



The Reformation Messenger

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International Missionary Society of The S.D.A. Church Reform Movement

“And now, O Lord GOD, thou art that God, and thy words be true, and thou hast promised this goodness unto thy servant” 2 Samuel 7:28-34:10



We Believe

The all-wise, loving God created all things in the universe by His Son, Jesus Christ; He is its 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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POWER FAILURE



As I arrived in Jamaica, close to midnight, suddenly at the airport all became dark. The lights went out, the computers would not work and all came to a standstill. It was a power failure.

This can happen also in a Christian's life. After being faithful for a while, suddenly because of human weakness, sins are committed. Somehow the connection to the power source was cut off. If you disconnect your table lamp from the electric current, it has no light at all; again when you connect it back again, it has full light in it.

Jesus said, "Without Me ye can do nothing." John 15:5. Again, Paul writes, "I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me." Phil. 4:13.

There is no halfway position. We are either saved from sin by the power of God, or we are formal Christians, doing only what is humanly possible, which in reality is a lost condition.

A young man who had been into many bad habits was converted and baptized into the church. He gave up the use of drugs and alcohol, and also smoking. For more than a year he was living a faithful Christian life. Then one day his friend offered him a cigarette, and he thought that this one time only he will smoke and then after no more. He did a willful sin, and he lost the power of God. After this he could not stop smoking, and finally he resigned from the church membership.

Whenever there is a power failure in a Christian's life, it is always caused by the believer and never by the Lord.

In the 1888 Conference in Minneapolis, the delegates who rejected the Christ's righteousness message sinned against the Holy Spirit, and by so doing they lost the power of God. When the test came upon the church in 1914, in the time of the First World War, they all failed. They had no power to resist the evil. Only the members, who had accepted this message, remained faithful, even unto death.

Alonso Jones wrote in his book, "Everlasting righteousness, remember. Not a righteousness for today and sin tomorrow, and righteousness again and sin again. That is not everlasting righteousness. Everlasting righteousness is righteousness that is brought in and stays everlastingly in the life of him who has believed and confessed, and who still further believes and receives this everlasting righteousness in the place of all sin and all sinning. This alone is everlasting righteousness: this alone is eternal redemption from sin. And this unspeakable blessing is the gracious gift of God by the heavenly ministry which He has established in our behalf in the priesthood and ministry of Christ in the heavenly sanctuary." *The Consecrated Way*, p. 123.

Some people take Romans chapter seven as a normal part of Christian life. "For the good that I would I do not: but the evil which I would not, that I do." Rom. 7:19. E. J. Waggoner writes about it, "The bondage of sin, of which the apostle complains in the seventh of Romans, is not the experience of a child of God, but a servant of sin. It is to deliver men from this captivity that Christ came, not to deliver us, during this life, from warfare and struggles, but from defeat; to enable us to be strong in the

Lord and in the power of His might, so that we could give thanks unto the Father 'who hath delivered us from the power of darkness and hath translated us into the kingdom of His dear Son,' through whose blood we have redemption." Christ and His Righteousness, p. 87.

During the 40 years of wilderness journey the people of Israel suffered power failures which kept them from entering the Promised Land.

Gladly they left the land of bondage and took their journey toward the country that flowed with milk and honey. But soon after they started murmuring and complaining. At every new difficulty they forgot how the Lord had saved them from the previous difficulties, that finally the Lord said, "Your carcasses shall fall in this wilderness; and all that were numbered of you, according to your whole number, from twenty years old and upward, which have murmured against Me, doubtless ye shall not come into the land concerning which I swore to make you dwell therein, save Caleb the son of Jephunneh, and Joshua the son of Nun." Num. 14: 29, 30.

Only two men had the power of God; the rest of the adults perished because they lacked the faith which would have saved them. Paul writes, "So we see that they could not enter because of unbelief." Heb. 3:19.

Sister White writes, "The reason why our people have not more power is that they profess the truth, but do not practice it. They have but little faith and trust in God. There are but few who bear the burdens connected with His work. The Lord claims

the strength of brain, bone, and muscle; but it is too often withheld from Him and given to the world. The service of God is made secondary matter, while worldly interests receive prompt attention. Thus things of minor consequence are made important, while the requirements of God, things spiritual and eternal, are treated in an indifferent manner, as something which may be taken up at will and let alone at pleasure." Test. Vol. 4, p. 613.

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

"With watchfulness and prayer their weakest points can be so guarded as to become their strongest points, and they can encounter temptations without being overcome." Test. Vol. 2, p. 511.

Every sin that we commit is a result of a power failure, and "the wages of sin is death."

"He that committeth sin is of the devil; for the devil sinneth from the beginning. For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that He might destroy the works of the devil. Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin; for His seed remaineth in him; and he cannot sin, because he is born of God." 1 John 3: 8, 9.

"Not even by a thought could our Saviour be brought to yield to the power of temptation... There was no sin in Him... this is the condition in which those must be found who shall stand in the time of trouble." GC, p. 623.

Joshua & Caleb; Numbers 14:29



righteousness." ST 23/7/1902.

We don't need to have a power failure. It is Satan's deception that a sinless life is not possible. There will be 144,000 overcomers, who have put away every sin and reflect the image of Jesus perfectly, from the last days. May the Lord help us to have faith which will enable us to move mountains, and nothing will be impossible to us. **AMEN.**

Timo Martin, Toronto, Canada

"Everyone who by faith obeys God's commandments will reach the condition of sinlessness in which Adam lived before his transgression. When we submit ourselves to Christ, we live His life. This is what it means to be clothed with the garments of

MERCY IN MY PIT OF MISERY

In the darkness I did sit,
Wretched and miserable
Alone in my pit.

Above me, the thunder roared:
The wrath of an angry Lord.

A shiver went down my spine,
To think, to know, to feel
That it's my turn this time.

"You're gonna die!"
Cried the voices in my head.
"It's time to go to hell,"
They said.

I waited, with breath abated,
For that final stroke of death.

There was a boom,
There was a flash,
There was a vision of light.
Then settled once more,
My perpetual night.

But in the light I did see,
There in my pit,
A personality.
Who could it be?

And how I love they
Invas'd my space.
Didn't they know this pit,
My life, was a waste?

I clenched my fists,
And got ready to fight.
Another boom,
Another flash,
Another vision of light.

Who could it be,
Down here with me?

Who could it be,
That would partake with me,
This woe, this pit,
Of misery?

This hole that I had dug,
To wrap what I had sown?
To think, to know, to feel,
That I was not alone.

Who could it be,
Down here with me?

Another boom,
Another flash,
Another vision of light.

Who could it be,
Down here with me?

Another boom,
Another flash,
Another vision of light.

'Twas my sins that I did wrap,
'Twas me that made my pit so deep.

And yet,
To think, to know, to feel,
That I was not alone,
Melted my heart, of stone.

Who could it be,
Down here with me?

I wept, I cried,
I cried some more,
I cried until my throat was sore.

Who could it be,
Down here with me?

A hand touched my cheek,
And wiped away a tear,
I startled with fear,
Then a voice, I did hear.

"Be not afraid,
Neither be thou dismayed."

'Twas a voice that I did not know,
The sound of love, and not of woe,
Sweet and melodious in my ear,
Foreign to me down here.
Another boom,
Another flash,
Another vision of light.

And then another boom,
Another flash,
Death's stroke drew nigh,
And yet,
Another vision of light.

In the light I did see,
A hand, reached out in pity.

And the voice,
It spake once more:
"I give to thee my hand,
Take it, hold it tight,
And I will help thee,
Through the night."

I hesitated,
And there was silence.

Another boom,
Another flash,
Another vision of light.

And there with me,
Was no personality.

Could it be,
I had delayed too long?
Could it be that hand
Was gone?

But laws of despair rattled over me,
And yet, a hope within,
"Lord, save me!" I cried,
And threw myself into the night.

Another boom,
Another flash,
A hand in the light.

It took hold of mine,
And I held it tight.

Another boom,
Another flash,
And I died.

Here on the mountain top I sit,
Far far from my dismal pit,
Days of night,
Have passed from my sight,
All that I see,
Is Jesus with me.

By Cameron Schlegel



“Therefore we also, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which so easily ensnares us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us.”
Heb 12:1, 2

Hidden Messages

Aesop was a tongue-tied Greek slave who lived in the sixth century BC and who was granted the power to speak and craft fables in return for his generosity to an attendant of the goddess Isis. So goes the theory. A fable is a kind of story. In fact “fabula” meant “story” for the early Romans, and from this comes the word “fabulous.” Aesop’s fables, much like proverbs, have a moral, which means in a sense that they have something to say about what happens when we behave in certain ways; written primarily for adults, but enjoyed by children as well.

Solomon’s proverbs of the Bible, too, are furthermore, a collection of pithy sayings, short stories, poetry, wise maxims, in which by comparison or contrast, some important

truth is set forth. Proverbs were common to all nations of the ancient world. A fable, on the other hand may seem humorous or far-fetched, but their hidden message makes a point also, such as in proverbs. The key word in proverbs is wisdom which forms the divine perspective necessary to handle life’s issues, or the “ability to live life skillfully,” a godly life in an ungodly world. Nevertheless, the fables or proverbs always “hit the mark.”

The Hare And The Tortoise

There was a certain hare, being confident of his natural ability and brilliant speed, challenged a tortoise to a race. “I know just the route,” he said, thinking of all of the fine resting-places which lay along the winding trail, and how with his superior speed and knowledge of the course, he would have such a very good time dashing ahead to the next comfortable spot to wait for the winner. “Well,” said the tortoise, “...if you really want to race, I guess we can, but what is the reward for the winner?” “The winner will receive a crown and great honor...” proclaimed the haughty hare.

“That sounds wonderful,” said the tortoise, saying further, “I will get to the finish before you do.” “Before I do!” the hare replied, and laughed until he almost died.

“Great!” said the hare, “We’ll race tomorrow.” They shook on it. The next morning, bright and early, nearly all the forest creatures turned out to see the contest between the tortoise and the hare. The fox agreed to start them, and the squirrel would certify the winner. They all took their positions. The fox swished his tail, and they were off. The hare dashed off to a magnificent start, stretching out a tremendous lead over the tortoise, who just plodded along, step by slow step toward the cherished goal. After putting considerable distance between himself and his opponent, the hare turned just off the path to join a celebration which some fellow animals were having over the forest’s bounty. As the hare cavorted and rejoiced with his neighbors, who had chosen to skip the big event, the tortoise pressed on slowly past the unnoticed group, his determination fixed upon the goal, every fiber of his being straining forward to win the crown. The

hare, looking up from the feast, spotted the tortoise disappearing around a bend in the road ahead. Leaping to his feet, the hare laughingly bid the others goodbye and streaked off into the distance, feeling giddy from all the fun, and looking forward to the next resting place on the narrow path. "That foolish tortoise..." thought the hare, "To think that he could imagine that he could finish the race ahead of me! I know every turn in the path, and in the last stretch, I'll really pour on the coal and just duck under the gate. Oh, what fun it is!" and he skipped and hopped up the path.

The tortoise, meanwhile, doggedly continued; turning neither to the right or to the left, she kept the finish-line in her mind's eye, thinking about how sweet would be the victory when over the line she crossed. The hare came finally to a place which was within a hop, skip and a jump of the finish-line. To the left of the path, there was a moss-covered patch of shady ground with sweet clover in abundance, and a little spring trickling with cool, satisfying water. He hopped quickly off the path, buried his nose in a patch of flowering clover and inhaled. Oh, the sweetness was so inviting, and he could see the finish-line just ahead. He could have gotten there and returned in next to no time, but he spurned a hollow victory instead, despising an easy win, while off the tortoise slowly sped, huffing and blowing. The tortoise now was in top gear, doing at least a mile a year, which was as fast as she could go. The hare looked behind and saw nothing of the tortoise, so he lay down in that sweet place just short of the goal, and began to eat and drink his fill, thinking of the victory which lay just a short way off, within his sight. A little while later, the hare woke up just in time to see the tortoise beaming with joy as the crown of honor was placed upon her weary head.

