the diet for the population of Ethiopia. Because of its high protein content, teff also provides two-thirds of the daily protein intake for people in these two countries. Now teff is also being grown in India, Australia, Germany, The Netherlands, United States, and Spain.

Teff is a fine-stemmed grass which grows in tufts. The size of the plant is dependent on growing conditions. It is self-pollinating, can tolerate drought, wet conditions, different altitudes, and high temperatures. However, it cannot tolerate frost. Although it can manage drought conditions, the amount of yield drops without adequate rainfall. It is able to regenerate during times of very dry conditions. It has a short growth cycle of 2–6 months. Compared to other grain crops, teff is relatively free of diseases. Thus, it is a very versatile crop, able to grow in many different climates. It is usually planted in rotation with other crops, and is typically planted late in the growing season. Teff means "lost", which may refer to the very tiny seeds whose diameter is smaller than 1 mm, about the size of a poppy seed. One thousand grains weigh approximately 0.3 grams. Because the seeds are so small, you need a very small amount to seed a large area. Also, it is difficult to mill because of its small size, so most teff that is available is a whole grain. Typically teff was threshed by having animals walk on the harvest. Teff seeds can be stored for several years under proper conditions. The seed is similar to millet and quinoa when cooking, but since the seed is much smaller it can cook faster, using less fuel. Its colour can range from white to a deep reddish brown.

Being gluten-free, teff is a good alternative for those with gluten intolerances. Many gluten-free products are made

with refined starches such as potato, corn, and white rice, which do not provide much nutrition. Teff's high selenium content is beneficial for those with celiac disease who often are deficient in selenium. Using teff flour provides a good, nutrient-packed alternative to other gluten-free options.

Teff is a rich source of many nutrients. It is very high in protein, fibre, and manganese. It is the leading grain in terms of calcium content. As is sorghum, it is high in resistant starch. Teff is low in sodium which is heart-protective. Per 100g (3.5 oz) of uncooked teff, the nutritional content is: 367 Calories; 73 g carbohydrates; 8 g fibre; 2 g fat; 13 g protein; Vitamin B1 34% DV; Vitamin B2 23% DV; Vitamin B3 22% DV; Vitamin B6 37% DV; Vitamin C 98% DV; manganese 402% DV; calcium 18% DV; iron 59% DV; magnesium 52% DV; phosphorus 61% DV; potassium 9% DV; zinc 38% DV; copper 90% DV. Ethiopians rarely suffer from iron-deficiency anemia because of the high iron content in teff.

Teff is used to make injera, a fermented flatbread with a spongy texture, and is the national dish of both Ethiopia and Eritrea. Millions of farmers in Ethiopia depend on injera for their livelihood. Teff flour can also be used to make other gluten-free baked goods. Teff can also be eaten like a porridge, or used in stews. It can be eaten whole, steamed, boiled or baked. Because it is high in minerals, it is also mixed with other grains to make baby foods. Teff is also used to feed livestock, and as a building material when mixed with mud to plaster walls. Teff is gaining in popularity because of its nutritional content, its versatility in use, and its delicious nutty flavour. Both whole-grain teff and sorghum products can be found in most health food stores and in the natural food aisles of supermarkets. As they gain in popularity, they are increasingly available worldwide.

"Our Creator has furnished us, in vegetables, grain, and fruits, all the elements of nutrition necessary to health and strength. . . . If fruits, vegetables and grains are not sufficient to meet the wants of man, then the Creator made a mistake in providing for Adam." –*The Signs of the Times*, January 6, 1876

Photo:
Sisters in the
church in
Ethiopia
preparing to
cook teff





Looking at the Cross

When in the night I cannot sleep,
I ponder Jesus, on Thy wounds and suffering so deep,
My heart and soul do weep.
Beholding there Thine anguish in Gethsemane, on Calvary,
Thy torment there because of me,
What my sins have done to Thee.
I see the blood sweat on Thy lovely face,
How the bitter struggle of Thy mind and soul,
Marred Thy features in this agony so dreadful,
As my sins and from the world were pressed on Thee. –

