



The Reformation **Messenger**

VOLUME 16, NUMBER 2, FEBRUARY 2009

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

“Be still, and know that I am God”
Psalm 46:10

WE BELIEVE: The all-wise, loving God created all things in the universe by His Son, Jesus Christ; He is its Owner and Sustainer. He met the challenge to His loving leadership and authority by reconciling the world to Himself through the life, death, and resurrection of His Son, the Word made flesh. The Holy Spirit, Jesus' representative on earth, convicts of sin, guides into truth, and gives strength to overcome all unrighteousness. The Bible is the record of God's dealings with mankind and the standard of all doctrine; the Ten Commandments are the transcript of His character and the foundation of all enduring reform. His people, in harmony with God's word and under the direction of the Holy Spirit, call all men everywhere to be reconciled to God through faith in Jesus. Bible prophecy reveals that earth's history will soon close with the visible return of Jesus Christ as King to claim all who have accepted Him as the world's only Redeemer and their Lord.

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Deliverance!



“So the King gave the command, and they brought Daniel and cast him into the den of lions. But the King spoke, saying to Daniel, “Your God, whom you serve continually, He will deliver you.” (Daniel 6:16)

LIONS!

This is not just another children's Sabbath School “fish” story or “lion” story but rather to clearly garner a message for our exhortation. The object, moreover, being to serve the two pressing needs facing the church today in a world plagued by turbulence: the need to keep abreast of the times, and the need to deepen theological thought unto the second coming of Jesus, and eternity beyond; preaching the distinctive truth to rouse the people to preparation!

EXTREMES

“The darkest hour (at midnight) of the church's struggle with the powers of evil is that which immediately precedes the day of her final deliverance.” (PK 725). God will be to His church “a refuge from the storm.” (Isaiah 25:4). The day of final deliverance of God's

people is at hand. “It was promised!” (PK 538). Ah! But promised only to the righteous! But, “deliverance will also be a day of wrath to His enemies.” (PK 727). Just before the deliverance of God's people by the voice of God, a remarkable number of events will rapidly occur; many major and a number of lesser ones. One compilation totaled forty-four events! Amazing!

“He (God) has always chosen extremes when there seemed no possible chance for deliverance from Satan's workings for the manifestation of His power.” (5T 714); (It might behoove us to memorize this verse, as we may need it soon, as the extremes can be drastic, intense, and even considered radical!)

THE CANDIDATE

Daniel, perhaps, is the personification of the trials and woes of deliverance and the interposition of God by “extremes.” His name, Daniel (the Greek form in the Septuagint) means, “God Is My Judge.” He was deported to Babylon at the age of sixteen, taken from his home, and later on handpicked for government service while still a student, by King Darius, the ruler of the Persian empire.

Even Daniel's three friends were promoted! Daniel is best known, perhaps, prophetically for his interpretation of Nebuchadnezzar's dream in a spectacular revelation of world history in its entirety; and other visions.

King Darius set over his kingdom one-hundred-twenty princes, and over these, three presidents, of which Daniel was first. Why Daniel? "Because, "Daniel was preferred, and special. But, above all an excellent spirit was in him." (Daniel 6:3). What virtues to emulate!

LAW ABIDING

But then, all the princes and presidents plotted against David. They tried to find an occasion or reason against him, but could not find an occasion or fault, because he was faithful! "Neither was there any error or fault in him."(Daniel 6:4). "He was raised in simplicity in a Judean home, and in his home training received habits of strict temperance."(PK 480-82).

So, the princes and presidents established a law, whereby whoever worships another god, except King Darius, for thirty days, shall be cast into the den of lions. Darius, being a weak man, signed the law. He was god on earth! Darius, however, loved Daniel, but was trapped by his own signature which could not be reversed by stringent Persian law.

Now, Daniel knew of the law, and went to his house and before the open windows prayed three times a day. He prayed and gave thanks to God as he did always, previously. "He acknowledged God before Kings and Statesmen." (4BC 1170). Ah! But when the men who were plotting saw this, they went to King Darius, declaring that Daniel was not obeying the law, but praying to his God three times a day! Darius, however, had to reluctantly comply with the law decree. So, Daniel was to be cast into the den of lions. "Devils planned the destruction of Daniel."(PK540).

CONTINUALLY SERVE!

Ancient Kings collected lions by the droves! Darius, too, thought, "I am King of the world, then I should master the King of the Beasts. I'll master everything!" A lot of Kings had a dungeon where they could watch the lions and feed them with people, or their enemies, or both! Some had as many as three hundred lions!

The dungeon was either square or rectangular, and divided by a masonry wall into one-half. The keeper opens the gate in the wall from above and then throws in the food in the other one-half. The lions changed sides over "appetite." Ah! It's really amazing what food can do! Adam and Eve changed sides over "appetite." Then the keeper closed the gate, lowered himself on the other side to clean and then safely got out. That's the type of den King Darius had.

What happened next? King Darius said to Daniel, "May your God whom you serve continually rescue you."(Daniel 6:16). It's easy to

say this to someone else, isn't it, when standing on safe ground and he, Daniel, is down there in the lion's pit... in trouble. It's easy to say, "well, may the Lord bless you." Here you are desperately fighting cancer, homeless, out of work, a marriage conflict, or this or that situation! Well, the cry is heard, "God bless you!" It's easy when you're standing over here. What would you have done in Daniels dire situation? Well, I believe, one would do everything possible to prevent Darius from lowering you down into that pit of lions. Most likely, "hanging on" to him!

Ah! But Darius gave Daniel an exceedingly kind complement, saying, "May your God whom you serve continually rescue you." What a marvelous testimony he paid Daniel! Remember this. If we continually serve God like Daniel did, then God will continually serve us! What a promise!

IN TROUBLE!

A stone was placed over the mouth of the den, and King Darius sealed it with his ring and the rings of nobles, so Daniel's situation could not be changed. The King then returned to his palace, and didn't eat or have any entertainment or concubines, nor could he sleep that night. You see, Daniel's religion got him in trouble! The same will happen with the children of God as the days of deliverance approach. Now, the lions were securely sealed in the pit. A grate covered the large opening hole. Daniel was now sealed in with hungry, vicious carnivorous animals!

Now, just imagine, being eighty-five years of age, and darkness has fallen, and you're being taken to the lion's pit. You can hear them restlessly roaring! They're dragging you, perhaps, or forcing you as they take you to the den of lions. You know innately what is going to happen! It's like being in the woods at night, knowing that it's infested with bears. Or, in dark waters you know are teeming with man-eating sharks, and knowing all along what will happen!

Lions can be up to five hundred pounds, and up to ten feet in length. Their sharp claws and teeth are infected with decaying meat. They are ravenously hungry. They are hideous! Atrocious! Fearless! It's pungently clear what can happen, and Daniel is going down there with them! Woe is me!

BELIEVE THAT!

It must have been a long night for Daniel. Older people can't stand the cold very well, or dampness. Dungeons are famous for that. Imagine trying to sleep with the ominous roar of lions, and their acrid smell! Well, Darius didn't sleep either! He cared for Daniel, and loved him, his good friend, yet dismally could not help him. He disconsolately tossed and worried all night.

Just think a moment. God did not prevent the enemies of Daniel from casting him into the lion's pit. I hear often from the pulpit; if you serve God, pay the tithe, and offerings, come to church

weekly, fellowship, pray, read the Bible, give your heart to the Lord – nothing bad can happen to you. Ah! But not so. Look at Daniel. God didn't prevent Daniel from being thrown into the lion's den. But, Daniel was not alone! God has sent His angel – an Angel of Light, that lighted up that evil pit of utter darkness. Have you ever had an angel light your way when your life was riddled with darkness and fear? God was down there, and God will be with you in your trials and deepest troubles. Believe that! Believe! Believe!

DELIVERANCE!

Daniel's three good friends, those with whom he refused to eat the King's delicacies, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, were tested early in their youth. But, Daniel was tested in his old, frail years! His three friends were in the fire only a few moments. Daniel endured the lion's den all night long; cold, dark, all alone.

"At the first light of dawn, the King hurried to the den of lions. Tired after a sleepless night, he hesitatingly called out, Daniel, has your God been able to rescue you?"(v-19,20). There was a few moments of deathly silence, as the anxious King awaited for an encouraging response. Daniel, finally answered, "Oh King, live forever."(v-21). What humility! What praise! Now, Daniel did not need to say that. A simple grunt, a sigh, or just anything – any sound to say I'm alive – I am here and well, would be enough. But, Daniel explains it thusly, "My God sent His angel and He shut the mouths of the lions. They have not hurt me because I was innocent in His eyes. Nor have I ever done any wrong before you." (v-22).

"The King was overjoyed, and gave orders to lift Daniel out of the pit of lions. When lifted out, there was no evidence of any wounds, because he trusted in His God."(v-23). You see, Daniel's God is a saving God. Trust in God! If God can save Daniel from lions He can save you too, from sin, foul language, bad temper, alcohol, tobacco, passion, selfishness, or anything, whatever it is that may separate you from God.

