

The Reformation *Messenger*

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



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

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.

ABOUT THE COVER

Located in the US and Canada and one of the largest in the world, Niagra Falls is considered one of the great natural wonders.

Photo: J. Reiser

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In a Biblical sense, when we talk about common fire, as opposed to sacred fire, the first story that often comes to mind is the story of the sons of Aaron. Although the sacred and common fires looked the same from outward appearance, God knew the difference. Nadab and Abihu had been anointed as priests to serve in the sanctuary. They had been given sacred duties to perform. They were not ignorant of the claims of God, however they did have a weakness and that was the indulgence of a depraved appetite. They partook of wine, which caused their reasoning powers to be blunted, which led them to bring common fire to the sanctuary. This was such a severe sin that they were punished by death.

What led these two young men to do this strange act? Was it sudden and impulsive? No, it was a lack of parental discipline. "Here is seen the result of loose discipline. As these sons of Aaron had not been educated to respect and reverence the commands of their father, as they disregarded parental authority, they did not realize the necessity of explicitly following the requirements of God." 3T 295. We live in an age when, if you discipline your children differently than the standard society has set up, your children may be removed from your home. You can be accused of child abuse for a simple spanking that does not even cause any bodily harm. The standard society has set is very loose and has produced a generation of youth of questionable morals and ethics. There is little respect for authority figures.

APPETITE

Nadab and Abihu would never have committed that fatal sin had they not first become partially intoxicated by the free use of wine. "The case of Aaron's sons has been placed upon record for the benefit of God's people, and should teach those especially who are preparing for the second coming of Christ, that the indulgence of a *depraved appetite* destroys the fine feelings of the soul, and so affects the reasoning powers which God has given to man, that spiritual and holy things lose their sacredness. Disobedience looks pleasing, instead of exceedingly sinful. Satan rejoices to see men formed in the image of their Maker, yield themselves as slaves to a *depraved appetite*; for he can then successfully control the powers of the mind, and lead those who are intemperate to act in a manner to debase themselves and dishonour God, by losing the high sense of His sacred requirements. It was the indulgence of the *appetite* which caused the sons of Aaron to use common, instead of sacred fire for their offerings." 1SP 279

From this paragraph we come to an understanding that the indulgence of any foods, not only wine, depraves our health and is dishonouring to God. It blunts the reasoning power and therefore the intellect is not so keen to discern between the common and sacred. How many Christians, and even Reformers, do not take dietary laws very seriously? They have lost the sense of common and sacred by indulgence. They see no necessity of being so extreme in diet as laid out by the Spirit of Prophecy. Small indulgences here and there are excusable and will not cause any harm. Here they make

a grave mistake. To be thinking in this manner is already showing that the mind has been depraved by the indulgence of appetite. The conscience is reassured that it is not such a major issue. Here they err. God is a God of order and justice. When God speaks... we ought to obey. Not one crumb should pass our lips that will not be of benefit; that will only satisfy the taste buds, but cause ill health to the rest of the system.

"If the faculties of the mind were in healthful vigour professed Christians would discern the inconsistency of such worship. Like Nadab and Abihu, their sensibilities are so blunted that they make no difference between the sacred and common. Holy and sacred things are brought down upon a level with their tobaccoed breaths, benumbed brains, and their polluted souls, defiled through indulgence of *appetite and passion*. Professed Christians eat and drink, smoke and chew tobacco, and become gluttons and drunkards, to gratify appetite, and still talk of overcoming as Christ overcame!" Con 84

MONEY

How can money be strange fire? Money is of great benefit to the cause of God, but it all depends on how the money is obtained. If it is obtained by fraud or by cheating – it is not sacred. If it is obtained by honest labour – it is sacred.

Also, some give to God only what is left over at the end of the week, rather than thinking of God first. When Israel came out of Egypt and they were preparing to build the sanctuary, Moses called for the people to bring offerings for the house of God. Did the Israelites have money? Yes, they received gifts, money, gold and jewels just prior to their departure from Egypt. They could have stopped to count the cost, thinking that they will need such and such an amount when they settle in Canaan so they should not give too much. They had to reserve a large portion for themselves for the future. They could have taken the best for themselves and given God that which was of lesser value. Did they indulge in this method of thinking? No, they gave heartily of the best they had.

What about our churches? Do we give them the best or do we give them what is left over? Often we may buy new dishes, furniture or curtains and what do we do with the old ones? We give the old ones as a donation to the church. The church will occasionally receive the leftovers while we save the best for ourselves. Is this not equated to common fire?

And why are some churches often in debt? Is it not because some members spend all their money for the finest for themselves and give God the few dollars that happen to be left in their wallet at the end of the week? Is this common fire? A cheap offering?

It is a common practice in many Christian churches to hold different fund raising events to gather money for the churches. These ideas were condemned by God because this excuses the members from

giving. God forbid that this would ever happen in God's church.

"Professed Christians reject the Lord's plan of raising means for His work; and to what do they resort to supply the lack? God sees the wickedness of the methods they adopt. Places of worship are defiled by all manner of idolatrous dissipation, that a little money may be won from selfish pleasure lovers to pay church debts or to sustain the work of the church. Many of these persons would not of their own accord pay one shilling for religious purposes. Where, in God's directions for the support of His work, do we find any mention of bazaars, concerts, fancy fairs, and similar entertainments? Must the Lord's cause be dependent upon the very things He has forbidden in His word--upon those things that turn the mind away from God, from sobriety, from piety and holiness?

"And what impression is made upon the minds of unbelievers? The holy standard of the word of God is lowered into the dust. Contempt is cast upon God and upon the Christian name. The most corrupt principles are strengthened by this un-Scriptural way of raising means. And this is as Satan would have it. Men are repeating the sin of Nadab and Abihu. They are using common instead of sacred fire in the service of God. The Lord accepts no such offerings." CS 204/5

"All these methods for bringing money into His treasury are an abomination to Him. It is a spurious devotion that prompts all such devising. O what blindness, what infatuation, is upon many who claim to be Christians! Church members are doing as did the inhabitants of the world in the days of Noah, when the imagination of their hearts was only evil continually. All who fear God will abhor such practices as a misrepresentation of the religion of Jesus Christ."--*R. & H. Dec. 8, 1896.* CS 205

"It is a deplorable fact that sacred and eternal considerations do not have that power to open the hearts of the professed followers of Christ to make freewill offerings to sustain the gospel, as the tempting bribes of feasting and general merriment. It is a sad reality that these inducements will prevail when sacred and eternal things will have no force to influence the heart to engage in works of benevolence.

"The plan of Moses in the wilderness to raise means was highly successful. There was no compulsion necessary. Moses made no grand feast. He did not invite the people to scenes of gaiety, dancing, and general amusement. Neither did he institute lotteries or anything of this profane order to obtain means to erect the tabernacle of God in the wilderness. God commanded Moses to invite the children of Israel to bring the offerings. Moses was to accept gifts of every man that gave willingly from his heart. These freewill offerings came in so great abundance that Moses proclaimed it was enough. They must cease their presents; for they had given abundantly, more than they could use.--*Counsels on Stewardship*, p. 203. (1874)" Ev 254



SPEECH

A third point I want to address as far as common fire is concerned is our words. "She openeth her mouth with wisdom and in her tongue is the law of kindness" Pro. 31:26. "The remnant of Israel shall not do iniquity, nor speak lies; neither shall a deceitful tongue be found in their mouth: for they shall feed and lie down, and none shall make them afraid." Zeph. 3:13