Too late! The hare had every opportunity to handily win the race, but had allowed the allurements of the forest to draw him off the path into places of distraction and pleasure. While he had been slumbering with a full belly, the tortoise had been plodding alone in a race of hopeful endurance, bypassing and foregoing the distractions and pleasures, always mindful of the fact that she had no natural ability to prevail, and yet hopeful that she could gain the crown, and her determination to win paid a marvelous reward. "All may win

the crown of immortality in the heavenly race."(OHC 163:1).

I wonder if this story suggests anything to your mind? Do you find yourself identifying with any of the characters in the parable?

Why?

As Seventh Day Adventist Reformers we have certain advantages which Christians in other denominations and in past ages have not had. We know the path: last day events are not hidden from us. We don't have to guess what mile markers lay ahead, or what the weather will be like. We have been given the map and we have received the forecast. We have been given the highest quality running shoes the Lord could provide, He has equipped us that we may run the race without tiring or stumbling or losing the way to the finish-line, and the armor to protect us against any wily foes along the path. **Well, why aren't we there?** "Christ came to establish a reformation." (UL873). Is, "example and influence on the side of reformation?" (RC142:6). Where is the "courageous self-denying like David?" (RC142:6). Certainly "religious movements are controlled by God." (LDE29).

When?

Have you ever heard the expression, "Build it and they will come?" This, of course applies to community parks, play grounds, meeting centers, etc., but in our end-time context and awareness, we might well say, "Live it and He will come!" Ah! But when? **"When the Lord's character shall be perfectly reproduced in His people He will come!"** Furthermore, "Beloved, now we are children of God; and it has not yet been revealed what we shall be, but we know that when He is revealed, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is." (1 John 3:2). Powerful words!

100% Pure!

When Jesus returns again He is coming for a pure people, and a pure church, whom have neither spot, nor wrinkle, nor blemish, nor any such thing. These people shall see Jesus as He is, and so **shall be like Him!** But, there is something which is important about seeing Jesus as He is. We need to focus upon what Jesus is doing now, and what His action means for us, if we are to see Him

as He is. Right now, at this moment, in the true sanctuary in Heaven, Jesus is our great High Priest, making intercession for and cleansing His people, who have entered with Him by faith into the Most Holy place of the Sanctuary in Heaven, to experience the presence of God, and to be cleansed from all defilement. Any view of Him or His work which does not include these features is not a view of Jesus as He is and therefore cannot produce that which He is coming to receive unto Himself. We live in the context of an important message which we must receive, and take up to share with all mankind. The first part of that message we should all be intimately familiar with: "The everlasting gospel," and, "Fear God and give glory to Him." (Rev. 14: 6,7). The other angel's present warnings derive from, or follow, the faithful witnessing of the first.

Attitude is Everything

The last, fullest revelation of the everlasting Gospel is being proclaimed within the context of judgment. Our commission as the remnant of the woman of Rev. 12:1, 17 is the same as that of the disciples who watched Jesus go into heaven in the cloud, but is amplified with special reference to the investigative judgment which concludes just prior to His second advent. In light of this fact, what should our attitude then be, as individuals accountable to God, and as a church called into being as Christ's agent of ministry to a dying world? Is it for us to seek out the "comfortable places to rest" from the toil of the race? It's so easy to be distracted today. There's so much going on around us competing for our time, money and attention that we're in grave danger of forgetting exactly what we're doing, where we are going, and why! The goal is veiled and illusionary

Victory Lap

Ah! But, there's another danger... looming, but real. The hare knew the path so well, that he had no concern whatsoever that he could get lost. Well, he didn't get lost, but he was so confident of his knowledge of where he was on the path, that he became complacent and careless. He counted upon his ability to dash suddenly to the goal and win the race. His burst of speed proved pointless at the end, although it was a record run, the tortoise had already won. "Looking at others running the race means

loss of victory.” (RC 273:3).

Heart Condition

Moreover, in Deut. 30:15,19, Moses told the people that those things which he had delivered unto them: the word of the Lord; provided opportunity for both blessing and cursing: If, however, they disobeyed Him, then upon them would come terrible cursing. The key lay in the heart condition of the people as it is written in verses 16-18. So, we can see that something which brings blessing if it is heeded can bring cursing if it is despised or ignored.

Blind Man’s Bluff

Now, is it possible that having such knowledge as we have can prove a liability to us? Is there not as great an opportunity for overthrow as there is for blessing, in the knowledge we have been given? Jesus said, “If ye were blind, ye would have no sin, but now ye say that ye see, therefore your sin remaineth.” (John 9:41). Apostle James wrote, “To him that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is sin.” (Jam. 4:17).

Eye Full

In the message to the angel of the church at Laodicea, Jesus described our condition as being content with our experience, blind to our condition, and thus lacking the righteousness with which we must be clothed if we would meet Him in peace. He counsels us to anoint our eyes with eye-salve, that we may see. The eye-salve is an honest assessment of our true condition, in the fullest light of the character and work of Jesus. “When we see Jesus as He is, where He is, what He is doing and why, and by faith enter into the race of endurance and life, we shall step by step, day by day be like Him, and as a result of this experience, great is the Mystery of Godliness.”

(1Tim. 3:16) God manifest in the flesh and our flesh, the final events will come, and we

shall be taken up to go home.

Global Warning

In addition, the Lord will not allow the four winds of the heaven to blow upon the earth until He has a people sealed with His Name in their foreheads, with His Holy character fully formed within their heart and minds. He is waiting patiently, but we need to keep in mind that is what He is waiting for and not for every straggler to eventually rouse himself or herself for a last-minute dash to the finish – the 11th hour! Assuredly, God’s latter rain shall fall upon that ground which is ready to receive it. It is to bring to full ripeness the harvest. “Say not ye, there are yet four months, and then cometh the harvest? I say unto you, lift up your eyes, and look on the fields; for they are white already to harvest. And he that reapeth receiveth wages, and gathereth fruit unto life eternal: that both he that soweth and he that reapeth may rejoice together.” (Jam. 4:36)

Surrounded!

“Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, (The faithful life testimonies of Abel, Enoch, Noah, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, Joseph, Moses, Rahab, the Judges of Israel, and the prophets) let us lay aside every great weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before Him

endures the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God.” (Heb. 12:1, 2)

Sinewy Neck

At this time; at the climax of Earth’s history, we have been given the opportunity to bear witness to the love and righteousness of God, and to His power as Creator and re-creator of man. We did not, nor can we merit such a privilege, it is a gift from our loving Father, and we need to be about our Father’s business with the single-mindedness which the tortoise exhibited in the parable. Through His people, God wants to reveal Himself as the true and only Benefactor to mankind. Let’s press together in love one toward another and in ministry toward others in His name, that we might be His children in truth, and not in word only. Let the message return here with power, in consecrated lives and sanctified hearts. We learn that even the “weakest may obtain a crown and win the race.” (TMK 315:1). Remember, a turtle only progresses by “sticking out her/his neck!”

Finally, when we hear or see the name tortoise, it immediately portends and reflects... persevering. Be a turtle in the **Race of Life. Amen.**

John Theodordou, U.S.A.



LAODICEA IS REBUKED



As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten, be zealous therefore, and repent. Revelation 3:19

I am convinced that before we will see Pentecostal results follow our preaching, there will first have to be a Pentecostal work done in us. In 1888, when the message of righteousness by faith came to our church in a strong way, Ellen White said that the work of that message was to lay “the glory of man in the dust” (Testimonies to Ministers, 456). Unless that takes place, unless we can say from the heart, “Not I, but Christ,” He cannot take over completely and finish His work.

It would be wonderful if the Laodicean message had ended with the counsel in verse 18. Unfortunately, there is more. Like the Jews, we have been stiff-necked and rebellious. So the Lord has had to take an additional step. That step is found in verse 19: “As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten: be zealous therefore, and repent.” Ellen White has written: “The testimony of the True Witness has not been half heeded. The solemn testimony upon which the destiny of the church hangs has been lightly esteemed, if not entirely disregarded. This testimony must work deep repentance, and all that truly receive it will obey it and be purified.” (Testimonies for the Church 1:181).

Let’s examine, then, the rebuke the True Witness gives Laodicea. The first thing we notice is how He begins: “As many as I love, I rebuke...” Thank God, He doesn’t rebuke us in anger but out of a deep, loving concern for Laodicea. This has always been true in God’s dealings with his people. “For whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth. If ye endure chastening, God dealeth with you as sons; for what son is he whom the Father chasteneth not?” (Hebrews 12:6, 7).

However, some of us have had human fathers who chastened us in anger. They wanted to give vent to their feelings. Sometimes human parents discipline unjustly or excessively or from the wrong motives. God, however, disciplines us “for our profit, that we might be partakers of His holiness.” (verse 10).

In spite of our failures, God loves us. God’s love is unconditional. So the first thing to realize about the rebuke Christ gives Laodicea is that it is based in His unconditional love. His love causes Him to rebuke and chasten us.

A rebuke usually refers to a verbal reproof or correction. For example, Jesus rebuked Peter once, saying, “Get thee behind me, Satan.” (Mark 8:33). He rebuked the eleven disciples for their unbelief (see Mark 16:14). He rebuked those who were criticizing Mary (see John 12:7). Through the prophets, God sent rebukes to His Old Testament people many times. He has also sent rebukes to His church today through Ellen White. In one such rebuke she wrote:

“Oh, for a religious awakening! The angels of God are going from church to church, doing their duty; and Christ is knocking at the door of your hearts for entrance. But the means that God has devised to awaken the church to a sense of their spiritual destitution have not been regarded. The voice of the True Witness has been heard in reproof, but has not been obeyed. Men have chosen to follow their own way instead of God’s way because self was not crucified in them. Thus the light has had but little effect upon the minds and hearts.” (5T: 719-720).

If we still don’t listen even after He has rebuked us verbally, God has to

take a further step to correct the problem, a much tougher measure. Those He loves, He first rebukes. But if that is ineffective He says, "I will have to chasten you as well". The word chasten means "to punish". This punishment could be physical; it could be economic. It is something that God allows to happen to you for the purpose of correcting or disciplining you. But remember that even His chastening issues from, and is administered in love.

The Babylonian captivity is an example of how God chastens. For years, He tried to get Israel to turn from idolatry, but they would not listen. He rebuked them through prophet after prophet. Finally, as a last resort, God said, "You won't listen to rebuke, so I will chasten you. I will allow a foreign, pagan government to take you captive." It was His final resort because Israel would not listen to earlier rebukes. And if we refuse to listen to God, He will chastise us as well. I don't know what form it might take. It could be a financial collapse; it could be something else that would knock the props from under us. Our whole social system might come under attack. The Babylonian captivity was devastating to the Jews. But remember, God's chastisements are an evidence of His love and concern. "As many as I love... I rebuke and chasten". (Revelation 3:19).

Jesus uses the illustration of the vine and its branches to symbolize His relationship to us, and ours to Him (see John 15:1-8). He wants to produce fruit in us and therefore He has to prune the branches. Now, pruning is painful, but it has a beautiful purpose. And God hopes the result is beautiful as well – a rich harvest of fruit in our lives. This disciplining, refining, pruning process is apparent throughout Scripture from beginning to end. God disciplines in love in order to reproduce His love and His righteousness in us.