I think that often when spiritual evils confront you, they often vanish when they're boldly faced! James 4:7 states, "resist the devil and he will flee from you." Trust in God! Trust in Him for He loves you!

Daniel was "resurrected" unharmed from the den, with not a single bone broken, crushed nor a scratch!

THE FAITH DIET

Do you know what took the appetite away from the lions? "Faith shut the mouths of the lions."(Heb 11:37). You see, there's power in faith! Daniel had faith, like Jesus – innocent, kind hearted, meek, kind, and gentle. Daniel miraculously stood before the King, smiling. He didn't ask for revenge. He left that to God; and neither will Christians seek revenge. What next? Ah! The enemies probably accused King Darius of feeding the lions before Daniel was lowered into the pit. "Ah ha! You fed them before!" But, there is one way to find out

if an animal is hungry. Well, that is to give them food. "Those that falsely accused Daniel were cast into the den; them, their wives and children; and the lions overpowered them, crushing their bones in pieces before they ever came to the bottom of the den."(v-24)

VICTORY OR DEFEAT?

A ponderous question! Now, what if the lions feasted on Daniel – ate him, "crushing his bones in pieces, before he ever came to the bottom of the den?" Would it make a good story, then? Would I be preaching it today? Yes! Yes! Most certainly! You see, the point is not deliverance, although that is the title, for at the deliverance of His terror stricken saints, they will be made glad when they hear the voice of God.

But, the point in fact is, that God didn't deliver Abel from Cain. Nor, John the Baptist, nor Stephen. Not even Jesus Christ, Himself! Ah! But they had the victory, sweet victory! Those that place God first and honor Him above all, may suffer, and die, but are victorious! Remember, God always, ultimately delivers His children. Yes, you may face serious trials and losses in this wicked and tumultuous world, but like Daniel, you'll be the ultimate winner! Deliverance will come – sometimes now – sometimes later – but it will come. But, always, God's people will win, finally, in the end. God's looking for the Daniels to today, here, now, who will maintain their integrity, an original, pure and perfect state, no matter what happens!

Therefore, determine to be "victory-minded!" Set your mind now on victory, and nothing else! Then move forward into the abundant life He has reserved for you. For, "the Lord is my strength and song, and He has become my Salvation."(Psalm 118:14).

You know something else? We live in a lion's den today! Furthermore, we face an old, cunning, hungry lion. (1Peter 5:8, 9). We, however, with Jesus as our best friend; we like Daniel, will win the skirmish, the battle, the war; the glorious, cherished victory. "God was first with Daniel," and a he was a "hearer and doer of God's word."(TM443; MH 466). Moreover, he was "unbending, esteemed for his integrity, and constancy, and unrivaled wisdom."(PK 516). "God will honor youth who follow his example; those that are tried and tempted." (SD174; 4T 570); and not following the example of the "American Idols!"

The message, therefore, that I urge you to understand for our exhortation, from this magnificently inspiring story of Daniel, is: If you have God on your side, it doesn't matter what happens to you, just STAY WITH GOD, in, or through whatever you're going through, or whatever it is! You may suffer here, you may even die here, but you're going to be the winner – the victor, and sing the Final Song of Victory! What a song that will be, when the ransomed of the Lord meet at the gate of the Holy City! So dear souls, don't give up on God; He does not give up on you! "To have a life that measures with the life of God – that is the reward." (MS 92).

ALONE BUT NOT LONELY

The Bible says often, that the time will soon come when we'll stand alone in the "lion's den." You will stand alone in the "lion's den." "We have to learn to stand alone. The faithful souls often have to stand alone." (3T302). Jesus Himself said, "I have trodden the wine press alone." (Isaiah 63:3). Jesus "hath not where to lay His head." (Luke 9:58).

The world will be the den. We're in the "lion's den," and the lions will be the men! They will summarily try to destroy the children of God. They will stealthily hunt them day and night, with avarice, and with a ravenous zeal for blood under the spirit of Satan. They will look at us with hungry, hate-filled eyes, but will not be allowed to bite! Ah! Daniel, in fact, was not in the lion's den, but the lions were in Daniel's den! We have learned, heretofore, that in the holy presence of God there is safety!

Years ago, during the genocide war between the Turks and Armenians, some Americans, captured by the Turks during the heinous conflict, were victimized and ready to be killed. Because they were faithful Christians, however, they refused to deny their belief in Jesus Christ. Consequently, they were all brutally murdered; all the men, women and with all their children!

Evil men, however, came upon a little American girl, the sole survivor of the massacre, and asked her if she would "give up" on Jesus, or "shall we throw you into the cage of wild, hungry dogs?" She softly and meekly answered, "I love Jesus." Ruthlessly, subsequently, her tormentors threw her into the pen of hungry, savage, wild dogs; shut the door and left her there alone to unmercifully die a horrific death.

The following morning, the evil men returned and could not believe their vengeful eyes. The little girl was all alone at the far end of the cage, on her knees, hands folded, eyes closed, bowed head, praying to Jesus. Just in front of her was a huge, savage brute of a dog, standing guard over the little girl. When one of the other starving dogs came too near, the huge dog viciously snarled and kept those other dogs away that would have attacked the little girl.

Those rough, calloused men cried out in disbelief, "There is a God! God Himself must be in there! And that God is the God of that little girl!"

That same God is our God. "We are never alone." (MH490). Hallelujah!

NOW HEAR THIS!

Returning to Daniel, "King Darius made a profession of faith unto all nations, peoples, and languages throughout the world unto the living God of Daniel, declaring, He is the living God, he endures forever, His sovereignty will never be destroyed and His Kingship never end. He saves, sets free, and works signs and wonders in the

heavens and on earth; he has saved Daniel from the power of the lions ; may peace be with you always, and be multiplied unto you. Then Daniel flourished in the reign of Darius and the reign of Cyrus the Persian." (Daniel 6:24-28).

Finally, Daniel passed the ultimate test. You see, true prosperity in all things comes when we totally surrender all to the will of God.

"The young lion may go empty and hungry, but those who seek Yahweh lack nothing good." (Psalm 34:10)

What a conversion, what a revival, what a testimony, what a proclamation and honor to God! What a hope we have! What a God we have! **Amen.**

DELIVERANCE CAN BE OURS!

John Theodorou, USA

LOOKING FOR YOU!!

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How To Use Religion

If someone would donate an airplane to you, that would make you very happy. Now you can go anywhere you like. Everything is in good order in the airplane; the tanks are filled with fuel, and ready to go. But one thing is wrong. You do not know how to fly the airplane. So then it remains as an ornament beside your house. You can show it to your friends, but it will not benefit you in any way.

So is our religion. We have a perfect religion, based on the word of God; everything is in perfect order. It can save us from sin, give us joy and happiness, and give us eternal life. But if we do not know how to use it, it remains only as an ornament and will not benefit us at all.

When you start to fly an airplane you must pull levers, push buttons, watch gauges, and do 30-40 different things. What can happen if you neglect just one of them? You may not have a perfect take off, you may even crash and kill yourself.

In religion, the same thing can happen. You must do all that the Bible tells you. You must read the guidebook carefully, and follow the instructions or you can hurt yourself if even one thing is neglected.

Guidebooks for flying change constantly as new technology is invented, but our guidebook for how to use religion will not need changes; it has been perfect since the beginning.

Yet the churches have decided to do changes to religion, and by so doing they have taken away the blessings and benefits that it should give them.

Our guidebook says, "Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy;" but the churches have decided to change it to Sunday.

The Bible speaks about health reform, but that also has been cut out.

To love your enemies, do good to them that hate you is completely ignored.

Tithe paying also is taken out. One by one the instruction book on how to use religion that God has given us is completely changed, and by so doing they have made it only a play religion with no benefits to its followers. No perfect peace in the heart, no fullness of joy that Jesus promised and no heaven in the end.

We read in Hosea 4:6, "My people are destroyed for the lack of knowledge."

As Jesus was being nailed to the cross, He prayed, "Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do."

Paul writes, "Cursed is everyone that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them." Gal. 3:10.

These people expected a blessing of God to come upon them, but instead of blessing, a curse came upon them.

Peter writes, "For it had been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than, after they have known it, to turn from the holy commandment delivered unto them." 2 Pet. 2:21.

Referring to Judas, Jesus said, "Woe to that man by whom the Son of man is betrayed! Good were it for that man if he had never been born." Mark 14:21.

From the above texts we see that we can use religion carelessly and receive a curse upon ourselves instead of a blessing.

The choice is ours. We must decide between true religion and false religion.

Moses asked the people to decide, "See, I have set before thee this day life and good, and death and evil. I call heaven and earth to record this day against you, that I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing: therefore, choose life, that both thou and thy seed may live." Deut. 30: 15, 19.

