



*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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E-mail: [ismessenger@yahoo.com](mailto:ismessenger@yahoo.com)

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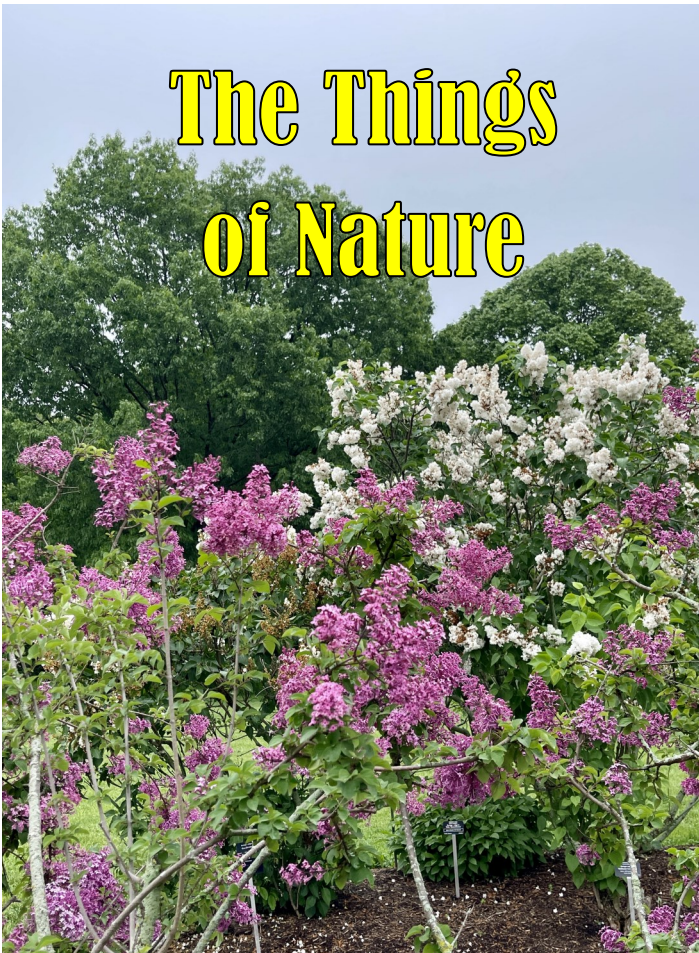
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# The Things of Nature



*"The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament showeth His handiwork." Psalm 19:1*

"The things of nature upon which we look today give us but a faint conception of Eden's beauty and glory; yet the natural world, with unmistakable voice, proclaims the glory of God. In the things of nature, marred as they are by the blight of sin, much that is beautiful remains. One omnipotent in power, great in goodness, in mercy, and love, has created the earth, and even in its blighted state it inculcates truths in regard to the skilful Master Artist. In this book of nature opened to us,--in the beautiful, scented flowers, with their varied and delicate coloring,--God gives to us an unmistakable expression of His love. After the transgression of Adam, God might have destroyed every opening bud and blooming flower, or He might have taken away their fragrance, so grateful to the senses. In the earth, seared and marred by the curse, in the briars, the thistles, the thorns, the tares, we may read the law of condemnation; but in the delicate color and perfume of the flowers, we may learn that God still loves us, that His mercy is not wholly withdrawn from the earth. . . .

"Those who have a true knowledge of God will not become so infatuated with the laws of matter or the opera-

tions of nature as to overlook, or refuse to acknowledge, the continual working of God in nature. Nature is not God, nor was it ever God. The voice of nature testifies of God, but nature is not God. As His created work, it simply bears a testimony to God's power. Deity is the author of nature. The natural world has, in itself, no power but that which God supplies. There is a personal God, the Father; there is a personal Christ, the Son. . . .

"God furnishes the matter and the properties with which to carry out His plans. He employs His agencies that vegetation may flourish. He sends the dew and the rain and the sunshine, that verdure may spring forth, and spread its carpet over the earth; that the shrubs and fruit-trees may bud and blossom and bring forth. It is not to be supposed that a law is set in motion for the seed to work itself, that the leaf appears because it must do so of itself. God has laws that He has instituted, but they are only the servants through which He effects results. It is through the immediate agency of God that every tiny seed breaks through the earth, and springs into life. Every leaf grows, every flower blooms, by the power of God . . . .

"Nature is filled with spiritual lessons for mankind. The flowers die only to spring forth into new life; and in this we are taught the lesson of the resurrection. All who love God will bloom again in the Eden above. But nature can not teach the lesson of the great and marvelous love of God. Therefore, after the fall, nature was not the only teacher of man. In order that the world might not remain in darkness, in eternal spiritual night, the God of nature met us in Jesus Christ. The Son of God came to the world as the revelation of the Father. He was that 'true Light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world.'" We are to behold "the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ." . . . .

"It is impossible to gain a perfect knowledge of God from nature alone; for nature itself is imperfect. In its imperfection it can not represent God, it can not reveal the character of God in its moral perfection. But Christ came as a personal Saviour to the world. He represented a personal God. As a personal Saviour, He ascended on high; and He will come again as He ascended to heaven,--a personal Saviour. He is the express image of the Father's person. 'In Him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily.'" --*The Review and Herald*, November 8, 1898

*Ellen G. White*



Are you a citizen of this country? Of this world? Or are you a stranger, a pilgrim? Just passing through? Are you comfortable with living here or do you feel that you are a stranger, that you do not fit into this society, into this world?

There was a man of God who was looking for a permanent place to live. Did he find what he was looking for? "By faith Abraham, when he was called to go out into a place which he should after receive for an inheritance, obeyed; and he went out, not knowing whither he went. By faith he sojourned in the land of promise, as in a strange country, dwelling in tabernacles with Isaac and Jacob, the heirs with him of the same promise: For he looked for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God." Hebrews 11:8-10

God called Abraham to leave his father's house, to embark on a journey. He did not know where God was leading him. He sojourned as a stranger in a strange country. Ultimately, he was looking for a city whose builder and maker is God. On this earth, Abraham never settled down permanently. Is this also our experience? Are we also pilgrims and strangers, looking for a city? Not a city of this world, which is corrupted and sinful; but, a city made by God.

Daniel was in a high position, a prime minister of a worldly kingdom, Babylon. He lived in a palace, surrounded with servants, riches and luxuries. But, was he satisfied with all these riches and honour? No. Where did we find him three times a day?

"Now when Daniel knew that the writing was signed, he went into his house; and his windows being open in his chamber toward Jerusalem, he kneeled upon his knees three times a day, and prayed, and gave thanks before his God, as he did aforetime." Daniel 6:10

Daniel prayed three times a day, at his open window, towards Jerusalem. All the glory and the greatness of the magnificent city of Babylon did not attract him. His heart was in the city of his fathers, in the city of his God—Jerusalem—which at this time was laid in ruins, the temple was burned, and the walls were broken. Yet it held something that the city of Babylon could not offer him.

The captive children of Israel were taken to Babylon, away from their beloved city. "By the rivers of Babylon, there we sat down, yea, we wept, when we remembered Zion. We hanged our harps upon the willows in the midst thereof. For there they that carried us away captive required of us a song; and they that wasted us required of us mirth, saying, Sing us one of the songs of Zion. How shall we sing the LORD's song in a strange land? If I forget thee, O Jerusalem, let my right hand forget her cunning. If I do not remember thee, let my tongue cleave to the roof of my mouth; if I prefer not Jerusalem above my chief joy." Psalm 137:1-6

The captives withdrew from the city into nature. Beside the rivers of Babylon they gathered into small groups, to weep and lament, and to remember Jerusalem. They knew many joyful songs, songs of victory; however,

they could not sing in this strange land. They hung their harps upon the willows. In their sorrow, they could not sing the songs of Zion. They were homesick. The cities of Babylon did not satisfy them.

Babylon was a very beautiful city. The name *Babylon* means "Gate of gods" in the Chaldean language. The palace of their king was twice the size of the whole city of Jerusalem. It covered eight miles, with hanging gardens, built on arched terraces, each rising above the other, and rich in all the luxuriance of artificial cultivation. The colossal temple rose eight stories high. The splendor and glory of Babylon far surpassed the city of Jerusalem. Their feasts and entertainment was the most attractive. The best artists in the world had been gathered there. The glory of the nations had been taken to Babylon. It was the centre of the world.

All the splendor did not satisfy these Hebrew captives. They withdrew from these cities, seeking solitary places, along the rivers, shedding bitter tears in their longing for their own country.

As time passed, many became used to the life in Babylon. They learned the language; they built houses and gardens; they had their friends there. They enjoyed the entertainment and the luxurious life in Babylon. They had no more desire to go back. They had forgotten the city of their fathers, the city of their God. They were not homesick anymore. And when finally the time came that they could go home after 70 years, only a small remnant of the vast army of the people of Israel took their journey back to Jerusalem. Most of them decided to remain in Babylon.

Do we have this same danger today, that we have forgotten our God, our homeland, and we have become used to life here? We are comfortable in this world, and our homesickness is forgotten, and we settle down to enjoy life here.

There was a little remnant who had felt that they were out of place, as pilgrims and strangers, and they now rejoiced. "When the LORD turned again the captivity of Zion, we were like them that dream. Then was our mouth filled with laughter, and our tongue with singing: then said they among the heathen, The LORD hath done great things for them. The LORD hath done great things for us; whereof we are glad." Psalm 126:1-3. Now they were singing, they were filled with laughter. It was as a dream to them. Their tears had changed to gladness.

What was there in Jerusalem that they could not forget?

What made this city so special? "Nor by the earth; for it is His footstool: neither by Jerusalem; for it is the city of the great King." Matthew 5:35

"Thus saith the LORD; I am returned unto Zion, and will dwell in the midst of Jerusalem: and Jerusalem shall be called a city of truth; and the mountain of the Lord of hosts the holy mountain." Zechariah 8:3

Jerusalem is the city of the great King, Jesus, and the city of truth. Pilate asked Jesus, "what is truth?" Millions of others are also seeking for the truth. They may learn the words of truth in Jerusalem.

