

The Reformation **Messenger**

VOLUME 15, NUMBER 3, MARCH 2008

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



*"And he saith unto them, Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men."
Matthew 4:19*

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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Messenger

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- Tel: 416-252-1197 Fax: 416-252-6625
- Email: timom@sympatico.ca
- Web: www.ims messenger.org

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There is a saying, "If you give a little finger to the devil, he will take the whole hand." This has been proven true over and over.

Eve was not planning to do a great sin: just to look at the mysterious tree; but then by looking, a desire to taste was aroused and the result was the terrible sin.

Satan took hold of mankind and controlled the people in the chains of sin. Only by divine intervention could anyone free himself from the power of Satan.

David was walking on the roof of his house and saw a woman bathing. Again, by looking a desire was aroused in his heart and the result was adultery and even murder.

Satan knows that by looking at forbidden things, sinful desires are aroused, and next, sins will be committed. Therefore, he has invented television shows, Internet programmes, and literature which arouse the base desires in the human hearts, and by so doing erase the purity and noble characteristics from men and women.

Sister White gives us a counsel, "Exciting love stories and impure pictures have a corrupting influence. Novels are eagerly perused by many, and, as the result, their imagination becomes defiled. In the cars, photographs of females in a state of nudity are frequently circulated for sale. These disgusting pictures are also found in daguerrean saloons, and are hung upon the walls of those who deal in engravings. This is an age when corruption is teeming everywhere. The lust of the eye and corrupt passions are aroused by beholding and by reading. The heart is corrupted through the imagination. The mind takes pleasure in contemplating scenes which awaken the lower and baser passions. These vile images, seen through defiled imagination, corrupt the morals and prepare the deluded, infatuated beings to give loose rein to lustful passions. Then follow sins and crimes which drag beings formed in the

image of God down to a level with the beasts, sinking them at last in perdition. Avoid reading and seeing things, which will suggest impure thoughts." Test. Vol. 2, p. 410.

"It is thus that Satan still seeks to compass the ruin of the soul. A long preparatory process, unknown to the world, goes on in the heart before the Christian commits open sin. The mind does not come down at once from purity and holiness to depravity, corruption, and crime. It takes time to degrade those formed in the image of God to the brutal or the satanic. By beholding we become changed. By the indulgence of impure thoughts man can so educate his mind that sin which he once loathed will become pleasant to him." PP, p. 459.

To look at impure pictures gives a little finger to Satan and next he takes the whole hand, and controls the weak human being completely. To protect ourselves from these small beginnings which in the end can destroy our salvation, we need to watch ourselves all the time. Daily Bible reading and constant prayer will occupy our minds that impure thoughts cannot enter. Also unselfish labour for others will be a great help in keeping our minds pure.

Not only by looking at evil is giving the little finger to Satan but many other seemingly small sins can set us on the downward path.

For instance, indulging the appetite. By eating unhealthy food we give a little finger to Satan and soon we lose our self-control and weaken our will power.

"Sins of the greatest magnitude are committed through the indulgence of perverted appetite." Test. Vol. 4, p. 30.

"If we enfeeble the body by self-gratification, by indulging the appetite, and by dressing in accordance with health-destroying fashions, in order to be in harmony with the world, we become enemies of God." Test. Vol. 3, p. 63.

"Those who live to gratify appetite and selfish desire, will lose the favour of God, and will lose the heavenly reward." CS, p. 29.

Another way we can give our little finger to Satan is neglecting the church meetings. "It is a serious mistake to neglect the public worship of God. The privileges of divine service should not be lightly regarded. Those who attend upon sick are often unable to avail themselves of these privileges, but they should be careful not to absent themselves needlessly from the house of worship." MH, p. 511.

"Some have failed to see the real importance not only of attending religious meetings, but also of bearing testimony of Christ and the truth... They will surely wither spiritually unless they change their course in this respect." Test. Vol. 4, p. 539.

These little sins are often committed by professed Christians thinking that they are so small that they can easily be overcome. But they do not realize how small sins soon lead to greater sins.

Jesus said, "He that is faithful in that which is least is faithful also in much: and he that is unjust in the least is unjust also in much." Luke 16:10.

It does not matter how small the sin is, if we do it willfully with knowledge, it silences our consciences and weakens our will power.

"The power of little acts of evil, of small inconsistencies to mould character, are not estimated as they should be." MYP, p. 27.

"Life is chiefly made up; not of great sacrifices and wonderful achievements, but of little things. It is oftenest through the little things which seem so unworthy of notice that great good or evil is brought into our lives. It is through our failure to endure the tests that come to us in little things, that the habits are molded, the character is misshaped; and when the greater tests come, they find us unready." MH, p. 490.

If it is your intention to be in heaven and have eternal life then begin with small things. Watch your thoughts, also your words that they are inspired by the Holy Spirit. Pay attention to your Sabbath-keeping and to your diet that it is according to our health message.

Do not give even the little finger to the devil, because if you do, he will take full control of your life. Be faithful in this short time that we have left in this world of sin. May the Lord help you in this is my wish and prayer. **AMEN.**

Timo Martin, Canada

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****SEE PHOTO OF LITERATURE ON PAGE 12****



Second Advent Promises

"For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of an archangel, and with the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first. Then we who are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And thus, we shall always be with the Lord. 1 Thessalonians 4:16.17

Believe It Or Not!

Do you really believe in the second coming of Jesus Christ? Well, if you do, how are you preparing for it? Furthermore, do you believe He is coming soon? Are you believing with all your mind, body, heart, and ... eyes, that the signs portend of His coming? Prophecy is fast-fulfilling, and in retrospect, looking back ten or twenty years, one might have questioned it. But, not any more. "The time is nearer than we first believed." (Ev 219)

Coming Trend

This is not another paper or sermon on the Second Coming of Jesus Christ as you will soon see. You have heard and read many, and truly, it seems there is a trend related to His coming that is cascading in all of the believing churches. Not only a trend but a fervor that has preoccupied the thoughts and beliefs of many. For others it has created an uneasiness, fraught with anxiety, guilt, and burning doubts of preparedness for this magnificent event.

Spurious Generations

We are the last generation on earth in this tumultuous world, but also in a time when "cooperation between young and old need each other." (RY 49:4) Yet, what a generation as we look about us; a "corrupt, blemished, perverse, and crooked generation, children in whom there is no faith." (Deut 32:5, 20)(Luke 9:41). Moreover, "He is rejected by this generation." (Luke 17:25). Consequently, God answers why, "Therefore I was angry with that generation, and said, 'They always go astray in their heart, and they have not known My ways.'" (Heb 3:10)

Ah! But, the Apostle Peter writes, "But you are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, His own special people, that you may proclaim the praises of him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light." (1Peter 2:9). Very well spoken, but Peter, in writing to the Jewish believers, encourages them to conduct themselves courageously, and both their character and conduct must be above reproach, and to imitate the Holy One who called them!

Who Are You?

Therefore, where are we and how do we stand? Of what generation are we today? Are we of the ancient Israelites or one of the numbered and sealed 144,000? Or, are we part of the "prevailing

spirit of apostasy in our time" (TMK 206:1), with "seducing spirits?" (1907 3SM 408:3)

It's quite evident, furthermore, that we are clearly living in the end times. The rise of apostasy has been known from the beginning of time by God and Jesus Christ and has been increasing rapidly adding to the accumulation of ages, and until the Lord returns.

Turn Away!

Also, we see the clearest signs of the end in these "perilous times and perilous men." In 2 Peter 3:1-5, "And from such people turn away!" Paul clearly warns us here to have nothing more to do with such people! But, you say, "they are really still 'nice' people, but only confused, or going through a trial, so there is no harm in being in contact with them. We are still good friends. They may just come back." No, no, no! Paul is explicit about it. It's over! "And from such people turn away." Have you honestly ever seen an apostate return? It's over! There is no turning back!

No Stopping

In spite of all this, Jesus Christ is returning; whether you believe it or not; whether you are prepared or not; whether you are still struggling to overcome that secret sin; whether you refuse to forgive that soul that offended you, or you are too proud to ask for forgiveness; whether you have confessed your sins and repented or not... He is coming, and coming soon, with you or without you! Remember, the foolish virgins were not prepared when He came.

Waiting Time

Throughout the ages, many have waited for Jesus' return. The disciples waited. The apostle Paul waited. EG White watched for His advent. Enoch saw and prophesized about it. Malachi's closing words were to be fulfilled before the coming of Jesus. The many faithful martyrs of the Reform era, all who lifted up their voices for Jesus Christ, believed He was coming in their time. Luther believed He was coming in his time, but saying, "If I knew He was coming tomorrow, I would plant a tree today." Yet, Jesus has not come, we can clearly see. Ah! But, why?

Firstly, however, although the thought of Jesus' coming should bring joy, cheerfully keeping Christ before us as we wait for His Advent, the "time of His Advent is not known exactly, but the signs are given." (2MCP531:1); and the "time of His Advent is not to be said as one year, or to put off the time of His Advent" (LDE 33). In fact, "the time of His Advent is unknown." (UL 365:1).

Wisdom and Understanding

EG White says, "We talk about the first angel's message, and the second angel's message, and we think we have some understanding of the third angel's message; but we should not be satisfied with our present knowledge. Our petitions, mingled with faith and contrition, should go up to God, for an understanding of the mysteries that God would make known to His saints." (Review and Herald, June 4, 1889).