The people of Israel had a perfect religion. They had the law, the knowledge of God, also all the ceremonies, but their blessings and well being depended on how they used the perfect religion.

If we carefully follow our guidebook, the Bible, we receive forgiveness for all our past sins. This is a most valuable blessing for us.

In order to receive this gift of God we must follow the instructions given.

"For if ye forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you: but if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses." Matt. 6: 14, 15.

Another very serious instruction has been given us, "If we sin willfully after that we have received the knowledge of truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins." Heb. 10:26.

Many professed Christians have committed this fatal error. They have learned the truth, but do not practice it. By their carelessness they have lost the greatest gift that ever has been offered to man.

If we follow the instructions given us we will receive power, that is far superior to human strength.

"But as many as received Him, to them gave He power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on His name." John 1:12.

Paul said, "I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me." Phil. 4:13.

Jesus said, "If ye have faith as a grain of mustard seed, ye shall say unto this mountain, Remove hence to yonder place; and it shall remove; and nothing shall be impossible unto you." Matt. 17:20.

Weak Christians are not using the religion to their benefit. They have not followed the instructions given, and therefore they gain no blessings from it.

True religion gives us joy and happiness that the world has never known, even in their riches and luxury. Jesus said, "If ye know these things, happy are ye if ye do them." John 13:17.

David writes, "Thou wilt show me the path of life, in Thy presence is fullness of joy; at Thy right hand there are pleasures for evermore." Ps. 16:11.

One of the most important and the most difficult thing in our religion is the message of Christ our righteousness, the justification by faith. Most of the Christians fail in this point, and therefore end up making a shipwreck of faith.

In 1889 Sister White said that there is not even one in one hundred who understand the message of Christ's righteousness for themselves. The great majority of the members were struggling on in their own righteousness.

How do we know if we have Christ's righteousness or our own self righteousness?

Our own righteousness is tainted by spiritual pride, looking down on others with, "I am holier than thou" attitude. It is a feeling of being rich and increased with goods and having need of nothing. A self righteous person compares himself to others and feels satisfied by keeping the letter of the law.

One with Christ's righteousness is marked with humility of heart. He truly feels himself unworthy and esteems others better than himself. He only compares himself to Christ and is reaching out for His perfection. He can love his enemies, turn the other cheek, and walk the second mile.

This lesson only children can learn; it is difficult for grown-ups.

Therefore Jesus said, "Verily I say unto you, Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven. Whosoever therefore shall humble himself as this little child, the same is greatest in the kingdom of heaven." Matt. 18: 3, 4.

If we learn to use religion to our benefit and do all that is required, we will change for the better constantly. We will be sanctified and made holy. Paul changed from a persecutor of the church to one of its most ardent advocates.

Our perfect example of how to use religion is Jesus Christ. Looking to Him daily and following His example we can avoid the terrible sins that Satan is tempting us to do. And we learn lessons of love that will conquer all things. Let us stop the useless play religion and seek the kingdom of God and His righteousness with the whole heart, is my prayer for all of us. **AMEN.**

Timo Martin, Canada



Australian Conference Memories



CAMP THEME

I
KNOW
WHOM
I
HAVE
BELIEVED

A small, square illustration showing a person in a brown, historical-style robe kneeling on the ground in a prayerful or reverent posture. The background of the illustration is dark and atmospheric.

Justification of Life

In Australia it was with great interest that we read week of prayer readings for 2008. The topic "justification by faith" was expanded upon in some of our meetings afterward. Some of the thoughts presented are as follows:

Condemnation Of Death And Pardon Of Life

Because of sin, mankind has entered into a condition described as the condemnation of death. This is contrasted with another condition described as justification of life. See. "For if by one man's offence death reigned by one; much more they which receive abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness shall reign in life by one, Jesus Christ.) Therefore as by the offence of one judgment came upon all men to condemnation; even so by the righteousness of one the free gift came upon all men unto justification of life." Romans 5:17,18.

In a justice system when a person is condemned to death they are said to be on death row. The judge delivers the sentence and the criminal waits on death row for the execution of that sentence. How can he avoid the execution of that sentence? He can appeal to the courts of that justice system or to the governor. If circumstances are such that the courts or the governor see fit to have mercy they will remit the death sentence. They will issue a pardon for crime. Bible justification is similar although the pardon is for sin. "*Pardon and justification are one and the same thing.*" {6BC 1070.6}

Mankind is condemned to death. Jesus describes those living as though they were already dead saying, "*let the dead bury the dead.*" *Matthew 8:22.* We are all sinners as it were, on death row. To our heavenly Father we must appeal for a pardon of life.

Receiving The Pardon Of Life

"And the publican, standing afar off, would not lift up so much as his eyes unto heaven, but smote upon his breast, saying, God be merciful to me a sinner. I tell you, this man went down to his house justified rather than the other." Luke 18:13,14

The publican approached God as a terrible sinner, and received a pardon for sin.

"*The Pharisee stood and prayed thus with himself, God, I thank thee, that I am not as other men are, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this publican. I fast twice in the week, I give tithes of all that I possess.*" Luke 18:11,12

The Pharisee approached God in the spirit of self-justification. He extolled his own works, his own virtues and his own faithfulness. He made comparison of his own virtues with the sins of other men. He condemned other men as evil sinners. Before God he took no responsibility for his own sins but rather sought to blame and condemn other men as sinners. This man did not receive a pardon for sin.



Why The Publican And Not The Pharisee?

“Now to him that worketh is the reward not reckoned of grace, but of debt. But to him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness.” Romans 4:4, 5

To him that works to be justified it is like the payment of a debt. When we've done many good works we think that God is indebted to us. We think that God owes us a pardon for sin and we come to God to demand our due as a debt. We say to God, “I have done many good works and now I deserve my due, I deserve to be pardoned of my sins.” We say as did the Pharisee, “You owe me, God because of all the good works I have done”.

However, *“the idea of doing anything to merit the grace of pardon is fallacy from beginning to end.”* {FW 24.2}. The text in Romans 4:4, 5 says: *“to him that worketh not.”* We cannot do anything to make ourselves deserving of a pardon. All we can do is plead like the publican, undeserving as we are and perhaps we can be justified as he was. *“Do you deserve the pardon that you are seeking? No, you do not; nevertheless, it is given you.”* {RH, April 29, 1884 par. 4}

The Great Debt We Owe To God

God is not in debt to us. To the contrary we are in debt to Him. Consider the following parable.

“Therefore is the kingdom of heaven likened unto a certain king, which would take account of his servants. And when he had begun to reckon, one was brought unto him, which owed him ten thousand talents. But forasmuch as he had not to pay, his lord commanded him to be sold, and his wife, and children, and all that he had, and payment to be made. The servant therefore fell down, and worshipped him, saying, Lord, have patience with me, and I will pay thee all. Then the lord of that servant was moved with compassion, and loosed him, and forgave him the debt.” Matthew 18:23-27

The servant says, “I'll pay you all, I'll do anything”. He was willing to do many works to meet repayments of his debt, but how was he justified before the king? The king had mercy upon him. The king was gracious and forgave his debt. The servant was justified, free from condemnation, free from that large debt. He didn't do any works to meet the repayments of the debt. He didn't do anything at all. It was a gift and he was totally undeserving of that gift. This is how justification comes to the sinner. We have a large debt of sin that we can never repay. All of our own works are totally and utterly insufficient to procure a pardon for sin. We can never meet the repayments. The debt of sin we owe is just too great. *“Justification is wholly of grace and **not procured by any works** that fallen man can do.”* {FW 20.1}

A Pardon Is Not A Licence To Sin

Since there is a pardon available for sin, there are many that seek

a pardon, yet they do not want to change their ways. We are to be justified from sin. We are not justified in committing sin. *“But if, while we seek to be justified by Christ, we ourselves also are found sinners, is therefore Christ the minister of sin? God forbid.” Galatians 2:17.* Christ is not the minister of sin. Christ does not justify us in committing sin. So for those that persist in sin there is no justification. *“He who so freely pardons and receives the penitent sinner, will by no means justify those who remain wilfully and persistently disobedient.”* {ST, May 6, 1886 par. 10}

The Obligation Of The Law

When justified from sin does the obligation of the law remain? In a justice system when a man on death row receives a pardon is he freed from future obligation to the law? If he were freed from this he would be issued with a certificate of pardon where he is no longer obliged to keep the law. Would that be a pardon? No, that would be a license and not a pardon. A pardon serves only to release from condemnation – the death penalty. It does not release from future obligation to keep the law.

“There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit . . . That the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. Romans 8:1,4. Those that are in Christ Jesus are released from the condemnation. At the same time they are described as fulfilling the obligation of the law. Christ did not come to excuse sin, nor to justify a sinner while he continued to transgress that law.” {ST, July 18, 1878 par. 9}

The woman brought by the Pharisees to Jesus was condemned to death and the death sentence was very nearly carried out. From Jesus she received a pardon for sin. Additionally Jesus reminded her of future obligation saying, “Go and sin no more”.