"And it shall be in that day, that living waters shall go out from Jerusalem; half of them toward the former sea, and half of them toward the hinder sea: in summer and in winter shall it be." Zechariah 14:8

Like the woman at the well, in Jerusalem the thirsty soul will find the Water of Life, so that he will never thirst again.

"And men shall dwell in it, and there shall be no more utter destruction; but Jerusalem shall be safely inhabited." Zechariah 14:11. It was a place of safety, a city of refuge for a sin-sick soul to see, where the avenger of blood would not reach him.

"As one whom his mother comforteth, so will I comfort you; and ye shall be comforted in Jerusalem." Isaiah 66:13. It is a place of quiet rest where the tormented soul will find peace and comfort. It is a shelter from the storms and winds. It is a place where all is calm.

"But be glad and rejoice for ever in that which I create: for, behold, I create Jerusalem a rejoicing, and her people a joy. And I will rejoice in Jerusalem, and joy in My people: and the voice of weeping shall be no more heard in her, nor the voice of crying." Isaiah 65:18-19. A place of joy and rejoicing, a place where songs of happiness are heard. A place without sorrow, where crying is no longer heard.

"And she coming in that instant gave thanks likewise unto the Lord, and spake of Him to all them that looked for redemption in Jerusalem." Luke 2:38. Jerusalem is also the city of redemption, where one who is sold under sin can be redeemed and be set free. There we find our Saviour, our Redeemer, Jesus Christ. There the burden of sin will roll off our heart, and we will be free.

Three times a year the people of Israel took their journey towards Jerusalem for the days of feasting and worship. On foot, they traveled for several days over rough roads, eagerly looking forward to the gathering in the

city.

However, the people sinned. Because of the sin of the people in Jerusalem, what must come upon them?

“Behold, the day of the LORD cometh, and thy spoil shall be divided in the midst of thee. For I will gather all nations against Jerusalem to battle; and the city shall be taken, and the houses rifled, and the women ravished; and half of the city shall go forth into captivity, and the residue of the people shall not be cut off from the city.” Zechariah 14:1–2. Because of their sins, there was war,



many were taken captive into Babylon, and only a small remnant of the people were left in the city.

“Shall I not, as I have done unto Samaria and her idols, so do to Jerusalem and her idols?” Isaiah 10:11. Samaria had already been taken into captivity. Jerusalem would suffer the same fate.

“And the light of Israel shall be for a fire, and his Holy One for a flame: and it shall burn and devour his thorns and his briars in one day; And shall consume the glory of his forest, and of his fruitful field, both soul and body: and they shall be as when a standbearer fainteth. And the rest of the trees of his forest shall be few, that a child may write them.” Isaiah 10:17–19

What will be left? “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 3:1

“And it shall come to pass, that he that is left in Zion, and he that remaineth in Jerusalem, shall be called holy, even every one that is written among the living in Jerusalem.” Isaiah 4:3

It is only a remnant that shall remain; a poor and afflicted people. The unclean has been removed. The selfish and ambitious are not there anymore. The careless and

indifferent are not found there. The world-loving has gone, the fearful and cowards are not among the remnant. Only the ones who are holy, sanctified, they shall remain and be holy still.

*Where is this holy city today?*

“But ye are come unto mount Sion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels, To the general assembly and church of the firstborn, which are written in heaven, and to God the Judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect.” Hebrews 12:22–23. The church of God is the spiritual city of God—Jerusalem—the place where truth can be found, where the remnant shall remain.

In this city the special work of God is being done. “And the LORD said unto him, Go through the midst of the city, through the midst of Jerusalem, and set a mark upon the foreheads of the men that sigh and that cry for all the abominations that be done in the midst thereof.” Ezekiel 9:4

The sealing angel is not going through the world, only through the city of God—Jerusalem—to place a mark on the foreheads of men and women who are concerned for others, who are not selfish, but who sigh and cry for the sins of others. They are sealed, and they remain in the city after others are cut down.

God’s church has always been given the message, telling people to leave Babylon. “Go ye forth of Babylon, see ye from the Chaldeans, with a voice of singing declare ye, tell this, utter it even to the end of the earth; say ye, The LORD hath redeemed His servant Jacob.” Isaiah 48:20

“Ho, ho, come forth, and see from the land of the north, saith the LORD: for I have spread you abroad as the four winds of the heaven, saith the LORD. Deliver thyself, O Zion, that dwellest with the daughter of Babylon.” Zechariah 2:6–7

“And I heard another voice from heaven, saying, Come out of her, My people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues.” Revelation 18:4

The message is also clear for today. God’s people are asked to come out of spiritual Babylon. What if some choose to ignore the message and decide to stay? What will happen to them? They will receive the sins of Babylon, and also her plagues.

“And it shall be, that whoso will not come up of all the

families of the earth unto Jerusalem to worship the King, the LORD of hosts, even upon them shall be no rain." Zechariah 14:17. Those who will not come to Jerusalem and worship the King, the Lord of hosts, will receive no rain—the latter rain. The outpouring of the Spirit of God will not come upon those in Babylon.

Not only are we called into a spiritual city, to the family of God, to the city of refuge here, but to the city of God in the New Jerusalem, the city which our father Abraham was looking for.

"For this Agar is mount Sinai in Arabia, and answereth to Jerusalem which now is, and is in bondage with her children. But Jerusalem which is above is free, which is the mother of us all." Galatians 4:25–26

We are looking for a city that is free, not the one that is in bondage. Jerusalem, the city in Israel that for centuries had been the holy city for God's people, still today is the most important city to the three great religions of the world—Jewish, Christian, and Islam.

To God's people the city of earthly Jerusalem has become meaningless because it is a Christless city. This occurred in the time when the Saviour and King was cast out of that city. Since then it has had nothing more to offer than any other city on the earth. It was no more the city of the great King. It no longer offered peace, comfort, living waters, or refuge.

But, we have not been left homeless. While Christ pronounced a curse upon the city, saying that not a stone will be left upon a stone, and it shall be desolate, He went on to say that there is another city where, "I go and prepare a place for you," a city that is free, which God made and not man.

"And I John saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away. and

He that sat upon the throne said, Behold I make all things new. And he said unto me, Write: for these words are true and faithful. And he carried me away in the spirit to a great and high mountain, and shewed me that great city, the holy Jerusalem, descending out of heaven from God, And had a wall great and high, and had twelve gates, and at the gates twelve angels, and names written thereon, which are the names of the twelve tribes of the children of Israel: And the twelve gates were twelve pearls; every several gate was of one pearl: and the street of the city was pure gold, as it were transparent glass. And the city had no need of the sun, neither the moon, to shine in it: for the glory of God did lighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof. And the gates of it shall not be shut at all by day: for there shall be no night there." Revelation 21:2, 4–5, 10, 12, 21, 23, 25

"And he shewed me a pure river of water of life clear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb. In the midst of the street of it, and on either side of the river, was there the tree of life, which bare twelve manner of fruits, and yielded her fruit every month: and the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations." Revelation 22:1–2

This is our home. This is the city of our God. You need to ask yourself one thing. Do you have your passport ready, that you may enter in? "Blessed are they that do His commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city." Revelation 22:14

They have right to the tree of life. They may enter in through the gates into the city.

My friend, are you homesick? Are you a stranger and pilgrim here or have you forgotten the city of our God? The city where our names are written in letters of gold, where we have mansions ready for us and a crown of life waiting. Where we see our Saviour face to face. May we all meet in this city, never to part again. Amen.

*Adapted from a sermon by Timo Martin*

**"Many people have been getting the idea that if they get out of the Methodist church or the Presbyterian church or the Catholic church and get into the Seventh-day Adventist church, then they are out of Babylon. No. That is not enough, unless you are converted, unless you are separated from this world you are not out of Babylon, even though you are in the Seventh-day Adventist church . . . the man who is connected with himself is connected with the world, and the world is Babylon. . . . 'Having a form of godliness, without the power,' is simply another expression which describes Babylon and her condition in the last days. That being so, if I, a Seventh-day Adventist, have the form of godliness without the power, I belong to Babylon; no difference what I call myself, I am a Babylonian; I have on the Babylonish garment. I bring Babylon into the church wherever I go." A.T. Jones. –*The General Conference Bulletin*, February 13, 1895**



## Blessings in Curses

"God bless you." I love to say this phrase in English, as it does not exist in my native languages, Korean and Japanese. It is such a lovely greeting. It is the best way to express the unique feeling of deep love and care for each other.

Indeed, God blesses us when we wish each other His blessings. Our God is good, and He is always ready to bless us. However, there is a very odd-looking concept in the Bible that seems so different from His generous and patient love. It is called a "curse".

"The first curse was pronounced upon the posterity of Adam and upon the earth, because of disobedience. The second curse came upon the ground after Cain slew his brother Abel. The third most dreadful curse from God came upon the earth at the flood." —*Counsels on Diet and Foods*, p. 373

This concept of a curse is sometimes difficult for us to understand. The first curse in the Bible gives us a hint of a fascinating truth.

"And the Lord God said unto the serpent, Because thou hast done this, thou art cursed above all cattle, and above every beast of the field; upon thy belly shalt thou go, and dust shalt thou eat all the days of thy life: And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise His heel." Genesis 3:14–15

The first curse in history was not given to us but to Satan. And, this curse is rather known to us as the first promise, prophecy and proclamation of the gospel in

the Bible that Jesus will die for us. Yet, unlike sinful curses that humans make, God's curses are closely associated with His divine love and wisdom for us. In this article, we will see the message of love and blessings revealed in His curses.

### Curse on Woman

Technically speaking, man and woman were not cursed. It was the earth that was cursed due to our sins. "Cursed is the ground for thy sake." Genesis 3:17. However, during this article, let us call it a curse because we will talk about a negative change that happened to us due to our sins, and that is precisely much the definition of a curse.

Now let us look into the curse on the woman: "Unto the woman He said, I will greatly multiply thy sorrow and thy conception; in sorrow thou shalt bring forth children; and thy desire shall be to thy husband, and he shall rule over thee." Genesis 3:16

As a result of sin, the woman was to have painful childbearing, dependence on the husband, and a lower position than the man. Have you ever wondered why such punishment was chosen? God could have given them different curses. Why did God choose these specific curses?