But now, there is a difference between just knowledge, and wisdom. Knowledge is a gathering of information. On the other hand, wisdom is the application of knowledge with good judgment. Society and even our church at times values the accumulation of knowledge, but the Lord says, "Blessed is the man who finds wisdom, the man who gains understanding." (Proverbs 3:13).

You see, with all the knowledge of man, wisdom, and understanding, although the signs are there, the extraordinary and crowning event of His coming has not occurred, yet, and continues to elude, frustrate, and confound man.

Where is the Hope?

Well. I can suggest why many are losing hope... then, and today. It is due to the timely and inescapable fact that many are placing their foundation of hope on the "event," rather than on the person of Jesus Christ! In whom and what event are they placing their hope? For if that hope is placed on the "event" – the second coming of Jesus Christ; or if that foundation of hope is placed on any of the signs described in 1 Peter 3:1-5, and Mathew 24, the problem is compounded! Now, what if the signs come and go, which invariably has happened, and will continue to do so in many aspects? What happens, then, to our lingering hope? I have heard for years of many who allowed their hopes to ultimately and shamefully die! "And saying, where is the promise of His coming? For since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation." (2 Peter 3:4). The Millerites, for one, were terribly disappointed, and many more, some of which suffered bitter consequences, such as the ancient Israelites, and their disbelief, and loss of hope in the promises of God. They perished for it!

Unbreakable Promises!

Focus on Jesus Christ! Furthermore, focus on the **promises of Jesus Christ!** Promises that are fulfilled daily in our imperiled life, but are promises that are filled with blessings. What else? A life of promises, not only blessings, but protection, confidence, peace and joy. We tend to overlook these promises and do not "claim them." Moreover, "for bodily exercise profiteth little, but godliness is profitable unto all things, having promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come." (1 Tim 4: 8)

Godliness, therefore, is profitable. It is a life-long investment. Another brilliant promise is found in the Fifth Commandment: "Honor thy father and thy mother, that thy days may be long upon the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee." (Exodus 20:12). We discover a treasure, furthermore, in the promise of "secret security," in Psalm 91:2: "He is my refuge and fortress..." When the plagues of Revelation 16 (vials of wrath) fall on mankind, the faithful will be protected. Understand this... that he who dwells in the foundation of Jesus Christ can have the comforting hope of His promises.

On the other hand a portrait of the Godliness, however, in the

shaking world is one of "corruption, doing abominable works, and none that doeth good, but, the Lord looked down from heaven upon the children of men, to see if there were any that did understand, and seek God." (Psalm 14:2).

Shifting Time!

Therefore, what does it take to shift from the place (event of His coming), to Jesus Christ? We can find that answer in John 16:13; "Nevertheless, when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth; for he shall not speak of himself, but whatever he shall hear, that shall he speak; and he will show all things to come." Shift your hope unto Jesus Christ! But for many, the Holy Spirit is lacking! The Holy Spirit is received when one is obedient.

An interesting conversation took place one evening between a man, Nicodemus, and Jesus Christ (John 3:1-15). Notice the shift here as Jesus was reading into the heart of Nicodemus, saying, "except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God. Nicodemus saith unto him, how can a man be born when he is old? Can he enter the second time into his mother's womb, and be born? Jesus answered, except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God." (John 3:3-5).

Divine Spirit

We often speak of baptism, and certainly it is one of the pillars of the Truth. But, when we speak of it we're not even thinking of a water baptism (as an embryo in a sac of water or fluid). The emphasis is on a **spirit filled life, not water only!** It is this that allows us to enter the kingdom of God. What is the kingdom of God? "For the kingdom of God is not food and drink, but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Spirit." (Romans 14:17).

Focus not on the event, but Jesus Christ, first and foremost!
These are the **Second Advent Promises!**

John Theodorou, U.S.A.

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Finding Jesus In The Darkness



Part 1

Have you ever been afraid of the future? Have you chosen to follow Jesus and then come to a fuller realization of what that really means? "Though to Jordan's rolling billows, cold and deep?" And as you consider your future experience, does your spine begin to tingle, a dark gloomy shadow envelop you, and your heart tremble and sink with fear?

Jacob's trouble. How few really know what it is about. From the Great Controversy: *The "time of trouble, such as never was," is soon to open upon us; and we shall need an experience which we do not now possess and which many are too indolent to obtain. It is often the case that trouble is greater in anticipation than in reality; but this is not true of the crisis before us. The most vivid presentation cannot reach the magnitude of the ordeal. In that time of trial, every soul must stand for himself before God.* (GC 622)

What an experience. It will be far worse than we can even anticipate – far beyond our worst imaginings. Sometimes when we consider where our path is heading, we become tempted to give up the race.

The Scriptures speak of this experience. *Woe unto you that desire the day of the LORD! to what end is it for you? the day of the LORD is darkness, and not light. As if a man did flee from a lion, and a bear met him; or went into the house, and leaned his hand on the wall, and a serpent bit him. Shall not the day of the LORD be darkness, and not light? even very dark, and no brightness in it?* (Amos 5:18-20)

This is the future we have to look forward to. A day of darkness, even very dark, and no light in it.

We have enough trials and enough tribulations as it is. Already at times our heart feels like fainting. How can we endure such a time? Even just thinking about it makes us scared. We become afraid to go any further in our Christian walk, if this is where it is leading. And dependency like a thick, gloomy cloud settles over us.

Did you know that Jesus felt the same way when He contemplated the future? *A human body and a human mind were His.* (3SM 129)

I want us to read Desire of Ages page 624. And here is Jesus as He has related His mission to the Greeks who came enquiring, "We would see Jesus." .Read this very carefully:

The message of the Greeks, foreshadowing as it did the gathering in of the Gentiles, brought to the mind of Jesus His entire mission. The work of redemption passed before Him, from the time when in heaven the plan was laid, to the death that was now so near at hand. A mysterious cloud seemed to enshroud the Son of God. Its gloom was felt by those near Him. He sat rapt in thought. At last the silence was broken by His mournful voice, "Now is My soul troubled; and what shall I say? Father, save Me from this hour?" In anticipation Christ was already drinking the cup of bitterness.

His humanity shrank from the hour of abandonment, when to all appearances He would be deserted even by God, when all would see Him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted. He shrank from public exposure, from being treated as the worst of criminals, from a shameful and dishonored death. A foreboding of His conflict with the powers of darkness, a sense of the awful burden of human transgression, and the Father's wrath because of sin caused the spirit of Jesus to faint, and the pallor of death to overspread His countenance. (DA 624)

As He thought of His future, in anticipation Christ was already drinking the cup of bitterness. Just the thought it caused the spirit of Jesus to faint, and the pallor of death to overspread His countenance.

Isn't Jesus so precious, that He would take upon Him OUR human nature?

But let's keep reading, and learn of Jesus:

Then came divine submission to His Father's will. "For this cause," He said, "came I unto this hour. Father, glorify Thy name." Only through the death of Christ could Satan's kingdom be overthrown. Only thus could man be redeemed, and God be glorified. Jesus consented to the agony, He accepted the sacrifice. The Majesty of heaven consented to suffer as the Sin Bearer. "Father, glorify Thy name," He said. As Christ spoke these words, a response came from the cloud which hovered above His head: "I have both glorified it, and will glorify it again." Christ's whole life, from the manger to the time when these words were spoken, had glorified God; and in the coming trial His divine-human sufferings would indeed glorify His Father's name. (DA 624)

This is awesome. This mysterious cloud had descended upon Jesus, and its gloom was felt by even those around Him. Yet, when Jesus submitted to the future experience, the voice of the Father came from that gloomy cloud that hovered about His head.

As the voice was heard, a light darted from the cloud, and encircled Christ, as if the arms of Infinite Power were thrown about Him like a wall of fire. The people beheld this scene with terror and amazement. No one dared to speak. With silent lips and bated breath all stood with eyes fixed upon Jesus. The testimony of the Father having been given, the cloud lifted, and scattered in the heavens. For the time the visible communion between the Father and the Son was ended. (DA 625)

Light comes out of the cloud! That which seemed so gloomy, so dark, so despondent, the Father was in it!

Let's read Isaiah 45:15 so that we can gain a clearer appreciation. *Verily thou art a God that hidest thyself, O God of Israel, the Saviour.*

God hides. And we need to FIND Him.

Oh, for living, active, faith! We need it; we must have it, or we shall faint and fail in the day of trial. The darkness that will then rest upon our path must not discourage us, or drive us to despair. It is the veil with which God covers His glory when He comes to impart rich blessings. We should know this by our past experience. In that day when God has a controversy with His people, this experience will be a source of comfort and hope. (CET 190)

God hides in the darkness! He makes the things that seem so gloomy, so despondent, His hiding place. He wants to bless us, but we would be killed by His personal glory, and so hides Himself in the darkness so that we are not consumed by His brightness. We need to learn this now. And if we do, then when we pass through that dark day, we will have comfort and hope. Jesus is here with me. And He will bless me.