In the context of Christ's message to Laodicea, what is the purpose of His rebukes and His chastening? It is that we will repent and be zealous of good works. Notice that the words rebuke and chasten are in the present tense. God will continue to use these methods until they achieve the desired result. It's interesting that the word John uses for zealous is from the same root as the word hot used earlier in describing the works God wishes Laodicea possessed. God is saying, then: "I want you to get hot in terms of your works by repenting and becoming zealous."

The word repent means simply "a change of mind". That's what the Greek word means – a change of mind or direction. It's a U-turn. When God asks us to repent, He's saying, "I want you to make a U-turn from being self-centered to being God-centered, from depending on self to depending on Me."

Remember the conflict between our evaluation of our own spiritual condition and Christ's evaluation of us. Because works of the law have deceived us, we think that we are "rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing." But Christ assures us that we are "wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked" (Revelation 3:17). Here are two conflicting opinions – ours and Christ's. To repent means to give up our opinion of ourselves and to accept Christ's opinion of us. If we don't do this, we will have to learn the hard way, as Peter did, that Christ is right and we are wrong.

At the Passover feast, when Christ instituted the Lord's Supper, Peter had to learn through chastisement that Jesus knew him better than he knew himself. After supper, Jesus turned to Peter and said, "Simon, Simon, behold, Satan hath desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat: But I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not: and when thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren." (Luke 22:31, 32). In the Middle East, farmers sifted wheat by placing the threshed grain on a flat tray of woven grass. Then they threw the contents into the air; the wind would blow away the lighter chaff while the grain would fall back onto the tray. "Pay attention, Peter," Jesus warned, "Satan wants to treat you like chaff and blow you away, to separate you from Me."

Satan was trying to destroy Peter's faith. That is always his plan.

When he discourages us, when he makes life difficult for us, he always has a single objective: to destroy our faith. Notice Peter's response to Jesus' warning. "Lord, I am ready to go with thee, both into prison, and to death." (verse 33).

Peter was so sure that Jesus was wrong. "What on earth are You talking about, Lord? I fail You? My faith fail? You're mistaken, Lord. I don't need Your prayers. I'll never fail"

Did Peter fail, or didn't he? He certainly

did. Just as Jesus had predicted, Peter denied Him three times and with cursing and swearing. In Jewish thinking, to deny God with cursing was to commit the unpardonable sin. God could not forgive such a person, for he had reached the point of no return. So when Peter cursed and denied the Lord, he no doubt felt that there was no hope for him.

But did Jesus abandon Peter because of his sin and his spiritual arrogance? No. Even though Peter failed Him, Jesus didn't forsake him. After the resurrection, before Jesus saw Peter, even before He had appeared to any of the disciples, the angel at the tomb told Mary, "Go your way, tell His (Jesus') disciples and Peter that He goeth before you into Galilee: there shall ye see Him" (Mark 16:7). If Mary had told Jesus' friends, "The angel said that Jesus will appear to the disciples," Peter would have thought, That doesn't include me; I've denied him, and there is no hope for me. But Jesus wanted Peter to know that he was specifically included, that he was still a disciple, even though he had failed so miserably.

Peter had to learn the hard way to trust Jesus and distrust self. Peter had failed his Lord and denied Him three times. But now he was broken. His spiritual arrogance was gone. He had repented. When they met later on the seashore after the resurrection, Jesus didn't say, "I told you so, Peter; now you must suffer." Instead, He forgave him and reinstated him. It's true that He put Peter through an embarrassing, bitter experience in order to chasten him. Twice, Jesus asked Peter, "Do you love (agape) Me?" And Peter replied twice, "You know that I love (philos) You" (see John 21:15). There is a play on words in these verses that doesn't come across in English.

Jesus was asking, "Peter, do you love Me unconditionally?"

And Peter responded, "Lord, You know that I love You", but he used the word that means fluctuating, unreliable, human love. In other words, Peter was saying, "Lord, You know all along how frail and unreliable my love is. I didn't believe You, but now I admit you were right, and I was wrong. I repent."

Then the third time, Jesus switched to philos and said, "Peter, do you love (philos)

Me?" In other words, "Is this the only kind of love you have for Me, Peter? This unreliable, human kind of love?"

Peter was hurt. He said, "Lord, You know everything. You know that I love (philos) You. That's all the love I'm capable of in myself." And Jesus was not discouraged by Peter's response. He said in effect, "Now that you are converted, I can use you. Feed My sheep; feed My lambs."

God cannot fully use us until we have lost confidence in self. When God's people put self aside and make room for the Holy Spirit to take over, the work will be finished. That is what God is looking for. We need to repent. We need to repent of our pride – whether it's individual pride or denominational pride. We need to admit that we have failed God. God says to us, just as Paul told the Jews, "You claim to know the truth: You claim to understand what is right and what is wrong from God's law, but you have blasphemed the name of God in the eyes of the world" (see Romans 2:17-24).

Christ has a negative opinion of our spiritual achievements. He is saying, "I want you to repent. I want you to give up your opinions about yourself. I want you to take your righteousness and lay it in the dust. Accept My white clothing – My righteousness. Accept the eye salve that will enable you to see clearly." Are we willing to say, "God, You are right. We have failed to reveal Your character of love to the world?" Are we willing to repent?

Ellen White challenges us:

"The Lord calls for a renewal of the straight testimony borne in years past. He calls for a renewal of spiritual life. The spiritual energies of His people have long been torpid, but there is to be a resurrection from apparent death. By prayer and confession of sin we must clear the King's highway. When we do this, the power of the Spirit will come to us. We need the Pentecostal energy. This will come, for the Lord has promised to send His Spirit as the all-conquering power." (Gospel Workers, 307, 308)

Not just Peter, but each of the disciples at the Lord's Supper were full of confidence in themselves. Each of them disagreed

with Christ when He said, "All of you will forsake Me." They were full of self, and as a result they were always jealous of one another. Even at the Lord's Supper they were competing to be the greatest in the kingdom (see Luke 22). They each wanted to be the prime minister or the finance minister. Their focus was egocentric.

We have a similar situation in the church whenever we have an election. We join factions, and those who are close friends of a particular person will say, "When you get into power, I hope you will give me a high position." The disciples had this mentality. Then came the cross, and their hopes were dashed to pieces. They said, "We thought He was the One who was going to restore the kingdom and establish it. But now He is dead." They were downcast, and their faith had failed.

But forty days later, these same disciples were of one heart and mind in the upper room. Self had been crucified, they had experienced deep repentance. The cross had done its work in their lives, turning them from self to Jesus. We need this same experience. Self must be crucified. It is painful, but God demands it. When we say in deep repentance, "God, I admit that in me there is nothing good. I admit that in my human nature I am capable of any sin, no matter how gross. Cleanse me. Change my heart and my life" – when we have this experience then we will understand what the disciples felt at Pentecost. All who belong to Christ, says Paul, have crucified the flesh with its desires and passions (see Galatians 5:24).

When I see what Hitler did to the Jews or what Idi Amin did to his own people in Uganda and realize that my sinful human nature is no different from theirs, then I must acknowledge that given the right set of circumstances, I am capable of doing just what these men did. We look at the Holocaust and say, "How could the Germans do that?" They could practice these atrocities because they turned their backs on God. When Hitler repudiated God, then unrighteousness came naturally. And when this world turns its back on God, we will find that we are capable of doing exactly what Hitler did. In fact, we are doing it now to a certain degree. When we condone abortion on demand and kill millions of unwanted babies each year, are we really different from those who killed some six million Jews in Nazi Germany?

It's crucial that we repent as the True Witness calls on us to do. We should pray that God will not have to chastise us anymore. We need to surrender to His testimony and admit that we are wretched and miserable and poor and blind and naked. We need to admit that He is right and that our only hope is to accept the heavenly merchandise through deep, heartfelt repentance. Only then can we be filled with His Spirit and power. Then we will turn the world upside down, as the early disciples did.

During her lifetime, Ellen White pleaded for and hoped to see this repentance, but did not. Notice these two statements:

"The message to Laodicea has not accomplished that zealous repentance among God's people which I expected to see, and my perplexity of mind has been great" 1T:185.

"The same disobedience and failure that were seen in the Jewish church have characterized in a greater degree the people who have had this great light from heaven in the last messages of warning. Shall we, like them, squander our opportunities and privileges until God shall permit oppression and persecution to come upon us?" 5T:456-457

God doesn't give up easily, He isn't through with us yet, He is patient. It is true we have drifted far from God's blueprint. We have failed to lift up Christ as we should. But God has not forsaken us. He still intends to fill us with His righteousness so that the world can see, "Christ in us, the hope of glory".

"Eternal interests are at stake; the time of probation is almost over; and Christ, as if loath to lose one single soul, reproves and rebukes, that sin may be discarded.

There is no other time for preparation, for the Laodicean message covers ecclesiastical history, to the very end of time.

As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten, be zealous therefore and repent." Prophetic Waymarks p 492 by Stephen Haskell.

"The token of love – this, strange as it may seem, is chastisement... If we are without chastisement, we are not sons." (Hebrews 12:5-8) Daniel and the Revelation p 456 Uriah Smith 1907 edition. Amen

Anonymous

ENMITY OR HARMONY?



Genesis 3:15 “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.”

In the first promise made to Adam and Eve after they sinned, God stated that He would put enmity between the seed of the woman and the seed of the serpent. In other words, there would not be any harmony, but enmity between Satan and mankind. Satan has been trying to break this enmity and create harmony with man, thus breaking man’s harmony with heaven. He has succeeded with the vast majority of the people on this earth.

After the sin of Adam and Eve, Satan’s next major success was when Cain sinned. He “went out from the presence of the LORD,” (Genesis 4:16), and severed his harmony with heaven. He was then at enmity with God and in harmony with Satan. He went far away from home to establish his own kingdom. If Cain and his descendants had remained far away, the faith of God’s people would have been preserved. To preserve their harmony with heaven, it was essential that they remain separate. Abraham lived in the city of Ur and did his best to live a righteous life, however, the Lord knew that in order to preserve his faith there was need for separation, therefore Abraham “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.” Hebrews 11:8. To preserve harmony with heaven, the righteous need to be separate from worldly influences – at enmity with the devil and his followers.

The Lord called the nation of Israel to be a peculiar and separate nation in order to preserve the truth in its purity. Unfortunately, as much as the Lord encouraged a separation, often the people of God were tempted to mingle with sinners. “The sons of God saw the daughters of men that they were fair; and they took them wives of all which they chose.” Genesis 6:2. All too often their faith was corrupted. Even after the flood, things did not change for the better. In reading through the history of Ancient Israel, there are numerous occasions in which God’s people mingled with idolaters. More often than not, their faith was corrupted rather than the Israelites being faithful witnesses to the heathen. “And Israel abode in Shittim, and the people began to commit whoredom with the daughters of Moab.” Numbers 25:1

After their captivity in Babylon, the counsel was given again. “Now therefore give not your daughters unto their sons, neither take their daughters unto your sons, nor seek their peace or their wealth for ever: that ye may be strong, and eat the good of the land, and leave it for an inheritance to your children for ever.” Ezra 9:12. The closest tie on earth is the family tie. How can two join in this union if their faith and belief is in enmity against each other, one being in harmony and the other in enmity against Satan? There will surely be difficulties in the family. One spouse may eventually turn to be with the spouse, and perhaps, violating their conscience, or there will be constant contention in the family circle, resulting in a possible disruption of the family unit.