Initially, childbearing was given to us as a blessing. "So God created man in His own image, in the image of God created He him; male and female created He them. And God blessed them, and God said unto them, Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth, and sub-



due it: and have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moveth upon the earth. And God said, Behold, I have given you every herb bearing seed, which is upon the face of all the earth, and every tree, in the which is the fruit of a tree yielding seed; to you it shall be for meat.” Genesis 1:27-29

Here, we can see that the first blessing of the Bible has three essential parts: childbearing, dominion, and food. The blessing of childbearing is a special privilege for us, as God allows us to participate in His work of creation. Forming new life in mothers’ wombs is a work that belongs to Him only. However, just as God allows us to participate in the work of a missionary despite His power to spread the gospel by Himself or by angels, God will enable us to join His work of love and life throughout the entire childbearing process, from fertilization to delivery.

Keeping this in mind, let us examine the motive of the



woman’s crime. “And the serpent said unto the woman, Ye shall not surely die: For God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be

opened, and ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil.” Genesis 3:4-5

Because of Eve’s sins, the desire to be like God became the weakness for women. Therefore, the privilege of childbearing could become a danger for women to feel like they are gaining God’s power of creation. Hence, God added the pain in pregnancy. Now, through childbearing, women were to remember their first sins and weaknesses. Also, the pain of childbearing made them seek God and ask for His help. Hence, the woman was protected from weakness, and learned to be humble and dependent upon God’s power.

For the same reason, God made the woman dependent on her husband and lowered her position.

“Eve had been perfectly happy by her husband’s side in her Eden home; but, like restless modern Eves, she was a lured with the hope of entering a higher sphere than

that which God had assigned her. In attempting to rise above her original position, she fell far below it.” – *Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 59

The woman wanted to be higher. Ever since then, the desire for a higher position became their weakness. Of course, there are many men with the same sin. However, remember that as the 144,000, we will belong to one of the twelve tribes of Israel, depending on the outstanding weakness we overcome. We all possess every kind of sin, but individually, we have a specific weakness that is worse than others. In this sense, the sin of position-seeking became women’s weakness.

Therefore, God added another layer of position between the woman and God by placing man above her so that women could be protected from this desire and temptation. God did not curse women in anger. Instead, God did so to protect them, to teach them a lesson, and help them to overcome the weakness formed due to their first sin. My dear brothers and sisters, we are blessed to be cursed.

Unfortunately, some men used this curse in a way that God did not intend, and many women had to suffer from abuse and inequity. Fortunately, women’s human rights have been restored a lot over the last few centuries. However, now Satan is trying to go beyond. Through a movement called “feminism,” Satan is trying to make women’s position equal to their husbands in a way that is against God’s plan so that they can be exposed to the same temptation again.

Of course, in some sense, man and woman are equal, as manifested in God’s creation of creating the woman from the man’s rib. “Eve was created from a rib taken from the side of Adam, signifying that she was not to control him as the head, nor to be trampled under his feet as an inferior, but to stand by his side as an equal, to be loved and protected by him.” – *Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 46. However, the equality that is claimed by modern feminism is not according to the Bible. On the surface, Satan claims that he is working for women’s sake. But his true intention is to remove the protection God has set.

### Curse on Man

Now, what was the curse on man? “And unto Adam He said, Because thou hast hearkened unto the voice of thy wife, and hast eaten of the tree, of which I commanded thee, saying, Thou shalt not eat of it: cursed is the ground for thy sake; in sorrow shalt thou eat of it all the days of thy life; Thorns also and thistles shall it



bring forth to thee; and thou shalt eat the herb of the field; In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou return unto the ground; for out of it wast thou taken: for dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return.” Genesis 3:17–19

The punishment for man was to suffer in labour. His work used to be a pleasant one. However, now the man had to work with pain. Why did God choose this curse for man? Let us see what was going on in Adam’s mind when he sinned.

“Adam understood that his companion had transgressed the command of God, disregarded the only prohibition laid upon them as a test of their fidelity and love. There was a terrible struggle in his mind. He mourned that he had permitted Eve to wander from his side. But now the deed was done; he must be separated from her whose society had been his joy. How could he have it thus? Adam had enjoyed the companionship of God and of holy angels. He had looked upon the glory of the Creator. He understood the high destiny opened to the human race should they remain faithful to God. Yet all these blessings were lost sight of in the fear of losing that one gift which in his eyes outvalued every other. Love, gratitude, loyalty to the Creator—all were overborne by love to Eve. She was a part of himself, and he could not endure the thought of separation. He did not realize that the same Infinite Power who had from the dust of the earth created him, a living, beautiful form, and had in love given him a companion, could supply her place. He resolved to share her fate; if she must die, he would die with her.” —*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 56

At first look, the motive of Adam might look “romantic,” wishing to die with his wife. However, what was one of his first actions after committing sin? “And the man said, The woman whom thou gavest to be with me, she gave me of the tree, and I did eat.” Genesis 3:12. Therefore, we can see how Adam was not taking responsibility for his action. He chose his wife over God, then immediately abandoned her afterwards.

After all, in some sense, he was responsible for everything that happened, as he allowed his wife to leave his side despite the warning and instruction from the angels to always stay together. All these things happened because Adam did not responsibly manage his family (wife). Therefore, God made man responsible for sustaining his family. Through working hard to take care of his family, the man was to learn what it means to be accountable.

From the testimonies, we can see more reasons for this curse. Adam neglected all the other blessings and chose His wife. He did not care about the high calling to noble destiny. In this way, Adam disregarded the initial blessings of dominion and food.

When I was a teenager, it was guaranteed that there was always food on the table thrice daily. Only after I became independent did I learn how many processes took place before one set food on the table. I realized that I needed to get a job, work, go grocery shopping, and cook to have one meal. Only after these experiences could I fully appreciate the food on my table.

This is the reason for the curse on man. Adam neglected the gifts of God. He took it for granted and did not appreciate its values. Therefore, God made Adam sweat and suffer to earn his food so that he could understand God’s daily grace. Of course, God did not do so because He wanted to be recognized for His mercy. Adam sinned because he did not appreciate the gift and calling. Therefore, without this lesson, Adam could fall into sin again. Hence, this curse was given to protect Adam.

There was another lesson for Adam in this curse. As he chose to die rather than lose his wife, he neglected his own life. This is a sin, as life is sacred and divine. Hence, Adam was to cultivate the ground, which was the material he was made of, to gain a new life (fruits, nuts, and vegetables) to sustain his life. Through this, Adam was to learn how precious life is. Through this, Adam could understand how much one life means to God.

There are many more purposes behind these curses! I invite you to read *Patriarchs and Prophets*, chapter 3, to discover more about the wisdom of God in these curses that I could not cover in this article. How incredible is God’s wisdom to contain many suitable purposes in a single curse.

This way, we can again see that this curse was given for our sake. God’s curses are provided so that we can overcome our weaknesses and resist temptation. It is

not only the re-creation of the past but also the preparation for the future. We are indeed blessed to be cursed.

### Curse on Cain

The second curse was given when Cain killed his brother. "And He said, What hast thou done? The voice of thy brother's blood crieth unto Me from the ground. And now art thou cursed from the earth, which hath opened her mouth to receive thy brother's blood from thy hand; When thou tillest the ground, it shall not henceforth yield unto thee her strength; a fugitive and a vagabond shalt thou be in the earth." Genesis 4:10-12

As we have done so in previous curses, let us think about the motive of Cain's sin. Why did Cain kill Abel? It was because God accepted Abel's offering but rejected Cain's, as Abel brought a lamb while Cain brought fruits as an offering.



However, we can see that fruits were a part of the offerings in the sanctuary service. "And when any will offer a meat offering unto the Lord, his offering shall be of fine flour; and he shall pour oil upon it, and put frankincense thereon: . . . As for the oblation of the first fruits, ye shall offer them unto the Lord: but they shall not be burnt on the altar for a sweet savour." Leviticus 2:1, 12

Then why did God reject Cain's offering? This meat offering in Leviticus had a condition. There should be another offering to be made beforehand. "If his offering be a burnt sacrifice of the herd, let him offer a male without blemish: he shall offer it of his own voluntary will at the door of the tabernacle of the congregation before the Lord." Leviticus 1:3

The lamb had to be offered first, and then they could bring fruit. What does it mean? Fruits represent our good work, which is the fruit of the Holy Spirit. Our

good work comes not from ourselves but from God, who works in us. First, we must acknowledge our weaknesses, accept Jesus and rely on His power. In other words, we work by faith.

However, Cain's offering showed the opposite idea. He brought fruits without the lamb. Through this, he claimed that he did not need Jesus. He was trying to do good works in his own power. Therefore, God made it harder for Cain to farm. Cain was to learn that he had to rely on God's power to bring forth fruits.

These two opposite ideas of Abel and Cain are called "Righteousness by Faith" and "Righteousness by works." And ever since then, every man had to choose or the other of these two ideas. Have you ever wondered why God cursed the entire earth just for one man's sin? It might sound too much. However, we can see God's mercy here. The universal curse on this earth is a reminder of Cain's sin and a message to follow the right path of righteousness by faith. It is a warning to those who believe in righteousness by works, that God will not accept their offerings and that they might even become a murderer of God's faithful people.

Also, it was to be a comfort for every Christian who sacrificed for God, especially the martyrs. God cursed the earth in response to Abel's blood. Therefore, this curse was a reminder to every martyr that God has never forgotten their sacrifice and will reward them in the end. Consequently, we are blessed to be cursed.

### Curse After the Flood

"The third most dreadful curse from God came upon the earth at the flood. After the flood the people ate largely of animal food. . . . He permitted that long-lived race to eat animal food to shorten their sinful lives. Soon after the flood the race began to rapidly decrease in size, and in length of years." *-Counsels on Diet and Foods*, p. 373

After the flood, God temporarily allowed humans to eat meat for a short period as there was no food. Of course, as it was a temporary measure, now we are called to return to the original vegetarian diet. Nevertheless, in the Spirit of Prophecy, we read that this momentary meat diet was the third curse, as it significantly reduced lifespan and body size. However, it is interesting to see how the Bible describes this curse.