The path to freedom from sin is through crucifixion of self, and conflict with the powers of darkness. Let none be discouraged in view of the severe trials to be met in the time of Jacob's trouble, which is yet before them. They are to work earnestly, anxiously, not for that time, but for today. What we want is to have a knowledge of the truth as it is in Christ now, and a personal experience now. In these precious closing hours of probation, we have a deep and living experience to gain. We shall thus form characters that will ensure our deliverance in the time of trouble. (OHC 321.2)

This again reiterates for us that if we NOW make a personal experience with Jesus, then there is no need for us to become discouraged in view of Jacob's trouble. We are to work for today, not tomorrow, but our experience TODAY must be a preparation for tomorrow. It is now that we are to learn that the darkness is the "veil with which God covers His glory when He comes to impart rich blessings."

Job was a man who passed through an experience similar to the faithful in the last days. And how much did he want to be released from his experience! Things were not going as he would have liked them to go.

When I looked for good, then evil came unto me: and when I waited for light, there came darkness. (Job 30:26)

All he wanted was some comfort, some light in his experience. Do you think that God heard his prayer? God had declared Job to be righteous, and the "prayer of a righteous man availeth much." (James 5:16) So, of course God heard his prayer. But how did He answer it? Darkness came. Evil came.

God calls for us to hide ourselves when the time of trouble comes. *Come, my people, enter thou into thy chambers, and shut thy doors about thee: hide thyself as it were for a little moment, until the indignation be overpast. (Isaiah 26:20)*

What does it mean to hide myself? *For in the time of trouble he shall hide me in his pavilion: in the secret of his tabernacle shall he hide me; he shall set me up upon a rock.* (Psalm 27:5)

To hide myself means to avail myself of God's offering to hide me. But where will He hide me? In His pavilion, in the secret of His tabernacle. And what about that?

Psalm 18 gives us a revelation of the experience of those who in the last days have been faithful to their calling. The heathen are angry with them and want to kill them. And so they cry day and night to God for help. And God hears their prayer.

I will call upon the LORD, who is worthy to be praised: so shall I be saved from mine enemies. The sorrows of death compassed me, and the floods of ungodly men made me afraid. The sorrows of hell compassed me about: the snares of death prevented me. In my distress I called upon the LORD, and cried unto my God: he heard my voice out of his temple, and my cry came before him, even into his ears. (Psalm 18:2-6)

God's people are hedged in with difficulties. The wicked are seeking to remove them from the face of the earth. And so they cry out to God. Help us! And in the heavenly sanctuary Jesus hears their cries. Then, probation closes, He leaves the sanctuary, and comes to their help.

Then the earth shook and trembled; the foundations also of the hills moved and were shaken, because he was wroth. There went up a smoke out of his nostrils, and fire out of his mouth devoured: coals were kindled by it. He bowed the heavens also, and came down: and darkness was under his feet. And he rode upon a cherub, and did fly: yea, he did fly upon the wings of the wind. He made darkness his secret place; his pavilion round about him were dark waters and thick clouds of the skies. At the brightness that was before him his thick clouds passed, hail stones and coals of fire. The LORD also thundered in the heavens, and the Highest gave his voice; hail stones and coals of fire. Yea, he sent out his arrows, and scattered them; and he shot out lightnings, and discomfited them. Then the channels of waters were seen, and the foundations of the world were discovered at thy rebuke, O LORD, at the blast of the breath of thy nostrils. He sent from above, he took me, he drew me out of many waters. He delivered me from my strong enemy, and from them which hated me: for they were too strong for me. They prevented me in the day of my calamity: but the LORD was my stay. He brought me forth also into a large place; he delivered me, because he delighted in me.

What is the hiding place of God? Where will He hide His people in the time of trouble? In His pavilion and the secret of His tabernacle. And where is that? Verse 11 again: He made darkness His secret place; His pavilion round about him were dark waters and thick clouds of the skies.

God's pavilion is dark waters and thick clouds, and His secret place is the darkness. And this is where He will hide us – in the darkness with Him.

Have you found Him yet? It is in the dark experiences of our lives, that God comes to visit us in mercy. He hides us in those horrible experiences, and those horrible experiences themselves are God's hiding place as He comes to impart rich blessings.

Let's read Psalm 31:19, 20 to more fully appreciate this: *Oh how great is thy goodness, which thou hast laid up for them that fear thee; which thou hast wrought for them that trust in thee before the sons of men! Thou shalt hide them in the secret of thy presence from the pride of man: thou shalt keep them secretly in a pavilion from the strife of tongues.*

God hides us in the darkness from the pride of man and the strife of tongues. Whose pride do we have to fear the most? Isn't it MY pride? My love of self?

When we find ourselves in situations that are overwhelming, where you cannot see the way out, can self flourish? Is there anything there that can feed the pride? No. You come to the realization that I just cannot. "I can't". And when you come to a point where you are constrained to acknowledge that you are in such a mess that you just cannot get yourself out of it, self is wounded, and we look to God for strength. And so those dark chapters of our lives are the precious experiences whereby God is teaching us to rely on Him. He is hiding us from ourselves because He knows that with our own strength we will never make it to be with Him in heaven.

The time of trouble is the crucible that is to bring out Christlike characters. It is designed to lead the people of God to renounce Satan and his temptations. The last conflict will reveal Satan to them in his true character, that of a cruel tyrant, and it will do for them what nothing else could do, uproot him entirely from their affections. For to love and cherish sin, is to love and cherish its author, that deadly foe of Christ. When they excuse sin and cling to perversity of character, they give Satan a place in their affections, and pay him homage. (OHC 321.3)

We say that we love Jesus and hate Satan, but while we are still committing sin, we are testifying to the fact that Satan still has a place in our hearts. I don't want Satan to have a place in my heart. He caused my Saviour so much suffering. And still causes, when I sin. And so God, in answer to the desires of my heart, will bring me to an experience that is called Jacob's trouble, so that Satan can be uprooted from my affections. Praise Him!

Yes, we must have a perfect character by the time that probation closes, but still my earthliness needs to be removed, and so Jacob's experience will do for us what nothing else can do. It is the answer to our prayers. **Amen**
Camron Schofield, Australia

For Whom
The Lord Loveth
He Chasteneth



TAXI

From 11 to 15 July 2007, the people of God gathered together in a Vacation Center two hours from Mexico City to praise their Creator, study His word and receive His special blessing. Surely each church member prepared himself for this event with great joy and enthusiasm and as the day came nearer the expectation grew. After having analyzed the circumstances and decided that I would also be able to partake in this spiritual feast, I experienced great joy at the thought of the people I was going to meet, some of them very dear to my heart. I had also invited my nephew whom I longed to meet after a long time and for whom I eagerly pray. Therefore, when the moment came, I prepared my suitcase with great care and expectation and sure that my documents and ticket were in order, I left for the airport.

Right from the beginning, difficulties started. There was a strike and the trains were running with delay, so at a certain point I had to catch a taxi so as to arrive at the airport on time. As I came to the Delta counter, they were about to close the flight but since there were fifteen minutes left they were ready to check me in. Since the flight was going to New York, where I was supposed to have a stopover of three hours before taking my flight to Mexico City, the hostess asked me to show her my visa for U.S.A. I had never thought that I needed a visa as a transit passenger. The citizens of the country whose passport I hold need a visa and without it I cannot fly. Suddenly I remembered I had a visa for U.S.A. valid for 10 years in my old passport, which unfortunately, I had not with me. The hostess told me that if that was the case, I could fly two days later and I gladly agreed. But soon an insolvable problem came up. My passport was not valid. How come? My passport is valid till the end of the year.

"I am sorry, madam," the hostess told me, "but your country has annulled all passports since the beginning of the year and the new passports have an electronic control. Therefore, even if you bring your visa you may not fly." I took everything very calmly and did not make any effort to try that they make an exception with me. I went back home convinced that it was not God's will for me to take that trip. I thanked the Lord for having used such a mild way of showing His disapproval, although I must confess that each refusal gave me the sensation that a door was violently being closed on my face.

I do not take this experience lightly, although I have not yet found the answer to the divine prohibition. I make no comment about the technical problems because I know that when something is according to God's will, He prepares the ground in advance. There is surely a lesson I have to learn from all this and I wish with all my heart to learn it. After fasting, meditating and praying much I have not yet understood the reason for God's disapproval to my trip, but I see a parallel to our preparation for Jesus' second coming, the greatest General Conference that will take place in heaven, and I tremble.

As children of God, as Adventists who have the privilege to know



study of God's word and communion with our Creator.

"Purified by obedience to the law of God, **sanctified by a perfect observance of His holy Sabbath**, trusting, believing, patiently waiting, and earnestly working out our own salvation with fear and trembling, we shall learn that it is God that worketh in us to will and to do of His good pleasure." Manuscript 6, 1900; Ev, p. 289.

"How perfect is my observance of the Sabbath?" was the first question I asked myself and I realized that due to different circumstances, it is not that perfect, which means that I myself am hindering my process of sanctification without which there is no admission to heaven.

As Christians, we all have a valid pass: our names are written in the church book next to the date on which we were baptized, which does not necessarily mean that we are newly born. The moment of our space trip may come and only then may we realize that our passport that we considered as valid is not acknowledged or accepted by the Authorities and we may not board the heavenly chariot. Like the foolish virgins, for not being spiritually prepared for the marriage of the Lamb, we find ourselves before a closed door and even if we knock and say, "Lord, Lord, open to us!" we may hear a voice saying to us, "Verily I say unto you, I know you not." Matthew 25:11, 12. What a drama!