Conclusion

Simon the Pharisee condemned Mary Magdalene as a sinner. However, “It is God that justifieth. Who is he that condemneth? Romans 8:33,34. Mary was a sinner pardoned, he [Simon] was a sinner unpardoned {DA 567.4}. When Jesus rebuked Simon privately, he saw the magnitude of the debt which he owed his Lord. His pride was humbled, he repented, and the proud Pharisee became a lowly, self-sacrificing disciple.” {DA 567.5}.

When we cease the work of self-justification, realise that we are terrible sinners and pray as did the publican it is then that God can work for us. **Amen.**

Glendon Higgins

FAR, FAR AWAY

*Faintly and lonely, voices 're calling.
For truth they're starving, even Present Truth and more!
On you the privileged, rests the voices' fading hopes.
Feed the flock, you stewards of the Message!
From vast a distance, that Rock's watching all ages.*

*Poor and forgotten of the world, daily 're crying:
'A helping hand, a helping hand--kindly lend us!'
Victuals and shelter, all require.
As in abundance and intemperance some of us live.
Sacrifice and give all excess--blessed art thou I believe!*

*Dying and wandering 're many, yet concerned's none!
Longing for love and sympathy 're countless souls.
Deeds of charity, hopeful words--the poor's chief dearth.
Shall we not care, repent and reform?
Guilty and filthy, what hope have we--unless we're reborn?*

*Fierce battles, in sea and on land 're raging.
Victims--the innocent, perishing in multitudes!
Welfare and benevolence, they hanker after.
Fellow Adventists; where 're your prayers and players?
Old paths retread, with urgency revive Godly manners!*

*In 1844,a unique Judgment commenced.
Initially the dead were its subjects;
Pending us the living--professors of truth and purity.
Soul affliction and heart searching, our acquittal's keys.
Great Advocate Jesus--for us pleads and shields!*

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New Year's Resolutions

The Toronto church held their annual New Year's Eve celebration on Dec. 31. As is tradition, everyone shared their New Year's resolutions for the following year:

Nicky: To study the Bible more.

Abel: To study Sabbath School lessons better.

Mike: To think about God more.

David: To be baptised.

Philip: To be baptised.

Gabriella: To be closer connected with God.

Linda: To be more faithful in eating regularly and not at night. Learn as much as possible of the Bible.

Brenda: To be one with both of my families.

Nidya: To exercise more.

Richard: To be more proud of being a Christian. Not to be ashamed of it.

Emelina: To love God above all, and my neighbour as myself. To read the 9 volumes of the Testimonies for the Church.

Leone: To do all I can to have extra oil in my lamp.

Eric: To do more missionary work, and read more of the Spirit of Prophecy books, and also to be more humble.

Alberto: To read more Bible and Testimonies.

Joaquin: To read more of Bible and Testimonies, and practice them more.

Lucia: To write articles for the Messenger magazine.

Sesciah: To read the Bible more.

Rose: To bring the message of Christ's return to the people.

Matthew: To read the book Steps to Christ.

Micky: To read the Bible more.

Gustavo: To keep all my old resolutions.

Derrill: To feel no more hurt.

Pasita: That the Lord will help me to read the Bible more.

Rafael: To change my character.

Rosario: To serve the Lord more, and to reveal the image of Jesus.

Timo: To do greater sacrifices for the Lord.



New Years At The Toronto Church





Regarded As Sinless



Regarded as sinless, no more sins. When you have memory of sin, they are not yours anymore. To really believe that. Can you see the difficulty of it? We need to believe. The Lord says it. You are declared righteous. Here is my righteous child.

“The love of God still yearns over the one who has chosen to separate from Him, and He sets in operation influences to bring him back to the Father’s house”. COL 202

We are in need of trusting Jesus. In the recent conversations I have had with God’s people, I have seen that Satan is going about, seeking whom he can destroy. I have seen very strong spiritual people being tossed about, especially as they discover more and more their sinfulness. Not surprising because as we come nearer to Jesus, the more distinctly we will see our sinfulness. There is a message that we need to remind ourselves continually, that we need to believe. I find myself having to remind even the strongest believers today of this message.

When our lives are illuminated by Jesus and we see ourselves as we really are, we keep on feeling oppressed, we keep feeling that we’re too sinful and that we have no hope because we see that my sins are so severe and that they are part of our very being, our sinful flesh.

“There are those who have known the pardoning love of Christ, and who really desire to be children of God, yet they realize that their character is imperfect, their life faulty, and they are ready to doubt whether their hearts have been renewed by the Holy Spirit. To such I would say, Do not draw back in despair. We shall often have to bow down and weep at the feet of Jesus because of our shortcomings and mistakes; but we are not to be discouraged. Even if we are overcome by the enemy, we are not cast off, not forsaken and rejected of God. No; Christ is at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us. Said the beloved John, ‘These things write I unto you, that ye sin not. And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous.’ And do not forget the words of Christ, ‘The Father himself loveth you.’ John 16:27. He desires to restore you to Himself, to see His own purity and holiness reflected in you. And if you will but yield yourself to Him, He that hath begun a good work in you will carry it forward to the day of Jesus Christ.” {FLB 118.4}

How much do we believe this? This statement tells us the experience that every true follower of Jesus will meet. As we meet it more intensely coming up to the time of Jacobs’s trouble, we need knowledge of God’s character in reference to our sinfulness. We need to believe God. The hardest thing that a person can handle is when he is convicted of sin, he feels absolutely bad about it, feels that he is not worthy, comes to God and falls on his knees before him--to believe he is forgiven. To believe that you are forgiven. There was a beautiful parable of the prodigal son who had really blown it. Not only had he blown his wealth that he gained because his father had given him what he wanted, but he had blown the

sense of knowing that he is accepted with his father. He thought, "I'm not worthy, I'm so bad." He came to the situation that he was so hungry because he had squandered all his past.

If you can consider this parable as a clear parable, as a description of what Jesus is trying to say to you and I personally today, no matter how much you've blown it, you are a son of God. You've blown it here and there. Every circumstance of our experience where we've made mistakes and we think it's too bad, I've blown my chance.

"And when he came to himself, he said, How many hired servants of my father's have bread enough and to spare, and I perish with hunger! I will arise and go to my father, and will say unto him, Father, I have sinned against heaven, and before thee, And am no more worthy to be called thy son: make me as one of thy hired servants. And he arose, and came to his father. But when he was yet a great way off, his father saw him, and had compassion, and ran, and fell on his neck, and kissed him." Luke 15:17-20.

Is that possible? Does God do that with us after we've blown it so badly?

"The love of God still yearns over the one who has chosen to separate from Him, and He sets in operation influences to bring him back to the Father's house." COL 202

Are you picking up the attitude of God? The one who had chosen to separate himself from the father.

The prodigal son in his wretchedness "came to himself." COL 202 There is another person who came to himself after seven years of madness and he opened his heart to the Lord. He became a converted believer. And that was Nebuchadnezzar.

"The deceptive power that Satan had exercised over him was broken. He saw that his suffering was the result of his own folly, and he said, 'How many hired servants of my father's have bread enough and to spare, and I perish with hunger! I will arise and go to my father.' Miserable as he was, the prodigal found hope in the conviction of his father's love. It was that love which was drawing him toward home. So it is the assurance of God's love that constrains the sinner to return to God. 'The goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance.' Rom. 2:4. A golden chain, the mercy and compassion of divine love, is passed around every imperilled soul. The Lord declares, 'I have loved thee with an everlasting love; therefore with loving-kindness have I drawn thee.' Jer. 31:3." {COL 202.1}

Where did he find hope? In the conviction of his father's love. How imperilled are we when we are teetering on the edge of total depravity?

This is what we need to understand about our case when we see ourselves as having blown it entirely. We know it in theory but how

is it inside of you? Are you losing hair? You know the reason for losing hair? Stress. We might be ever so bold and believing on the outside but on the inside we are still struggling. It happens to everyone until we break out of this stress mode. How do we break out of it? To believe the sentiments of God's love. To believe it right down into your very being. The sense of my evils are debilitating. I want to do what's right but because I see my depraved condition, I feel like giving up. I have no ability to pull myself out. My sin and physical disease comes as a disease of spiritual palsy. This was the case of the man of Capernaum. He wanted to go to Jesus to be healed but he couldn't get to him as he was palsied. He asked his friends to take him to Jesus but they couldn't get through the crowd. What did he do? He was so desperate, he said, "let me in through the roof," so they did. We are palsied internally by the mistakes of our life pleading at the foot of Jesus but still suffering. How many people have been sorry for their sin but they are still not free? This man is portrayed to us as a wonderful object lesson.