What about us? Does the Lord sometimes want to separate us from others? Are we in harmony or at enmity with the people in the world? Do we think that their influence will not really affect us? “Be not deceived: evil communications corrupt good manners.” 1 Cor 15:33.

Paul encourages believers to stop being led astray. The term “communications” is literally translated to mean, “companionships.”

The company of such individuals is to be avoided. Association with those who hold erroneous religious opinions (false Christian teachers), or whose lives are impure, has a tendency to corrupt the faith and morals of believers. By daily association with those who do not believe in the pure truth, the believers would be likely to lose their clear, positive understanding of the truth. Familiarity with error tends to remove objection to it and to lessen caution against it. For this reason God has always counselled His people to separate themselves from close associations with unbelievers. (An

unbeliever is not necessarily a worldly person and includes those who do not believe the pure truth. They mix it with a bit of error to suit their lifestyle).

The question to ponder though is when to be separate and when to mingle. Jesus was condemned by the Jewish leaders because He ate and drank with sinners, while they themselves separated themselves from these types of people. "And it came to pass, as Jesus sat at meat in the house, behold, many publicans and sinners came and sat down with him and his disciples. And when the Pharisees saw it, they said unto his disciples, Why eateth your Master with publicans and sinners?" Matthew 9:10, 11

What was Jesus' answer?

"But when Jesus heard that, he said unto them, They that be whole need not a physician, but they that are sick. But go ye and learn what that meaneth, I will have mercy, and not sacrifice: for I am not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance." Matthew 9:12, 13. Many of the poorer classes were drawn to Jesus. The Lord loved the ones who the Jewish leaders rejected.

How will worldly people react if we are truly living a righteous life? "Blessed are ye, when men shall hate you, and when they shall separate you from their company, and shall reproach you, and cast out your name as evil, for the Son of man's sake." Luke 6:22. Why would we want to keep company with these kinds of people? They expect that you will join them in their sin or then they will ostracise you. Either you harmonize with them in their sinful lifestyle or you will find enmity between

you and them. Those who do harmonize with the world find themselves at enmity with God. The two cannot be in agreement. They will always be separate.

SEPARATION

The Bible does emphasize the need for a separation of God's people from the world. "Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you," 2 Cor 6:17.

A person who loves and trusts the Lord seeks to unite himself with Him in every way possible. He actively rejects everything that displeases God, and accepts only that which is in harmony with His will. This joining of himself with Christ is a constant activity, one that becomes his all-absorbing interest.

Although we are to encourage sinners to turn to the Lord, if they refuse, this is when we must walk away. However, we are not to turn away from sinners after the first entreaty. The Holy Spirit has long patience and doesn't give up easily. Jesus pleads with sinners, as we also should. There is only so much we can do though, if someone loves their sin. There is a time when we can do no more and we need to separate from them. The Holy Spirit will reveal to us when this time will be. We have an example from Ancient Israel. "Ephraim is joined to idols: let him alone." Hosea 4:17. Ephraim was the principle tribe of the Northern Kingdom. Ephraim's idolatry and refusal to repent left him to an inescapable fate. The ten tribes had gone so far in idolatry that to them was made no promise of complete restoration. God does not coerce the will. He pleads with men to accept the way of life. But He leaves it with them as to whether they will hear or whether they will forbear. Those who persistently refuse to accept the offers of mercy are left to reap the fruits of their own choosing, which is enmity with God.

There is a time when we must draw back and leave the Holy Spirit to do the work. He can work on the human heart in a very effective manner when our words are no longer having any effect. Although the case of Ephraim seemed hopeless and humanly speaking, they were to be left alone, the Holy Spirit was still working. Ephraim had a change of heart by no human effort.

"Ephraim shall say, What have I to do any more with idols? I have heard him, and observed him: I am like a green fir tree. From me is thy fruit found." Hosea 14:8. Sometimes the best solution is to simply step back and leave the work to the Holy Spirit.

The following paragraphs describe the types of people we should not harmonize with, since they are at enmity with God.

Those seeking to cause division amongst God's people.

"Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; and avoid them. For they that are such serve not our Lord Jesus Christ, but their own belly; and by good words and fair speeches deceive the hearts of the simple." Romans 16:17, 18

Paul encourages believers against false teachers who might attempt to disrupt their harmony and destroy their faith. Anyone who seeks to disrupt the unity in God's church should be separated.

There are two main ways that Satan works to cause division amongst God's people.

1) *Causing people to exalt minor points of doctrine, while ignoring major points.*

"Whenever the Lord has a special work to do among His people, when He would arouse their minds to contemplate vital truth, Satan will work to divert the mind by introducing minor points of difference, in order that he may create an issue concerning doctrines that are not essential to the understanding of the point in hand, and thus bring about disunion, and distract attention from the essential point. When this occurs, the Lord is at work making impressions upon the hearts of men, concerning that which is necessary to their salvation. Then if Satan can draw the mind away to some unimportant issue, and cause the people to divide on some minor point, so that their hearts are barricaded against light and truth, he exults in malicious triumph." Ev 154.

2) *Causing the unconverted believers to take their eyes off Jesus and to look at the sins and faults in their brethren.*

“God’s people must take warning and discern the signs of the times. The signs of Christ’s coming are too plain to be doubted, and in view of these things everyone who professes the truth should be a living preacher. God calls upon all, both preachers and people, to awaken. All heaven is astir. The scenes of earth’s history are fast closing. We are amid the perils of the last days. Greater perils are before us, and yet we are not awake. This lack of activity and earnestness in the cause of God is dreadful. This death stupor is from Satan. He controls the minds of unconsecrated Sabbathkeepers, and leads them to be jealous of one another, faultfinding, and censorious. It is his special work to divide hearts that the influence, strength, and labor of God’s servants may be kept among unconsecrated Sabbathkeepers and their precious time be occupied in settling little differences when it should be spent in proclaiming the truth to unbelievers.” 1T 260

“Satan is ever seeking to divide the faith and hearts of God’s people. He well knows that union is their strength, and division their weakness. It is important and essential that all of Christ’s followers understand Satan’s devices and with a united front meet his attacks and vanquish him. They need to make continual efforts to press together even if it be at some sacrifice to themselves.” 3T 434

“Press together, press together, press together....in union there is strength, in division there is weakness.” TM 56

Those That Obey Not God’s Word.

“And if any man obey not our word by this epistle, note that man, and have no company with him, that he may be ashamed.” 2 Thess 3:14. “Such deliberate ostracism on the part of loyal Christians could hardly fail to have a remedial effect. The delinquents would more readily see themselves as others saw them, and be ashamed. Being ashamed of their wayward conduct, they would be led to repentance and be saved.” 7BC 281.

“We are not to unite with the rebellious and call this charity. God requires His people in this age of the world to stand for the right as unflinchingly as did John in opposition to soul-destroying errors.” AA 554. As we stand for the right, there will naturally occur an enmity with evil and harmony with God.

The fornicator, covetous, idolater, railer, drunkard or extortioner.

“But now I have written unto you not to keep company, if any man that is called a brother be a fornicator, or covetous, or an idolater, or a railer, or a drunkard, or an extortioner; with such an one no not to eat.” 1 Cor 5:11

This verse refers to social meals as well as the Lord’s Supper. Believers should have nothing that would give observers reason to believe that defiant transgressors of God’s law are recognized as Christian brothers in good standing. The standard of truth and purity must be held high. It is necessary to withdraw completely from wickedly impenitent apostates and let it be known that the church has no connection with them. Only thus will the church be kept pure and free from the contaminating influence of apostate sinners who are at enmity with God, refusing to repent and give up their wickedness.

Just because a person is a member of the church does not mean it is always ‘safe’ to associate with them. They may be lukewarm believers. If you find that they are influencing you in the wrong direction more than you are influencing them in the correct direction, it is time to withdraw from their company. If you are not growing through their friendship, it is not safe to continue the companionship. You do not want to jeopardize your harmony with heaven.

Although we can warn them, we need the wisdom of the Holy Spirit, to know when to walk away. We are encouraged not to keep company with these types of people as they have no interest in salvation. A drunkard does not have a clear mind. Unless he has a desire to leave his liquor habit, we are counselled to not even eat with him.

Unbelievers

“Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness? And what concord hath Christ with Belial? or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel? And what agreement hath the temple of God with idols? for ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and

I will be their God, and they shall be my people. Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you,” 2 Cor. 6:14-17. These verses encourage us not to yoke up with these people in marriage or business associations and alliances.

Unfruitful Works Of Darkness

“And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them.” Eph 5:11 Paul counsels us to have no fellowship with these types of people, but he doesn’t say isolate yourselves from them either. He tells us to reprove them. True believers will not participate in unfruitful works, nor countenance them nor have any sympathy with them. “By word and life Christians should be a continuous rebuke to the world of evil. It is not sufficient to ‘have no fellowship’ with the works of evil; they must be reprov’d. The Christian cannot be neutral, a passive observer in the face of wickedness; he must be aggressive in exposure and denunciation of sin. Sympathy with afflicted men must not degenerate into an easygoing, indifference or sentimental tolerance. Otherwise it will be hard to show that we have ‘no fellowship’ with works of darkness.” 6BC 1033

False Religious Teachers

“If there come any unto you, and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into your house, neither bid him God speed: For he that biddeth him God speed is partaker of his evil deeds.” 2 John 10, 11. This apparently inhospitable counsel applies only in the case of a “deceiver” and “antichrist” (v.7), and has no direct bearing on the hospitality that Christians should cheerfully show to needy friends and strangers. There would be no point in receiving a visitor who was determined to deceive the church of God; one who wants to create division and disrupt the church’s harmony with heaven.

“Lay hands suddenly on no man, neither be partaker of other men’s sins: keep thyself pure.” 1 Tim 5:22 Paul is counselling Timothy here, firstly that no inexperienced person should be ordained. Then he goes on to tell Timothy not to partake in other’s sin. Why are these two thoughts placed in the same verse? New members need to develop more. They need to prove that they have shunned sin. If Timothy refused to

acknowledge the sins of his elders, he would be shielding sin, and thus sharing in its spirit and consequences.” 7BC 314. The minister, above all others, must remain clean from moral indiscretions. Paul reminds Timothy that no factor such as wealth, or prestige, or personal friendship, should affect his judgment with respect to church matters. If leaders sin persistently, and are working at enmity with heaven, they also need to be separated from their position.

“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.” Rev. 18:4

As God’s people formerly came out of literal Babylon in order that they might return to Jerusalem, so His people today are called out of mystical Babylon in order that they may be accounted worthy to enter the New Jerusalem. Those who refuse to leave will be sanctioning the sins of Babylon and have to share the responsibility for them. They are at enmity with heaven.

“Having a *form of godliness*, but denying the power thereof: from such turn away.” 2 Timothy 3:5. Paul counsels Timothy and all future leaders to be alert to the dangers confronting the church. Besides a personal vigilance lest he succumb to the evil practices here described (v. 1-4) Timothy was to point out publicly these insidious tendencies and practices, which were curtailing the influence of Christianity. Through the years, the behaviour of nominal church members, that is, those who profess loyalty to God’s way of life and yet reveal no tangible evidence of a development of Christlikeness, has been a greater handicap to the progress of the gospel than any other factor. They are not at enmity with the world, but are rather disrupting the harmony within God’s church.