I thank the Lord for this hard experience and warning that I want to share with all those who love the coming of the Lord so that we may not be negligent in our preparation. Maranatha! **Amen**

Teresa Corti

the truth and act according to a "Thus says the Lord," we all have a visa--the Sabbath day, God's official rest day. It may happen, though, that our visa that is so important so that we may have access to God's kingdom may be in "an old passport", forgotten in a drawer in our wardrobe. That memorial day of creation that we accepted with great joy as a wonderful gift from God may have turned into a routine, or even worse. We often transgress it by speaking our own words, making our own plans, following our own ways instead of making out of it a delight, a holy and glorious day of prayer, deep

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Excuses

When Adam and Eve sinned, although they acknowledged the fact, they made excuses. How could they deny the fact that they ate of the fruit? They could not. They knew that God knew. They were caught, but rather than admit that, yes, they made a mistake, they made excuses to justify their behaviour. "Whatever else the sin of Adam did, it did not give human beings an excuse for transgressing God's law." 8MR 450. Although I have heard, over the years, many people blaming Adam for the condition of the world, for the sin in their own lives. If Adam would have been faithful, they would not be in the sinful condition they are in, and would not have to struggle so hard to overcome.

SIN – what is it? The common definition that we are all familiar with is, "Whosoever committeth sin transgresseth also the law: for sin is the transgression of the law." 1 John 3:4. The transgression of God's law in a single instance, in the smallest particular, is sin." MS 145, 1897.

"It is impossible to explain the origin of sin so as to give a reason for its existence. Yet enough may be understood concerning both the origin and the final disposition of sin, to make fully manifest the justice and benevolence of God in all His dealings with evil. Nothing is more plainly taught in Scripture than that God was in no wise responsible for the entrance of sin... Sin is an intruder, for whose presence no reason can be given. It is mysterious, unaccountable; to excuse it, is to defend it. Could excuse for it be found, or cause be shown for its existence, it would cease to be sin. Our only definition of sin is that given in the word of God; it is 'the transgression of the law;' (1 John 3:4) it is the outworking of a principle at war with the great law of love which is the foundation of the divine government." TMK 15

NO EXCUSE

Temptation is not sin. Every man is tempted. Jesus was tempted, however, He did not sin. When temptation is dwelt upon and allowed to linger in the mind, it turns into lust, which leads to sin. "But every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed. Then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin: and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death." James 1:14,15. When faced with temptation, the safest course is to give it over to the Lord immediately – crucify the desires of the flesh.

"Every man is tempted when he is drawn away of his own lusts and enticed. He is turned away from the course of virtue and real good by following his own inclinations. If the youth possessed moral integrity, the strongest temptations might be presented in vain. It is Satan's act to tempt you, but your own act to yield. It is not in the power of all the host of Satan to force the tempted to transgress. *There is no excuse for sin.*" 4T 623

MOSES:

Surely, Moses had good reason to be upset at the waters of Meribah because the nation of Israel had so provoked him. Did he not have

a good excuse for his sin? However, this was a sin that kept him out of the Promised Land. This was one small instance in a life that was very righteous for the most part. Had not the nation of Israel committed greater sin with their constant murmuring? Could Moses excuse himself by comparing himself with others? Some people do. They state, "Well I am not as bad as this person, see what they have done." Thus taking the focus off themselves and placing it on the other person. In this way they seek to minimize their guilt and excuse their behaviour.

"God had forgiven the people greater transgressions, but He could not deal with sin in the leaders as in those who were led. He had honored Moses above every other man upon the earth... The fact that Moses had enjoyed so great light and knowledge made his sin more grievous. Past faithfulness will not atone for one wrong act. The greater the light and privileges granted to man, the greater is his responsibility, the more aggravated his failure, and the heavier his punishment.

"All who profess godliness are under the most sacred obligation to guard the spirit, and to exercise self-control under the greatest provocation. The burdens placed upon Moses were very great; few men will ever be so severely tried as he was; yet this was not allowed to excuse his sin. God has made ample provision for His people; and if they rely upon His strength, they will never become the sport of circumstances. 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 any one 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. MYP 62

Many people make excuses for their sin by stating they were provoked, for example parents getting angry by disobedient children. They blame others for their sin as did Adam and Eve. They refuse to take responsibility for their sins. When their sins are pointed out, they not only excuse them, but they state they can repent only if the other person also will repent.

EXCUSES

"For we know that the law is spiritual: but I am carnal, sold under sin. For that which I do I allow not: for what I would, that do I not; but what I hate, that do I. If then I do that which I would not, I consent unto the law that [it is] good. Now then it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me. For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh,) dwelleth no good thing: for to will is present with me; but [how] to perform that which is good I find not. For the good that I would I do not: but the evil which I would not, that I do. Now if I do that I would not, it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me." Romans 7:14-20

These verses are very familiar and have been used in many sermons and articles. Some use these verses to excuse sin - the weakness

of sinful flesh. However, this is the unconverted man speaking. He cannot gain the victory because he is attempting to do so in his own strength. In the strength of Christ we can overcome every sin. We will no longer be making excuses.

The promise to us is, that "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." I John 3:9 Is this condition possible? It is for the person who truly believes in Jesus and has made Jesus the centre of their existence. We can't use the excuse of sinful flesh to justify our sin, since Jesus overcame in our flesh.

Yet there is a part we have to play. "Resist the Devil and he will flee from you." James 4:7. You may not be able to expel the evil spirits any more than could the demoniacs in Gergesa, but Jesus can. They came to Jesus and Jesus cast out the demons. But the willingness and desire were there. Do you love the current occupants? Or do you want them removed? Then resist the devil. Do you doubt that God can change your heart? That God can keep you from sinning? Is the fact that we are weak sinful mortals excuse enough to not live a perfect life in Christ? The great and mighty God, who created the Universe – can He not change the human heart? He can only if we allow Him to. Although He owns the universe, the heart of man is the one thing that he has willingly given up ownership of. He has given the decision over to man as to who will be the ruler of his heart. Man has been given the power of choice. No excuse can be offered for the weakness of man as man has chosen the weaker, defeated enemy (Satan) to control his heart, rather than the victor (Jesus) who came to redeem the heart of man.

GRIEVOUS NATURE OF SIN

"Because sentence against an evil work is not executed speedily, therefore the heart of the sons of men is fully set in them to do evil." Ecclesiastes 8:11 Men have become bold in their defiance of God. When will God come and put an end to it? That is dependent on the heart of man. When will God's elect be ready? When will they have pure hearts? When will God find 144,000 who are willing to stop making excuses and who will overcome by the blood of the Lamb?

"Satan summons all his forces and throws his whole power into the combat. Why is it that he meets with no greater resistance? Why are the soldiers of Christ so sleepy and indifferent? Because they have so little real connection with Christ; because they are so destitute of His Spirit. Sin is not to them repulsive and abhorrent, as it was to their Master. They do not meet it, as did Christ, with decisive and determined resistance. They do not realize the exceeding evil and malignity of sin, and they are blinded both to the character and the power of the prince of darkness. There is little enmity against Satan and his works, because there is so great ignorance concerning his power and malice, and the vast extent of his warfare against Christ and His church. Multitudes are deluded here. They do not know

that their enemy is a mighty general who controls the minds of evil angels, and that with well-matured plans and skilful movements he is warring against Christ to prevent the salvation of souls. Among professed Christians, and even among ministers of the gospel, there is heard scarcely a reference to Satan, except perhaps an incidental mention in the pulpit. They overlook the evidences of his continual activity and success; they neglect the many warnings of his subtlety; they seem to ignore his very existence." GC 507

"Satan is continually at work to lessen man's estimate of the grievous character of sin. And those who trample the law of God under their feet are doing the work of the great deceiver; for they are rejecting the only rule by which they can define sin, and bring it home to the conscience of the transgressor." 1SM 219. Sin does not appear as sinful as it has in the past. Look at society today. If this condition existed 100 years ago, people would have been appalled. There has been a steady decline. Men are becoming bold in their defiance. They don't care if they are caught in sin. They no longer make excuses – they simply laugh and mock in the face of God and glorify their evil deeds.

Can this spirit enter God's church? Are there excuses being made for sin? Are there small indulgences that don't appear to be overly grievous? How grievous is one small sin? "One sinful desire, persistently cherished, will eventually neutralize all the power of the gospel." SC 34

Do you see that small crumb you put in your mouth that is only meant to satisfy your taste buds but has no real value to your human frame in the severity of sin that it really is? This crumb can keep you out of heaven. Do you see that small wasting of time? That short TV program – that is a complete waste of time and has not brought you closer to your heavenly Father, but rather served to waste precious moments in frivolous activity, moments that can never be recalled? And what about the great amount of time spent on the Internet? What is the excuse? Nature shows, wholesome TV, interesting web sites? Is this considered the wisest use of our time? And where is God's word? Still sitting on the shelf. What about starting Sabbath 5 minutes late because you could not adequately prepare? These are small sins are they not? Are we not picking at straws?