"And God blessed Noah and his sons, and said unto them. . . . Every moving thing that liveth shall be meat for you; even as the green herb have I given you all things. But flesh with the life thereof, which is the

blood thereof, shall ye not eat." Genesis 9:1, 3-4

The Bible calls this curse as a blessing. In other words, these verses seem to say: "God blessed Noah and told them to eat meat so they would live shorter and become smaller." Why so?

"In sparing the life of the first murderer, God presented before the whole universe a lesson bearing upon the great controversy. The dark history of Cain and his descendants was an illustration of what would have been the result of permitting the sinner to live on forever, to carry out his rebellion against God. The forbearance of God only rendered the wicked more bold and defiant in their iniquity. Fifteen centuries after the sentence pronounced upon Cain, the universe witnessed the fruition of his influence and example, in the crime and pollution that flooded the earth. It was made manifest that the sentence of death pronounced upon the fallen race for the transgression of God's law was both just and merciful. The longer men lived in sin, the more abandoned they became. The divine sentence cutting short a career of unbridled iniquity, and freeing the world from the influence of those who had become hardened in rebellion, was a blessing rather than a curse." - *Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 78

### Blessed to Be Cursed

In our life, there are many blessings. However, we have suffering, trials, and pain also. Some of them last for a long time, and we feel like we are cursed. We might be born with it. We might have gained it one day. Some of them might continue until our last breath.

However, through these curses in the Bible, God is telling us: "You might wonder why. And you might never understand until you reach heaven. However, trust Me. Your curse is for your sake. I have allowed it in My wisdom and love for you. In your curses, I have hidden blessings, protection, lessons, and training."

Paul wrote: "And lest I should be exalted above measure through the abundance of the revelations, there was given to me a thorn in the flesh, the messenger of Satan to buffet me, lest I should be exalted above measure. For this thing I besought the Lord thrice, that it might depart from me. And He said unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee: for My strength is made perfect in weakness. Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me. Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses for

Christ's sake: for when I am weak, then am I strong." 2 Corinthians 12:7-10

Paul had a health condition, which was so painful that Paul asked God three times to remove it. Paul knew God's healing power. Paul himself was the instrument and witness of miracles of healing. However, God did not allow His beloved servant to be healed. Why?



Paul was a very talented person. He was educated and skilled. For such a man, there was a danger in being proud of oneself. Hence, God allowed him a health condition so that Paul could always depend on God and stay humble. For God to lead Paul to heaven and eternal life, this thorn in the flesh was inevitable and necessary.

My dear brothers and sisters. Let us appreciate the curses in our lives. They are painful and challenging. But God says, "My grace is sufficient for thee." And is it not true? When we count the blessings, is there not enough grace to endure difficulties? God never allows any trials that we cannot handle.

Curses in our lives are given for our sake. God allows them so that they would guide us to heaven. They are given for our good. Let us not complain about these curses. Instead, let us see His love in them. We might not understand. But farther along, God will show us why. The fact that we have curses in our lives proves that God has not given up on us. It is the evidence that God is working in our lives and guiding us through. When we feel abandoned, that is the very moment when God is the closest to us. Hence, let us believe in His love and His wisdom. We are blessed to be cursed.

Therefore, my beloved brethren, I would like to close with this warm Christian greeting: May God bless you. Amen.

*Makoto Matsumoto*





## Why Will You Die?

If you ask anyone of any age, if they want to die, most people would answer, no. Yes, we do hear tragic stories of people taking their own lives in suicide, or terminally ill people who are suffering great pain and discomfort, with seemingly no quality of life, who wish to die. Elijah, when running away from Queen Jezebel, was so exhausted and discouraged, he wished to die. He said, "O LORD, take away my life." 1 Kings 19:4. Job also, in the midst of his suffering, did not wish to live. "Even that it would please God to destroy me; that He would let loose His hand, and cut me off!" Job 6:9. However, for the vast majority of people, they prefer to live. There is a strong desire to fight for life as long as possible.

When people get older, they get more feeble, and thus seek medical assistance so that their lives can be prolonged. The rich pay a lot of money for the best doctors so that they can get a few more days of life, but no amount of money can save a person from the inevitable—death.

Death comes upon all, both man and animal. None can avoid it. "For that which befalleth the sons of men befalleth beasts; even one thing befalleth them: as the one dieth, so dieth the other; yea, they have all one breath; so that a man hath no preeminence above a beast: for all is vanity. All go unto one place; all are of the dust, and all turn to dust again." Ecclesiastes 3:19–20. No one can escape death. No man or no animal. In death, all are equal, whether rich or poor, weak or strong, famous or homeless, man or animal. They have no influence on anything that is happening on earth—nothing.

Many fear death because they do not know what is in the hereafter. What will happen next? Will they end up in heaven? Or will they end up in hell? Some know that they have departed from God and death is terrifying. "The sting of death is sin." 1 Corinthians 15:56. But, the truth is that all people die. You and I will all die one day unless we are faithful enough to be spared death by still being alive when Jesus returns a second time to receive His own into heaven.

Yet, we read in the Bible of God asking the question, "for why will ye die, O house of Israel?" Ezekiel 33:11. Is not this a strange question to ask? We all will die one day. We have no choice—we will die. There is nothing we can do about it. "For we must needs die, and are as water spilled on the ground, which cannot be gathered up again." 2 Samuel 14:14

The day Adam and Eve sinned, they were told, "In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou return unto the ground; for out of it wast thou taken: for dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return." Genesis 3:19

Clearly, as many already know, two deaths are being spoken of. The first death, we all experience, both good and evil. None can avoid it. There is nothing we can do to escape it. It is, in reality, only a sleep because all will awake out of it. Some to be received into heaven, and some to receive the punishment of the second death, which is eternal.

This second death, not the first, is the one that the Lord is speaking of through Ezekiel.

The first death, we have no choice in, but the second

death we *do* have a choice. The decisions we make today decide if we will experience the second death or not. God is appealing to man in Ezekiel 33 to turn from his evil ways and then He ends up asking, “why will you die?”

Clearly the choice of the second death is not on God. It is on us. Although the final act of the destruction of the wicked comes as fire from heaven—from God, the decision as to whether we will be a part of that destruction or be in the New Jerusalem is ours to make, and ours alone.

You may ask every Christian on this earth if they want to go to heaven, and of course you will receive an affirmative response. However, when it comes to the conditions to obtaining eternal life, there is a variety of opinions as to the expectations. They go from one extreme to the other—from 100% work righteousness, that we can work our way to heaven, to 100% Jesus does it all, and we can keep on sinning because we are helpless to overcome our sin while living on this earth. And then there are a variety of standards in between. Even in God’s church, there can be a variety of standards in situations we call “grey areas.” Some feel strongly that we should adopt a vegan diet because that will be the diet in heaven and we are on the brink of eternity now, and it is very possible to be healthy and get all the nutrients you need from a vegan diet. Others are not so strict. As long as it is not literal flesh, they feel animal products can be, and will be, consumed with much safety today until the Lord returns. There are minor variances also on dress reform, sabbath keeping, and other areas with different people. The reality is that, with God, there are no grey areas. “But let your communication be, Yea, yea; Nay, nay: for whatsoever is more than these cometh of evil.” Matthew 5:37

Where do you stand in your personal life? How challenging is your daily struggle to live a righteous life? What choice are you making today? What is your response to the Lord when He comes and points out your sins and shortcomings and asks you, “Why will you die?”

What is the solution? It is to repent here and now—today. You must be willing to change your ways and choose to follow the Lord in every detail of your life. “I call heaven and earth to record this day against you, that I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing: therefore choose life.” Deuteronomy 30:19. “Choose you this day whom ye will serve.” Joshua 24:15. Even the smallest decisions we make every day

shows what direction we are headed. The smallest deviations from the correct way are not viewed as so minor in the eyes of God. Each decision is building our character, whether for heaven, or for annihilation. “Can we not understand that the most costly thing in the world is sin? It is at the expense of purity of conscience, at the cost of losing the favor of God and separating the soul from Him, and at last losing heaven. The sin of grieving the Holy Spirit of God and walking contrary to Him has cost many a one the loss of his soul.” —*Faith and Works*, p. 17. Why will you die?

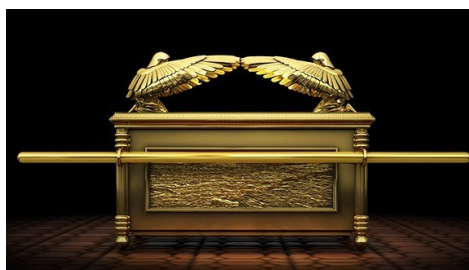
“Behold, the LORD’s hand is not shortened, that it cannot save; neither His ear heavy, that it cannot hear: But your iniquities have separated between you and your God, and your sins have hid His face from you, that He will not hear.” Isaiah 59:1–2. “If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me.” Psalm 66:18

Say like King David, “For I acknowledge my transgressions: and my sin is ever before me.” Psalm 51:13. And, “I acknowledged my sin unto Thee, and mine iniquity have I not hid. I said, I will confess my transgressions unto the LORD; and Thou forgavest the iniquity of my sin.” Psalm 32:5. For some it is so very hard to repent and acknowledge their sin when brought to them, especially if it is brought by another person, and perhaps someone younger than them, or newer in the faith.

We do know that God is fair, although sometimes we may not understand what He does. Sometimes we do not know what happened beforehand, what thoughts and motives were going on in a person’s mind and at what time they grieved the Holy Spirit. Only God knows those details as He is the only one that can read the heart. Let us look at two examples.

**Uzzah.** He seemingly had no time to repent. He committed a serious sin, and dropped dead. “The fate of Uzzah was a divine judgment upon the violation of a most explicit command. Through Moses the Lord had given special instruction concerning the transportation of the ark. None but the priests, the descendants of Aaron, were to touch it, or even to look upon it uncovered.