ADMONISH THE ERRING

“Yet count him not as an enemy, but admonish him as a brother.” 2 Thess 3:15. This word of caution is very needful in the church. It is easy for Christians to be harsh in their thinking toward a perverse brother. Paul did not want the erring one to be excommunicated on the first entreaty. He wished him still to be counted as a brother, and to be admonished as such. If the discipline had its intended effect, he would be susceptible to brotherly counsel,



and be ready to repent. However, if many entreaties are given and they are continually slighted, then the steps of separation need to be taken as outlined in Matthew 18:15-19 in order to preserve the harmony in God’s church, since this believer has placed himself at enmity with heaven.

In the Spirit of Prophecy important counsel is given when working with the erring – those that are at enmity with heaven. “In labouring with the erring, some of our brethren had been too rigid, too cutting in remarks. And when some were disposed to reject their counsel and separate from them, they would say: ‘*Well, if they want to go off, let them go.*’ While such a lack of the compassion, and long-suffering, and tenderness of Jesus was manifested by His professed followers, these poor, erring, inexperienced souls, buffeted by Satan, were certain to make shipwreck of faith. However great may be the wrongs and sins of the erring, our brethren must learn to manifest not only the tenderness of the Great Shepherd, but also His undying care and love for the poor, straying sheep. Our ministers toil and lecture week after week, and rejoice that a few souls embrace the truth; and yet brethren of a prompt, decided

turn of mind may, in five minutes, destroy their work by indulging the feelings which prompt words like these: ‘*Well, if they want to leave us, let them go.*’” 2T 18

RECONCILIATION

If a person is at enmity with God, they are not hopeless. The Holy Spirit is continually working until the person has cut themselves completely off from God. God is seeking for reconciliation between Himself and man. He is doing everything possible for the reconciliation process, however men who cling to their sin, resist the reconciliation. They do not want reconciliation on God’s terms, rather on their own terms. They have essentially separated from God and we are counselled to separate and leave them be.

Reconciliation is essential in order to preserve the unity in God’s church. All need to be at enmity with the world and in harmony with heaven for unity to happen.

“And all things are of God, who hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ, and hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation; To wit, that God was in

Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them; and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation." 2 Cor. 5:18, 19

Reconciliation involves no change on God's part, for God never changes. It is not God who needs to be reconciled to man, but man who needs to be reconciled to God. There has never been enmity on God's part between Him and man. After Adam and Eve fell into sin, God put enmity between the seed of man and the seed of the serpent. If any enmity exists between man and God it was not God who put it there, rather it was man. Men sometimes perceive God as a stern judge, angry with sinners, hard to be placated, unmerciful, ready to condemn. This characterization misrepresents Him and is an affront to Him. Christ did not have to go to the cross in order to appease God, but as a demonstration of His love. God did not demand the death of His Son, but gave Him out of a heart of infinite love. He wants to create harmony and unity with man (John 17:21) and put enmity between the believers and Satan.

This reconciliation work is passed on to us. The message of reconciliation has been deposited, as it were, in the minds and hearts of all who accept it for themselves for distribution to others.

Finally, true reconciliation is obtained in this manner, "Therefore if thou bring thy gift to the altar, and there rememberest that thy brother hath ought against thee; Leave there thy gift before the altar, and go thy way; first be reconciled to thy brother, and then come and offer thy gift. Agree with thine adversary quickly, whiles thou art in the way with him; lest at any time the adversary deliver thee to the judge, and the judge deliver thee to the officer, and thou be cast into prison." Matthew 5:23-25

From the Spirit of Prophecy we are given an example of this verse put into action. "Years ago, when the company of believers in the soon coming of Christ was very small, the Sabbathkeepers at Topsham, Maine, met for worship in the large kitchen in the home of Brother Stockbridge Howland. One Sabbath morning Brother Howland was absent. We were surprised at this, because he was always so punctual. Soon he came in, his face aglow, shining with the glory of God. 'Brethren,' he said, 'I have found it. I have found that we can pursue a course

of action regarding which the guarantee of God's word is: "Ye shall never fall." I am going to tell you about it.'

"He then told us that he had noticed that one brother, a poor fisherman, had been feeling that he was not as highly respected as he ought to be and that Brother Howland and others thought themselves above him. This was not true, but it seemed true to him; and for several weeks he had not attended the meetings. So Brother Howland went to his house and knelt before him, saying: 'My brother, forgive me. What is it that I have done?' The man took him by the arm and tried to raise him to his feet. 'No,' said Brother Howland, 'what have you against me?' 'I have nothing against you.' 'But you must have,' said Brother Howland, 'because once we could speak to one another, but now you do not speak to me at all, and I want to know what is the matter.'

"'Get up, Brother Howland,' he said. 'No,' said Brother Howland, 'I will not.' 'Then I must get down,' he said, and he fell on his knees, and confessed how childish he had been and how many evil surmisings he had cherished. 'And now,' he said, 'I will put them all away.'

"As Brother Howland told this story, his face shone with the glory of the Lord. Just as he had finished, the fisherman and his family came in, and we had an excellent meeting.

"Suppose that some of us should follow the course pursued by Brother Howland. If when our brethren surmise evil, we would go to them, saying, 'Forgive me if I have done anything to harm you,' we might break the spell of Satan and set our brethren free from their temptations. Do not let anything interpose between you and your brethren. If there is anything that you can do by sacrifice to clear away the rubbish of suspicion, do it. God wants us to love one another as brethren. He wants us to be pitiful and courteous. He wants us to educate ourselves to believe that our brethren love us, and to believe that Christ loves us. Love begets love.

"Do we expect to meet our brethren in heaven? If we can live with them here in peace and harmony we could live with them there. But how could we live with them in heaven if we cannot live with them here without continued contention and strife?

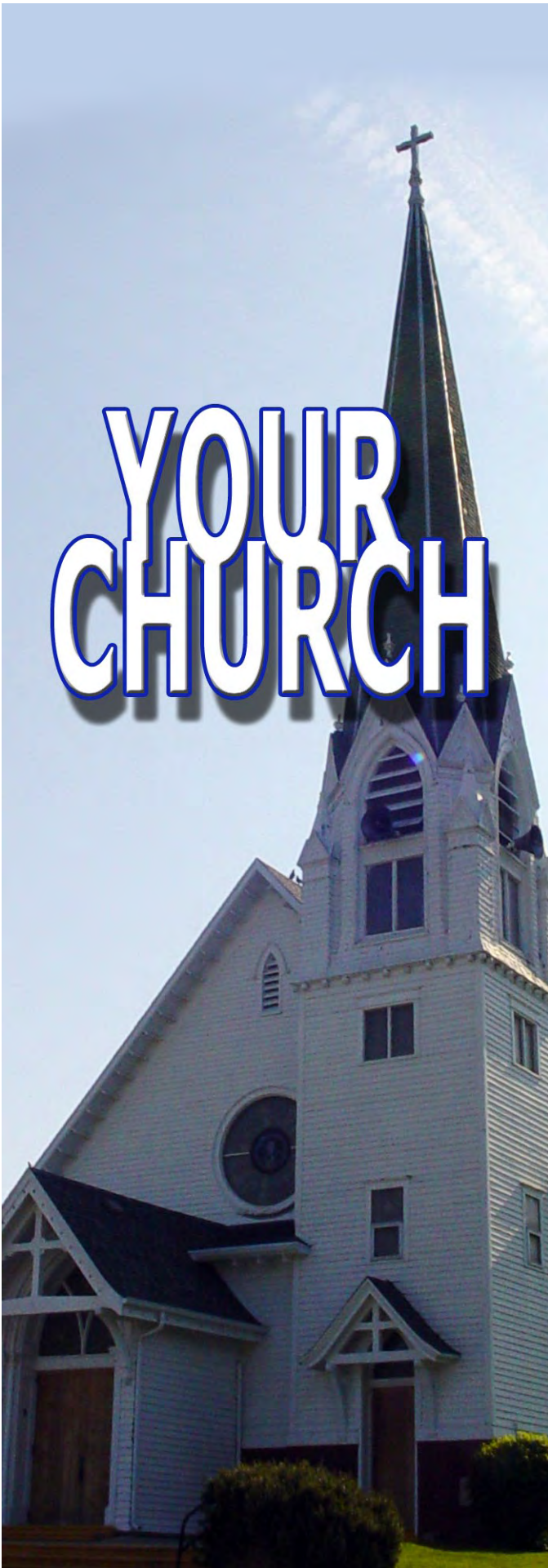
Those who are following a course of action that separates them from their brethren and brings in discord and dissension, need a thorough conversion. Our hearts must be melted and subdued by the love of Christ. We must cherish the love that He showed in dying for us on the cross of Calvary. We need to draw closer and closer to the Saviour. We should be much in prayer, and we must learn to exercise faith. We must be more tenderhearted, more pitiful and courteous. We shall pass through this world but once. Shall we not strive to leave on those with whom we associate the impress of the character of Christ?" 9T 191-193

"Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? As it is written, For thy sake we are killed all the day long; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter. Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us. For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, Nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord." Romans 8:35-39

If we truly surrender to the Lord, we will be found to be at enmity with Satan and the world. Although we are not to stand aloof from worldly people and have an air of superiority over them, as did the Pharisees in the days that Jesus walked the earth, we can't harmonize with them and participate with them in their folly. We will automatically be at enmity with them if we stand faithful.

We are preparing for entrance into the New Jerusalem and must surrender any idol or habit and leave behind any person who will hinder our heavenward journey. We must examine ourselves to determine who we are harmonizing with, and who we are at enmity with. Are we at enmity with God or with the world and Satan? My prayer is that each person reading this would be out of harmony with the world and perfectly united with Christ and in harmony with His people. *Amen*

Wendy Eaton, Australia



Notwithstanding theological implications and nuances, what does the church do for the Reformer's practical life? Does she have a right to claim her services and loyal support? Let us try to answer these questions by examining the influence of the church in our past. Long before we were born, the church gave to our parents standards and ideals that were able to make our home a haven of peaceful happiness.

The church enriched our childhood by painting on the canvas of life, pictures so lovely and beautiful as to preserve their imprint into adulthood without fading. Sometimes we forget the lessons taught, but then, when otherwise we might give in to the insistent syllogisms and philosophies of those who knew no church when they were children, we see again those pictures and we remember how good it is to be God's child.

During the storm and stress of adolescence, when we attempted to show that we were grown men and women by thinking contrary thoughts, the church kept our footsteps from going too far astray.

Marriage vows were made sacred within the walls of the church, and it was the church that taught us that love is a spiritual thing, always to be kept that way.

When sorrows assailed us like hungry waves lapping the side of a sinking ship, the fellowship of the church brought comfort and relief.

When perchance our steps slipped and we knew the defeat of sin, the church wooingly called us back. She believed in us, and helped us to reach up to God's ideal for us.

My village pastor, Mocasamy, always said that churches are "well" when they practice these activities:

- W—Worship
- E—Evangelize
- L—Love
- L—Learn

"But if we walk in the light, as He is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son, cleanseth us from all sin." John 1:7.

Like the early church, we should be very active in these last days.

Worship—We must meet together for fellowship, communion, prayer, and praise. (Acts 2:42-47). God is to be the focus of all we do in His church.

"They continued steadfastly in the apostle's doctrine and fellowship." Acts 2:42.

We can notice some of our church people are not coming regularly to the church. Some of them will come to divine worship only, and some people do not like to participate in the Sabbath School program. This is not a complete worship of the Sabbath day.

Evangelize—As we share the word, the Lord will add new believers to the church. We all should take part in spreading God's word by developing friendships, by giving someone an article about the gospel, or by sharing some Scripture verses, and pamphlets with a stranger. The church should give an equal opportunity to everybody to participate in every religious activity, which can train more workers for field evangelism.