We are not picking at straws. These types of sins are serious enough to keep you out of heaven. Christ and only Christ can help you overcome these 'small' sins and help you to see how grievous they really are. Connect to Christ and you WILL overcome. Jesus does not sin and if Jesus is living in you, you will not either. It is only as a person lets go of Jesus hand that they sin. He is "drawn away of his own lusts."

SINS OF OMISSION

Will you be saved if you happily live for yourself? You live a good life – you do no harm to anyone. You don't steal, you don't kill, you don't tell lies or cheat. What excuse will you give to God for your

lack of sympathy, your lack of missionary work, your lack of church attendance? Your lack of a faithful tithe and offering? There will be no excuses offered in the end. Sins of omission are very grievous in the sight of God.

"John Welch, a minister of the gospel, felt so great a burden for souls that he often rose in the night to send up to God his supplication for their salvation. On one occasion his wife pleaded with him to regard his health, and not venture on such exposure. His answer was, 'O woman, I have the souls of three thousand to answer for, and I know not how it is with them.'

"In a town in New England a well was being dug. When the work was nearly finished, while one man was still at the bottom, the earth caved in and buried him. Instantly the alarm was sent out, and mechanics, farmers, merchants, lawyers, hurried breathlessly to the rescue. Ropes, ladders, spades, and shovels were brought by eager, willing hands. 'Save him, O save him!' was the cry.

"Men worked with desperate energy, till the sweat stood in beads upon their brows and their arms trembled with the exertion. At length a pipe was thrust down, through which they shouted to the man to answer if he were still alive. The response came, 'Alive, but make haste. It is fearful in here.' With a shout of joy they renewed their efforts, and at last he was reached and saved, and the cheer that went up seemed to pierce the very heavens. 'He is saved!' echoed through every street in the town.

"Was this too great zeal and interest, too great enthusiasm, to save one man? It surely was not; but what is the loss of temporal life in comparison with the loss of a soul? If the threatened loss of a life will arouse in human hearts a feeling so intense, should not the loss of a soul arouse even deeper solicitude in men who claim to realize the danger of those apart from Christ? Shall not the servants of God show as great zeal in labouring for the salvation of souls as was shown for the life of that one man buried in a well?" {GW 32.2}

Did these men make excuses that they were tired at the end of a long working day so they could not go rescue the man? Yet we make these kinds of excuses all the time for not going and help perishing men who are spiritually dying.

Could lack of attendance at our religious meetings be considered a sin of omission? Jesus told a parable about a king who made a wedding for his son (Matthew 22) and he sent his servants to call those who were bidden to the feast. The invited guests made all kinds of excuses starting from the man who just married a wife, to the man who had just purchased some oxen or the other man who had just purchased a field. Their material interests were of more importance than attending the great feast prepared by the king. Our King also invites us to a spiritual feast every week during prayer meeting time and on Sabbath, however often people have too many material concerns to attend this feast. They miss out on a

great blessing... is this considered a sin of omission?

It is time to stop making excuses and turn to the Lord. Turn and repent and give your heart to the Lord. "Return, thou backsliding Israel, saith the LORD; and I will not cause mine anger to fall upon you: for I am merciful, saith the LORD, and I will not keep anger forever. Only acknowledge thine iniquity, that thou hast transgressed against the LORD thy God, and hast scattered thy ways to the strangers under every green tree, and ye have not obeyed my voice, saith the LORD. Turn, O backsliding children, saith the LORD; for I am married unto you: and I will take you one of a city, and two of a family, and I will bring you to Zion: And I will give you pastors according to mine heart, which shall feed you with knowledge and understanding." Jeremiah 3:12-16. And where do we meet with our pastors? Often at church. The door of mercy is still open for those who desire to come in.

EARNEST EFFORT

However, the way to salvation is not an easy road. Satan has had such a hold of sinners, that it takes great efforts to extricate a person from the grip of Satan and sinful habits. He will not let one soul go without a great struggle and will oppose them every step of the way to heaven. The Christian life is not for the feeble, for the weak. Although the world may look at Christians in this manner, it is only because Christians are peaceful, calm and kind people. However, it takes great courage, strength and energy to stand for Christ – to be different than the world – to swim upstream. It is only for those who have the courage and fortitude to take up the battle. Those only will be able to make it who have connected with Christ, making no excuses for lack of effort because in Christ there will be no lack. The battle cannot be lost with Christ on our side.

"Wrongs cannot be righted, nor can reformations in conduct be made by a few feeble, intermittent efforts. Character building is the work, not of a day, nor of a year, but of a lifetime. The struggle for conquest over self, for holiness and heaven, is a lifelong struggle. Without continual effort and constant activity, there can be no advancement in the divine life, no attainment of the victor's crown. "The strongest evidence of man's fall from a higher state is the fact that it costs so much to return. The way of return can be gained only by hard fighting, inch by inch, hour by hour. In one moment, by a hasty, unguarded act, we may place ourselves in the power of evil; but it requires more than a moment to break the fetters and attain to a holier life. The purpose may be formed, the work begun; but its accomplishment will require toil, time, perseverance, patience, and sacrifice.

"We cannot allow ourselves to act from impulse. We cannot be off guard for a moment. Beset with temptations without number, we must resist firmly or be conquered. Should we come to the close of life with our work undone, it would be an eternal loss.

"The life of the apostle Paul was a constant conflict with self. He

said, 'I die daily.' 1 Corinthians 15:31. His will and his desires every day conflicted with duty and the will of God. Instead of following inclination, he did God's will, however crucifying to his nature.

"At the close of his life of conflict, looking back over its struggles and triumphs, he could say, 'I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith: henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, shall give me at that day.' 2 Timothy 4:7, 8

"The Christian life is a battle and a march. In this warfare there is no release; the effort must be continuous and persevering. It is by unceasing endeavour that we maintain the victory over the temptations of Satan. Christian integrity must be sought with resistless energy and maintained with a resolute fixedness of purpose.

"No one will be borne upward without stern, persevering effort in his own behalf. All must engage in this warfare for themselves; no one else can fight our battles. *Individually we are responsible for the issues of the struggle*; though Noah, Job, and Daniel were in the land they could deliver neither son nor daughter by their righteousness." {MH 453.3}

"*THE ONLY ONES SAVED WILL BE THOSE WHO WOULD RATHER DIE THAN COMMIT ONE WRONG ACT.*" Even a small sin. Have you reached this point? Do you loathe sin? Or do you secretly desire it, while openly professing faithfulness? The battle will be fierce. It is a battle to let go of our sinful desires, but we still cannot make excuses because our Helper has overcome and gained the victory.

"God's ideal for his children is higher than the highest human thought can reach. 'Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect.' This command is a promise. The plan of redemption contemplates our complete recovery from the power of Satan. Christ always separates the contrite soul from sin. He came to destroy the works of the devil. And He has made provision that the Holy Spirit shall be imparted to every repentant soul to keep him from sinning.

"The tempter's agency is not to be accounted an excuse for one wrong act. Satan is jubilant when he hears the professed followers of Christ making excuses for their deformity of character. It is these excuses that lead to sin. A holy temper, a Christlike life, is attainable by every repenting, believing child of God." RH, October 31, 1907
May God help us to make earnest efforts to achieve the goal Christ has set before us, not making any excuses for our inefficiencies, but repenting and making ready to meet our Lord. **AMEN**

Wendy Eaton, Canada



"The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit: a broken and a contrite heart, O God, Thou wilt not despise." Psalm 51:17.

What is a contrite heart? Why did David have a broken and contrite heart?

A contrite heart is a broken heart. It is a heart that realizes the greatness of its sin. David's heart was broken when the prophet came to him and showed him by a parable how great of a sinner he was. Up until that revelation, he felt secure.

"There is need of contrition of soul every day, and the Lord declares the great advantage of every one who will humble his heart and hide in Jesus." "The Lord is near to them that are of a broken heart; and saves such as be of a contrite spirit."

Sin is a terrible thing, yet God is such a Being that He is able to bring good out of it. Therefore, when we have committed a great offense, and are brought to see it, actually our defeat can be turned into a glorious victory. And we will be closer to God than if we had stayed in our lukewarm, self-righteous, good-appearing state.

So, should we all go out and commit great crimes so that we can then repent and be closer to God than if we had not? Is committing a heinous crime a condition of then repenting and having a broken heart?

Jesus had a broken heart, and He never sinned in His whole life. He was broken-hearted at the separation between Himself and the beings He had created. He was broken-hearted at the separation that sin created, between Himself and His Father

If I never, ever went out of my own little space on this sin-cursed earth, and never even sinned on my own account, I would still have a broken heart at the evil I see. Example: Cats killing the lovely birds. I could cite many more examples of suffering, but they are

too sad to relate. We are all out-of-joint with God's perfect plan. Out-of-jointness is a very painful condition.

A broken heart is a repentant heart. Paul tells us that, "the goodness of God leads us to repentance." Romans 2:4.

That is certainly true in my own case. Years ago, when I was very much in the world, it was God's love for me that won me. Punishment would have made me a hardened criminal, but His loving forgiveness melted my heart. I wanted nothing to stand between me and Him. I had no desire to go back into the pit from which I had been dug.

Paul was broken-hearted over the refusal of his country-men to accept Christ as their Saviour. (Romans 9:1-3). He had a great heaviness and continual sorrow in his heart over this. He saw their great possibilities as God's specially-chosen people, and he saw them throwing away their birth-right. Because of this he could wish that he himself were accursed (separated) from Christ for the brethren, his kinsmen in the flesh.