"The Lord will help everyone of us where we need help the most in the most grand work of overcoming and conquering self. Let the law of kindness be upon your lips and the oil of grace in your heart. This will produce wonderful results. You will be tender, sympathetic, courteous. You need all these graces. The Holy Spirit must be received and brought into your character; then it will be as holy fire, giving forth incense which will rise up to God, not from lips that condemn, but as a healer of the souls of men. Your countenance will express the image of the divine. No sharp, critical, blunt or severe words would be spoken. This is common fire and must be left out of all our councils and intercourse with our brethren. God requires every soul in His service to kindle their censers from the coals of sacred fire. The common, severe, harsh words that come from your lips so readily must be withheld, and the Spirit of God speak through the human agent. By beholding the character of Christ you will become changed into His likeness. The grace of Christ alone can change your heart and then you will reflect the image of the Lord Jesus. God calls upon you to be like Him, pure, holy and undefiled. We are to bear the divine image." (Letter 84, 1899)

Our words can either be kindled by sacred fire, or by common fire. Speech can have good value or it can be debased. This is a talent God has entrusted to each one of us and He will require us to answer for our words in the judgment. "The power of speech is a talent that should be diligently cultivated. Of all the gifts we have received from God, none is capable of being a greater blessing than this. With the voice we convince and persuade, with it we offer prayer and praise to God, and with it we tell others of the Redeemer's love. How important, then, that it be so trained as to be most effective for good." COL 335 "How many words are spoken in lightness and foolishness, in jesting and joking! This would not be so did the followers of Christ realize the truth of the words, 'Every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment.' " VSS 127

How important is it that we place a guard on our words? Every word is carefully recorded by our recording angel. Not only the words uttered, but the manner in which they were spoken and the motive behind the words. Jesus tells us in Mat 12:37, "for by thy words shalt thou be justified, and by thy words thou shalt be condemned." Although we may not use the vulgar language of the crude and corrupt people in this world, we are no better than they are if we speak evil of another person. Gossip... this is a terrible crime in the eyes of God. Read carefully the following testimony.

"Cease to dwell upon the shortcomings of others. Keep the tongue sanctified unto God. Refrain from saying anything that might detract from the influence of another; for by indulging in these words of criticism, you blaspheme God's holy name as verily as you would were you to swear...We need especially to guard against having a tongue that is sanctified to Satan. The tongue that God has given is to be used to glorify Him in speech. Unless it is, we shall be standing directly in the way of God's work in the world, and the judgments of heaven will surely fall upon us." MS 95, 1906
"If any man among you seem to be religious, and bridled not his tongue, but deceiveth his own heart, this man's religion is vain."
James 1:26

Our words are so important that they are an indication of the character. "He who speaks only what is pure and honest has attained to the goal of Christlikeness." 7BC p. 525. "For in many things we offend all. If any man offend not in word, the same is a perfect man, and is able to bridle the whole body." James 3: 2. Pure words are equated with having obtained Christlikeness. James even states that a man who has pure speech is a perfect man. A man's words reveal the tenor of his thoughts. If he controls his thoughts to the extent that his words are consistently Christ-like, the "whole body" is safely under control. Do right rather than talk about it. If the tongue is unbridled it is evidence that the inner man has not been transformed by the grace of God.

"For he that will love life, and see good days, let him refrain his tongue from evil, and his lips that they speak no guile." 1 Peter 3:10. The person who wants to have a happy life is one who controls his words and speaks no guile. Many friendships and promising careers have been shattered by a small considered impetuous word.

John in Revelation states that those who are saved are those who have a control of their speech. "And in their mouth was found no guile: for they are without fault before the throne of God." Rev. 14:5

And Paul is also very clear in giving counsel regarding speech. "Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth, but that which is good to the use of edifying, that it may minister grace unto the hearers." Eph. 4:29. "Not one word is to be spoken unadvisedly. No evil speaking, no frivolous talk, no fretful repining or impure suggestion, will escape the lips of him who is following Christ. The apostle Paul, writing by the Holy Spirit, says, 'Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth.' Eph. 4:29. A corrupt communication does not mean only words that are vile. It means any expression contrary to holy principles and pure and undefiled religion. It includes impure hints and covert insinuations of evil. Unless instantly resisted, these lead to great sin." COL 337 "We are counselled to let no corrupt communication proceed out of our mouth; but a corrupt communication is not simply something that is vile and vulgar. It is any communication that will eclipse from the mind the view of Christ, that will blot from the soul true sympathy and love. It is a communication in which the love of Christ is not

expressed but rather sentiments of an un-Christlike character." Letter 43, 1895 It is not good enough to only refrain from unseemly speech, but words are to accomplish a useful purpose. They are to edify, build up, making men better than they were before hearing the words.

"Do not, because you are among unbelievers, become careless in your words, for they are taking your measure. The Lord desires you to be soul winners. Do not try to reveal your smartness as theologians, even of Bible truth, for by so doing you will speak too many words that will be as little understood by them as Greek... Connect yourself firmly with Christ, and present the truth as it is in Him. Work as Paul worked. Wherever he was, whether before scowling Pharisees or Roman authorities, rich or poor, learned or ignorant, the cripple at Lystra or the convicted sinners in a Macedonian dungeon, he lifted up Christ as One who hates sin and loves the sinner, the One who bore our sins that He might have full power and authority to impart to us His righteousness." UL 342.

What should be the central theme of our conversation, especially on the Sabbath day? "Hearts cannot fail to be touched by the story of the atonement. Those who realize the necessity of keeping the heart under the control of the Holy Spirit will be enabled to sow seed that will spring up unto eternal life." UL 342

May God help us to think carefully about the fire we are offering the Lord. Are we offering common fire? Or are we offering sacred fire? There are many other areas in our Christian life where we can offer common fire – here we only addressed a few. Appetite is a major problem for the majority of people on this earth. They do not take seriously God's counsels on health and make light of the strict rules that have been laid out for God's people. Also who has our thoughts? Are we thinking of the cause of God? Are we seeking to support the Lord's work before our own? In the time of Haggai, the believers were doing such. "Thus saith the Lord of hosts; Consider your ways." Hag. 1:7. Their own worked was not prospering. "Ye looked for much, and, lo, it came to little; and when ye brought it home, I did blow upon it. Why? saith the Lord of hosts. Because of mine house that is waste, and ye run every man unto his own house. Ye have sown much, and bring in little; ye eat, but ye have not enough; ye drink, but ye are not filled with drink; ye clothe you, but there is none warm; and he that earneth wages earneth wages to put it into a bag with holes." Hag 1:9, 6. Those who have put God's work first, have found that, even if they have less time for their own work, it will prosper to a greater extent than had they initially only thought of themselves. If our thoughts are upon God continually, then our words will be seasoned with salt and they will minister grace to the hearers.

In every aspect of your life – offer to God the best... the sacred fire not the common fire. Although they may look the same, God knows the difference. **AMEN**

Wendy Eaton, Canada



There is a song with the following words—"Jesus pilot your children." Is Jesus really the name that you love to hear? Does your soul become thrilled through and through every time His name comes up before you? The only way in which this can happen is when we discover our wretchedness and His amazing love towards *"a wretch like me."* When we realise this it sends thrills through our soul because we discover the amazing Physician that could heal a sin wracked being. That is why Jesus spoke about the publican and the Pharisee. The one who went away was the Pharisee. So why didn't the publican go away? The publican remained with Jesus because he was a sinner and he knew it and he accepted the blessings of God. The Pharisee on the other hand thought he was alright. And because he thought he was alright, he could not sense that amazing love that God had for him. Humanity is sin sick. A deadly malady is upon the human race and only those who know this will seek for the remedy, for the heavenly Physician.

The description that is made in the Bible of the condition of God's church let alone the world, is written of in Isaiah 1:4-6. Here God is speaking to His own people who were under the prophet Isaiah. In verse 4 He talks about our sinful nature – a people laden with iniquity.

"Ah sinful nation, a people laden with iniquity, a seed of evildoers, children that are corrupters: they have forsaken the LORD, they have provoked the Holy One of Israel unto anger, they are gone away backward. Why should ye be stricken any more? ye will revolt more and more: the whole head is sick, and the whole heart faint. From the sole of the foot even unto the head there is no soundness in it; but wounds, and bruises, and putrifying sores: they have not been closed, neither bound up, neither mollified with ointment. Isa. 1:4-6

This is God's vision of the human family. And you can see that there needs to be a remedy for this condition. This is our meditation for today - a remedy. And where can we find such a remedy?