The church should encourage and discover everyone's spiritual gifts by using the talents God has given to them. If the church is going to follow these methods, it is not necessary to advertise for workers.

Learn—Without learning anything, we cannot be a worker in any field. So, learning is a very important part in our life. Every day we are the students of this world. For learning there is no age and end. Never think that you have learned enough and that you may now relax your efforts. The cultivated mind is the measure of a man. Your education should continue during your lifetime. Every day you should be learning and putting to practical use the knowledge gained.

“To lead a life worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing to him, bearing fruit in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God.” Col. 1:10.

We cannot say that I am fully perfect and I know everything and I have achieved everything through my education. We must continue learning the church doctrines, Scriptures, songs, canvassing, preaching, teaching, praying, prophecies, taught by experienced people and leaders of the church. The Bible is filled with instruction for good living, and we should take every opportunity to learn from others, and apply it to our daily living, and teach others.

Love—We may have health, beauty, education, and worldly things, but if we do not have love, really we are only a sounding, clanging bell. Love never sees poor, sick, language, caste, race, colour, creed or knowledge. It never fails. We must respect other's opinions and boundaries. We must love everybody without differences, expectations, and any conditions. We cannot love only those who love us. If we are continually seeing the differences among us, the kingdom of God will be taken away from us and given to people who will produce its fruits.

So, we are to share with whoever has need, and enjoy the fellowship of other believers regularly. A church whose members worship, evangelize, learn and love will be a “well” church, appreciated by “all the people.”

The church means all this and more. She calls us to her heart, and she has a right to do this. Let us help her to do for others what she has done for us. **AMEN.**

Xavier Chelliah, Canada

GENERAL CONFERENCE ASSEMBLY 2007

International Missionary Society 7th-day Adventist Church Reform Movement

July 11-15, 2007 Puebla, Mexico

With the help of the Lord, the time of the next General Conference Assembly is at hand. Believers from all over the world are awaiting this spiritual event and desire to share the blessings and experiences that the Lord has given them and their brethren in the entire world.

The General Conference Committee is pleased to announce that the public meetings of the General Conference Assembly 2007 are scheduled for Wednesday, July 11, through Sunday, July 15, 2007 in the morning. We extend a cordial invitation to our members and friends to come and participate in this worldwide General Conference. The Mexican Union, with more than 1000 members, also looks forward to welcoming all our brothers, sisters, and visitors to this special event.

Where will the conference be held?

The General Conference Assembly 2007 will be held at the Centro Vacacional IMSS Metepec, in the State of Puebla, Mexico. The conference center is located close to the city of Atlixco. In this peaceful environment, within view of the beautiful volcanoes Popocatepetl and Ixtlachuatl, the visitors may enjoy the spiritual conference. The conference center has several hotels and restaurants, as well as swimming pools and parks, offering a good opportunity for recreation and spiritual edification.

Reservation and payment

On Wednesday, July 11, the rooms will be available after 3 p.m. During the conference, breakfast, lunch and dinner will be provided each day and are included in the price of the reservation. On July 11, however, only lunch and dinner will be served. We expect that all visitors to the General Conference Assembly 2007 will make their reservations ahead of time and will send their payment. The whole conference center has been booked for the event. The Mexican brethren have offered the foreign visitors the privilege of making their reservations first. Of all the places available, 600 beds are reserved for foreign visitors and the rest of the places have already been sold to Mexican visitors. In order for foreign visitors to make their reservations, their reservation forms and payment need to arrive at the General Conference offices no later than May 25, 2007. After May 25, 2007 no additional reservations or payments can be accepted, because all remaining places will be given to Mexican visitors. Reservations without payment will be not considered. Reservations and the corresponding payments may be made only under one and the same name. If you make a reservation under one name and the payment is sent under another name—even if it is a member of the same family—we won't be able to identify your reservation and payment. For participants who come from other continents and who wish to arrive at the conference ground one or two days ahead of time, there is a possibility of making a separate reservation for these days. However, this needs to be done on a private basis with the reception of the campground. The prices will be higher than the special rates offered to the conference participants. One will need to change rooms at the beginning of the conference.

Contact information:

Centro Vacacional IMSS Metepec
Avenida de la Compañía s/n
Metepe, Atlixco, Puebla
Telephone: (+52) 244 444 01 00, (+52) 244 444 00 88, (+52) 244 444 00 00 • Fax: (+52) 244 444 00 33
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Additional Information

Please check the General Conference web site regularly for additional information.

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MEXICAN UNION

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“We give thanks to God always for you all, making mention of you in our prayers, remembering without ceasing your work of faith, labour of love, and patience of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ.” 1 Thessalonians 1:2, 3.

There are three things that Paul remembers and thanks the Lord for, three things that he found in one of the many churches he worked for; the church that gives him more joy and to which he does not rebuke anything. On the contrary, he praises it because of its faith, love expressed in acts of generosity, and patience: the church of Thessalonica.

The good reputation of the Thessalonians because of their faith had spread out not only in Macedonia, but also in Achaia (the Peloponese) and in all of Greece. This faith was not a theory, but it was seen in concrete acts: they had turned to God from idols to serve the living God and to wait for his Son from heaven (1:9). What a wonderful change had taken place in the heart of those Thessalonians! Instead of believing in the gods on Mount Olympus and keeping their worldly ambitions and practices, the Gentiles of Thessalonica opened their hearts to the living God and received the free gift of salvation by grace. On the other hand, the Jews gave up their dead ceremonies, accepted Christ as the Messiah and their personal Saviour and became servants of the Creator of heaven and earth and *“imitators of the church of God”* (2:14), followers of Jesus Christ, the perfect Model for all Christians! As it happened with the church in Judea, they also suffered at the hands of their countrymen.

Paul had a great longing to visit his brethren in Thessalonica, but Satan hindered him. Therefore he sent Timothy to see how they were doing and Timothy brought very good news. *“But now when Timotheus came from you unto us, and brought us good tidings of your faith and charity, and that ye have good remembrance of us always, desiring greatly to see us, as we also [to see] you”* (3:6). The tender bond of love had joined the hearts of the believers in Thessalonica to those of their brethren who had brought them the gospel, the good news of salvation, and they longed to see the great missionary of the Gentiles again.

Love could be seen and experienced in the church of Thessalonica among all brethren because all of them, without exception, had the same goal: to serve the living God; and the same hope: they waited for His Son from heaven. Like the church of Philadelphia, centuries later, the Thessalonians were rich in brotherly love.

What is the condition of our own local church? Can love and faith be breathed in our midst? Could the pioneer brother or sister who brought us the message of salvation be consoled and rejoice with the good news that there is unity and genuine love among us? The conditions for this unity are the same today as at the time of Paul: to turn from our idols to the service of the living God and to wait for the coming of His Son from heaven; in other words: a deep conversion, a new birth.

Love is a gift we receive from God only when we walk by faith, and Paul remembers the Thessalonians because of their love. In chapter 4:9, 10, we read: *“But as touching brotherly love ye need not that I write unto you: for ye yourselves are taught of God to love one another and indeed ye do it toward all the brethren which are in all Macedonia.”*

Paul did not need to write to the Thessalonians, as he did to the

Corinthians, about the things love does not do, because this church had been directly taught by God and love was a daily practice among the believers that lived in the second largest city in Greece; also toward the brethren in the whole region of Macedonia, namely those in Philippi and Berea and wherever else there might be isolated members.

In his second letter to the Thessalonians, Paul mentions once again these virtues: their faith and love. *"We are bound to thank God always for you, brethren, as it is meet, because that your faith groweth exceedingly, and the charity of every one of you all toward each other aboundeth"* (1:3). Their labour of charity had spread out beyond the borders of their own region and reached Corinth where Paul explained that the churches of Macedonia, in spite of their deep poverty, abounded in liberality toward the saints and implored them to accept their free gifts (2 Corinthians 8:1-4). Love, translated as charity in some versions, has its utmost expression in the act of giving: *"For God so loved the world, that he gave..."* (John 3:16).

Why was the generosity of the Thessalonians so exemplary? Why could they perform such free acts of love and faith? *"And [this they did], not as we hoped, but first gave their own selves to the Lord, and unto us by the will of God"* (2 Corinthians 8:5). This is the secret of every act of genuine love. To be able to give to others all we are and have, without putting our needs first or measuring our real possibilities, is only possible if we have first given our heart to our Lord. Then, whichever *"work of faith"* or *"labour of love"* we perform is not ours, but the Lord's, who works through us, since we have surrendered Him our will. *"For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them"* (Ephesians 2:10).

To this living faith and working love of the Thessalonians is added one more Christian virtue: *"patience of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ"* (1 Thess. 1:3). Patience is one of the virtues we all need at the end of times, *"perseverance in hope"* (as it says in Spanish) that we shall one day see and be forever with the One we love so much because He loved us first and gave Himself for us.

A working faith and love keeps this hope alive and makes us patient because no matter how long we have to wait, our waiting is not passive and our goal remains the same and is always before our eyes. Patience is tested in trials, which make us dependent on God as we become more and more aware that we can do nothing on our own, but with the Lord everything is possible (Philippians 4:13). The awareness of our own impotence and limitations makes us patient and willing to take Jesus' yoke upon us and learn humbleness from Him. As a German hymn says: *"Der Demut Blume steht im Garten der Geduld"*: the flower of humbleness grows in the garden of patience.

The brethren in the church of Thessalonica were humble, had patience and hoped in the Lord. Trials had helped to shape their character. In Acts of the Apostles, Luke reports that when the gospel was preached in Thessalonica during three consecutive Sabbaths, many Jews were persuaded and a great multitude of devout Greeks (Acts 17:1-5) also accepted it, but the Jews who rejected it harassed them. The pattern has repeated itself throughout the centuries.

Not only did these Jews from Thessalonica cause disturbances in their city, but when they heard that in Berea there were many converted as well, they *"came thither also, and stirred up the people"* (Acts 17:13). Many of us have not yet gone through such kinds of tests of our faith and love for the cause of God, but they are at the door.

God permits these trials so that we can grow in patience, in endurance, in faith and in trust in our Lord. *"Knowing [this], that the trying of your faith worketh patience. But let patience have [her] perfect work, that ye may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing"* (James 1:3, 4). We shall be tried until the end, in little everyday things and in bigger ones so that our patience may reach a point of perfection and it may once be said of us: *"Here is the patience of the saints: here [are] they that keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus."*

May the Lord help each church member to wear the immaculate robe of Christ's righteousness so that his church may be a model in living faith, labouring love and patience in the hope of our Lord like the church of Thessalonica. *Amen.*

Teresa Corti

2007

CANADIAN CONFERENCE

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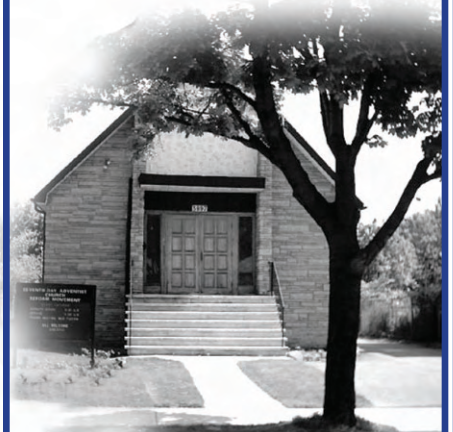
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INTRODUCTION

Just as the generations of mankind have increased, so many religions have increased. These so-called God's churches have increased and many kinds of worship have been established by men themselves in the world in our age. Seeing this some people think and say there is no God. Yet a majority of people think and believe surely there is a God, a Creator. A foolish person says in his heart, "There is no God..." says King David. [Psalm 14; 1; 53; 1; 10:4]

There are many religion spread all over the world. All these religions point out that God is the all powerful of all power in this world. Each religion follows their own principles and beliefs, formed by masters of this world. On the other hand we see a religion given to men of this world that should be followed, sent from the Creator Himself. The prophet gave witness to this. Let us call this the Christian religion. The giver of this Christian religion is Christ, the Saviour of mankind.