So we can be sorrowful over a world lying in wickedness. But our sorrow will be turned into joy, because God knows who are His. He sees what we do not. Here and there, hidden from mortal view, are His jewels, and He will cause them to shine in His appointed time.

"The sincere, contrite soul is precious in the sight of God. He places His own signet upon men, not by their rank, not by their wealth, not by their intellectual greatness, but by their oneness with Christ. The Lord of glory is satisfied with those who are meek and lowly in heart."

"Thou hast given me," said David, "the shield of Thy salvation:... and Thy gentleness"—as an element in human character—"hath made me great." Psalm 18: 35. **AMEN.**

Kathleen Ross, Alberta, Canada



Call To Sanctification

"And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ." 1 Thess. 5:23.

The experience of sanctification is necessary. In his epistle to the Hebrews, Paul declares, "Follow after peace with all men, and the sanctification without which no man shall see the Lord." Hebrews 12:14 RV.

"Paul's sanctification was the result of a constant conflict with self. He said, 'I die daily.' 1 Cor. 15: 31. his will and his desires every day conflicted with duty and the will of God. Instead of following inclination, he did God's will, however crucifying to his own nature." 8T 313:3

"Sanctification is not the work of a moment, an hour, a day, but of a lifetime." AA 560.

"For this is the will of God, even your sanctification." 1 Thess. 4:3.

"No man receives holiness as a birthright, or as a gift from any other human being. Holiness is the gift of God through Christ. Those who receive the Saviour become sons of God. They are his spiritual children, born again, renewed in righteousness and true holiness. Their minds are changed. With clearer vision they behold eternal realities. They are adopted into God's family, and they become conformed to His likeness, changed by His Spirit from glory to glory. From cherishing supreme love for self, they come to cherish supreme love for God and for Christ.

"Accepting Christ as a personal Saviour, and following His example of self-denial—this is the secret of holiness." ST Dec. 17, 1902.

Marks of True Sanctification

"True sanctification is a Bible doctrine. The apostle Paul, in his letter to the Thessalonian church, declares: "This, the very God of peace sanctify you wholly." 1 Thess. 4:3; 5:23. The Bible clearly teaches what sanctification is and how it is to be attained. The Saviour prayed for His disciples; "Sanctify them through Thy truth: Thy word is truth." John 17:17. And Paul teaches that believers are to be "sanctified by the Holy Ghost." Romans 15:16. What is the work of the Holy Spirit? Jesus told His disciples: "When He, the Spirit of truth, is come, He will guide you into all truth." John 16:13. and the psalmist says, "'Thy law is the truth.'" By the word and the Spirit of God are opened to men the great principles of righteousness embodied in His law. And since the law of God is "holy, and just, and good," a transcript of the divine perfection, it follows that a character formed by obedience to that law will be holy. Christ is a perfect example of such a character. He says, "I have kept My Father's commandments." "I do always those things that please Him." John 15:10; 8:29. The followers of Christ are to become like Him—by the grace of God to form characters in harmony with the principles of His holy law. This is Bible sanctification.



“in humility they submitted to the molding influence of the Holy Spirit”

This work can be accomplished only through faith in Christ, by the power of the indwelling Spirit of God. Paul admonishes believers: “Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling, for it is God which worketh in both to will and to do of His good pleasure.” Philippians 2:12, 13. The Christian will feel the promptings of sin, but he will maintain an constant warfare against it. Here is where Christ’s help is needed. Human weakness becomes united to divine strength, and faith exclaims, “Thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.” 1 Cor. 15:57. GC 469: 2, 3.

Humility Accompanies True Sanctification

“Those who experience the sanctification of the Bible will manifest a spirit of humility. Like Moses they have had a view of the awful majesty of holiness, and they see their own unworthiness in contrast with the purity and exalted perfection of the infinite One.” GC 470:2.

“There can be no self-exaltation, no boastful claim to freedom from sin on the part of those who walk in the shadow of Calvary’s cross. They feel that it was their sin which caused the agony that broke the heart of the Son of God, and this thought will lead them to self-abasement. Those who live nearest to Jesus discern most clearly the frailty and sinfulness of humanity, and their only hope is in the merit of a crucified and risen Saviour.” GC 471:2.

Sanctification Expands the Mind

“The simplicity of true godliness must be brought into the education of our young people, if they are to know how to escape the corruption that is in the world. They must be taught that the true followers of Christ will serve God not only when it is in accordance with their inclinations, but also when it involves self-denial and cross bearing. Besetting sins must be battled with and overcome. Objectionable traits of character, whether hereditary or cultivated, must be compared with the great rule of righteousness, and then conquered in the strength of Christ. Day by day, hour by hour, a vigorous work of self-denial and of sanctification must go on within; then the works will bear witness that Jesus is abiding in the heart by faith. Sanctification does not close the avenues of the soul to knowledge, but expands the mind and inspires it to search for truth as for hidden treasure.” CT 449:1.

No Compromise with Evil

“We are authorized to hold in the same estimation as did the beloved disciples those who claim to abide in Christ while living in transgression of God’s law. There exist in these last days evils similar to those that threatened the prosperity of the early church; and the teachings of the apostle John on these points should be carefully heeded. ‘You must have charity,’ is the cry heard everywhere, especially from those who profess sanctification. But true charity is too pure to cover an unconfessed sin. While we are to love the souls for whom Christ died, we are to make no compromise with evil. 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 554:3.

Sanctification Refines and Ennobles

"Those who at Pentecost were endued with power from on high were not thereby freed from further temptation and trial. As they witnessed for truth and righteousness they were repeatedly assailed by the enemy of all truth, who sought to rob them of their Christian experience. They were compelled to strive with all their God-given powers to reach the measure of the stature of men and women in Christ Jesus. Daily they prayed for fresh supplies of grace, that they might reach higher and still higher toward perfection. Under the Holy Spirit's working even the weakest, by exercising faith in God, learned to improve their entrusted powers and to become sanctified, refined, and ennobled. As in humility they submitted to the molding influence of the Holy Spirit, they received of the fullness of the Godhead and were fashioned in the likeness of the divine." AA 49:2.

False Theories of Sanctification

"Let none deceive themselves with the belief that they can become holy while willfully violating one of God's requirements. The commission of a known sin silences the witnessing voice of the Spirit and separates the soul from God. "Sin is the transgression of the law." And "whoever sinneth (transgresseth the law) hath not seen Him, neither known Him." 1 John 3:6. Though John in his epistles dwells so fully upon love, yet he does not hesitate to reveal the true character of that class who claim to be sanctified while living in transgression of the law of God. "He that saith, I know Him, and keepeth not His commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him. But whoso keepeth His word, in him verily is the love of God perfected." 1 John 2: 4, 5. Here is the test of every man's profession. We cannot accord holiness to any man without bringing him to the measurement of God's only standard of holiness in heaven and in earth. If men feel no weight of the moral law, if they belittle and make light of God's precepts, break one of the least of the commandments, and teach men so, they shall be of no esteem in the sight of Heaven, and we may know that their claims are without foundation." GC 472:3.

"And the claim to be without sin is in itself, evidence that he who makes this claim is far from holy. It is because he has no true conception of the infinite purity and holiness of God or of what they must become who shall be in harmony with His character; because he has no true conception of the purity and exalted loveliness of Jesus, and the malignity and evil of sin, that man cannot regard himself as holy. The greater the distance between himself and Christ, and the more inadequate his conceptions of the divine character and requirements, the more righteous he appears in his own eyes." GC 473:1.

"The world is given up to self-indulgence. 'The lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life' control the masses of the people. But Christ's followers have a holier calling. 'Come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean.' in the light of God's word we are justified in declaring the sanctification cannot be genuine which does not work this utter renunciation of the sinful pursuits and gratifications of the world." GC 475:2.

Shut Out or Shut In

"For this ye know, that no whoremonger, nor unclean person, nor covetous man, who is an idolater, hath any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God." Eph. 5:5.

"Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived; neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind, nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God." 1 Cor. 6: 9, 10.

"Mortify therefore you members which are upon the earth; fornication, uncleanness, inordinate affection, evil concupiscence, and covetousness, which is idolatry; for which things sake the wrath of God cometh on the children of disobedience." Col. 3: 5, 6.

"If a man therefore purge himself from these, he shall be a vessel unto honour, sanctified, and meet for the Master's use, and prepared unto every good work." 2 Tim. 2:21. Peter says, 'Abstain from fleshly lusts, which war against the soul.' 1 Pet. 2:11. Every sinful gratification tends to numb the faculties and deaden the mental and spiritual perceptions, and the word or the Spirit of God can make but a feeble impression upon the heart. Paul writes to the Corinthians, 'Let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God.' 2 Cor. 7:1. And with the fruits of the Spirit—'Love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness--He classes 'temperance'. Gal. 5: 22, 23.