A remedy for such a condition as is mentioned in Psalm 103:2-5. "Bless the LORD, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits: Who forgiveth all thine iniquities; who healeth all thy diseases; Who redeemeth thy life from destruction; who crowneth thee with lovingkindness and tender mercies; Who satisfieth thy mouth with good things; so that thy youth is renewed like the eagle's."

The Great Physician is very near to us and He is the one who heals all our diseases and putrifying sores, spiritually speaking. We are desperately sick mentally, physically and spiritually, as we know so well.

In Malachi 4:2 it says that He is the one who can provide the remedy. But through what avenue does He and can He provide the remedy? "But unto you that fear my name shall **the Sun of righteousness arise with healing in his wings**; and ye shall go forth, and grow up as calves of the stall."

Here is a beautiful statement that explains where the remedy comes from and how it comes through us. So where does this healing come from? It comes from the Son of righteousness--to those who fear His name. But the question that people always ask me is, HOW? People can see that there is a remedy but they don't know how to apply it--how to actually connect with these healing rays.

"Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness: **by whose stripes ye were healed.**" 1 Peter 2:24.

Can you see how the healing impact takes place in my being? As I see myself as I really am as described in Isaiah. My sins that are the source of my disease were in Christ's own body like they are in me. And with my sins in His body Jesus died so that we should live unto righteousness. There is the healing balm--by His stripes we are healed. My sins that deserved eternal death Jesus died with and as I appreciate my deplorable condition which Jesus died with it says--we may be dead to sins and He will arise with healing in his wings – by His stripes we are healed.

By His stripes we are healed! There is something in the gift of Jesus on the cross and in His life that has a remedial effect and we touched on it there in the Scripture readings.

Here is the precious comment on this - a divine remedy we are dealing with in the healing of a sin sick soul:

A Divine Remedy for Sin.--The atonement of Christ (Jesus death and resurrection – the atonement) is not a mere skillful way to have our sins pardoned; it is a divine remedy for the cure of transgression and the restoration of spiritual health. It is the Heaven-ordained means by which the righteousness of Christ may be not only upon us but in our hearts and characters (Letter 406, 1906). {6BC 1074.2}

This is the remedy! The atonement of Jesus is the remedy and the cure for our transgression. It is something that cures you of your sinful condition.

When a transgression is cured it ceases to exist – is that right? A transgression is an act or a behaviour pattern that transgresses the commandments of God and when that behaviour is cured it no longer transgresses. The atonement of Christ is a remedy for the transgression. It affects something that you are doing so that you no longer do it. We need to have a logical application of the atonement to rectify our transgression and this logical application is an activity of the mind. The activity of the atonement upon my mind will be able to stop me from transgressing and cure me from that practice. I need to have an application of that package that renders itself to my appreciation or I will keep on sinning. I need something to heal my rationale and heal my wrong way of thinking.

I would like to consider this in reference to the practices in the churches, which create such serious consequences – namely GOSSIP.

Gossipers and news-carriers are a terrible curse to neighborhoods and churches. Two-thirds of all the church trials arise from this source. {SA 162.1}

How much trouble arises in the church from gossip? Two thirds! If we could irradiate two thirds of the trials of the church wouldn't you be happy? We need a remedy that is practical and applicable to the practice of gossip that will wipe it out. This is the sermon title. By understanding this process it will help us to understand other processes as well. The application that erases from our life the process of transgression.

What I have just verbalized comes from our scripture reading: "Where no wood is, there the fire goeth out: so where there is no talebearer, the strife ceaseth." Prov. 26:20. In other words, if you remove the wood you won't have a fire.

Remove tale bearing and you won't have strife! This is a very simple intelligent reality--the remedy, the removal of tale bearing, gossip.

I want to identify the word "gossip" in our minds, because if you want to cure something first you have to know what the disease is. You have to diagnose the problem to apply the cure.

So what is gossip? If you look in a descriptive dictionary here are the words that describe gossip

Gossip – Definition: Tale bearing, groundless rumor, hearsay, whispering behinds ones back, backbiting, scandal, scandal mongering, idol talk, tittle tattle, comment, report, that is all under the title of gossip and a person who is a gossip is an idle tattler, a tale bearer, a rumor monger, a scandal monger, a busy body, a meddler. These are the terms used to describe gossip in the descriptive dictionary.

So let us inquire how true those statements are in relation to gossip by reading Spirit of Prophecy Vol 5 and there we can explore in our mind the true meaning of this practice.

"It pains me to say that there are unruly tongues among church members. There are false tongues that feed on mischief. There are sly, whispering tongues. There is tattling, impertinent meddling, adroit quizzing (this is clever questioning - where you are asked questions in such a way that a particular thing a person is looking to understand is drawn out of you). Among the lovers of gossip some are actuated by curiosity, others by jealousy, many by hatred against those through whom God has spoken to reprove them. All these discordant elements are at work. Some conceal their real sentiments, while others are eager to publish all they know, or even

suspect, of evil against another.

"I saw that the very spirit of perjury, that would turn truth into falsehood, good into evil, and innocence into crime, is now active. Satan exults over the condition of God's professed people. While many are neglecting their own souls, they eagerly watch for an opportunity to criticize and condemn others. All have defects of character, and it is not hard to find something that jealousy can interpret to their injury. "Now," say these self-constituted judges, "we have facts. We will fasten upon them an accusation from which they can not clear themselves." They wait for a fitting opportunity and then produce their bundle of gossip and bring forth their tidbits". 5T 94

Here we see a description of the disease and as we read that we can see how easily the disease affects us as human beings. What does the Bible say to help us further appreciate the dimensions of this disease?

We are exploring the disease so that we can intelligently apply the remedy. "Thou shalt not go up and down as a talebearer among thy people: neither shalt thou stand against the blood of thy neighbour: I am the LORD." Lev. 9:16.

What does God say? We are not to go among God's people as a tale bearer. We are not to spread stories about others--it is forbidden.

Some people think **if it's true** it is not gossip, but that is also wrong. "A talebearer revealeth secrets: but he that is of a faithful spirit concealeth the matter." Prov. 11:13.

So gossip is to enlarge something that is a secret of another person's experience. So if the matter is true and it has come to my ears then I will conceal the matter if I am of a faithful spirit. Thou shalt not go among the people of God to tale bear a secret.

"The words of a talebearer are as wounds, and they go down into the innermost parts of the belly." Prov. 18:8.

The words of a talebearer are as wounds as they go down into the inner most parts of the belly – wounds – oh, how many wounds exist in our life because of this "two thirds" problem among people.

"But let none of you suffer as a murderer, or as a thief, or as an evildoer, or as a busybody in other men's matters." 1 Peter 4:15.

Here is another word that we say – Busy Body!

Under the words of inspiration a busy body is on the same level as a murderer, a thief and an evil doer. So with everything I have read here we now understand the nature of the disease. It is a mind activity in which I am watching the depravity of other people. And as I am watching the depravity, I beginning to ponder and enlarge that errorsome things that they are doing around me and then I spread the evil thoughts that I conjure in my mind and report the

evil that I have seen and heard by speaking in my conversation with others. This is the disease. When we read the Bible, what does it say I should be doing in relation to this?

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

Here is what you should be doing with your mind and as I read this can you see the disease. We know what our minds should be preoccupied with but what are we doing?

If I am thinking of a true story but it is not a good report – DON'T THINK ABOUT IT. If it is true but not lovely--DON'T THINK ABOUT IT. But how many people can't help themselves? Can you go to bed at night and switch your wrong thoughts off? Every human being suffers from this disease to a larger or lesser degree.