"The palsied man had sunk into despair. Then he heard of the works of Jesus. Others, as sinful and helpless as he, had been healed, and he was encouraged to believe that he, too, might be cured if he could be carried to the Saviour. But hope fell as he remembered the cause of his malady, yet he could not cast away the possibility of healing." MH 73

"My sin is always before me," said king David. As the sin which is the cause of the malady, how can I be cured and healed if I am still under the oppression of the sin that is always before me?

"His great desire was relief from the burden of sin. He longed to see Jesus and receive the assurance of forgiveness and peace with heaven. Then he would be content to live or to die, according to God's will." {MH 74.1} "There was no time to lose; already his wasted flesh bore signs of death. Luke 1:53." {MH 74.2} "The discourse was interrupted. The Saviour looked upon the mournful countenance and saw the pleading eyes fixed upon Him. Well He knew the longing of that burdened soul. It was Christ who had brought conviction to his conscience when he was yet at home. When he repented of his sins and believed in the power of Jesus to make him whole, the mercy of the Saviour had blessed his heart. Jesus had watched the first glimmer of faith grow into a conviction that He was the sinner's only helper, and had seen it grow stronger with every effort to come into His presence. It was Christ who had drawn the sufferer to Himself. Now, in words that fell like music on the listener's ear, the Saviour said, 'Son, be of good cheer; thy sins be forgiven thee.' Matthew 9:2." {MH 75.2}

Those words be of good cheer, thy sins are forgiven. Did he believe those words? Indeed he did.

"The burden of guilt rolls from the sick man's soul. He cannot doubt. Christ's words reveal His power to read the heart. Who can deny His power to forgive sins? Hope takes the place of despair, and joy of oppressive gloom. The man's physical pain is gone, and his

whole being is transformed. Making no further request, he lay in peaceful silence, too happy for words." {MH 76.1}

Have you experienced this in our fellowship? The very things that you were burdened with the Lord knows. He knows the heart. He sends messages that are designed to reach us. Regarded as sinless. That is the theme of our meditation today. He saw himself as God saw him, sinless.

Today we may find help by other means. There are the stresses of life which cause us to look for relief somewhere. We try this and that and other things and there is no release. The disease keeps coming back. There is only one release of disease. That is total release of our sin. We must be free of the sense of our sin. This is the only way because sin creates disease. Jesus says "I have come with healing in My wings." There needs to be faith. That is a very presumptuous statement today. If I'm sick then I have no faith? I'm stressed again.

"The paralytic found in Christ healing for both the soul and the body. He needed health of soul before he could appreciate health of body. Before the physical malady could be healed, Christ must bring relief to the mind, and cleanse the soul from sin. This lesson should not be overlooked. There are today thousands suffering from physical disease who, like the paralytic, are longing for the message, 'Thy sins are forgiven.' The burden of sin, with its unrest and unsatisfied desires, is the foundation of their maladies. They can find no relief until they come to the Healer of the soul. The peace which He alone can impart would restore vigour to the mind and health to the body." {MH 77.3}

Vigour to the mind and then health to the body. If your mind is under the oppression of sin and its consequences, it is going to affect your health. I mentioned hair falling out, that is a small symptom. Take an honest look at yourselves. Is there still an undercurrent of secret sufferings under the burden of sin? A gloom that keeps festering deep inside of your soul? A character defect that is too big to let go? Are there still unreleased conflicts and fears that are deep inside of you that keeps your head in gloominess? There must come a time for God's children to realise the Father's love. We need to believe in Jesus. The application of Jesus to us is not something to argue, because of the false doctrines around us. We can think we have the truth but still have problems around us. Our sinful flesh that is always before us that comes to us by the courses of our sinful flesh. The frustrating situations that take place inside of us.

We need a constant flow of the love of God to stay out of it. Here we have the knowledge of Jesus in that experience that we are suffering under. We need a constant reminder to be able to conquer.

"For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh." Rom. 8:3.

Sin in the flesh. Isn't that the problem? Isn't that the thing that continuously festers inside of our experience? How many times our flesh fails and we think, "what I have done? I'm never going to make it." And the gloom sets in. What do we see when we look to Jesus? In the likeness of sinful flesh? Sin in the flesh condemning sin in the flesh.

"That He might by His own example condemn sin in the flesh, He took upon Himself the likeness of sinful flesh." {AG 322.3}

That by His example He will give me hope. I need to know this living reality. I need to understand and believe it. Isn't that the cry, "my God my God why have you forsaken me?" Isn't that the cry? I had you in the past but now you're gone. He's been my Saviour in the past, hasn't He? But now He's gone again. When He cried, "My God, My God why hast thou forsaken Me," it was my sin.

"All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the LORD hath laid on him the iniquity of us all." Isa. 53:6.

Our sins have separated us from God. Jesus said in Isaiah 40:12, "they are more than the hairs of my head." What oppression, what stress, what a horrifying experience Jesus went through. If we will believe that, then there is hope for us. If we believe it for ourselves personally. Here is the beautiful picture of faith that is needed, that Jesus had. Remember, we are to have the faith of Jesus.

"What shall we then say to these things? If God [be] for us, who [can be] against us? He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things? Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect? [It is] God that justifieth. Who [is] he that condemneth? [It is] Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us. Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? [shall] tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword?" Rom. 8:31-35.

We read of the man who suffered the palsy and of the prodigal son. Wasn't God for him? If God is for us, who can be against us? Can't we see? My sinful self. God is not going to hold us down for that. It is a condition I keep seeing around me. We don't believe God but we believe one another. When people run us down we believe them instead of God. I find that incredible when people say, "he said such and such about me," and then what God says about me, we don't believe. If God is for me, who can be against me? We want to believe that. Think about these words. He spared not his own Son. He let His Son suffer the stress that is mine.

We don't believe that is the problem. When the onslaughts of another person's words come towards me, I'm not believing what I'm reading here. Who can be against me? Be careful in the church when someone is beginning to lift their head and rejoicing, don't remind them of their sins or their past as they are beginning to

feel Jesus is working in them. There is no way we can be forgiven unless we believe that Jesus has forgiven us. If we say things about each other, the Lord can't help us at all. Jesus can't take away our sin. Jesus gave Himself and the Father didn't spare Him. He let all the weight of absolute depression fall on His soul. God wretched our sins into the body of Jesus and made Him suffer it all. Jesus gave Himself for what?

"Who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works." Titus 2:14.

He gave himself so this might happen. He who knew no gloom, He who knew no sin gave Himself so He may suffer it for me.

"For he hath made him [to be] sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him." 2 Cor. 5:21.

What a picture. For what purpose? So that I who know no peace, feeling my past sins, feeling that all these things I have done are now all played up, He has taken my gloom.

"When we see the length of the chain that was let down for us, when we understand something of the infinite sacrifice that Christ has made in our behalf, the heart is melted with tenderness and contrition." {SC 35.4}

It makes you feel even worse. It makes you feel like breaking at the foot of the cross. Praise the Lord. The chain that Jesus let down was Himself, and He touches us at the bottom of the pit. When we see that, we discover something profound. Let us see what is happening to us in Jesus Christ.

"The great work that is wrought for the sinner who is spotted and stained by evil is the work of justification. By Him who speaketh truth he is declared righteous. The Lord imputes unto the believer the righteousness of Christ and pronounces him righteous before the universe. He transfers his sins to Jesus, the sinner's representative, substitute, and surety. Upon Christ He lays the iniquity of every soul that believeth. 'He hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.' 2 Cor. 5:21" {FLB 112.4}

Regarded as sinless, no more sins. When you have memory of sin, they are not yours anymore. To really believe that. Can you see the difficulty of it? We need to believe. The Lord says it. You are declared righteous. Here is my righteous child.

Declared as righteous because I believe and I take hold of this gift of Jesus and I see Him coming right down to my level and suffering my sin. There is freedom. Today Jesus says to you and me today, "be of good cheer, your sins are forgiven." Can you lay back in total resignation and say oh... I believe it? Don't bring them up again, your sins, or to each other. I've made a declaration before the Lord and I'm going to rely on Him. I know I've desperately sinned in front

of the congregation and I know I've done lots of things and they can see them and there is a talking point. We don't believe. That is why we talk evil about each other. That's why. Jesus says, "believe My word." If I believe it, won't I repent? Won't I fall in contrition before Him? Like the paralytic, who didn't dare to go but he felt he had to as he felt that others who were bad as him were healed too?

"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.

Why the word "let"? Because if you let it, when your sins come up before you and cause you to feel deprived, you have no peace. He took my guilty condition.