“The priests were to cover the ark, and then the Koha-



thites must lift it by the staves, which were placed in rings upon each side of the ark and were never removed. To

the Gershonites and Merarites, who had in charge the curtains and boards and pillars of the tabernacle, Moses gave carts and oxen for the transportation of that which was committed to them. 'But unto the sons of Kohath he gave none: because the service of the sanctuary belonging unto them was that they should bear upon their shoulders' (Numbers 7:9). Thus in the bringing of the ark from Kirjathjearim there had been a direct and inexcusable disregard of the Lord's directions." —*Conict and Courage*, p. 176

Was God fair? This was not only a momentary error. It was preceded by a direct violation of a command of God. We do not know, because it is not written, but perhaps Uzzah was instrumental and influential in insisting the ark be carried on the cart, as all the other parts of the sanctuary were carried in the wilderness. Perhaps he decided to make himself the one who watches over the cart as the ark was being carried since it could have been his idea. We can only speculate because we do not know any more details than what is revealed. What we do know is that one direct violation, leads to another and thus the voice of the Holy Spirit is withdrawn. Uzzah unthinkingly was led to make that fatal mistake at a key juncture of the journey. Had things been done things correctly initially, he would have been spared from making this fatal mistake. Only God knows. But what we do know is that God is fair and patient.

**Ananias and Sapphira:** They were given only a brief moment to repent. Just one moment. When Peter asked each of them separately if the money they gave was the entire amount, they each lied, stating that it was. They were then immediately struck dead. No time to contemplate and reconsider. Was God fair? They did have plenty of time to reconsider prior to giving the donations. They knew they were doing wrong. This was a willful sin. Sin against a clear understanding of what the will of God was. It is very dangerous to plot to sin willfully. "For if we sin willfully after that we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins, But a certain fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation, which shall devour the adversaries." Hebrews 10:26–27. Yes, God has been merciful, it seems, to some who have done similar sins as they did not die immediately. But why not in this case? The greater the light and experience, the more grievous the sin. They sinned against the Holy Spirit. "In the case of Ananias and Sapphira, the sin of fraud against God was speedily punished. The same sin was often repeated in the after history of the church and is committed by many in our time. But though it may not

be ended by the visible manifestation of God's displeasure, it is no less heinous in His sight now than in the apostles' time. The warning has been given; God has clearly manifested His abhorrence of this sin; and all who give themselves up to hypocrisy and covetousness may be sure that they are destroying their own souls." —*The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 76

The sad part is that they gain nothing. Even if Ananias and Sapphira had lived, as some others have, "they are destroying their own souls." After death, they have no hope—nothing. The Lord could read their hearts and had they lived, they likely would have continued in their selfish course and added greater sin to their already guilty lives. If you think about it, in reality, in mercy the Lord put an end to their lives.

"Because sentence against an evil work is not executed speedily, therefore the heart of the sons of men is fully set in them to do evil." Ecclesiastes 8:11. To live longer in sin for one who refuses to repent, will only increase their punishment. It is in mercy sometimes that they are laid to rest sooner. God reads the heart and knows what path one will choose should they continue to live. Yet He still asks in dismay, "why will you die?"

Thousands go to the grave every day—some from natural causes, some from natural disasters and others from violence. Some, it seems, have no time to repent. For example, when a plane crashes, with no warning, the passengers have all sealed their destiny. Yet, God is fair. The Apostle Paul writes, "For it is written, As I live, saith the Lord, every knee shall bow to Me, and every tongue shall confess to God." Romans 14:11. This verse depicts a universal acceptance of God's final judgement, by both good and evil, saved and unsaved. No one will say, "God you were not fair, my plane crashed before I was ready."

Thus, we are encouraged to live today as though it was our last. Making all choices, small or great, in light of eternity. Choose life so you do not have to hear the Lord asking you, "Why will you die?"

Pray, pray, pray like never before. "Pray without ceasing." 1 Thessalonians 5:17. "Speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord." Ephesians 5:19. Every song is a prayer. "Our heavenly Father



waits to bestow upon us the fullness of His blessing. It is our privilege to drink largely at the fountain of boundless love. What a wonder it is that we pray so little! God is ready and willing to hear the sincere prayer of the humblest of His children, and yet there is much manifest reluctance on our part to make known our wants to God. What can the angels of heaven think of poor helpless human beings, who are subject to temptation, when God's heart of infinite love yearns toward them, ready to give them more than they can ask or think, and yet they pray so little and have so little faith? The angels love to bow before God; they love to be near Him. They regard communion with God as their highest joy; and yet the children of earth, who need so much the help that God only can give, seem satisfied to walk without the light of His Spirit, the companionship of His presence." *-Prayer* p. 24. Why will you die?

Let us go back to Ezekiel and read the whole verse in chapter 33. "Say unto them, As I live, saith the Lord GOD, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked; but that the wicked turn from his way and live: turn ye, turn ye from your evil ways; for why will ye die, O house of Israel?" Ezekiel 33:11

If we read in Ezekiel 18, we read almost the same entreaty. "Have I any pleasure at all that the wicked should die? saith the Lord GOD: and not that he should return from his ways, and live? Cast away from you all your transgressions, whereby ye have transgressed; and make you a new heart and a new spirit: for why will ye die, O house of Israel? For I have no pleasure in the death of him that dieth, saith the Lord GOD: wherefore turn yourselves, and live ye." Ezekiel 18:23,31-32

Apparently this was a very important message that the Lord asked Ezekiel at two different times to share with His people. When the Lord repeats a message, He wants to make sure that we understand it as it is a very important message.

Jeremiah also had a similar message from the Lord. "Why will ye die, thou and thy people?" Jeremiah 27:13

The Lord has no pleasure in the death of the wicked. He created them and loves them. He is very sad when people choose not to follow Him, as He has so many blessings to pour out upon mankind. Yet, the fault is not God's. It is ours. He has done all He can for our salvation. "Now will I sing to my wellbeloved a song of my beloved touching His vineyard. My wellbeloved hath a vineyard in a very fruitful hill: And He fenced it, and gathered out the stones thereof, and planted it with the choicest vine, and built a tower in the midst of it, and also made a winepress therein: and He looked that it

should bring forth grapes, and it brought forth wild grapes. And now, O inhabitants of Jerusalem, and men of Judah, judge, I pray you, betwixt Me and My vineyard. What could have been done more to My vineyard, that I have not done in it? wherefore, when I looked that it should bring forth grapes, brought it forth wild grapes?" Isaiah 5:1-4



"The Lord is not slack concerning His promise, as some men count slackness; but is long-suffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance." 2 Peter 3:9. "God is long-suffering, not willing that any should perish; but His forbearance has a limit, and when the boundary is past, there is no second probation. His wrath will go forth and He will destroy without remedy." *-The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*, vol. 7, p. 946. He sadly asks you why you are choosing death.

Now, we have to make a choice. God has done His part and what is our part? We repent, as I already mentioned, but there is more—the Sanctification process, and thus we have to act. "Every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure." 1 John 3:3. "Does this text mean that the human agent can remove one stain of sin from his soul? No. Then what does it mean to purify himself? It means to look upon the Lord's great moral standard of righteousness, the holy law of God, and see that he is a sinner in the light of that law. 'Whosoever committeth sin transgresseth also the law: for sin is the transgression of the law. And ye know that He was manifested to take away our sins; and in Him is no sin.'

"It is through faith in Jesus Christ that the truth is accepted in the heart, and the human agent is purified and cleansed. . . . He has an abiding principle in the soul, that enables him to overcome temptation. 'Whosoever abideth in Him sinneth not.' God has power to keep the soul that is in Christ who is under temptation." *-The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*, vol. 7, p. 950-951

**Grieve not the Holy Spirit.** "And grieve not the Holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption." Ephesians 4:30. How do we grieve the Holy Spirit? By ignoring His voice when He brings us reproof and tries to guide our feet in the paths of righteousness. When we choose to travel our own path and make our own conditions for salvation we grieve the Holy Spirit.

"The Spirit of God keeps evil under the control of con-



science. When man exalts himself above the influence of the Spirit, he reaps a harvest of iniquity. Over such a man the Spirit has less and less influence to restrain him from sowing seeds of disobedience. Warnings have less and less power over him. He gradually loses his fear of God. He sows to the flesh; he will reap corruption. The harvest of the seed that he himself has sown, is ripening. He has a contempt for God's holy commandments. His heart of flesh becomes a heart of stone. Resistance to truth confirms him in iniquity. It is because men sowed seeds of evil, that lawlessness, crime, and violence prevailed in the antediluvian world.

"All should be intelligent in regard to the agency by which the soul is destroyed. It is not because of any decree that God has sent out against man. He does not make man spiritually blind. God gives sufficient light and evidence to enable man to distinguish truth from error. But He does not force man to receive truth. He leaves him free to choose the good or to choose the evil. If man resists evidence that is sufficient to guide his judgment in the right direction, and chooses evil once, he will do this more readily the second time. The third time he will still more eagerly withdraw himself from God and choose to stand on the side of Satan. And in this course he will continue until he is confirmed in evil, and believes the lie he has cherished as truth. His resistance has produced its harvest."—*The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*, vol. 6, p. 1112. And the Lord is grieved, asking us why we are choosing death?

"For who hath known the mind of the Lord, that He may instruct him? But we have the mind of Christ." 1 Corinthians 2:16. One of salvation's requirements is to have the mind of Christ. If we have Christ dwelling in us, we will not sin. "Whosoever abideth in Him sinneth not." 1 John 3:6. Why do we sin? Even if for a moment we take our eyes off Jesus, as Peter did while walking on the water, we will sink. Satan is on hand, ready to tempt us to sin every moment of the day and night.

"The law of Ten Commandments is not to be looked upon as much from the prohibitory side as from the mercy side. Its prohibitions are the sure guarantee of happiness in obedience. As received in Christ, it works in us the purity of character that will bring joy to us through eternal ages. To the obedient it is a wall of protection. We behold in it the goodness of God, who by revealing to men the immutable principles of righteousness, seeks to shield them from the evils that result from transgression.