Our minds become active when we get the right circumstances with people who can see things just like us and then we start to talk about it, and then they each begin to question one another. Is that right? Gossip is a disease and it needs a remedy. Understand the nature of it. We understand that there is a practical treatment that is necessary. Gossip is a practical behaviour, a thought pattern that needs a remedy to stop the person from doing it. The wood must be removed that creates the fire. So what then is the relevant remedy? I introduced it in the beginning – the atonement.

The question is, if the remedy for the disease is the atonement of Jesus Christ, how can I apply it so that it is effective in clearing my brain from these kinds of diseased thought patters and conversations that get the better of me?

Notice several times I read the word "putrefying sores" next to "gossip" in the Spirit of Prophecy. Many years back I did my nurse's training and I know what a putrefying sore smells like. The spirit of gossip is the smell of a putrefying mess, which is part of the human dilemma. The spirit of gossip stinks. It needs something to occupy it so it can tell others about it and spread the smell. So what can stop or deal with this putrefaction--a putrefaction in which there is a need of talking to people, a need of sharing something, an internal drive where I can't keep this to myself I have to talk to somebody? The only way that you can apply a remedy to such a spirit is to **startle it with the most exciting story that has ever been told.** That story will incite the person to think, "wow, now I can go and tell somebody about something." I will tell you about this most exciting story later.

Tale bearing and gossiping is identified as a graveyard in your body. Romans 3:10 talks about the general condition of the human race. This was hard for me to accept as a Christian but the Lord said to me, unless you recognise the way you really are I can't help you.

"As it is written, There is none righteous, no, not one...Their throat is an open sepulchre; with their tongues they have used deceit; the poison of asps is under their lips." Romans 3:10, 13.

Sepulcher = grave. And the dead go through the mouth of that grave. Our throats absorb other people and we swallow them.

In Adventist Home the spirit of gossiping is identified. This is a startling discovery—my throat, mouth and tongue is full of death. I am swallowing people up through my throat.

"We think with horror of the cannibal who feasts on the still warm and trembling flesh of his victim; but are the results of even this practice more terrible than are the agony and ruin caused by misrepresenting motive, blackening reputation, dissecting character?" AH 440

Sis. White is talking of the spirit of gossip and tale bearing, which Satan delights to use to sow strife. It is equated with the cannibal who is eating the flesh and drinking the blood of another person – that is gossiping – dissecting another person's character with a knife and fork and then feasting upon it. Doesn't this make you think how terrible gossip is? When we feel tempted to gossip we need to understand the consequences of that crime and what we are actually doing to another person.

"And the sea gave up the dead which were in it; and death and hell delivered up the dead which were in them: and they were judged every man according to their works. And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death." Rev. 20:13, 14.

Can you imagine the experience of people who are going to suffer the consequences of sin in their lives at the second death? Imagine the experience--abject hopelessness, complete blackness of outlook. As we read the Word we realise that this is the condition of everyone of us as we continue along this path, the hopeless torment that wracks the being. But we read of hope for our dreadful condition in John 3:16: "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life."

The horrible reality of what gossip is--the crime of dissecting other human beings and having them for dinner is of such a consequence that it brings destruction upon myself in the judgment. But then comes this other picture into the equation of God sacrificing His only begotten Son for us because He so loved us. What a story! What a meditation! What a thing to spend your mind on! Here is my sure result of the second death experience but God so loved me in my diseased condition that he says – I don't want you to perish like that so I am going to give you my Son, Jesus. And what did Jesus Christ experience?

Now here is a story for a mind which loves to tell tales to become preoccupied with--the experience of abject alienation because of the sin and the crime of such a thing as gossip "To the chief Musician upon Aijeleth Shahar, A Psalm of David. **My God, my**

God, why hast thou forsaken me? (This is Jesus talking in the Psalms) why art thou so far from helping me, and from the words of my roaring? O my God, I cry in the daytime, but thou hearest not; and in the night season, and am not silent. Ps. 22:1-2.

What is this person experiencing? No hope--suffering entire guilt for which there is no remedy--separation from God. And who is the one speaking here? "But I am a worm, and no man; a reproach of men, and despised of the people." Ps. 22:6. Isn't a cannibal despised of the people eating that worm blood flesh? "My strength is dried up like a potsherd; and my tongue cleaveth to my jaws; and thou hast brought me into the dust of death. For dogs have compassed me: the assembly of the wicked have enclosed me: they pierced my hands and my feet. I may tell all my bones: they look and stare upon me. They part my garments among them, and cast lots upon my vesture." Ps. 22:15-18.

For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten son--for what? That He would experience our terrible experiences in Himself-- even though He committed no sin. He suffered the dire results of abject disassociation from any hope (the same hopelessness we feel when we sin against God) and He calls out in despair on the cross "*My God, my God why hast thou forsaken me.*" Have you ever been in such dire straights about your condition so that your tongue sticks to the top of your mouth? Jesus Christ experienced this – the second death of your experience.

"Upon Christ as our substitute and surety was laid the iniquity of us all (including gossip.) He was counted a transgressor, that He might redeem us from the condemnation of the law. The guilt of every descendant of Adam was pressing upon His heart. (Have you felt horror upon your heart? It pressed upon Him. The wrath of God against sin, the terrible manifestation of His displeasure because of iniquity, filled the soul of His Son with consternation. All His life Christ had been publishing to a fallen world the good news of the Father's mercy and pardoning love. Salvation for the chief of sinners was His theme. But now with the terrible weight of guilt He bears, He cannot see the Father's reconciling face. The withdrawal of the divine countenance from the Saviour in this hour of supreme anguish pierced His heart with a sorrow that can never be fully understood by man. So great was this agony that His physical pain was hardly felt.

"Satan with his fierce temptations wrung the heart of Jesus. The Saviour could not see through the portals of the tomb. Hope did not present to Him His coming forth from the grave a conqueror, or tell Him of the Father's acceptance of the sacrifice. He feared that sin was so offensive to God that Their separation was to be eternal. Christ felt the anguish which the sinner will feel when mercy shall no longer plead for the guilty race. It was the sense of sin, bringing the Father's wrath upon Him as man's substitute, that made the cup He drank so bitter, and broke the heart of the Son of God." DA 753

The physical pain that Christ experienced on the cross was

Strive To Enter In

These are the words of Jesus, "Strive to enter in at the strait gate: for many, I say unto you, will seek to enter in, and shall not be able." Luke 13:24.

This does not give a picture of quiet peaceful living in ease and comfort, but the opposite. While we have mighty helpers, yet we ourselves must put out an earnest effort in order to enter in.

Many start cheerfully on the Christian way. They leave the world behind and start walking with the people of God. But then the way is long, and the constant battle against sin and temptations is fierce, and they grow weary.

Sister White wrote in her first vision, "But soon some grew weary, and said the city was a great way off, and they expected to have entered it before... Others rashly denied the light behind them and said that it was not God that had led them out so far. The light behind them went out, leaving their feet in perfect darkness, and they stumbled and lost sight of the mark and of Jesus, and fell off the path down into the dark and wicked world below." EW 14,15.

Some years ago I took a language course in night school, starting in the fall. In the beginning there was a full class, about 40 students, all eager to learn a new language. In December there were 20 students left, and in the spring time there were six of us who completed the course.

The same thing happens in the church of God. When we look at old Conference pictures we see those who used to be in the church but now have lost their faith and gone away.

The Christian life is a constant striving against pride, covetousness, jealousy, hasty temper, impatience, moody disposition, and selfishness. And there is no resting until we reflect the image of Jesus perfectly.