"The Lord God through Jesus Christ holds out His hand all the day long in invitation to the sinful and fallen. He will receive all. He welcomes all. It is His glory to pardon the chief of sinners. He will take the prey from the mighty, He will deliver the captive, He will pluck the brand from the burning. He will lower the golden chain of His mercy to the lowest depths of human wretchedness, and lift up the debased soul contaminated with sin." {MH 161}

As I am sinful and fallen, His hand is reaching. He receives all and welcomes all. Can you believe it? Contaminated, unclean, filthy. Everyone is saying, "what a hopeless case these people are - they can't change, can they?" Jesus needs to be seen and believed.

"If you give yourself to Him, and accept Him as your Saviour, then, sinful as your life may have been, for His sake you are accounted righteous. Christ's character stands in place of your character, and you are accepted before God just as if you had not sinned." {SC 62.2}

Do you believe it? Hard to believe, isn't it? When this ugly, sinful flesh that comes up through your stomach into your heart, when you feel so evil, when you cast back your mind on your past activities and also your character defects that are still prevalent now, to believe. That as you break your heart before the Lord, as you see yourself as you really are and say, "I'm so hopeless, I'm caught out," and as you rest your soul... believe it. Do you wish to please God? Do you think you're pleasing God when you hold onto sin and the gloom and consequence of sin? When He is reaching out all day long trying to take your sin from you? When you are not releasing yourself as He wants you to release yourself, are we pleasing Him?

Like the paralytic and Enoch. The paralytic released himself and he laid back, making no further request in peaceful silence, it made Jesus so happy.

"By faith Enoch was translated that he should not see death; and was not found, because God had translated him: for before his translation he had this testimony, that he pleased God. But without

faith [it is] impossible to please [him]: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and [that] he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him." Heb. 11:5, 6.

"When God pardons the sinner, remits the punishment he deserves, and treats him as though he had not sinned, He receives him into divine favor, and justifies him through the merits of Christ's righteousness. The sinner can be justified only through faith in the atonement made through God's dear Son, who became a sacrifice for the sins of the guilty world. No one can be justified by any works of his own. He can be delivered from the guilt of sin, from the condemnation of the law, from the penalty of transgression, only by virtue of the suffering, death, and resurrection of Christ. Faith is the only condition upon which justification can be obtained, and faith includes not only belief but trust." {TMK 110.2}

The very atonement that we enjoy studying that is being harassed in our minds. Is it true that Jesus came in sinful flesh? We get harassed about that. Faith is not only to believe but to trust.

"The faith that is unto salvation is not a casual faith, it is not the mere consent of the intellect, it is belief rooted in the heart, that embraces Christ as a personal Saviour.... When the soul lays hold upon Christ as the only hope of salvation, then genuine faith is manifested. This faith leads its possessor to place all the affections of the soul upon Christ; his understanding is under the control of the Holy Spirit, and his character is molded after the divine likeness. His faith is not a dead faith, but a faith that works by love, and leads him to behold the beauty of Christ, and to become assimilated to the divine character." {TMK 110.4}

How can you ever do anything right unless you entrust yourself entirely into the forgiving pardon of God? If you don't believe that, you will continue to strive to do it in all your own strength. When you totally trust in Jesus, you will cease all that. You will be motivated. It will come as the righteousness of Christ in your life, not your

own. You will be motivated not only to cry unto Him but to continue to rejoice in Him. As you cry you are released. It is a continuous experience.

To remind ourselves of our sins is not our agenda. God shows us our sins and all we are to do is to take hold of His grace. Take hold of this saving picture. Take hold of Jesus and live under that. If you are afraid because you haven't repented properly, well, you can't repent properly anyway. The only way you can truly repent is by the repentance that Jesus gives you.

"Repentance is as certainly a gift of Jesus Christ as is forgiveness of sins. Repentance cannot be experienced without Christ, for it is the repentance of which He is the author that is the ground upon which we may apply for pardon." {TMK 109.3}

I can't even repent. As my heart is drawn out to all this, I will make rapid progress. I will not keep holding back and stooped in that stressful experience. When it comes back, it's gone as I keep on applying the beautiful story of Jesus. I will cease to condemn others! Because we have such a high standard, we continually look at others and condemn them for not reaching the standard. If I have this message right, I will think as Jesus thought. I will care for those who are stumbling, who are sinful. I will not bring them up before the church and say, isn't this man a sinner? This is not what Jesus showed us. We will be sinners in the hospital of Jesus Christ all looking to Him for healing. We will recover as we are not focused on each other but on Jesus.

Believe in Jesus and you will be saved. It's as simple as that. It's just made complicated by legalism. It's made complicated by misapplication of the law and the gospel. That's all. It is simple. May God grant us to believe that our sins are truly pardoned.

John Thiel, Australia



Believers In Perth, Australia

One of the greatest challenges for Christian parents is how to secure for their children the best possible education available in this sinful world. We all want what's best for our children, and most of us would go to any length to secure the same. But just what's in our children's best interest? The Bible tells us "the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God, and keep his commandments: for this [is] the whole [duty] of man". Ecclesiastics 12:13. In other words, the best interest of parent and child is an education that helps both to trust and obey God completely, allowing Him to transform mind, body and character.

Christian parents, unlike others, want their children to be uncompromising servants of their Father in Heaven in the same way that Jesus was. They "would rather have Jesus than silver or gold. They would rather have Jesus than riches untold. They would rather have Jesus than anything this world affords," and they want nothing less for the precious children God has entrusted to their care. The true Christian parent wants only a true Christian education for their children.

What is Christian Education?

But, you ask, "what is Christian education?" It is true education – an education led by the Holy Spirit who was given to us as an aid in the study of the Word that we may be empowered to live without sinning even in a sinful world. Jesus promised us "The Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in My name, He shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you." Those who are under the training of the Holy Spirit will not only possess true wisdom and wealth but will also reflect the Fruit of the Spirit - the light of Christ - to the world.

The result of this education which has its root and branches in the Word of God "will be well-balanced minds; for the physical, mental, and moral powers will be harmoniously developed. There will be no paralysis in spiritual knowledge. The understanding will be quickened; the sensibilities will be aroused; the conscience will become sensitive; the sympathies and sentiments will be purified; a better moral atmosphere will be created; and a new power to resist temptation will be imparted. And all, both teachers and students, will become active and earnest in the work of God. {FE 433.3}

"Children may be trained for the service of sin or for the service of righteousness. The early education of youth shapes their characters both in their secular and in their religious life. Solomon says, "Train up a child in the way he should go; and when he is old, he will not depart from it." This language is positive. The training which Solomon enjoins is to direct, educate, and develop." {CG 297.1} However, to do this work effectively parents and teachers "must themselves understand 'the way' the child should go. This embraces more than merely having a knowledge of books. It takes in everything that is good, virtuous, righteous, and holy. It comprehends the practice of temperance, godliness, brotherly



kindness, and love to God and to one another. In order to attain this object, the physical, mental, moral, and religious education of children must have attention.” {CG 297.2}

The education of children is a matter of life and death decision entrusted by God to fathers and mothers. “In no case are they to let any line of business so absorb mind and time and talents that their children are allowed to drift until they are separated far from God. They are not to allow their children to slip out of their grasp into the hands of unbelievers. They are to do all in their power to keep them from imbibing the spirit of the world. They are to train them to become workers together with God. They are to be God’s human hand, fitting themselves and their children for an endless life.” {CG 298.1}

Examine Your Motives and Desires

It is of great import that as a Christian parent you “examine your desires, your aims for your children, and see if they will bear the test of God’s law? **The most essential education is that which will teach them the love and the fear of God.**”

It is unfortunate that so many Christians today consider worldly education superior to godly education. “The education that is lasting as eternity is almost wholly neglected as old-fashioned and undesirable. The educating of the children to take hold of the work of character building in reference to their present good, their present peace and happiness, and to guide their feet in the path cast up for the ransomed of the Lord to walk in, is considered not fashionable and, therefore, not essential. **In order to have your children enter the gates of the City of God as conquerors, they must be educated to fear God and keep His commandments in the present life.**

“Our lifework here is a preparation for the life eternal. The education begun here will not be completed in this life; it will be going forward through all eternity--ever progressing, never completed. More and more fully will be revealed the wisdom and love of God in the plan of redemption. The Saviour, as He leads His children to the fountains of living waters, will impart rich stores of knowledge. And day by day the wonderful works of God, the evidences of His power in creating and sustaining the universe, will open before the mind in new beauty. In the light that shines from the throne, mysteries will disappear, and the soul will be filled with astonishment at the simplicity of the things that were never before comprehended.” {CG 298.2-4}

God’s enemy has created many deceptions to lead parents away from God’s plan and His desire for us to raise godly families and children. We have been duped into thinking that we and our children need the council and wisdom of “the world” to get a “head start in life” and to “make it in this world.” But God says no, what we need is to be trained, educated and socialized in the Word of God and by the Holy Spirit with the sole purpose of being a faithful servant of

God and a true friend to mankind.