There are two main days of worship seen in this world and accepted by church-goers. One is based on Biblical principle; other based on the ground of worldly beliefs.

The ten commandments given by God are all bound up equally, but let us think on the fourth commandment in particular. "Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy..." Work at your job six days a week. But the seventh day is a day of rest in honour of the Lord your God. Exodus 20: 8-10. Why? Because the Lord worked six days and made the sky, the earth, the sea, and every thing in them. And on the seventh day, God rested; the Lord blessed and sanctified the Sabbath – the day of rest. The Lord made the Sabbath a very special day. Exodus. 20:11. So, we have to respect the command of God in this particular matter. If we do otherwise we reject God's will, and the result will be the wrath of God upon us. In Matthew it reads, "Ye hypocrites, well did Esaias prophesy of you, saying, This people draweth nigh unto me with their mouth, and honoureth me with their lips; but their heart is far from me. But in vain they do worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men." Isaiah was right when he spoke about you. In other words, Isaiah is saying: These people say they honor me, but they don't really make me an important part of their lives. Their worship of me is for nothing. The things they teach are only rules that people have made." Isaiah 29:13; Mathew 15:7,9 – Please consider these statements. This concerns particularly Sunday worship. Our way to redemption, and the salvation of mankind from sin is by the mercy of God. So, we must follow the instruction of God alone.

"There are but two religions in the world... The one class of religions are those which men have invented, in all of which man saves himself by ceremonies and good works; the other is that one religion which is revealed in the Bible, and which teaches men to look for salvation solely to the free grace of God." GC, p. 220

"He that turneth away his ear from hearing the law, even his prayer shall be abomination." Proverbs 28:9

"Whoso despiseth the word will be destroyed: but he that feareth the commandment shall be rewarded." Proverbs 13:13

"All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all

SABBATH OBSERVANCE

Part 1

good works.” Timothy 3:16,17

Here we learn to follow the pathway of God. Man follows God for his future, past and present goodness, as shown by God. The above verse emphasizes the importance of Sabbath-keeping taught by God in the Holy Bible.

PART 1: WORSHIP OF GOD IN EDEN

The almighty merciful Lord God created every thing that exists in this world, in the span of six days. All the necessities of the living things were also created by Him. And as the crown of His creation, God created man above all, and it was given to man the power to rule over all the creatures God created.

“God made man perfectly holy and happy; and the fair earth, as it came from the creator’s hand, bore no blight of decay or shadow of the curse.” SC, p.9

Worship the Creator

“The duty to worship God is based upon the fact that He is the creator and that to Him all other beings owe their existence. And wherever, in the Bible, His claim to reverence and worship, above the gods of the heathen, is presented, there is cited the evidence of His creative power. ‘All the gods of the nations are idols: But the lord made the heavens.’ Psalm 96:5 ‘To whom then will ye liken me, or shall I be equal? Said the holy one. Lift up your eyes on high, and behold who bath created these things.’ ‘Thus saith the Lord that created the heavens: God Himself that formed the earth and made it...I am the Lord: and there is none else!’_Isaiah 40:25,26; 45:18 Says the psalmist ‘know you that the Lord He is God: It is He that hath made us, and not we ourselves.’ ‘O come let us worship and bow down: let us kneel before the Lord our maker.’ Psalm 100:3; 95:6 And the holy beings that worship God in heaven state, as the reason why their homage is due to Him. ‘Thou art worthy O Lord, to receive glory and honor and power: for thou hast created all things.’ Revelation 4:11” GC, pp. 436437

So, all men, created by God, must worship the Lord. God teaches us how and when to worship Him. “Thus the heavens and the earth were finished, and all the host of

them. And on the seventh day God ended his work which he had made; and he rested on the seventh day from all his work, which he had made. And God blessed the seventh day, and sanctified it: because that in it he rested from all his work which God created and made.” Genesis 2:1-3

With the work of creation over, God rested on the seventh day. Because we have to learn lessons from Creator’s actions as a model to follow; we must work for six days, and on the seventh day, Sabbath, we rest and worship Him. Why? “The Sabbath was made for man...” Mark 2:27

Three gifts from Eden

When man was created by God he was given three special gifts. The first of these gifts was, “It is not good that man should be alone; I will make him an helpmeet for him” Genesis 2: 18. The second gift was the power to have dominion over the whole world. The third gift was the Holy Sabbath of the Lord, the seventh day of the week. This is very important and particularly special regarding the subject of the day of worship. “Six days may work be done; but in the seventh is the Sabbath of rest, holy to the Lord... Wherefore the children of Israel shall keep the Sabbath, to observe the Sabbath throughout their generation, for a perpetual covenant.” Exodus 31:15, 16

If man was obedient to God and to His holy laws he would have been the emperor of the world. But because he disobeyed the Lord and His commandments, and because man was deceived by the crooked ways of Satan the above-mentioned, highest, precious position was lost to him and the result of this is that mankind became under Satan’s control and became a slave to sin. To set man free from this slavery was the reason why Jesus came to this world as our Redeemer.

Sabbath observance was given to man as vital to him, so that, man should follow the line drawn by God, in order to be without spot and blameless.

Pluralities of Sabbath

“Our heavenly father desires through the observance of the Sabbath to preserve among men a knowledge of Himself. He desires that the Sabbath shall direct our minds to Him as the true and living God,

and that through knowing Him we may have life and peace.” 6T, p.349.

“The Sabbath given to the world as the sign of the God as the Creator is also the sign of Him as the Sanctifier. The power that created all things is the power that re-creates the soul in His own likeness. To those who keep holy the Sabbath day it is the sign of sanctification. True sanctification is harmony with God, oneness with Him in character. It is received through obedience to those principles that are the transcript of His character. And the Sabbath is the sign of obedience.” 6T, p.350

“The Sabbath was made for man, to be a blessing to him by calling his mind from secular labor to contemplate the goodness and glory of God. It is necessary that the people of God assemble to talk of Him, to interchange thoughts and ideas in regard to the truths contained in His word, and to devote a portion of time to appropriate prayer.”-2T, p.583.

We need to remember that the observance of the God-given holy Sabbath day must be observed by man with all his heart, might and mind. This the duty of man; this is the will of God. If man fulfills the will of God, wonderful blessings from the heavenly kingdom shall be abundantly showered upon him.

“Speak thou the will of God also unto the children of Israel, saying, Verily my sabbaths ye shall keep: for it is a sign between me and you throughout your generations; that ye may know that I am the Lord that doth sanctify you. Wherefore the children of Israel shall keep the Sabbath, to observe the sabbath throughout their generations, for a perpetual covenant.” Exodus 31:13, 16

“Blessed is the man that doeth this, and the son of man that layeth hold on it, that keepeth the Sabbath from polluting it, and keepeth his hand from doing any evil.” Isaiah 56:2.

We need to follow our Savior Jesus Christ. He says to us “For I have given you an example, that ye should do as I have done to you.” John 13:15 *Amen*

Raj Israel

MEXICO 2007

Youth Conference

INTERNATIONAL MISSIONARY SOCIETY SEVENTH DAY ADVENTISTS REFORM MOVEMENT

World Youth Conference Mexico 2007 from 15 to 22 July 2007 Puebla, Mexico

Thank to the Lord we shall soon have the opportunity to gather together and enjoy the spiritual blessings that He has prepared for the World Youth Conference 2007 in Mexico and to share a week of Christian fellowship. Once the General Conference Assembly is over, the World Youth Conference will start and will last from Sunday 15 to Sunday 22 July. All young people and brothers and sisters worldwide are cordially invited.

The program entails study workshops with topics of interest for the youth. Every evening there will be evangelistic meetings. We shall take an excursion to Mexico City and another one to the ruins of Teotihuacan. One evening there will be a public evangelization with the performance of the International Youth Choir which will be formed during the conference with all those who want to raise their voice to glorify God.

Site of the Conference

The World Youth Conference 2007 will take place in the same place as the General Conference Assembly, at the Centro Vacacional IMSS Metepec, in the state of Puebla, Mexico. This is a peaceful environment, surrounded by woods and with a panoramic view of the volcano Popocatepetl. The premises have much greenery, an area for physical recreation, swimming pools and different choices for lodging, such as hotels, houses, and camping facilities. Our wish is that every partaker may enjoy the place and may also have an experience with God in quiet surroundings.

Booking and Payment

To make a reservation, the forms and payment of foreign visitors must be received at the General Conference offices no later than June 25, 2007.

eMail: imssdarmgc@yahoo.com

Fax: (+1) 562-863-7559

Booking and payment must be done in the same name. If a booking is done in one name and the payment in another name— even if it is a member of the same family – we shall not be able to identify the booking and payment.

Brothers, sisters and friends in Mexico are requested to contact the Union Headquarters:

eMail: unionmexicana_ims@hotmail.com

Tel., FAX Office: 553 626 1866

Additional Information

Those who wish a copy of the reservation form should download it from the youth web page or require it by email to:

www.juventudencristo.org ; eMail: Pablo-Hunger@aon.at



THE WAY OF SAFETY



CHILDRENS CORNER

Dear Grandma is one of those who “being dead yet speaketh.”

She was not a preacher, or a lecturer-much less a censorer or reprove; but she was that most agreeable of teachers to childhood and youth, a story-teller. Yet, let no one suppose that she told us tales of fairy lore or ingenious romance, as pernicious as they are false. Not so; the stories to which we listened with so much delight, were all true, and all from the capacious store-house of her own memory.

We had returned from the church one Sabbath afternoon, and as usual, hastened to Grandma to repeat as much as we could remember of the sermon. The text was that solemn command of the wise man: “My son, if sinners entice thee, consent thou not;” and our pastor had made it the ground-work of a powerful exhortation to the young especially, to beware of the many temptations, snares and allurements which they should meet; and warned them of the consequences of yielding to the seductive influences by which they might be surrounded.

“That reminds me of a young man whom I knew before any of you were born,” Grandma remarked, when we had reported as much as we could remember of the sermon. “You have heard me speak of Jacob Wise?” she said, addressing my father.

“Yes, mother,” he replied, “please tell the children about him. I am sure your account of his experience will be a very suitable addition to our afternoon sermon.”

“Oh yes, Grandma, please do!” we exclaimed; and, drawing our seats around her, we prepared for what we knew would be a treat. The good old lady did not need to be urged, but, after pausing a moment to collect her thoughts, began as follows: -

“Jacob Wise was the son of a near neighbour when I was a happy wife in my Western

home. His father was a plain, practical man, respected for his uprightness, good sense, and piety; and he brought up his son in his own sound principles, at the same time giving him all the education that was within his reach.

“When Jacob was about fourteen years of age, he was sent to Louisville, for the benefit of a year’s instruction in a large school there.

“There were, also, other sons and daughters around his father’s hearth. It therefore appeared expedient that Jacob should be allowed to develop his taste for commercial pursuits.

“The first circumstances of any note, that I remember, which particularly marked his character, occurred at the time of his first practical acquaintance with business.

“While in Louisville, he received much attention from the family of a wealthy man who kept a large store in the city; and when, at the close of his school term, he was offered a place behind the counter of his friend, he found no difficulty in obtaining his father’s permission to accept it.