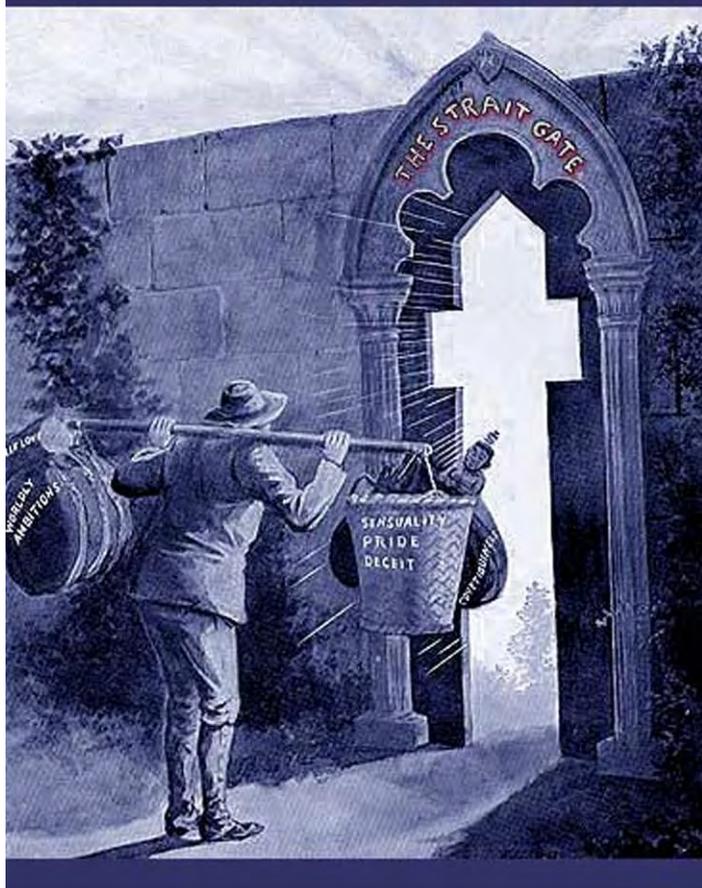
Peter gives us counsel, "Ye therefore, beloved, seeing ye know these things before, beware lest ye also, being led away with error of the wicked, fall from your own steadfastness." 2 Pet. 3:17.

When the old Israel had come to the border of the Promised Land they said, "Were it not better for us to return into Egypt? And they said one to another, Let us make a captain, and let us return into Egypt." Num. 14: 3, 4.

We also have come to the borders of the Promised Land and we repeat the history of ancient Israel. Many are becoming weary and stop striving for perfection of the character.

It is so easy to fall down, like Adam and Eve, and lose the holy character. But to come up again into holiness and perfection takes great effort and time.

God has given us mediums for our salvation; they are the Bible, Spirit



of Prophecy books, Sabbath School lessons, church meetings, and the privilege of prayer. If we neglect anyone of these mediums, it shows that we are not really striving to enter in. The further helps for our character development are: fasting, missionary work, health reform, and sacrifice of our means.

If we are truly serious of our salvation and realize the perfection that is required for it, we will not neglect the church meetings. We will become active in missionary work, nothing can hold us back. Everything else in our life becomes secondary and less important to us. We will be like the disciples of Jesus, with Him constantly.

"When the disciples heard the words of Jesus, they felt their need of Him. They sought, they found, they followed Him. They were with Him in the house, at the table, in the closet, in the field. They were with Him as pupils with a teacher, daily receiving from His lips lessons of holy truth. They looked to Him, as servants to their Master, to learn their duty." SC 72.

This is what we need to do also. Enoch walked with God daily, and it is a privilege for us to have Him as our life companion also.

Satan knows that if we keep striving for perfection we will gain it and he will lose us. Now, therefore he has found a way to stop our striving, and it is self-righteousness.

A self-righteous person thinks that he is good enough, and even better than others. He feels that he is "rich, and increased with goods and have need of nothing." While his true condition is "wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked."

"Were you cold, there would be some hope that you would be converted; but where self-righteousness girds one about, instead of the righteousness of Christ, the deception is so difficult to be seen, and the self-righteousness so hard to be put away, that the case is most difficult to reach. An unconverted, godless sinner stands in a more favourable condition than such." Test. Vol. 2, p. 176.

Paul compares this striving to fighting a war, "Fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on eternal life." 1 Tim. 6:12.

"I therefore so run, not as uncertainly; so fight I, not as one that beateth the air: but I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection: lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway." 1 Cor. 9: 26, 27.

"The warfare against self is the greatest battle that was ever fought. The yielding of self, surrendering all to the will of God, requires struggle; but the soul must submit to God before it can be renewed in holiness." SC 43.

"Self-denial for Christ's sake is the battle before us." Test. Vol. 4, p. 457.

"Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling." Phil. 2:12.

These Bible texts and testimonies give us a clear picture of what we must do in order to be saved. We must truly strive with all our might in order to enter in. Millions of professed Christians will fail in the end because they did not put out an effort sufficient to overcome. God will help only those who put out their utmost in order to overcome.

The old Israel during their wilderness journey kept the Sabbath faithfully, they paid their tithes and offerings, and attended all worship meetings, yet so few of them entered the Promised Land. They did not have all the worldly temptations that we have today. It is harder today to reach the perfection that God requires. Therefore we must put out greater effort into it than before. After 154 years the 144,000 number is not yet full.

"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, every hour. By a momentary act of will, one may place himself in the power of evil; but it requires more than a momentary act of will to break these fetters, and attain to a higher, holier life. The purpose may be formed, the work begun; but its accomplishment will require toil, time and perseverance, patience and sacrifice." Test. Vol. 8, p. 313

Let us put out a supreme effort and strive to enter in through the strait gate. Heaven and eternal life are well worth it. There is no easier way to gain salvation, and everyone can make it with the help of God. **AMEN.**

Timo Martin, Canada

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ims
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worship the Creator of the universe. The Sun of Righteousness, who suffered and died for them, is the Lord of their hearts. We can read a wise advice in *Adventist Home*, p. 343, "Close the windows of the soul earthward, and open them heavenward. If your voices are uplifted in prayer to heaven for light, the Lord Jesus, who is light and life, peace and joy, will hear your cry. He, the Sun of Righteousness, will shine into the chambers of your mind, lighting up the soul temple."

If Jesus, the Sun of Righteousness, is our righteousness and we are hidden in Him, His love is permanently burning in our heart and motivates us to give testimony of God's mercy and goodness.

The prophet Jeremiah saw violence and spoil all around him and since he faithfully served the Lord, he was laughed at and scorned to the point that he made a decision, "*I will not make mention of him, nor speak any more in his name.*" But what happened?

"But [his word] was in mine heart as a burning fire shut up in my bones, and I was weary with forbearing, and I could not [stay]." Jeremiah 20:9 Next thing, he announces to king Zedekiah the destruction of Jerusalem. No good news. The prophet suffered much due to the messages he delivered to his people so that they could come to repentance and be saved. The worshiping of foreign gods, fruit of man's imagination, had sunk the country in a miserable situation. The Prophet Ezekiel was given a vision of the priests of the living God worshiping the sun in the Lord's own temple!

The sun was a subject of adoration in most ancient cultures, from the Aztecs, the Mayan and the Incas in Latin America to the ancient Egyptian, Greek, Roman and far eastern civilizations. History tells us that in the year 321 A.D, emperor Constantine set up a day in which people should not work for the sake of the sun and that day is called Sunday up to our days. Not a pyramid or an obelisk, but a memorial of heathen religion as opposite to the religion of Jesus Christ. Anybody would say this belongs to the past; nobody builds pyramids nowadays to offer sacrifices to the sun. Sunday keeps its heathen name, but Christians worship the Sun of Righteousness-- Jesus Christ. Is it really so?

In a German newspaper, on 22 June two pictures were published that call our attention to this matter. In Times Square, in New York City, "yoga enthusiasts gathered in an extraordinary performance to celebrate the summer solstice by practicing some bodily exercises" and one can clearly distinguish that they are doing the well known yoga exercise: the Greeting of the Sun. The same day, something similar happened in England and the same newspaper published a picture under which we read "Mystic and esoteric summer solstice in Stonehenge" and explains that thousands of people gathered there to celebrate the shortest night of the year and that in that place supernatural powers are considered to work. One can easily see this by the expression on some people's faces.