Educating Young Children

Contrary to popular practice “Children should not be long confined within doors, nor should they be required to apply themselves closely to study until a good foundation has been laid for physical development. For **the first eight or ten years of a child’s life** the field or garden is the best schoolroom, the mother the best teacher, nature the best lesson book. Even when the child is old enough to attend school, his **health should be regarded as of greater importance than a knowledge of books.** He should be surrounded with the conditions most favourable to both physical and mental growth.

“It is customary to send very young children to school. They are required to study from books things that tax their young minds... This course is not wise. A nervous child should not be overtaxed in any direction.” Instead, “During the first six or seven years of a child’s life, special attention should be given to its physical training, rather than the intellect. After this period, if the physical constitution is good, the education of both should receive attention. Infancy extends to the age of six or seven years. Up to this period children should be left, like little lambs, to roam around the house and in the yards, in the buoyancy of their spirits, skipping and jumping, free from care and trouble.

“Parents, especially mothers, should be the only teachers of such infant minds. They should not educate from books. The children generally will be inquisitive to learn the things of nature. They will ask questions in regard to things they see and hear, and parents should improve the opportunity to instruct and patiently answer those little inquiries. They can in this manner get the advantage of the enemy and fortify the minds of their children by sowing good seed in their hearts, leaving no room for the bad to take root. The mother’s loving instruction at a tender age is what is needed by children in the formation of character.” {CG 300.2-4}

Schooling Outside the Home

If and when the Christian parents decide to send their child to a school outside the Christian home it should only be to a truly Christian school. The enemy of God will certainly tempt us to follow the ways of the “world”. He will entice us as he did Eve in the Garden of Eden, with the lie, “your children will ‘not surely die: For God doth know that in the day’ they ‘eat thereof, then’ their ‘eyes shall be opened, and they shall be as gods [brilliant and successful], knowing good and evil [balanced and street-smart].” Genesis 3:4-5. But we must not like Eve buy into this lie which is designed to get us and our children to worship the idol of self, ambition, and ungodly wealth.

Instead let us respond as Jesus did when faced with the very same temptation. Matthew 4:8-10 describes it this way: “Again, the devil took him up into an exceeding high mountain, and showed him all the kingdoms

of the world, and the glory of them; And said unto him, All these things will I give thee, if thou wilt fall down and worship me. Then said Jesus unto him, 'Get thee hence, Satan: for it is written, Thou shall worship the Lord thy God, and him only shall thou serve.'" The truly Christian parent will echo these words of their Saviour when tempted to send their child to be educated by "the world."

Public Schools Unsafe and Ungodly

"In planning for the education of their children outside the home, parents should realize that **it is no longer safe to send them to the public school**, and should endeavour to **send them to schools where they will obtain an education based on a Scriptural foundation**. Upon every Christian parent there rests the solemn obligation of giving to his children an education that will lead them to gain a knowledge of the Lord and to become partakers of the divine nature through obedience to God's will and way.

"While the judgments of God were falling upon the land of Egypt, the Lord directed the Israelites not only to keep their children within their houses, but to bring in even their cattle from the fields... As the Israelites kept their children within their houses during the time when the judgments of God were in the land of Egypt, **so in this time of peril we are to keep our children separate and distinct from the world**. We are to teach them that the commandments of God mean much more than we realize. Those who keep them will not imitate the practices of the transgressors of God's law.

"Parents must regard God's Word with respect, obeying its teachings. To the parents in this day, as well as to the Israelites, God declares: 'These words... shall be in thine heart; and thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up. And thou shalt bind them for a sign upon thine hand, and they shall be as frontlets between thine eyes. And thou shalt write them upon the posts of thy house, and on thy gates.'" {CG 304.2-4}

"Notwithstanding this plain instruction, some of God's people permit their children to attend the public schools, where they mingle with those who are corrupt in morals. In these schools their children can neither study the Bible nor learn its principles. Christian parents, you must make provision for your children to be educated in Bible principles." {CG 305.1}

Neutralizes Bible Truth and Confuses The Child

"Do our children receive from the teachers in the public schools ideas that are in harmony with the Word of God? Is sin presented as an offense against God? Is obedience to all the commandments of God taught as the beginning of all wisdom? We send our children to the Sabbath school that they may be instructed in regard to the truth, and then as they go to the day school, lessons containing falsehood are given them to learn. These things confuse the mind, and should not be; for if the young receive ideas that pervert the truth, how will the influence of this education be counteracted?" {CG 305.2}

"Can we wonder that under such circumstances some of the youth among us do not appreciate religious advantages? Can we wonder that they drift into temptation? Can we wonder that, neglected as they have been, their energies are devoted to amusements which do them no good, that their

religious aspirations are weakened, and their spiritual life darkened? The mind will be of the same character as that upon which it feeds, the harvest of the same nature as the seed sown. Do not these facts sufficiently show the necessity of guarding from the earliest years the education of the youth? **Would it not be better for the youth to grow up in a degree of ignorance as to what is commonly accepted as education than for them to become careless in regard to the truth of God?"** {CG 305.3}

Parents "work as if you were working for your life to save the children from being drowned in the polluting, corrupting influences of the world. Give your children the Word of God as the foundation of all their education. This is full of beautiful lessons, and if pupils make it their study in the primary grade below, they will be prepared for the higher grade above." {CG 308.3, 310.3}

May God bless you as you seek the council of His Holy Spirit in the education of your child or children. Please do not allow the enemy to rob you or your child of the blessing of a complete Christian education. No amount of money, time or convenience should come between you and the doing of the will of your Father in Heaven. **Amen.**

Joseph and Charlet Patterson, Canada



Report Of The Annual Australian Field Conference

The welcoming invitation to our spiritual conference went out weeks before the event. Prayerfully we were hopeful that many of God's children would make the effort to attend. We were not disappointed. The grounds of Sydney church, where the conference was to be held, were manicured after enthusiastic efforts of church members during the preceding weeks.

In eagerness almost every attendee arrived the day before the appointed time. An unscheduled morning worship was conducted by Brother Glendon Higgins, our Australian Field President. His subject "The Spirit and the Letter of the Word" was in line with our theme "I Know Whom I Have Believed." We all assembled on Thursday night and we commenced our conference with the Sydney choir singing "What a Fellowship, What a Joy Divine Leaning on the Everlasting Arms." In the opening study Brother Higgins showed us the trustworthiness of God's Word and so began a weekend of devotion and fellowship.

The highlight of Friday's meetings was a 3 part series on the history of the church presented by Brother Henry Andrade (Minister), Brother Anton Salavyov (President of the Oceania Union) and Brother Higgins. Many musical items were enjoyed during the conference - having three choirs, the Sydney, Brisbane and Samoan.

The Divine Service on Sabbath showed how God is a God of order in the wider universe and in the micro-universe. He is also a God of order in our church with any independence representing a breakdown of the body of Christ. The Sabbath afternoon meeting brought testimonies from all over the Australian Field and New

Zealand. It was a beautiful fellowship with unity and sharing.

Sunday morning began with the baptism of one soul and the fellowshipment of another bringing much joy to us. During the conference another 6 souls expressed interest in joining the church. The celebration of the Lord's supper conducted by Brother Andrade and Brother Higgins was a sacred time of special fellowship.

Children's meetings were conducted by Sister Carol Higgins and impressions were made on young minds. The children explored the wonder of water and how it cleans and refreshes.

Beautiful floral arrangements and plentiful food were thoughtfully and lovingly prepared.

Brother Larry Ah-Ching began the last day with worship on topic of the vineyard. The vineyard must be fenced, the stones thrown out and the soil cultivated. The closing meeting was filled with testimonies and praise to God for His blessing at our conference. One added moment of fellowship was enjoyed with a picnic at Katoomba.

The spirit of the conference was one of caring, sharing and kindness to one another. We are blessed in Australia to have such loving members who are representing Jesus in their lives.

Praise to God is given for the 54 souls that attended our conference and also for other interested visitors.



THE COW THAT GOT STUCK IN THE MUD



CHILDREN'S CORNER

This is another “stick-to-it” story, but it is a story about Sister White when she was a little girl. The family name was Harmon, and the Harmon family lived in the country near Gorham, Maine. The home was on a hill. Back of the home was a valley. Through this valley there ran a little stream. This land back of the home on the hillside and across the stream was largely in woods and served as a cow pasture.

In the Harmon home, each of the children had their duties. They were taught to do their part in the home. They learned to do their work well. When Ellen was just a little girl, it was one of her tasks to go to the pasture gate in the evening and open the gate and bring the cow up to the shed where her father did the milking. Every evening when she would go down to get the cow, the cow was there, because cows have a way of knowing when it is time to be milked, and they know they will get something special to eat too.

And so each evening Ellen went down to the pasture gate, opened the gate, and brought the cow up to the shed. But one evening, as she went down to the gate, the cow wasn't there. “That's strange,” she thought, “where's bossy?” So she began to call, “Come bossy, come bossy, come bossy!” Then she listened, but she didn't hear a thing. Then she called louder, “Come bossy, come bossy, come bossy!” Then she listened. There wasn't any response, and she knew that something was wrong, because Bossy was always there when it was time to be milked.