Then in the trial so unjust, none stood up, but all did flee,
Even of Thine own ones –Judas –Peter – did betray Thee – the Messiah,
Sent by God, to save mankind from its hopeless lot.
Condemned to death by Thine own nation by a hateful plot...
Then cruelly scourged, oh, when I think of it,
A surge of pain my reins does hit,
As brutally the whip slashed down, the blood to gush,
Each lash Thy bleeding back did crush.
O, sin, what did you do to One so lovely, innocent!
This heinous evil to the core – rebellion of the world and me
Has caused Thee Saviour, Son of God,
To be treated thus so violent...
Merciless the heavy cross was laid on Thee my God!
You could not bare it, no not now, too weak – You sank under it!
Every step was torture on the way to Calvary,
With people mocking, cursing on the side,
It was, they knew it not, to their own blight.
But the worst was yet to come, the most wicked deed
Of all ages to be done –
The crucifixion of Messiah, the Anointed, Son of God,
Son of man, who did only good, healed and loved all men.
It makes me shudder at the thought,
What sin had done to mankind – to murder – its own Creator!
And Thou never said one word, but with patience, love divine alone
Brings forth, Thou stretchest out Thine loving hands and feet,
Those hard and cruel spikes to meet!
What sigh, deep groan of woe and pain was in Thine heart,
When with heavy force they pushed the cross into the earth...
And Satan then assaulting Thee, deriding, sneering, cursing Thee,
Pressing hard against Thine soul and mind,
To discourage, taunting most unkind.
Oh – Lamb of God, Thine dignity,

In all this torment, is holy, divine majesty!
It was Thine love for all the world and me
Thou gave Thyself to pay the penalty,
For sin, that we go free.
As I behold the crown of thorns upon Thy brow,
The piercing of it oh, so awful, causing droplets of
Thy precious blood dripping down Thy face,
Yet no loving hand is there to wipe it off with grace!
Shame covers me and sorrow deep, truly causing me to weep.
Thy wounded head, Thy pierced hands and feet,
Thy bleeding body, aching soul, and broken heart –
was the reward – for love and doing good!
But death could not hold Thee God, my Saviour,
You resurrected, atoned my sin, are now in heaven,
As my High Priest, Redeemer, Intercessor.
I can come to Thee with all my clamour,
To find forgiveness, peace and rest.
Let every drop that flowed from Thee,
on the cruel cross now cover me,
To wash away my guilt and sin, make me all new within,
And stamp Thine image on my heart,
cause all earthliness depart,
And make me Christlike, obedient and faithful
To the last breath of mine,
To behold Thee in Thy glory, my Creator, Saviour, God sublime!
Amen.

Edda Tedford, Canada



CHILDREN'S CORNER:

Your Influence

Matthew was raised by loving parents on a beautiful farm in the countryside in northern United States. His parents took him to church every Sabbath. He loved to hear all the stories of the Bible, with those of David and Goliath, and Daniel in the lion's den being his favourites. He also was intrigued by the story of the three young men who refused to bow to the King's golden statue and were thrown into the fiery furnace, only to be saved from the flames by Jesus. He often wondered if he would ever be that courageous. Could he stand alone for Jesus and face possible death to the flames or to lions? He hoped he would. In his young heart he had decided that he wanted to have that courage one day. His parents taught him to pray, and when he learned to read, he began to read all the stories in the Bible for himself. Any spare moments he had in the evenings, he was found reading his Bible.

After school, he had to help his father with some chores on the farm, but there was always a little time in the evenings. How he loved to read and to pray to Jesus. Jesus became a close friend to him. How thankful Matthew was for his loving parents who took good care of him and provided him a nice place to live. Life seemed to be going very well for Matthew. He attended the church school and had many good friends who he enjoyed spending time with.

One day this all changed for Matthew. He had barely reached the age of ten when his father became gravely ill. Day by day he became progressively worse. Soon, he could no longer take care of the farm. Matthew had to increasingly do more of the farm duties to the best of his ability. The doctors gave little hope of his recovery, and it was not long before Matthew's father's life was taken by this illness. With great sorrow, Mathew and his mother laid his father to rest. Before he passed away, though, his father had encouraged Matthew to be good,

to take care of his mother, and be faithful; and one day they would meet again when Jesus comes.