In Daniel Dossman's book about Yoga, the ex-yogi who by God's

grace became a Christian, we read some interesting information about this very popular ancient practice. There is a paragraph in which he explains the "Greeting of the Sun" as an exercise through which the yogi tries to become sensitive to the power of the sun and the stars and to all that has to do with the sphere of magnetism. He has to place even his bed in a place that can be reached by cosmic currents and sleep in certain positions that facilitate the influence of this cosmic power upon him. In this way, says the author, man becomes a slave of the powers of nature and he quotes the Bible, "*Take ye therefore good heed unto yourselves;... lest thou lift up thine eyes unto heaven, and when thou seest the sun, and the moon, and the stars, [even] all the host of heaven, shouldest be driven to worship them, and serve them...*" Deuteronomy 4:15, 19.

The worshiping of the sun does not belong only to the past but is practiced today, in our modern civilization and is closely related to esotericism and occultism. The apostle of the Gentiles writes, "*But all things that are reprov'd are made manifest by the light...*" and he warns us to redeem the time, "*because the days are evil.*" Ephesians 5:13, 16.

In Daniel Dossman's book we read, "Jesus overcame all these powers of darkness on the cross. Through the cross He sets free whoever comes to Him in order to be liberated. The demons flee from the power of His blood."

Jesus' invitation is still today, "*Come unto me, all [ye] that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.*" Matthew 11:28.

May the Lord help us to be among the ones in whose hearts the Sun of Righteousness has risen with healing in His wings...

I translated some motivating thoughts found in a card, "Lighter the steps, happier the mood, brighter the look, warmer the flame, surer the goal, firmer the walk, Jesus is Victor, Jesus comes soon! 'And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain...' Revelation 21:4." ***Amen. Even so, come Lord Jesus!***

Teresa Corti

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The Triumph Of Disappointment

"And lest I should be exalted above measure through the abundance of the revelations, there was given to me a thorn in the flesh, the messenger of Satan to buffet me, lest I should be exalted above measure." (1Corinthians 12:7)

BITTERNESS

I wonder how many reading or hearing this message are facing disappointments in their lives, and have discovered a tinge of bitterness in their Christian experience? Well, it may be that our attitude toward our failings is rather like that of the person who says, "Yes, it is all very well for so-and-so, but you do not know how I have suffered, and what I am up against." Moreover, it is very tempting to think that our lot is harder than the lot of another; to say, "It is easy for him to be radiant, to be victorious." That attitude, you must admit, can be quite unjust. God's people often have secret sorrows and suffer disappointments in a turbulent world of cascading disappointments.

"Bitter disappointments are awaiting many professed Christians." (1 SM 81, 82). Yes, it's true, we all meet with disappointments, often because of choosing our own way instead of God's way. Also, because we tend to "seek an easier way in life, and, also, strive to seek happiness, primarily because of our selfish interests." (TDG 280:3; 1 MCP 271:2).

GONE WITH THE WIND

But, by defining disappointment, we may be able to understand more of the winds of circumstance and the suffering that accompanies it. Disappointment, simply defined is a failure to fulfill (hope); ah! It gets worse; in Greek it means the charm and fascination is gone! In all, it thereby, frustrates. Ah! But, we can understand by this, too, and on the positive side, that behind the most radiant life there is often the most bitter trials and frustrations,; and that life, which is so wonderfully used of God, is at the same time most violently attacked or assailed.

DISAPPOINTED SERVANTS

Many ancient servants of God suffered keen disappointments and trials. Elijah's spirit was crushed by disappointment. Martha and Mary suffered the death of their brother Lazarus. The disciples of Jesus suffered the cruel crucifixion of Jesus. Moses was exiled. The Israelites suffered the crossing of the Red Sea. The Millerite Adventists suffered the disappointment of 1844. Job experienced the problem of suffering. John the Baptist was imprisoned. Jesus "Christ was subjected to disappointment in His own home; suffered in His efforts to save souls; but, was never dejected by disappointment." (3SM 130:0; 3T 525; DA 330).

CHIEF OF ALL

No other Christian, however, could match the suffering and disappointments of the Apostle Paul and his “unwilling boasting!” (2Corinthians 10-12). He suffered a succession of disappointments! Paul was, firstly, disappointed with the Church of Corinth. It was unspiritual, experiencing divisions, and infested with false prophets. They didn't trust him, bitterly criticizing him; accusing him of being insincere, questioning his apostolic authority, and called him a coward, weakling, and fanatic. Is this, perhaps, a familiar ominous reckoning for the Christian in the face of the enemy as the end approaches?

So, let's now look further into the inner heart of Paul, that great warrior and saint. Some, again, say, oh, it was easy for Paul with all of his experience, understanding, eloquence, and knowledge. But, through Paul's experiences, there is a lesson for us today, as God can teach our willing hearts in “disappointment.”

The three important words in understanding the resultant hurt and unhappiness of disappointment are: 1. Frustration, 2. Revelation, and 3. Transformation.

1. FRUSTRATION

In our opening verse we read again, “there was given unto me a thorn in the flesh.” (v-7). Here we see the anguishing heart of Paul, the pressure of a trial. Ah! But, the nature of Paul's thorn in the flesh is not revealed to us. What could it have been? Was it a weakness that made him acutely aware of his temperament, personality, character? Maybe it was a remembrance of his old nature with all its weaknesses and sinfulness. Or, maybe it was a physical disability of some kind which threatened his usefulness in God's service so that its origin could only be ascribed to Satan; an eye disease (Gal 6:11). Another may have been malaria, which was common in the Mediterranean world at that time. Or, some kind of body pain? Then, too, was it the pressure of spiritual opposition, and the presence of false prophets in his midst? Ah! Maybe it was Satan's temptations that were plaguing him? A powerful deterrent in one's everyday life!

There is a story of a young boy sitting on a fence opposite his neighbor's flourishing apple tree. The owner approached the youngster, and asked, “young man are you planning on stealing one of my apples?” The young boy answered, “no sir, I am just trying hard not to.” You see, temptations can be overpowering, disappointing.

Well, whatever it was, Paul wanted to be rid of it! Free of it! “If only this thorn would be removed; if only this pressure would be relieved; if only my health would be restored; if only the opposition would stop; if only Satan would leave me.”

Let me compassionately ask you--is there in your life the pressure of some sore trial? Has your thinking through the past few weeks,

months, years, been along this same line--if only...? If only the pain would be relieved, if only my husband or wife would be more keen, eager, stronger, if only my children would listen or change, if only the congregation was more responsive when I preach, if only our family disputes would stop, if only I had better health, if only I had a job, or a different job, if only I had more money to get me out of debt, if only I wasn't so weak, if only...!” If, if, if, if!! I pray God here and now that we may leave our “if only's” behind us forever! Surprised? We will explain further.

But first, “we need to brace ourselves against disappointment.” (Ev 489). (I love this one!) “Don't hoard your disappointments!” (ML 327).

Furthermore, not only the pressure of a trial, but there's the **persistence** of it. It just lingers on and on! Here's where there's more disappointment. So, Paul, a power of faith, continued to suffer disappointment, crying out, “for this I besought the Lord three times that it might depart from me.” (v-8).

What did the brilliant but broken Paul do? Well, he did, and what you have done, and are now doing... pray! So, as to face the trial, the eloquent and heroic man of faith faced the pressure of the “thorn” and started praying. “I besought the Lord three times, that it might depart from me.” (v-9). You see, Paul's thinking was that this thorn “had to go,” and that he would be “better off without it.” Yet, on the other hand, it is written, “pray without ceasing!” (1 Thess 5:17).