Now I know some boys or girls who would have said, “Well, it's just too bad. If Bossy isn't here, there is nothing I can do about it. I can't help it.” But Ellen and her sisters and brother had been taught to carry responsibilities. They had been taught to find a way to do what needed to be done.

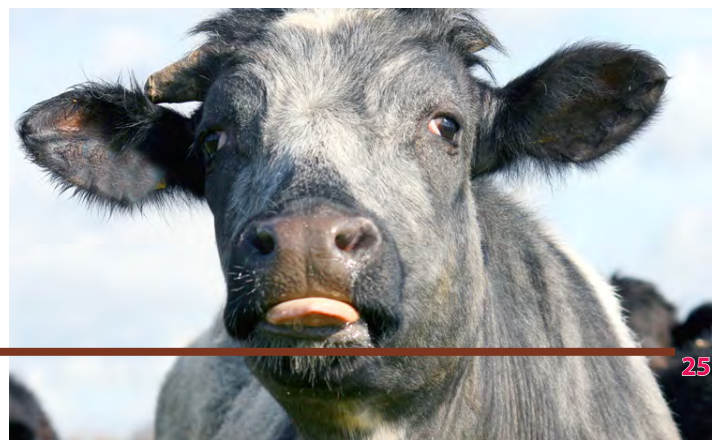
But where was Bossy? Ellen opened the pasture gate and she started walking down through the woods towards the little stream. And she kept calling, “Come bossy, come bossy, come bossy!” And then she listened. “Come bossy, come bossy, come bossy!” And then she listened. But she didn't hear a thing. She walked on and on down through the woods on the pasture trail. She kept calling. Finally when she got down near the stream, she called, “Come bossy,” and she heard just a faint “Moo!” She knew that Bossy was

nearby. She kept calling and she was looking this way and that. Finally she got to the stream, and there was Bossy, standing in the stream, stuck in the mud!

You may think it strange that a cow should get stuck in the mud, but I have known of cases where cows have been stuck for a day or two as they were in soft mud and were unable to get out.

Now what could Ellen do? Here was the cow and the cow was stuck. How could she get her out? She began to think. She found some nice tall grass, picked some big handfuls and reached out to where the cow could reach it. And oh, it tasted so good to Bossy! She got some more grass, and she reached out again, and Bossy could eat that. And then she got some more grass, but this time, she didn't give it to Bossy. With one hand, she took hold of Bossy's horn and she held the grass close to the cow's mouth, then she moved the grass quickly away. As she did this, she said, “Come on, Bossy!” and gave a quick pull on her horn. The cow reaching for the grass, made an extra effort and got out of the mud. And then Ellen let the cow eat the grass.

It was getting late when she got back to the house, but Bossy was with her. She had found a way to do that which needed to be done. This was a lesson that helped her all through her life. Sister White was called upon to do many hard things. It was because while she was a little girl she had learned to be faithful and to do what needed to be done that she was prepared to do larger and more difficult things later in life. We do not find that when Sister White had something difficult to do that she complained and said, “I can't do it;” No, she found away. This is a lesson that each boy and girl must learn too. If we learn this lesson, it will help us all through life.



THE MISSING MONEY

This story about the county treasurer and the missing money shows how God helped the people to know that the message of the pioneers was the truth and that He spoke to His people through the Spirit of Prophecy.

In the winter of 1849-1850, Elder and Mrs. White lived at Oswego, New York, right near Lake Ontario. While there, Elder White published several numbers of our first little paper, The Present Truth. He also held meetings and presented our message, particularly the Sabbath truth. Our pioneers called it the third angel's message, and we call it that today.

The Methodists were especially disturbed, and with a very earnest business man leading out, they held revival meetings. This man, whom we know only as Mr. M. was the county treasurer. The people were very much impressed and some found it hard to decide as to who was right, this man who upheld Sunday or Elder White, the young minister who had just moved to Oswego and who lived in a rented house with borrowed furniture, who was teaching the Sabbath truth. Mr. M., well-known in the town and the county treasurer conducting a religious revival, told the people that the Sabbath was not important. All that they had to do was to turn from sin and give their hearts to God.

Mr. Hiram Patch and the fine young lady he was about to marry were especially troubled. How could they know what was the truth in this matter? They were deeply impressed with the earnestness of the Methodist county treasurer and the meetings he held. They could also see clearly the Bible proofs for the Sabbath truth and the third angel's message.

About this time, Sister White was given a vision in which she was shown the true character of Mr. M., and that he was not honest. And she was instructed to tell Mr. Patch, "Wait a month, and you will know for yourself the character of the persons who are engaged

in this revival, and who profess to have such a great burden for sinners."

When Mrs. White told this to Mr. Patch, he said, "I will wait."

About two weeks later, as Mr. M., the county treasurer, in one of the revival meetings, was praying in agony for sinners, a blood vessel in his stomach broke, and he was carried home in great pain.

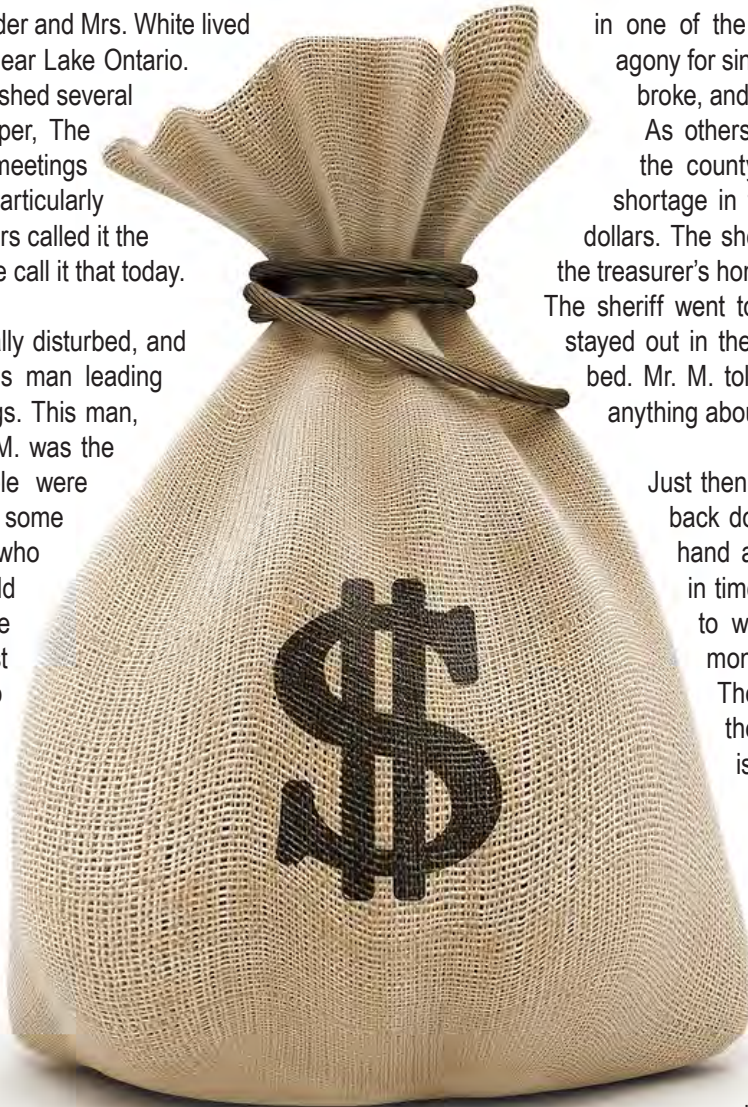
As others took over his treasurer's work at the county court house, they discovered a shortage in the county funds of one thousand dollars. The sheriff and his assistant were sent to the treasurer's home to ask about the missing money. The sheriff went to the front door and the assistant stayed out in the yard. The sheriff found Mr. M. in bed. Mr. M. told the sheriff that he did not know anything about the missing money.

Just then the sheriff's assistant came in the back door with Mrs. M. and he had in his hand a bag of money. He got there just in time to hear the treasurer call on God to witness that he had not taken the money.

The sheriff's assistant then held up the bag of money and asked, "What is this?"

As he stood outside while the sheriff went into the house, he had seen Mrs. M. go out the back door carrying a bag and this she quickly hid in a pile of snow. Then as she returned to the house, she met the man who had been watching her, and he took her back with him to get the bag. Just as he had suspected, it contained the missing money. The treasurer was put under arrest. The revival meetings collapsed, The people of the town were shocked.

Now Mr. Patch knew who had the truth and he, with the young lady he soon married accepted fully the third angel's message, joined the Sabbath keeping Adventists and were very faithful members. When they saw the fulfillment of the predictions of Sister White, they knew that God was guiding this people and that they had the truth.





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