“The merchant, Mr. Rankin, was a smooth, bland, good-tempered man, and in his interaction with the world maintained outwardly a fair and honest character.

“But Jacob had not been many weeks in intimate connection with him before he discovered that his dealings were not all conducted with scrupulous adherence to divine law; neither was a conscientious regard to his neighbour’s interests a very deep-seated principle. This caused the lad much uneasiness; and a feeling of nervous disquiet took possession of the hitherto happy boy.

“He hesitated as to which was the more honourable course; to obey his employer without question, or to sacrifice his own ideas of strict integrity.

“But he was not long left in doubt. One day a carriage drove to the door, and a richly dressed lady entered the store, and asked to be shown some children’s necklaces. Jacob, who attended in that department, was proceeding to wait on her, when Mr. Rankin came forward smiling, and with the ease and courtesy for which he was noted, took the lad’s place, and spread before the lady an assortment of glittering trinkets which, judging from her fashionable appearance he knew would please her eye.

“An animated dialogue ensued between the merchant and customer, respecting the style and value of the various articles in view. The lady was made to believe that this elegant display had been imported with great cost and difficulty from the manufacturing cities of Europe, and, in consequence of the immense and rapid demand for them, the obliging trader had been satisfied with moderate profit, and was now willing to dispose of the remainder of the stock at fabulously low prices.

“To all this, which he knew to be utterly and shamelessly false, Jacob listened with equal grief and astonishment, and it was with difficulty that he restrained his honest indignation as he saw one after another of the tinsel gewgaws transferred to the shopping bag of the deceived customer at prices which were five times their value, while she was duped with the flattering persuasion that she was receiving unequalled bargains.

“All doubts as to the unlawfulness of his remaining another hour under the roof where this swindling transaction had taken place were immediately removed from the mind of the noble and upright youth.

“When Mr. Rankin returned after having very politely attended the lady to her carriage, and placed the parcel containing her purchases by her side, he was met by Jacob, who, with an air of grave rebuke rarely assumed by lads of his years,

informed him that from what he had seen of his method of conducting business he thought it quite impossible that they could agree.

“He was therefore, resolved to return without delay to his father’s house, and he was glad that the terms upon which he had entered the establishment left him free to do so.

“The firm and fearless bearing of the boy awed the man of unjust practices, and he neither attempted to vindicate his own meanness nor to oppose the departure of his right-minded assistant. At once Jacob returned to the old homestead, his character more permanently formed by the ordeal through which he had passed.”

“But do you think, Grandma,” inquired Henry, “that Jacob would have acted so independently if he had had no home to return to?”

“Yes, dear, I think he would,” was the prompt reply. “He had learned to obey the commands of God and to believe His promises. He knew that the injunction, ‘Come out from among them,’ was followed by the assurance, ‘I will receive you,’ and such as his trust in his heavenly Father’s word that no thought for his future provision would have interfered with the performance of what he deemed to be his duty.”

“Well, Grandma,” said Henry, “I like the stand taken by the honest boy. Please go on with the story.”

“Jacob remained at home for the next three years, making himself useful in teaching his younger brothers and sisters, besides assisting his father in the management of his affairs. In the meantime his own education was advancing. Nor was he without receiving many offers of clerkship in the neighbouring cities, whither the good report of his honesty and integrity had come.

“But a cousin of his father, who was a merchant of some eminence in New Orleans, had proposed to take him into his counting house in a confidential capacity when he should reach a more mature age, and for this important post he was qualifying himself.

“Accordingly, when he was eighteen years of age, at the request of his relative, he again left home. This time his departure was a more serious affair than it had been when, a few years before, he left for school in Louisville.

“Now he was going to a large and populous city, where fashion and vice walked hand in hand, and where snares and pitfalls were spread for the simple and unwary, with scarcely a finger-mark cautioning them to beware.

“All the neighbourhood was moved with anxiety and friendly interest for the youth, and the last Sabbath of his attendance at our rural church, the good pastor made an earnest and affectionate address from the same text which the minister presented today.

“Our friend’s journey to the great maritime city of the South was not without incident. Mr. Wise accompanied his son to Louisville, and, after the necessary preliminary arrangements, went with him on board the boat that was to bear him down the broad waters of the Mississippi.

“The parting advice and benediction of his father were then given. He reminded him of the subject of his pastor’s last sermon, and closed by giving him, as the motto of his life, the imperative charge, ‘Come out from among them.’

“Then, as he desired to return home by daylight, and the boat was not to start for a couple of hours, he once more committed his son to the care and guidance of heaven, and left him, with a calm trust that he would be kept in the way of safety.

“After a pleasant trip on board the ‘Southern Belle,’ our young friend arrived in New Orleans.

“Jacob was much pleased with his new situation. He found his relative a man of the most honourable character. Accommodations were procured for him in a first-class boarding house, where none but persons of the best standing were admitted. And, whether owing to his attractions of mind or person, the sterling worth of his character, or the independent position of his family, or perhaps all these combined, he soon found himself an object of marked interest and attention to all with whom he

came in contact.

“Naturally of a social disposition, and disposed to look at everything in the most favourable light, Jacob saw none of those vicious traits and habits which he had been cautioned to shun.

“He did not partake of the mirthful spirit by which the unwary are enticed into scenes of folly, neither did he deny himself innocent recreations.

“And now to the unsophisticated youth, life presented the fairest aspect. His religious duties were carefully attended to, and in the faithful discharge of his business engagements no one could be more careful and punctual. His evenings were devoted to the society of those who were congenial to him. But it was not long before the hidden thorns of the flowers that strewed his path began to make themselves felt, nor was it without pain that conscience awoke him from the repose in which he had been lulling himself.

“Among the many charming sojourners at the establishment in which he had taken up his abode, was the family of a wealthy planter, who had come to the city for the winter. Mr. and Mrs. De Veaux were a lively and fashionable couple, and their children partook of the light and careless temperament of their parents.

“Isabel, the eldest, was now in her sixteenth year, and the faultless beauty of her face and figure was only equalled by the childlike sweetness of her disposition. She had been brought up without much restriction or control, and now that she was entering society for the first time, being spirited and witty, she flung herself into the enjoyments of fashionable pleasure with all the zest of her nature.

“The winter glided along with its witching gayeties, and, though the young Christian was never tempted to join the giddy multitude in their unlawful pastimes, yet his views were more lax than they had been.

“With the hope of his presence having a restraining effect upon the fair being who had touched the tenderest chords of his nature, he suffered himself to be led into scenes such as sober conscience could not approve.

“At length, however, the alarm came that was to disturb his security. A sermon was to be preached by a celebrated minister before the members of the ‘Young Men’s Christian Association.’ Jacob attended, and heard with startled interest the minister deliver, as his text, the very same verse which the pious pastor of his country home had made the subject of the last discourse he had heard from him: ‘My son, when sinners entice thee consent thou not.’

“The young man of irreproachable life had no idea that this exhortation could be applied to his case; he had been careful that ‘sinners’ were granted no opportunity of enticing him.

“But to many of the young men present, who were not so cautious, he hoped the sermon would prove of benefit. So he settled himself comfortably to listen to the brilliant orator.

“But his self-complacency did not last long. It was that very class to which he belonged, that the preacher addressed. He exposed the cunning temptations of Satan, and told how he laboured to lead even those who hated vice, to join in the pleasures of the world, without requiring them to commit one apparent sin.

“Thus the enemy sought to lead even the Christian, and to turn his heart from God, from holiness, and from heaven.

“Painfully solemn were the feelings with which Jacob left the house of God at the close of the service. The film had passed from his eyes, and he saw that while his outward walk had been strictly correct, his heart had wandered from its true allegiance.

“When he reached home he found a giddy party of young people, dancing and making merry in the brilliantly lighted parlours. But the sickening sensations that ran through his frame, at the thought of time thus wasted, and creatures fashioned in their Maker’s image perverting their fine intelligences, showed the change that had been made in his views within the last hour.

“He went at once to his chamber, and with earnest prayer, he gave himself anew to his Master.

“He decided at once that Isabel must be given up, with all her attractions. How lone and cheerless the future appeared. Casting himself upon his knees, he prayed for help to bear the blow which had descended upon his hopes.

“With Jacob Wise, to know his duty was to do it. Having felt the evil influence of intimate association with light and giddy worldlings, he determined to change his boarding place to some more retired spot where no similar temptation should waylay him. And so, the next morning, he called on his pastor, stated the circumstances in which he was placed, and asked his help in obtaining board in some private family connected with the church.

“The minister sympathized with his young friend, and after a few minutes thought, mentioned a pious couple of his charge, whose only son had lately gone from home, and into whose vacant room he thought it likely Jacob might be admitted.

“It was as he had hoped. When Mrs. Bennet heard the case, she was glad to be able to give a home to the young man. No other difficulty now remained but his parting with Isabel.

“He found her seated at the piano, and a long conversation ensued, in which opinions and sentiments entirely opposite were maintained by each. On subjects of vital importance, they were disagreed. So that finally they, whose hearts had receive their first tender impressions from each other, with an apparent calmness inconsistent with their true feelings, separated, to meet no more.”

Grandma paused, and for several minutes no one seemed disposed to speak. Each of us was looking into his own heart to see if there were grace enough there to bear us conquerors through such trials as might be in store for us. The silence was broken by Henry, inquiring the sequel of the young Christian’s career.

“Well, said, Grandma, “Jacob continued to live a consistent, Christian life. He visited his parents every summer, gladdening their hearts by purity and simplicity of life.

“When he had been six or seven years in New Orleans, he was taken into partnership

by his kinsman and employer; and shortly after he married the daughter of his pastor, whose sweet companionship was a great help to him in his Christian life.

“It is a long time since I have had an opportunity of hearing of Jacob Wise; but I dare say, if still living, he is an example of moral dignity, truth and uprightness, and an honour to the church of which he has been, from childhood, a steady and consistent member.”

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The Lord was good. He protected and provided for me in Nepal. There were some political problems that paralyzed Kathmandu for a number of days. About 90% of the retail shops were closed and the 6 major roads into the valley were blocked by demonstrators. Some people who wanted to join the church couldn't reach me. The bus they traveled in was not permitted to come into the capital city. Gasoline was scarce. People had to wait 14 - 18 hours to buy gas. Also six hours per day there was no electricity in the city. A sad situation. The good news is that three people were baptized. A first in Nepal. Praise the Lord! Now there are five members in Nepal. **Br. Henry Dering from Nepal**

IMS around the world



Sis. Raquel Conde in San Pedro, Atitlan



PRACTICE WHAT YOU PREACH

You can know all the scriptures,
Have all the Bibles you can reach,
But when push comes to shove
Do you practice what you preach?

Anyone can go to church
And collapse on the floor,
But when Judgment Day comes
Will you be at Heaven's door?

You can have the biggest of fits
And say the Holy Ghost passed through,
But is that really reflected
In the things you do?

You can yell far and wide
Proclaiming your love for Christ,
But what have you given Him
When for you He gave His life?

You can lecture others
About the wrong things they do,
But before you look at others
You need to look at you.

You can damn all the sinners
Tell them they're headed south,
But what have you done lately
Besides run your mouth?

You can call yourself a Christian
Spend all your days at church,
But while you are praising His name,
Have you been doing the Lord's work?

You can boast of good deeds
To show us the spirit is within
But why show it to us?
You should show it to Him!

You can memorize the Bible
Know it from front to back,
But you don't use it to regulate others
Regulate how you act!

Take a good look at yourself
Not at what others do,
Because when He comes to get His children...
Will He be coming for you too?