Have you been praying about your trial? Do you have the same attitude or conviction that Paul had? That you would be better without it; praying that God would only take it away? Well, friends, I want to learn with you, and notice that not only was the disappointed Paul praying, but that he **stopped praying** about it! “I besought the Lord three times.” The praying then stopped, but,... ah! The pressure was still there. Paul stayed on, persevering until the end of the road!

Maybe, believers and friends, God wants you to stop praying. Yes, to stop asking Him to take out of your life something he has no intention of removing!

2. REVELATION

After Paul stopped praying, we notice that God now spoke to him, “He said unto me.” (v-9). He heard the “still small voice of God.” In our praying about a trial, is it possible that we are so busy saying things to God that maybe we do not listen to what He wants to say to us? Maybe it's the same as that which God spoke to Paul, that there was some purpose in his trial.

Ah! Yes, Paul understood, saying, not only once but twice, “lest I be exalted above measure.” (v-7). Paul was wrong in a way, if it's possible, to thinking about the thorn of flesh as being useless, but worse, a hindrance. Paul discovers the important way God sees it, not the way Paul sees it. You see, as long as the pressure remains, he will never be a proud man; being aware always of his old decrepit

nature; the "chief of sinners.!"

But, why was this step necessary? Well, God knew best what Paul needed, just as what you and I need. God had to make sure Paul's usefulness would not be lost, and that he be a humble, meek, gentle, kind soul. God burned into his tender soul, and attempts to do the same with us, that "without Jesus we cannot do anything." (John 15:5).

I can't begin to think what God's purpose is in your life, and the trial you may be going through. But, certainly, He will tell you! His purpose in your life may be character. But, friend and child of God, there is a **purpose behind pressure!**

The second revelation God made to Paul was that of His glorious provision for the trial, in saying, "**my grace is sufficient for thee.**" (Math 6:34). This is God's provision for every need when we need it. Have you been praying to God to take something out of your life? Perhaps, a change in circumstances, conditions, quality of life, needs, burdens, or any number of things, while God all along is speaking to you—not to be taken away? God's riches are available at God's expense. Are you ready to believe God made adequate and efficient provisions for you?

If so, then the Third Word of the picture of Disappointment can be experienced.

3. TRANSFORMATION

What a glorious transformation we find in Him! We discover here a double transformation: weakness into strength, and sadness into joy! Paul tells us, for "most gladly will I rather glory in mine infirmity." (v-10)

Here we have a transfer from weakness into strength. Isn't your heart at hearing this, filled with a desire, eagerness, and expectation for God to transfer your weakness into strength? Wouldn't it be wonderful if that breakdown and bitterness in your faith and experience be a place of building up again of His strength, and where we were weak in the past to being strong in the future? Wouldn't you give anything for that experience to be yours? Well, it can be! Let's see how, from Paul's experience.

How did this transfer come about in Paul's life? Oh! How I wish Paul was here to tell us.

Well, I believe this transfer of weakness has a relation to the thorn that God gave Paul. A question for us is--was the presence of Paul's thorn--a reminder of the power of the Cross?

Another question is--was Paul's thorn a reminder of the presence of the flesh--the old nature making him aware of his weakness, his sinfulness, helplessness? The moment Paul was aware of the flesh, he was reminded of the way of delivery from its power in the Cross of Jesus Christ and subsequently preaching "**Christ and Him crucified**"--another message for us today.

Ah! The weapon Satan used to destroy Paul was taken out of the hands of Satan and turned around as a weapon of Paul's to overthrow the enemy! When Satan sent this trial, so the old nature might be stimulated and aroused to life and sin, he found that all he did was to enable Paul, the moment he was reminded of its power and presence in his life, to hand it over once again in faith to the Cross of Christ.

The pressure of the thorn and the power of the Cross were welded and united in the heart of Paul, so he could say, "**when I am weak then I am strong.**" Wouldn't it be wonderful that such an experience could become ours, as we face the trials of life?

Therefore, we're going to stop praying that it be removed and the pressure of that thorn is going to be transformed into the Power of the Cross! Then, another transformation comes – that of "**sadness into joy.**" "Most gladly therefore, will I rather glory and take pleasure in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me." (v-9)

Has the sun gone out of your Christian experience? Is your life dull, routine, gone desperately hard, dreary, drab, drudgery, monotonous? God wants to bring back that joy of life and with continuing rejoicing. It's possible... with Jesus.

There is nothing lovely with the thorn given to you. The cross was cruel, hard, unjust, hurtful, dreadful thing. Your thorn – your trial can be all of that. And today you look forward to the future and think that thorn is going to be in your life to the end of the road. It just seems like more than we can take. Yet, it will be transformed!

Notice what Paul said; a trial given by God, "there was given to me." You and I may have been trying to push something out of our lives which all the time God is holding out to you saying, "take it my child, it is my gift." "God permits disappointments to reveal sin and bring on happiness." (OHC 81:4) Also, to "harmonize plans with God's plans." (HP 120:5).

Birthdays, and presents are often filled with "useful" presents. As a child I remember such gifts – "useful" gifts; pajamas, gloves, monogrammed handkerchiefs, shoes, neckties, even money. These were almost unwanted gifts, but "useful." I desired a toy train, or bicycle! What we may want to get rid of in our lives; in the mind of God is a "useful" gift. It comes from Him!

Will you take it from Him in trembling and fear and say thank you?

Oh, that you and I might see the Father's face, and not need the help and the sympathy of others any more! Disappointed, spiritually tried child of God, may the pressure of the thorn in your life bring flooding in the power of the Cross of Christ, the power of His resurrection!

"The **Triumphant** souls will be those who are faithful through disappointment." (AA 590) **AMEN. John Theodorou, U.S.A.**

VISION IN HEALTH REFORM

The health reform, I was shown, is a part of the third angel's message, and is just as closely connected with it as are the arm and the hand with the human body. I saw that we as a people must make an advance move in this great work. Ministers and people must act in concert.

I was shown that God would give to His commandment keeping people a reform diet, and that as they received this, their disease and suffering would be greatly lessened. I was shown that this work would progress.

Since the Lord presented before me, in June, 1863, the subject of meat eating in relation to health, I have left the use of meat. *Spiritual Gifts*, vol. 4, p. 153, 154 (1864)

We do not hesitate to say that flesh meat is not necessary for health or for strength. The liability to take disease is increased tenfold by meat eating. We say to you, dear brother and sister, your safest course is to let meat alone.

We bear a positive testimony against tobacco, spirituous liquors, snuff, tea, coffee, flesh meats, butter, spices, rich cakes, mince pies, a large amount of salt, and all exciting substances used as articles of food.

Meat is not essential for health or strength, else the Lord made a mistake when He provided food for Adam and Eve before their fall. All the elements of nutrition are contained in the fruits, vegetables, and grains.

The common use of the flesh of dead animals has had deteriorating influence upon the moral, as well as the physical constitution. Ill health in a variety of forms, if effect could be traced to the cause, would reveal the sure result of flesh eating.

ALL BEING PROVED

It is of great importance that individually we act well our part, and have intelligent understanding of what we should eat and drink, and how we should live to preserve health. All are being proved to see whether they will accept the principles of health reform or follow a course of self-indulgence.

TRUE REFORM IS HEART REFORM

Circumstances cannot work reforms. Christianity proposes a reformation in the heart. What Christ works within, will be worked out under the dictation of a converted intellect. The plan of beginning outside and trying to work inward has always failed, and always will fail. God's plan with you is to begin at the very seat of all difficulties, the heart, and then from out of the heart will issue



the principles of righteousness; the reformation will be outward as well as inward.

The remnant people of God must be a converted people. The presentation of this message is to result in the conversion and sanctification of souls. We are to feel the power of the Spirit of God in this movement. This is a wonderful, definite message; it means everything to the receiver, and it is to be proclaimed with a loud cry. We must have a true, abiding faith that this message will go forth with increasing importance till the close of time.