But, what now? How could he live and manage the farm? Matthew was still young and could not manage the farm. After much prayer, Matthew's mother realized she had to go to work to help support her son, and she would need hire a young man to manage the farm chores. This is how George came into Matthew's life. George was a member of the local church that Matthew and his mother attended, and his parents were faithful. Matthew's mother trusted that George would provide a good example for Matthew. George proved

to be a hard worker, but his influence was not exactly Christlike. Matthew secretly questioned God's love, and had a growing bitterness in his heart for God allowing his father to die. He shared his concerns with George, who was not much of a help. George had little respect for his parents, or for God, and he reinforced Matthew's doubts, saying that God does not care and it is not worth living a Christian life. Since Matthew's mother had to work two jobs to support the farm, she was not home very much and slowly George's influence grew on Matthew. Matthew's mother also could not afford to send him to the church school, so she sent him to the public school which was free. At this school, the young boys had a negative influence on Matthew also. Although Matthew still went to church with his mother, his heart was not there. He had forgotten his father's words. The change in Matthew came slowly, and at first his mother did not notice; but, after a few years, she saw that Matthew was getting more impatient. His language was deteriorating. He had no more interest in having worship with her in the evenings. He would rather spend the evenings with his worldly friends than his mother. It grieved her heart and she prayed much for him and tried to encourage him.

One day Matthew's mother also became gravely ill. She simply had been working too hard. She was very sick and had to stop working. After some time, she was so weak she could not do any household chores and spent much of her time in bed. Matthew became alarmed. The thought of losing his mother also struck him with fear. He was just a teenager and could not bear the thought of being an orphan. What would he do?

Matthew was terrified at the thought of losing his mother and went to a quiet place alone and cried. He cried for a long time. Then for the first time in over a year he knelt down to pray. He reflected on his past life and

with remorse thought of his mother's sorrow and his own neglect. He began to think of his childhood and the wonderful times he had spent with his family, and how he had enjoyed reading his Bible. Then he remembered his father's final words to him. How terrible he felt. How he prayed earnestly for forgiveness. How sincerely he prayed for his mother. How he wished to see his father again when Jesus came. He right then and there decided to turn his life around and live for Jesus. Getting up off his knees he went into the house and gave his mother a big hug, confessed his sins to her with much tears. He then started to cook for his mother, clean the house and to tenderly care for her. He read from the Bible to her many times during the day and prayed with her. Even though the doctors had given up hope for his mother's recovery, miraculously she started to gain strength every day, much to everyone's surprise. How happily Matthew served his mother every day.

In order to get complete healing, the doctor recommended they go for one month to a retreat centre in Southern California where the weather was much warmer. At this retreat centre many wealthy people came and spent several months in order to be away from the cold north during the winter months. After the first week or two, most of the patrons became sloppy in their dress and habits. They no longer dressed nicely for meals. They came as they were, whether they just came in from lounging on the hammock, or bike riding, or hiking. Some even came in their pajamas. They did not seem to care how they dressed and they became just as careless with their manners and language. They were there to rest and have a good time and that was all that mattered.

When Matthew and his mother arrived, the first meal saw Matthew come neatly dressed with a white shirt and a tie. He escorted his mother as though she were a princess. He was smiling and cheerful to everyone he met. Just before eating they held hands and prayed.

The others looked at one another, many rolled their eyes and they all seemed to be thinking that he will not keep this up too long. Soon enough he will be just like them. But they were wrong. Matthew was full of life. He kept himself busy. He spent the days with his mother, taking her out in the fresh air; and when she napped, he went about trying to help as many as he could. Without fail though, 20 minutes before each meal Matthew's mother blew a little silver whistle that she had, and no matter what he was doing, Matthew left all and went to go and prepare for the meal. At each meal, he was clean and well dressed. He was polite and his language was re-

spectful. He was kind and friendly to everyone. His life was a little sermon in itself. Then slowly the others started to respond to the little silver whistle. One by one they began to also leave what they were doing, and began to dress nicely for the meals. The language and atmosphere in the dining room was more pleasant and respectful. Some even began to join Matthew and his mother praying for their meals. You could hardly believe it was the same group of people from ten days ago.

Matthew's politeness, simple, and unfailing, at the table, on the veranda, in the yard, wherever you met him; his readiness to be helpful, his deference to those older; his thoughtfulness for all, was the best sermon he could preach,—that of his example.

After the month that Matthew and his mother spent at the retreat, the whole atmosphere had changed by his influence; and the only one utterly unconscious of this was Matthew himself. Some even joined Matthew and his mother in their worship services.

This teenage boy, by his influence, was able to lead those at the retreat to live a better life and some gave their lives to Jesus. Do not think for one moment that people are not watching you. They are watching your words and actions. Ask yourself, what kind of influence are you giving? Your influence is like a ripple in a pond. Once the ripple has been made, it is impossible to stop it and take it back.