Use of a Christian's Money

"Know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own? For ye are bought with a price; therefore, glorify God in your body and your spirit which are God's." 1 Cor. 6:19, 20. He whose body is the temple of the Holy Spirit will not be enslaved by a pernicious habit, his powers belong to Christ, who has bought him with the price of blood. His property is the Lord's. How could he be guiltless in squandering this entrusted capital? Professed Christians yearly expend an immense sum upon useless and pernicious indulgences, while souls are perishing for the word of life. God is robbed in tithes and offerings, while they consume upon the altar of destroying lust more than they give to relieve the poor or for the support of the gospel. If all who profess to be followers of Christ were truly


sanctified, their means, instead of being spent for needless and even hurtful indulgences, would be turned into the Lord's treasury, and Christians would set an example of temperance, self-denial, and self-sacrifice. Then they would be the light of the world." GC 475:1.

The Sign of Sanctification

"From the pillar of cloud Christ declared concerning the Sabbath; '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.' Ex. 31:13. The Sabbath given to the world as the sign of 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 in harmony with God, oneness with Him in character. It is received through obedience to those principles that are to be the transcript of His character. And the Sabbath is the sign of obedience. He who from the heart obeys the fourth commandment will obey the whole law. He is sanctified through obedience." 6T 350:1.

"It is the work of conversion and sanctification to reconcile men to God by bringing them into accord with the principles of His law. In the beginning, man was created in the image of God. He was in perfect harmony with the nature and the law of God; the principles of righteousness were written upon his heart. But sin alienated him from his Maker. He no longer reflected the divine image. His heart was at war with the principles of God's law. 'The carnal mind is enmity against God; for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be.' Romans 8:7. But 'God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son,' that man might be reconciled to God. Through the merits of Christ he can be restored to harmony with his Maker. His heart must be renewed by divine grace; he must have a new life from above. This change is the new birth, without which, says Jesus, 'he cannot see the kingdom of God.'" GC 467:2.

Brethren, we believe without a doubt that Christ is soon coming. This is not a fable to us; it is a reality. We have no doubt, neither have we had a doubt for years, that the doctrines we hold today are present truth, and that we are nearing the judgment. We are preparing to meet Him who, escorted by a retinue of holy angels, is to appear in the clouds of heaven to give the faithful and the just the finishing touch of immortality. When He comes He is not to cleanse us of our sins, to remove from us the defects in our characters, or to cure us of the infirmities of our tempers and dispositions. If wrought for us at all, this work will all be accomplished before that time. When the Lord comes, those who are holy will be holy still. Those who have preserved their bodies and spirits in holiness, in sanctification, and honour, will then receive the finishing touch of immortality. But those who are unjust, unsanctified, and filthy will remain so forever. No work will then be done for them to remove their sins and their corruption. This is all to be done in these hours of probation. It is now that this work is to be accomplished in us. **AMEN. Golden Kayawa Hingabantu, Zambia**



God Spoke Through The Testimonies

"In ancient time God spoke to men by the mouth of prophets and apostles. In these days He speaks to them by the testimonies of His Spirit. There was never a time when God instructed His people more earnestly than He instructs them now concerning His will and the course that He would have them pursue." 5T 661

"Many are going directly contrary to the light which God has given to His people, because they do not read the books which contain the light and knowledge in cautions, reproofs, and warnings. The volumes of Spirit of Prophecy, and also the Testimonies, should be introduced into every Sabbathkeeping family, and the brethren should know their value and be urged to read them. They should be in the library of every family and be read again and again. Let them be kept where they can be read by many.

"Let ministers and people remember that Gospel truth hardens when it does not save. The rejection of light leaves men captives, bound about by chains of darkness and unbelief. The soul that refuses to listen to the invitations of mercy from day to day can soon listen to the most urgent appeals without an emotion stirring his soul. As labourers with God we need more fervent piety and less self-exaltation. The more self is exalted, the more will faith in the Testimonies of the Spirit of God be lessened. Those who trust wholly in themselves will see less and less of God in the Testimonies of His Spirit." 5T 681

"Doubt, and even disbelief of the testimonies of the Spirit of God, is leavening our churches everywhere. The testimonies are unread

and unappreciated. God has spoken to you... Light has been shining from His word and from the testimonies, and both have been slighted and disregarded." 5T 217

"I have been shown that unbelief in the testimonies has been steadily increasing as the people backslide from God. It is all through our ranks, all over the field. But few know what our churches are to experience. I saw that at present we are under divine forbearance, but no one can say how long this will continue. No one knows how great the mercy that has been exercised toward us. But few are heartily devoted to God. There are only a few who, like the stars in the tempestuous night shine here and there among the clouds...

"Many of our people are lukewarm, they occupy the position of Meroz, neither for nor against, neither cold nor hot. They hear the words of Christ, but do them not. If they remain in this state, He will reject them with abhorrence. Many of those who have had great light, great opportunities, and every spiritual advantage praise Christ and the world with the same breath." 5T 76, 77

"Our only safety is to stand as God's peculiar people. We must not yield one inch to the customs and fashions of this degenerate age, but stand in moral independence, making no compromise with its corrupt and idolatrous practices." 5T 78. **AMEN.**

Submitted by: Edeline Cosby, Romulus, Michigan, USA



Nails!

Think of the agony Jesus must have suffered as the soldiers drove those savage nails into His tender hands and feet! We cringe when we think of it. But do you realize that you and I can still drive those nails today?

The nails – those cruel nails
That stabbed his tender palms and feet,
That tore those gaping bloody wounds –
Do I that awful scene repeat?
Do I drive deep those nails again
Through sins I'm guilty of?
Do I repeat the cross today
And kill again the Christ I love?
My sins are nails – they are for sure;
They spike Him to the tree,
And I am guilty, yes, I am,
For Jesus' agony!
The nails – those cruel nails,
Those brutal, savage nails of pain –
I cannot bear the thought today:
I drive those cruel nails again.

--Author Unknown

Won't you resolve that you will never cause our Saviour this pain?

Submitted by Christina McTavish

Ellen Brought Him Back



CHILDREN'S CORNER

"Ellen, I've never been so tired in all my life," James White said with a sigh as he drew on his overcoat and picked up his travelling bag.

"No wonder, my dear, after that late meeting last night." His wife cast a last look around the room to see that nothing was being left. It was three o'clock in the morning. They had had less than four hours' rest, and it was now time for them to take the train.

"It's been a hard trip, James—that seven-hour ride over rough, bumpy roads, the late meetings, then the visiting till after midnight in the homes where we were entertained. The days have been too long and the nights too short. But we must hurry if we catch that three-thirty train. The train for home, James! The train for home!"

"Yes, for home, and some rest, and your good wholesome cooking, after the terrible fare we had had on this journey!" They picked up their bundles, closed the door, and hurried down the dimly lighted street to the station.

But their train missed connections, and they had to wait until late in the afternoon for the next one. It was long past midnight when they finally reached Battle Creek.

In the morning, Ellen begged, "James, don't go to the office today. You should rest at least one day before taking up your work there."

"I must go," he replied firmly, "but I'll rest tomorrow." He was off, not to return till late that evening.

On Wednesday morning he told Willie, "You need not go for the milk today; mother and I will take a walk and stop for it at Brother Lunt's on our way back."

While his wife was in the house getting the milk, James went into the garden. Noticing a good ear of corn, he picked it and began stripping off the husks. Suddenly his right arm fell helpless to his side. Ellen, coming out of the house with the little tin pail of milk, saw him stagger. Rushing to his side, she helped him into the house and onto the couch.

With considerable effort, he managed to say, "Pray! Pray!"

They prayed, and they sent for the doctor; but he could do nothing. Other physicians made examinations. One of them said, "You cannot expect your husband to recover from this serious stroke." James heard his remark.

After the doctor had left the house, Ellen said, "Never mind what the man said, dear. God can heal you. We're all praying. As I pray, Heaven seems very near. I have the assurance that you will live to continue your work for God."

For weeks Elder White required constant nursing. His wife cared for him during the day, and women of the church took turns at night. There were no Seventh-Day Adventist sanitariums then, and very few physicians who knew how to do anything for the sick except prescribe medicines. Ellen could think of only one place in the country where the sick were treated without poisonous drugs. This place the Whites had visited before.

She sent a telegram to Elder Loughborough, who met them at Battle Creek, and together they went to a sanitarium in Dansville, New York, where the doctors used water treatments and other natural remedies with good results. Elder Loughborough had also been suffering from overwork and poor food, so the two men decided to spend a few weeks resting. They wanted to see what a vegetarian diet and hydrotherapy treatments would do for them.

The head physician did not believe God would perform miracles in response to prayer and told the two Adventist ministers they were too religious, that if they wanted to get well, they must forget religion and join in sports with the other patients.

One day the fiddlers who played for the dances at the sanitarium passed the hat for contributions. When they came to Sis. White, she said, "I cannot use my money for such purposes. You think that this dancing keeps up the patients' spirits and helps them get well. But have you noticed that the ones who dance are languid for a day or two afterward, and some are not able to leave their beds? It is not true religion but lack of it which makes a person gloomy and



to obey the laws of life that He has given us.”

That summer Sis. White carried on her public ministry as best she could, her husband being ill. She spent weekdays caring for him, writing, and visiting church members. On Fridays Edson or Willie would harness Jack and Jim to the carriage and take their father and mother to hold weekend meetings in one of the little churches near Battle Creek. Ellen always insisted that her husband go along; for though he was not well enough to help with the preaching, she was sure the meetings would be an inspiration to him and that the exercise of making the trip would aid in his recovery.