"We are not to regard God as waiting to punish the sinner for his sin. The sinner brings punishment upon

himself. His own actions start a train of circumstances that bring the sure result. Every act of transgression reacts upon the sinner, works in him a change of character, and makes it more easy for him to transgress again. By choosing to sin, men separate themselves from God, cut themselves off from the channel of blessing, and the sure result is ruin and death." —*The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*, vol. 6, p. 1085

The key word here is that "by choosing to sin." It is a choice many make, and it only ends in ruin.

"The law is an expression of God's idea. When we receive it in Christ, it becomes our idea. It lifts us above the power of natural desires and tendencies, above temptations that lead to sin." —*Ibid*

"Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap." Galatians 6:7

"Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus." Philippians 2:5. "Christ alone can help us and give us the victory. Christ must be all in all to us, He must dwell in the heart, His life must circulate through us as the blood circulates through the veins. His spirit must be a vitalizing power that will cause us to influence others to become Christlike and holy." —*The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*, vol. 5, p. 1144. Jesus said, "I am the vine, ye are the branches: He that abideth in Me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without Me ye can do nothing." John 15:5

Why will you die? Only you can answer the Lord should He ask this of you. There is no need to die the second death, if we have Christ living within us. We *can* overcome every sin and besetment. We *will* follow the Lord into the straight and narrow paths He leads us. We *will* trust in Him and not complain about the cross we have to bear. I hope we all *choose* life today. Amen.

*Wendy Eaton*



# David - the Hunted Fugitive (Part 4)

1 Samuel 19-20



*David is now homeless, haunted by Saul's madness,  
Stripped of his position, honored occupation,  
Fighting battles for the king victoriously,  
Is now persecuted, causeless, needlessly.  
The wilderness is now his home with some  
Loyal followers through to roam,  
Seeking shelter, food and to hide,  
That he may the spies of Saul avoid.  
Hunger him to priest Ahimelech drove  
By lying to receive a loaf,  
But only sacred, hallowed bread the priest could spare,  
What proved to him a deadly snare,  
For he was watched by one wicked of Saul's servants there.  
He and all his house and priests were slain,  
By helping David and his men.  
One son escaped and joined himself to David,  
And others who were discontented, in distress, now did  
Then stay with him about 400 (later 600).  
Distrusting Saul, his father's house came as well,  
Felt themselves unsafe as one can tell,  
David for them intreated Mizpeh, Moab's king,  
To grant a place to them for a secure, safe living.*

.....  
*David's life was now of mere unrest,  
A constant getaway from one danger and the next,  
Being spied upon, would even be betrayed,  
By those he saved in battle with the Philistines -  
The men of Keilah - as the inquired ephod said (1 Samuel 23:6-12).  
Immediate danger of discovery in this relentless persecution,  
Uncertainty and fears,  
Filled David, the anointed Shepherd boy the onward days and years.  
Can anyone conceive the meaning of such hardship and ordeal?  
It seemed so unjust how fate with David here did deal.-*



.....  
*Saul proved a failure as a ruler, king,  
Too stubborn, unteachable in everything,  
Pertaining never to true godliness,  
His judgements were irrational, uncouth, unsound,  
Wanting reason, righteousness.  
God then prepared, His chosen king for Israel a man,  
Humble, teachable, just and sane,  
To be a blessing for the land.*

*In those years of suffering adversity,  
David often bent his knee,  
In prayer seeking refuge in the God of Heaven,  
With crying for deliverance, protection,  
Was pouring out his grief and weariness of endless wanderings,  
A life of constant need for food and shelter,  
It often brought him to despair,  
For all of it, it seemed not fair...  
To his men however David was the hero  
Non perceived his apprehension, fear, oh, no -  
He was strong, enduring ever so courageous,  
His bravery was always so contagious...*



*In prayer he wrote down his sorrow, the frustration,  
With profound, intense emotions,  
Unloading then the burden of his mind and the desires,  
Talking to God all what lay hidden in his heart, the pains, the fears,  
In lonesome nights, away from camp with many tears...  
Inspired when delivered from Saul's menacing,  
His soul did overflow with gratitude, thanksgiving,*

*Creating psalms of praise with joyful singing.  
Revealing there the innermost afflictions, conflicts and desires  
Of his soul have been immortalized -  
Became a blessing, comfort, hope to all  
Who go through trials, pain and turmoil,  
Receiving strength, encouragement amidst distress,  
Confidence for overcoming, fortitude in striving after godliness.*



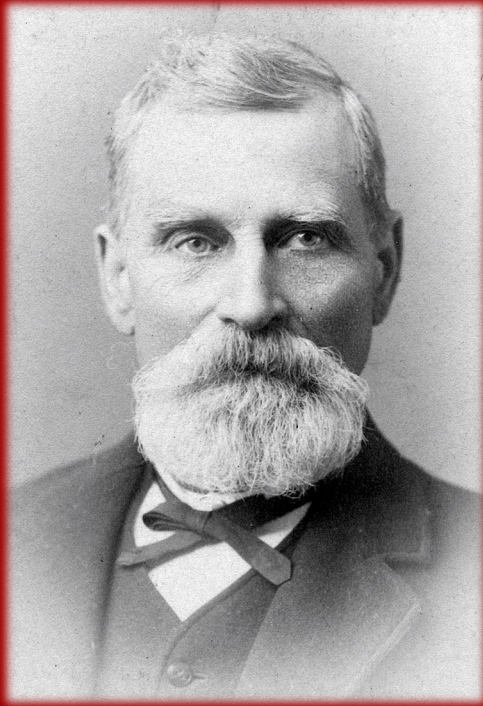
*The treacherous encounters David suffered in his youth,  
Matured him by those events uncouth,  
And leaning in his mind upon the mercy, guidance of his God,  
He graciously had been delivered from many a heinously laid plot.  
The years of enduring hardship, want, perplexity,  
Evolved the novel virtuous patience, faith and trust,  
A character of humility, dependency,  
All this Providence desired for Israel, of His chosen people's king.  
As time went on then David was a 30 years young man,  
The perfect age for God's intended plan*

*Then on the horizon a new dawn arose,  
Bringing the life of wandering and danger to a close....  
Amen.*



*To be continued*

*Edda Tedford, Canada*



## Stephen and Mary Haskell



A few days before he died, Mr. How—the owner of a nice farm—called 17 year-old Stephen Haskell to his bedside. He explained that he knew he did not have long to live and that he needed help.

“You’ve been faithful, Stephen. I appreciate your help. Now I am leaving you, for I can’t live long. The farm and everything on it will be left in your hands. I know you’ll do your best.”

“Stephen,” he continued, “I’m am worried though about what will happen to Mary. You know that I’ve been both father and mother to her. She’s unable to take care of herself, and I don’t know what to do.” With tears glistening on his pale cheeks he concluded by saying, “This is a lot to ask of a young man, but, Stephen, but when I am gone, would you look after her? She has no one else in all the world.”

Stephen hesitated. He was only 17. He was a hired hand. And Mr. How was asking him to take care of his partially paralyzed daughter! How could he possibly do such a thing? True, he had helped Mr. How when Mary needed to be carried in and out of the house or from room to room. And true, he was fond of her. But was he mature enough and wise enough to be entirely responsible for her? But he was grateful for all Mr. How had done for him and he solemnly promised to do so, “I’ll do my best not only to take care of the farm, but to take care of Mary also.”

It was not a decision Stephen took lightly. He had helped Mr. How on the farm for perhaps a year or so and knew the routine of the work. However, taking care of Mary was another matter entirely.

After Mr. How’s death, Stephen thought long and hard about how he would fulfill his promise to take care of Mary. The only appropriate way he could think of was to marry her. He was not quite 18, and she was 40! But he had promised to take care of her. Not knowing how else to keep his word, he talked it over with her, and she accepted his proposal, saying that she did love him.

Mary was a deeply spiritual woman and also very practical. She was always patient and contented, never complaining under depressing circumstances or physical suffering. She cultivated sunny thoughts and had cheering words for those around her.

Both Stephen and Mary belonged to the Methodist church when they married, and their faith served to strengthen each other as they prayed that Mary’s health would improve. Within a couple of years her health was so much better that she was able to resume most of her former activities. It is said that Mary How Haskell could “manage spirited horses as few men could.” They always had one to three horses.

Stephen wrote to Ellen White saying, “Physicians said that were she healed she could not walk as she had lost

the use of her muscles by being bed ridden. I thought God would heal her. This He miraculously did the second or third year after our marriage."

Mary and Stephen had been married a little more than two years when he heard the message that Christ was coming back to earth very soon. The sermon he heard thrilled him, and even though he was only 19 years old, he began to share the good news with everybody he came in contact with.

One day he spoke enthusiastically with a friend, and began to turn from scripture to scripture to prove his points. His friend said to him, "Stephen, why don't you preach? You ought to rent a hall and preach."

"Well maybe I will," was Stephen's half-joking response. "If you rent the hall, I will preach."

His friend was not joking though, and it was not long before he came knocking on Haskell's door. "We've got the hall, now come and preach to us."

What! Him preach? This was more than young Haskell had bargained for, but he could not back out now. A date was set and he preached the only sermon he had ever heard on the subject of Jesus' second coming.

His listeners eagerly gathered around him after the meeting, asking for more studies. A small group formed and they began to study the scriptures together. In his mind, he kept hearing the words, "You need to preach!" He did not know whether this was his own desire or whether God was asking him to preach.

He also had Mary to consider—after all, he had a wife to support. He was a professional soap maker, selling his own product on a regular sales route around the country. This, of course, often took him away from home for weeks at a time. As he travelled, he worked on algebra problems, eventually conquering the subject. Following the logic he found in solving algebra problems, he made points in his sermons that were firm and sound, based not on algebra but on the formula of comparing scripture with scripture, thus reaching correct conclusions from the Word of God.