"Whatever we are at heart will be revealed in character, and will have an influence on all those with whom we associate. Our words, our actions, are a savor of life unto life or of death unto death." —*Our High Calling*, p. 241

"Every soul is surrounded by an atmosphere of its own—an atmosphere, it may be, charged with the life-giving power of faith, courage, and hope, and sweet with the fragrance of love. Or it may be heavy and chill with the gloom of discontent and selfishness, or poisonous with the deadly taint of cherished sin. By the atmosphere surrounding us, every person with whom we come in contact is consciously or unconsciously affected.

"This is a responsibility from which we cannot free ourselves. Our words, our acts, our dress, our deportment, even the expression of the countenance, has an influence." —*Christ's Object Lessons*, p. 339

"Our influence may be a silent, unconscious, but mighty power in drawing others to Christ and the heavenly world." —*Ibid.*, p. 341

Cooking and Health Ministry in 2020



Dear brothers and Sisters, I greet you in the name of our Saviour Jesus Christ. “The foundation of that which keeps people in health is the medical missionary work of good cooking.” –*Medical Ministry*, p. 269

We thank God very much for His lovingkindness. The year 2020 has been very difficult for all of us. No one had planned what has happened. Many lost their loved ones, jobs etc. But out of all these trials and troubles, the Lord has been gracious to us.

In this short experience, I would like to share with you how the work of cooking has reached people in many places.

We went to different places to conduct cooking and health seminars, which went well. Private classes were also given to individuals at their own homes and some came to our home. Many people who were struggling with healthful cooking now have an idea of what to cook and how to cook. Glory be to God.

Besides cooking we also reached out to the needy. We organised soup kitchens. In one of the villages we were especially asked to help with this work. Soups (which were mostly beans or lentils) were cooked and distributed to the members of the community, especially to the children.

My husband and I are self-supporting workers. We love to serve the Lord, and we enjoy reaching those in the villages. Sometimes we have had to travel to a village 60–70 km away.

In this new year we have not done much because of the restrictive Covid-19 regulations. All gatherings were banned. Just recently (in March) they have opened up. Now we have an opportunity to continue the same work. There are villages we have not reached and we would love to reach them and bless them also.

We are currently busy with virtual health and cooking lectures, using Facebook, and WhatsApp, but we also want to start on Zoom.

Many people look down on the work of cooking, but the Spirit of Prophecy says that it is one of the most important works that God looks upon with great interest. Many medical missionaries teach people about health and how to avoid harmful foods, but they do not teach them how to cook healthy and delicious food. Hence people end up spoiling good, healthy, food by unhealthy ways of cooking.

I believe whenever there is a health lesson, there should also be a cooking lesson, and this has been our work.

We ask for your prayers and your support financially, dear Brothers and Sisters, as we are pushing forward the work of God. We want to conduct more cooking and health lessons virtually and physically. We also wish to feed the needy; and to share food and clothes with them. We wish to conduct more vegan food expos, at the mall or churches, schools or universities. Combined with our health ministry is the preaching of the gospel, which my husband helps out with.

The Lord is coming soon; we have no time to waste. Let's all get busy in the service of God. There's not much time left for us. Let us not work so hard trying to secure worldly things more so than heavenly things.

Dorcas Luboya, Eswatini (former Swaziland)

www.dorcasvegankitchen.com



Senegal



In the April Issue, we gave a report of the work Daniel Kimeu in The Gambia. He had recently baptized a young man. Daniel also has been working in the neighbouring country of Senegal which is also a Muslim country, and is largely French Speaking. On April 9th, two souls were baptized in Senegal, Almamy Souma and Gnapou Thea. Let us pray for our young missionaries who are making many sacrifices for the Lord