One Thursday morning she said to her boys, “Today we must get ready for our Sabbath appointment at Windsor. We’ll have to clean up the carryall. After the many miles that old carriage has taken us over muddy roads, it surely does present a sad appearance.” So the carryall was brought out, and Edson gave it a thorough washing. Willie took down the ragged side curtains and helped his mother clean and mend them. Then they patched and washed the oilcloth seat covers and laid them out to dry. They were to start early Friday morning, for Windsor was a full day’s drive away.

But in the morning when Willie opened the stable door, he cried, “Mother, oh, Mother! Come see what has happened!” The two big water pails and the tub used in washing the carryall were smashed and stamped to pieces. The carefully mended curtains and seat covers were torn into strips. Ellen sighed when she looked at the ruin.

But when she saw poor old Jack trembling with pain from a gash in his side, she could have cried. The culprit was a neighbour’s big work horse which shared the stable with the two carriage horses. Left loose, he had spent much of the night in mischief.

Jim was unhurt. He had slipped his halter and escaped. Willie found him crowded between the carryall and the stable wall. Jack tried to tell about his sufferings by neighing pitifully.

Ellen took a long look, then said to the boys. “You know who is responsible for this. It’s our great enemy, who is always trying to discourage us. But shall we let him? No, never! We’ll have to postpone our meeting at Windsor, but we’ll not give it up.”

One day at a meeting she persuaded Elder White to sit with her on the rostrum. After she had spoken, she said, “Now my husband will address you.” She waited anxiously to see what he would do. When he stood up and talked, she could not restrain the joyful tears.

Her next suggestion was rather startling, coming as it did in mid-December: “Let’s visit some of our churches in northern Michigan. We can drive up to Wright and stay with the Roots, and then go on as we are able.” She had decided that her invalid husband would not recover if he remained inactive.

sad. Hearty, willing service to Jesus gives one a sunny religion and brings health.

Daily, James White grew weaker and thinner. He enjoyed the treatments, but not the worldly atmosphere. He longed to be with his Adventist friends.

“Why not go home?” Ellen suggested. “I can give you these treatments there.”

On their return to Battle Creek they stopped at Rochester and called some of the ministers together for special prayer. Yet Elder White was not healed. This did not discourage his wife. “If God should heal you now,” she said, “you might go right on abusing your health by overwork. If we do our part, God will do His. Our part is

They planned to start on Wednesday; but when they awoke in the morning, heavy snow was falling.

"That puts an end to our trip; we can't start out on a day like this," Elder White said dismally.

"Oh yes, James; I think we'd better to as planned."

"What? Ninety miles in this kind of storm? It's out of the question!" he protested. "And tell me, Ellen, how can we meet the extra expense?"

Ellen had that all figured out. She had taken up their best carpet and sold it. They made the journey, with a friend name Rogers driving the covered wagon.

During their first Sabbath at Wright, Sis. White had a big surprise: her husband have a twenty-minute talk. He helped also in the meeting on Sunday. During the following week he rested. Each day they went for a walk, and often they drove together.

In late January a Mr. Maynard invited the Whites to stay at his country home in Greenville and hold meetings in his neighbourhood. Elder White helped with the preaching in nearly every meeting. Praying with the sick and discouraged and cheering the lonely helped him forget his own troubles.

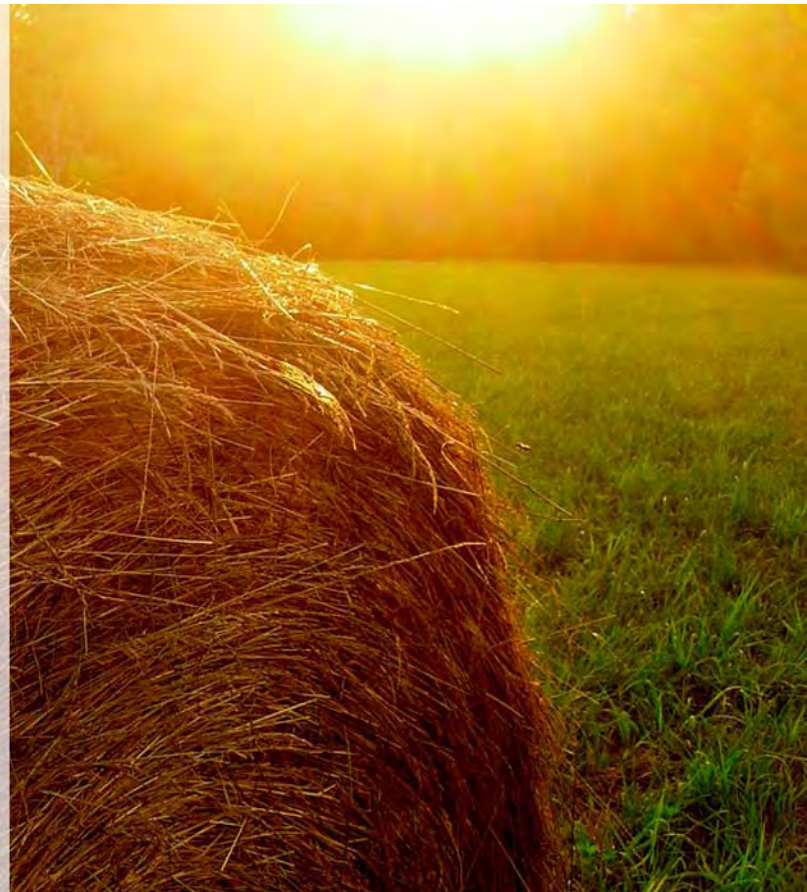
"James, you're winning the battle; country life is doing you good." Sis. White repeated it so often that her husband began to believe it.

They sold their Battle Creek home and bought a small farm near the Maynards at Greenville. There they lived in a three-room shanty while waiting for a house to be built. Planting time came. Ellen knew that exercise in the garden was just the medicine her husband needed. She called Willie and said, "I want you to go to town and buy three hoes and three rakes. Be sure to buy three of each."

When Willie brought them home, she said, "Let me have one of the hoes, give one to your father, and take one yourself. Then come with me into the garden." James groaned as Willie handed him a hoe. He accomplished very little that day, but he went through the motions. He did better with the planting. Next, he helped set out berries and fruit trees.

At haying time Mr. Maynard mowed their grass and was intending to haul it in, but Sis. White sent Willie over with a note: "If my husband asks you to help us with the haying, please refuse. Tell him how busy you are with your own work. That kind of work is just what he needs to strengthen his muscles and build up his health." She sent Willie with the same request to the other neighbours.

A few days later James came into the house looking downcast.



"Ellen," he said, "can you imagine what's the matter with all our neighbours? Not one of them will bring in the hay for us. Even Brother Maynard says his hired man is too busy.

"Then let's show them that we can do the work ourselves," his wife replied cheerfully. "Willie and I will drive the team." The barn had not yet been built, and the hay was to be stacked near the cowshed. When a load was brought in, James pitched it off the wagon and Ellen built the stack while Willie raked up the next load.

One day while they were hard at work, some of the townspeople drove past in their carriages. They gazed curiously at Sis. White out there in the field, treading down hay and building a stack. Could this be the woman who recently had been conducting public meetings? But Ellen was not in the least embarrassed. She was happy that the farm work was building up her husband's health, and nothing could daunt her spirits.

Before the summer was half over, James was working like a regular farmhand. Then he traveled with his wife from state to state, holding meetings as he had done before being stricken with paralysis. His battle for health was won. With God's help, Ellen had brought him back.

During the next fourteen years, James White accomplished some of the most important work of his life, establishing the Battle Creek Sanitarium and College as well as the Pacific Press Publishing Association, and organizing churches and conferences throughout the States.



Sis. Marilu Castro with Family Visiting Canada



Conference in Australia



Baptism of Paula & Evelin in Australia

Rest In Peace

BR. LEN FERGUSON

On an evening on the 7th of December, 1935, in the township of St. Anne Labyrinth, Jamaica, a baby boy entered the world as Lenbert George to the happiness and joy of Stanley and Doris Ferguson.

Len would grow up and share the family name with 9 other siblings, 4 brothers and 5 sisters

Len took up a career as a successful bookkeeper.

Len met Miss Beulah Jones in Montreal, Quebec in the summer of 1963.

Len was baptized in 1983 to the IMS SDA Reform Church.

Their only child, Lynn, married Ozzie Ortiz and subsequently gave the Ferguson's two beautiful grandchildren, Mercedes and Ozzie Jr.

Len is survived by his wife and family after returning his last breath on February 20, 2008.

Br. Len loved and was much loved within the reform church. He Served the Church in the Following capacities: Treasurer of the former Canadian-Caribbean Union; Field Deacon; Auditor; Field Delegate for many years; and he served the local church as a Senior Deacon; Committee Member; Sabbath School Superintendent; and Youth Leader.

Br. Len was always the first to church and gave a helping hand whenever there was an opportunity.

He served the church faithfully until he was hospitalized in October 2007. Despite this he even continued to be involved in the activities of the church from his hospital bed.

Br. Len will be missed while we wait to be reunited on that resurrection morning as Jesus promised, "I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live." John 11:25

"Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid." John 14:27

May God grant this dear brother a place in the Partial Resurrection.