In 1953 Stephen met William Saxby, who introduced him to the Sabbath truth. Stephen resisted it at first, telling William, "If you want to keep that old Jewish Sabbath, you can do so, but I never shall." When he departed from the home of William, he was given a few tracts about the Sabbath. As he travelled down the river by boat, he read and reread the tracts. There is nothing but Scripture there and he could not argue with that. At

the next stop, Stephen got on the boat and went alone into the woods to pray and settle the Sabbath question for himself. He spent the day reading and praying, and just before dark he came to the conclusion that the seventh-day was indeed the Sabbath. He then returned home to begin preaching about the Sabbath.

He did not go into preaching full-time, however, since he realized there was not much money to be made from preaching unless the audience was unusually generous. He and Mary still lived on their farm, and he kept his soapmaking business. Mary also accepted the Sabbath and supported her husband in his ministry.

In 1868, Haskell was ordained into the ministry and began travelling more extensively, being sent by the Seventh-day Adventist Church. He travelled to Europe, to India, to Africa, to Australia and around the USA. Through all of his travels, Mary was willing and content to remain at home and wait for his return. She did her part in supporting him in whatever God called him to do. She cared for him as tenderly as he cared for her. As the need arose, when Mary was getting older and having difficulty caring for herself, the Lord sent just the right woman to stay with her when her husband was called away.

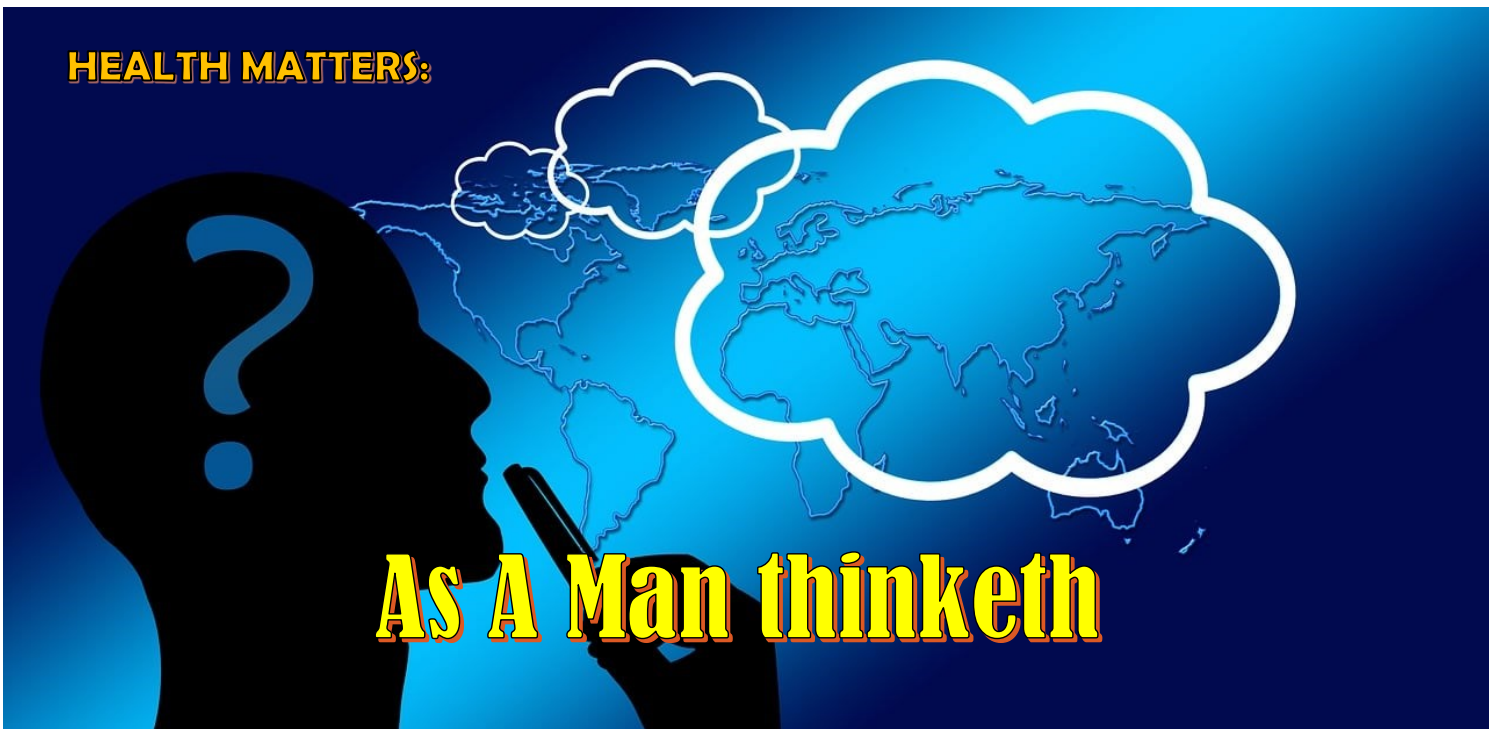
While travelling in Europe, one day Stephen received a telegram that he should return to America immediately as Mary's health was failing. She had suffered a series of partial strokes. Without delay he was on his way. His arrival revived Mary's failing energies for awhile; husband and wife enjoyed a few days together between frequent absences made necessary by church administrative duties, but he remained near her.

Mary was a committed Christian. She bore her physical pain with patience and always had cheerful words for others. She and Stephen were married for about 40 years. They were living in California, where Mary passed peacefully to rest on January 29, 1894, at the age of 81. She left a record of long years of cheerfulness and fortitude, frequently under intense suffering.

Stephen was immediately very lonely. For more than 40 years they had loved each other. Even when separated by his travels, he had known that she was thinking of him and praying for him. Now he felt he was alone in the world, for he had no children.

In writing to Ellen White a short time later, Stephen wrote, in capital letters to emphasize the point, "I LOVED HER AND SHE LOVED ME."

## HEALTH MATTERS:



# As A Man thinketh

Many things determine a person's ability to cope with, and recover from, illness. People have different lifestyle habits that allow them to have stronger immune systems. These can range from economic status (ability to have better health care or purchase healthier more expensive foods), to genetics—the constitution you inherited from your parents. Also, your eating habits, sleeping habits, exercise, fresh air—all the eight essentials play a key role in health and the recovery from illness.

When one has a terminal illness, a person can live longer or shorter, depending on a variety of factors also. The truth is that two people can have exactly the same illness, with the same constitution, and one can recover from illness quickly, while another takes much longer. What is the difference?

Often these differences can be traced down to the way a person thinks. We only need to look to the Bible as to the impact that our thoughts have on our health. Solomon, who was considered the wisest man on this earth, once said, "For as man thinketh in his heart, so is he." Proverbs 23:7. Not only does this apply to our spiritual lives, but it encompasses our entire being.

How do you consider your health today? Do you think you are somewhat healthy? Extremely healthy? Just average? Have below average health? Very poor health? And finally—is the way you think about your health reflective of the true reality of your health status? A true and accurate idea of your health?

Unfortunately, someone who is of good health may consider their health just average and thus they go along in

life with the thought and acceptance that their health is not the best. And they suffer needlessly. There is a vital connection between the mind and the state of one's physical health. This is the focus of this article.

A story was once told of two people who went to the doctor to have tests—one was extremely healthy, and one had a terminal illness. After the test results came in the two people went to see the doctor. The tests got mixed up, though. The healthy person was told they have a terminal illness and the ill person was told they were healthy. The two went home. The one who was healthy but was told he was ill, became extremely ill and passed away in a few years time. The one who was terminally ill, but was told he was healthy, miraculously recovered and went on to live a happy life.

Now this is an extreme example, but gives an accurate illustration of the power of the mind over one's body, especially when one is sick.

There are many healthy people who think they are sick. I know of one such person who is always moaning and groaning, complaining that they are sick, when in reality they are quite healthy. They are the healthiest sick person I know. No amount of convincing seems to help this person see that they are healthy. And because of this, they are always unhappy, always dissatisfied, having a constant focus on the negative aspects of their life, their "sickness."

"Disease is sometimes produced, and is often greatly aggravated, by the imagination. Many are lifelong inva-

lids who might be well if they only thought so.” *–The Ministry of Healing*, p. 241

The thoughts and inclinations of the heart shape the reality of who you are and this definitely also affects your health. “Sickness of the mind prevails everywhere. Nine tenths of the diseases from which men suffer have their foundation here.” *–Counsels on Health*, p. 324

Scientific research backs this up by stating that negative emotions can damage the immune system, which can either contribute to disease, or worsen a disease that is already present. It can actually shorten our lifespan. On the other hand, there have been many terminal ill people who live longer than expected, because they are happy and cheerful.

When people are sick, especially with a chronic illness, they react in one of two ways. They either focus on their illness, their deficiencies and what they cannot do, the pain there are in, and so on. They are always miserable and groaning. Others focus on what they are still capable of doing, even though quite limited, they do not let their limitations determine their happiness. They are thankful for life every day. They thank God for every breath they breathe and for every heart beat they experience. They look at the roses, rather than the thorns.

“Many are diseased physically, mentally, and morally because their attention is turned almost exclusively to themselves.” *–Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 2, p. 647

Not only does our emotional state affect our physical health, but when we harbor negative emotions we tend to engage in behaviors that are detrimental to our health—inactivity leading to weight gain and loss of muscle mass, eating for comfort (often unhealthy foods) or eating too little, sleeping too much or too little. Other unhealthy lifestyles include the use of substances, drugs and alcohol.

Ellen White stated that, “I frequently turn from the bedside of these self-made invalids, saying to myself, Dying by inches, dying of indolence, a disease which no one but themselves can cure.” *–The Health Reformer*, January, 1871

The ones who focus on the positive during an acute illness, often recover more quickly. They appreciate the ability to get out of bed, and maybe go for a little gentle walk and sit in the fresh air. While those who focus on the negative lie in bed all day, often breathing stale air as their circulation stagnates; their recovery is much slower.

The healthy person that thinks they are sick are at a much higher risk of becoming sick because of their negative outlook. “Disease is sometimes produced, and is often greatly aggravated, by the imagination. Many are lifelong invalids who might be well if they only thought so. Many imagine that every slight exposure will cause illness, and the evil effect is produced because it is expected. Many die from disease the cause of which is wholly imaginary.” *–The Ministry of Healing*, p. 241

Many of the words of Solomon in the Proverbs provide lessons of cause and effect. He tells us, “A merry heart doeth good like a medicine: but a broken spirit drieth the bones.” Proverbs 17:22. When we feel happy, it is like medicine to our body; thus our own outlook on life can prevent illness or treat illness.