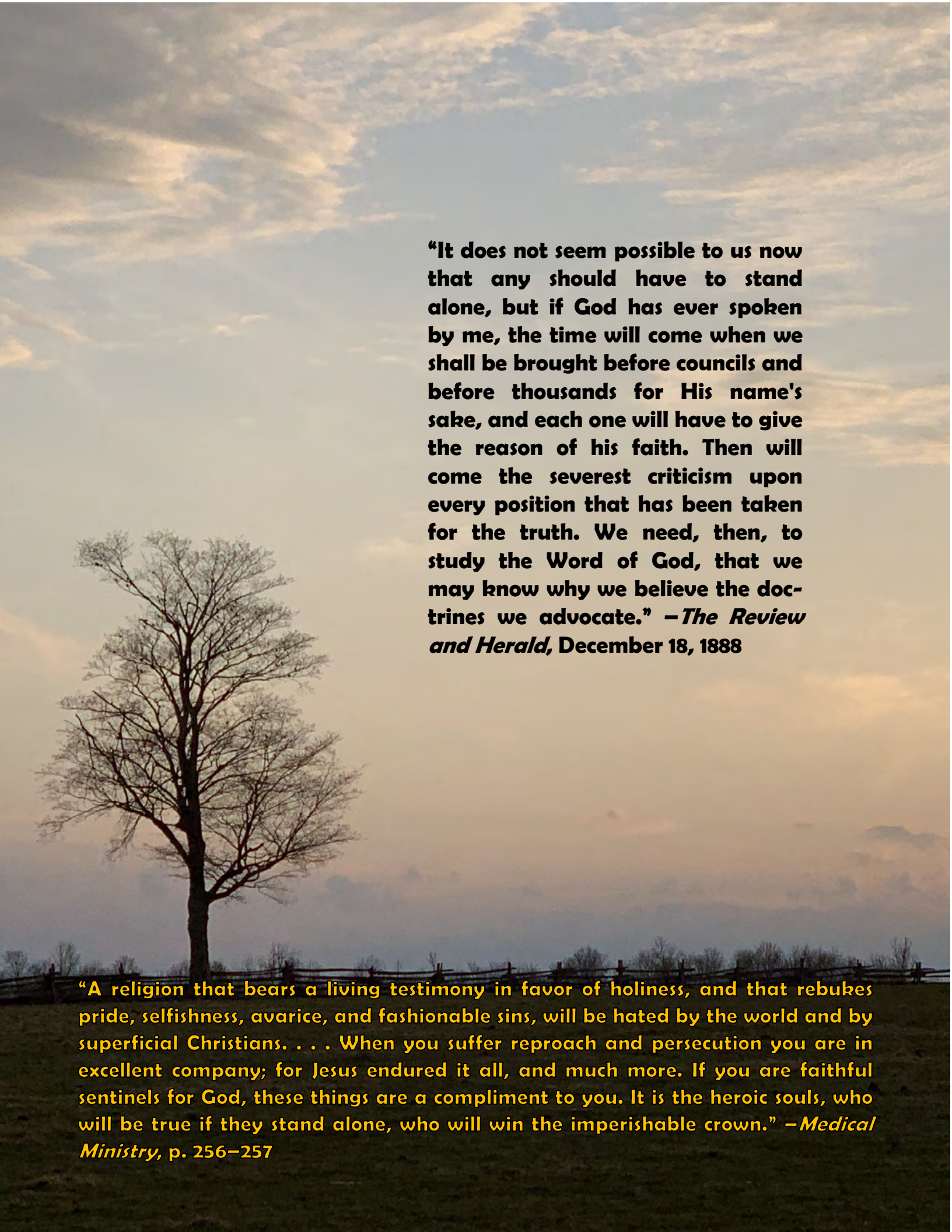
and are working far away from home in challenging parts of the world. The Lord still has a few honest souls in these countries. Their faithfulness will be rewarded.

Philippines



**Baptism on
March 21,
2021.**

**These are the
fruits of
online Bible
Studies in
Arayat
Pampanga,
Philippines**

A landscape photograph showing a large, bare tree in the foreground on the left. The tree is silhouetted against a sky filled with soft, white and grey clouds. The sky has a warm, golden glow, suggesting a sunset or sunrise. In the background, there is a wooden fence and a line of smaller trees. The overall scene is peaceful and contemplative.

“It does not seem possible to us now that any should have to stand alone, but if God has ever spoken by me, the time will come when we shall be brought before councils and before thousands for His name's sake, and each one will have to give the reason of his faith. Then will come the severest criticism upon every position that has been taken for the truth. We need, then, to study the Word of God, that we may know why we believe the doctrines we advocate.” –*The Review and Herald*, December 18, 1888

“A religion that bears a living testimony in favor of holiness, and that rebukes pride, selfishness, avarice, and fashionable sins, will be hated by the world and by superficial Christians. . . . When you suffer reproach and persecution you are in excellent company; for Jesus endured it all, and much more. If you are faithful sentinels for God, these things are a compliment to you. It is the heroic souls, who will be true if they stand alone, who will win the imperishable crown.” –*Medical Ministry*, p. 256–257