What is the science behind our emotions and the state of our physical health?

There are people who seem to constantly harbor a negative outlook on life. It may not be in response to a specific situation or occurrence, but they are always looking on the dark side, no matter what their circumstance. They definitely are at risk for a number of health problems.

Like mentioned above, a negative outlook is linked to changes in the immune system, including a lowered immune response to fight antigens that the body is exposed to. These antigens include toxins, chemicals, bacteria, viruses, or even cancer cells. Once the immune system response is lowered, these antigens have the capability to cause illness and disease.

Negative emotions also trigger inflammation in the body, which is linked to many of the common ailments that mankind suffers from, such as premature aging, heart disease, asthma, high blood pressure, osteoporosis (weak bones), type 2 diabetes, arthritis, digestive issues, some cancers, and an overall increase in frailty.

“A great deal of the sickness which affects humanity has its origin in the mind and can only be cured by restoring the mind to health. There are very many more than we imagine who are sick mentally. Heart sickness makes many dyspeptics, for mental trouble has a paralyzing influence upon the digestive organs.” *–Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 3, p. 184

Studies have also shown that a positive outlook on life is linked to lower blood pressure, reduced risk of heart disease, better weight control, healthy



blood sugars, and increased longevity overall. This increase in longevity is also seen when an individual is suffering from some type of physical ailment.

Positive emotions stimulate the parts of the brain that are associated with the reward pathways in the brain located in an area called the basal ganglia. When these reward pathways are activated, there is an overall feeling of wellbeing. If this remains the constant state of the brain, it causes healthy changes in the body.



With negative emotions, the part of the brain known as the amygdala is activated. This area of the brain is associated with the stress response, and triggers feelings such as fear and anxiety. Once the amygdala is activated, individuals are at a higher risk of disease, and a slower recovery from disease.

Thus, scientists have concluded that the way a person responds to life, whether with a positive or negative outlook, determines his overall health.

Happiness is a choice. It is our choice how we feel, we can choose to have a positive outlook on life, or we can focus on doom and gloom. Thus, much of our health and wellbeing is under our own control. Through their genetic make-up, some people automatically look on the positive side of life. However, for others, they are not doomed by their genes; there is the choice to adopt healthy behaviours and emotional outlooks that influence health in a positive way. We can train our brain and our emotions into looking on the positive side of life, and in so doing, we activate those parts of the brain that improve our physical health. "Rejoice in the Lord always: and again I say, Rejoice." Philippians 4:4. The apostle Paul did not write, to rejoice in the Lord only when all goes well, and you are healthy. Rather he wrote to rejoice always. That includes in good times and bad times, in sickness and in health.

"It is the duty of everyone to cultivate cheerfulness instead of brooding over sorrow and troubles. Many not only make themselves wretched in this way, but they sacrifice health and happiness to a morbid imagination. There are things in their surroundings that are not agreeable, and their countenances wear a continual frown that more plainly than words expresses discontent. These depressing emotions are a great injury to them healthwise, for by hindering the process of digestion

they interfere with nutrition. While grief and anxiety cannot remedy a single evil, they can do great harm; but cheerfulness and hope, while they brighten the pathway of others, 'are life unto those that find them, and health to all their flesh' (Proverbs 4:22)." -*Signs of the Times*, February 12, 1885

One of the healthiest behaviours that we can take on, to improve our happiness and our state of mind is doing things for others. Research shows that performing a good deed activates the basal ganglia, the part of the brain associated with positive emotions. There is a link between giving, unselfishness and lower risk of early death. People who volunteered the most throughout their life had the highest levels of happiness. "It is more blessed to give than to receive." Acts 20:35

"The relation which exists between the mind and the body is very intimate. When one is affected, the other sympathizes. The condition of the mind affects the health of the physical system. If the mind is free and happy, from a consciousness of right doing and a sense of satisfaction in causing happiness to others, it creates a cheerfulness that will react upon the whole system, causing a freer circulation of the blood and a toning up of the entire body. The blessing of God is a healing power, and those who are abundant in benefiting others will realize that wondrous blessing in both heart and life." -*Christian Temperance and Bible Hygiene*, p. 13

We need to choose where we focus our thoughts, as from our thoughts come our feelings. Focusing on the positive aspects of life will trigger feelings of happiness and wellbeing and will improve our physical health. "We need a constant sense of the ennobling power of pure thoughts." -*The Ministry of Healing*, p. 491.

"Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things." Philippians 4:8

*Helen Marinen*





# Baptism of George and Dragica Radin

We were very blessed on Sunday, May 5, 2024 to gather together in Niagara Falls, Canada to witness the baptism of two dear souls, George Radin and his wife Dragica. The event was marked by a spirit of joy and unity as we gathered to witness and celebrate this momentous occasion in the spiritual journey of the Radins.

Brother Evald Pedersen opened the service with words of encouragement to welcome the two new souls into the church of God. "Now we are one family." he told the congregation of 20 witnesses who were present. He then read from John 1:12, "But as many as received Him, to them gave He power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on His name."

In John chapter one, the apostle John explains how the son of God came to brighten our lives in order to give us hope and light. He says in John 1:11, "Jesus came to His own and His own received Him not." The majority did not receive Jesus then, and the majority does not receive Jesus now, but those who *do* receive Him will be blessed, not only in this life, but also have the promise of eternal life. Jesus said, "Seek ye first the kingdom of God and His righteousness and all these things shall be added to you." We have two souls who have committed their lives to the Lord. It was such a pleasure to witness their decision to commit their lives to Jesus.

After the baptismal questions were asked, the Radins prepared themselves for entering into the church's baptismal pool. While waiting, the congregation sang several hymns to praise God for the sacred occasion that was to follow.

Brother John Bescec conducted the baptism, immersing George and Dragica Radin in the water as a symbol of death to the world, and a spiritual rebirth and renewal. Afterward he spoke a few words of praise to God on this very happy occasion. "All heaven was rejoicing when these two souls decided to get baptized and dedicate their lives to the Lord. Jesus was baptized by John the Baptist leaving us an example that we are to follow. Christ has made baptism the sign of entry into His spiritual kingdom. Through baptism you are solemnly saying that you are renouncing the world and are saying 'yes' to Christ and thus we become members of the royal family, children of the heavenly King.

Mark 16:16 says, "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved." Thanks be to God that there are some who are still willing to accept God's gift and are willing to step forward in faith and give their lives to Him."

After the acceptance of George and Dragica Radin into the fold of the Hamilton church, they received warm embraces and heartfelt greetings from all present.

It was a very joyous time to be together to witness the baptism of these two dear souls who had been supporting the church for many years. As the witnesses reflected on this solemn occasion, there is hope that others will be inspired by the Radins' example and likewise choose to also participate in the rite of baptism and become members in God's church.



# BORSCHT

## Ingredients:

1 medium onion, chopped	6 cups water (1500 mL)
2 cloves garlic, minced	3 cups tomato juice or preserved tomatoes (750 mL)
½ cup carrots, diced (125 mL)	1 cup cooked pot barley (250 mL)
½ stalk celery, diced	2 bay leaves
3 Tbs. olive oil (45mL)	Himalayan salt to taste
2 cups green cabbage, cut ne (500 mL)	Freshly chopped dill and parsley to taste
1 cup yellow potatoes, peeled and diced (250 mL)	
1 cup cooked red beets, peeled and diced (250 mL)	

## Directions:

In a large soup pot on minimum heat, sauté onion, garlic, carrots and celery for about 3 minutes, stirring constantly. Add the cabbage and the potatoes, the tomato juice or tomatoes and water. Now add the bay leaves and some salt. Allow to simmer until the vegetables are cooked. Stir in the beets, barley, dill and parsley at end of cooking time. If necessary, add salt and heat soup to preferred warmth. Enjoy!

This soup is not only delicious, but is full of nutrients such as: Vitamin A, B6, Vitamin C, Vitamin K, copper, ber, folate, iron, magnesium, manganese, phosphorus, potassium, thiamine, zinc, and much more.

*Franziska S. Pedersen*



“We can have a variety of good, wholesome food, cooked in a healthful manner, so that it can be made palatable to all. And if you, . . . do not know how to cook, I advise you to learn. It is of vital importance to you to know how to cook. There are more souls lost from poor cooking than you have any idea of. It produces sickness, disease, and bad tempers; the system becomes deranged, and heavenly things cannot be discerned. . . . There is more religion in good cooking than you have any idea of.” –*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 2, p. 373

“I appeal to men and women to whom God has given intelligence: learn how to cook. I make no mistake when I say men, for they, as well as women, need to understand the simple, healthful preparation of food. Their business often takes them where they cannot obtain wholesome food. They may be called to remain days and even weeks in families that are entirely ignorant in this respect. Then, if they have the knowledge, they can use it to good purpose.” –*Christian Temperance and Bible Hygiene*, p. 57

# Rwanda



# Sri Lanka



**“God has surrounded us with nature's beautiful scenery to attract and interest the mind. It is His design that we should associate the glories of nature with His character. If we faithfully study the book of nature, we shall find it a fruitful source for contemplating the infinite love and power of God.**

**“The great Master Artist has painted upon heaven's shifting, changing canvas the glo-**

**ries of the setting sun. He has tinted and gilded the heavens with gold, silver, and crimson, as though the portals of high heaven were thrown open, that we might view its gleamings and our imagination take hold of the glory within. . . .**

**“Look at the wonderful and beautiful things of nature. Think of their marvelous adaptation to the needs and happiness, not only of man, but of all living creatures. The sunshine and the rain, that gladden and refresh the earth, the hills and seas and plains, all speak to us of the Creator's love. It is God who brings the bud to bloom, the owner to fruit. It is He who supplies the daily needs of all His creatures.”**

**–My Life Today, p. 294**