There are some professed believers who accept certain portions of the Testimonies as the message of God, while they reject those portions that condemn their favourite indulgences. Such persons are working contrary to their own welfare, and the welfare of the church. It is essential that we walk in the light while we have the light. Those who claim to believe in health reform, and yet work counter to its principles in the daily life practice, are hurting their own souls and are leaving wrong impressions upon the minds of believers and unbelievers.

A solemn responsibility rests upon those who KNOW THE TRUTH that all their works shall correspond with their faith, and that their lives shall be refined and sanctified, and they be prepared for the work that must rapidly be done in these closing days of the message.

PRACTICE MERCY TOWARD DUMB CREATURES

Is it not time that all should aim to dispense with flesh food? How can those who are seeking to become pure, refined, and holy, that they may have the companionship of heavenly angels, continue to use as food anything that has so harmful an effect on soul and body? How can they take the life of God's creatures that they may consume the flesh as a luxury? Let them rather, return to the wholesome and delicious food given to man in the beginning, and themselves practice, and teach their children to practice, mercy toward the dumb creatures that God has made and has placed under our dominion.

PREPARING FOR TRANSLATION TO HEAVEN

Among those who are WAITING FOR THE SECOND COMING OF THE LORD, MEAT EATING WILL EVENTUALLY BE DONE AWAY; flesh will cease to form a part of their diet. We should ever keep this end in view, and endeavour to work steadily toward it. I cannot think that in the practice of flesh eating we are in harmony with the light which God has been pleased to give us.

Greater reforms should be seen among the people who claim to be looking for the soon appearing of Christ. Health reform is to do among our people a work which it has not yet done. There are those who ought to be awake to the danger of meat eating, who are still eating the flesh of animals, thus endangering the physical,

mental, and spiritual health. Many who are now only half converted on the question of meat eating will go from God's people to walk no more with them.

Again and again I have been shown that God is bringing His people back to His original design, that is not to subsist on the flesh of dead animals. He would have us teach people a better way. If meat is discarded, if the taste is not educated in that direction, if a liking for fruits and grains is encouraged, it will soon be as God in the beginning designed it should be. **NO MEAT WILL BE USED BY HIS PEOPLE.**

Those who USE FLESH MEAT DISREGARD ALL THE WARNINGS THAT GOD HAS GIVEN concerning this question. They have NO EVIDENCE THAT THEY ARE WALKING IN SAFE PATHS. They have not the slightest excuse for eating the flesh of dead animals. Pacific Union Recorder, Oct. 9, 1902.

EVERYONE WILL GIVE AN ACCOUNT

The moral evils of a flesh diet are not less marked than are the physical ills. Flesh food is injurious to health, and whatever affects the body has a corresponding effect on the mind and soul. Think of the cruelty to animals that meat eating involves, and its effect on those who inflict cruelty and those who behold it. How it destroys the tenderness with which we should regard these creatures of God!

He who will abuse animals because he has them in his power is both a coward and a tyrant. A disposition to cause pain, whether to our fellow men or to the brute creature, is satanic. Many do not realize that their cruelty will ever be known, because the poor dumb animals cannot reveal it. But could the eyes of these men be opened, as were those of Balaam, they would see an angel of God standing as a witness, to testify against them in the courts above. A record goes up to heaven, and a day is coming when judgment will be pronounced.

MEAT EATING IS ESPECIALLY DANGEROUS NOW

Flesh was never the best food; but its use is now doubly objectionable, since disease in animals is so rapidly increasing. Ministry of Healing, p. 313.

I am instructed to say that if ever meat eating were safe, it is not safe now.

GOD'S MESSENGER - MINISTER AND CANVASSER

Those who claim to believe the truth are to guard carefully the power of body and mind, so that God and His cause will not be in any way dishonoured by their words or actions. The habits and practices are to be brought into subjection to the will of God. We are to give careful attention to our diet. It has been clearly presented to me

that GOD'S PEOPLE ARE TO TAKE A FIRM STAND AGAINST MEAT EATING. Letter 48, 1902.

As God's messengers, shall we not bear a decided testimony against the indulgence of perverted appetite?... God has provided an abundance of fruits and grains, which may be healthfully prepared and used in proper quantities. Why then, do men continue to choose flesh? CAN WE POSSIBLY HAVE CONFIDENCE IN MINISTERS WHO AT TABLES WHERE FLESH IS SERVED JOIN WITH OTHERS IN EATING IT? Pacific Union Recorder, Oct. 9, 1902.

Let not any of our ministers set an evil example in the eating of flesh meat. Let them and their families live up to the light of health reform. Let not our ministers animalize their own nature and the nature of their children. Manuscript 133, 1902.

Let our minister and canvasser step under the banners of strict temperance. Never be ashamed to say, iNo, thank you; I do not eat meat. I have conscientious scruples against eating the flesh of dead animals.î If tea is offered, refuse it, giving your reason for so doing. Explain that it is harmful, and though stimulating for a time, the stimulus soon wears off, and a corresponding depression is felt.

Why do some of our ministering brethren manifest so little interest in health reform? It is because instruction on temperance in all things is opposed to their practice of self-indulgence. In some places this has been the great stumbling block in the way of our bringing the people to investigate and practice and teach health reform. No man should be apart as a teacher of the people while his own teaching or example contradicts the testimony God has given His servants to bear in regard to diet, for this will bring confusion. HIS DISREGARD OF HEALTH REFORM UNFITS HIM TO STAND AS THE LORD'S MESSENGER.

As a people, we need to reform, and especially do ministers and teachers of the word need to reform. I am instructed to say to our ministers and to the presidents of our own conferences: Your usefulness as labourers for God in the work of recovering perishing souls depends on your success of overcoming appetite.

PHYSICIANS IN OUR INSTITUTIONS

Let not flesh be prescribed by any physician who has knowledge of truth for this time for flesh of dead animals is not safe now. Instruction has been given me that physicians who use flesh meat and prescribe it for their patients should not be employed in our institutions.

Meat eating should not come into the prescription for any invalids from any physicians from among those who understand these things. Disease in cattle is making meat eating a dangerous matter. The Lord's curse is upon the earth, upon man, upon beast, upon the fish in the sea; and as transgression becomes almost

universal, the curse will be permitted to become as broad and as deep as the transgression. Disease is contracted by the use of meat. The diseased flesh of these dead carcasses is sold in the market places, and disease among men is the sure result.

A SUGGESTION OF SATAN

Some think that they cannot reform, that health would be sacrificed should they attempt to leave the use of tea, tobacco, and flesh meats. This is the suggestion of Satan. CDF, p. 431.

Satan is corrupting minds and destroying souls through his subtle temptations. Will our people see and feel the sin of indulging perverted appetite? Will they discard tea, coffee, flesh meats, and all stimulating food, and devote the means expended for those harmful indulgences to spreading the truth?

The apostle Paul exhorts the church, il beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service.î Men, then, can make their bodies unholy by sinful indulgences. If unholy, they are unfitted to be spiritual worshippers, and are not worthy of heaven. If man will cherish the light that God in mercy gives him upon health reform, he may be SANCTIFIED through THE TRUTH, and FITTED for IMMORTALITY. But if he DISREGARDS that LIGHT, and LIVES in VIOLATION of NATURAL LAW, he must PAY the PENALTY.

WORK OF ELIJAH AND JOHN A TYPE

For years the Lord has been calling the attention of His people to health reform. This is one of the great branches of the work of preparation for the coming of the Son of man. John the Baptist went forth in the spirit and power of Elijah, TO PREPARE the way of the LORD, AND TO TURN the people to the wisdom of the just. He was a representative of those living in these last days, to whom God has entrusted sacred truths to present before the people, to prepare the way for the second appearing of Christ. John was a reformer. The angel Gabriel, direct from heaven, gave a discourse upon health reform to the father and mother of John. He said that he should not drink wine or strong drink, and that he should be filled with the Holy Ghost from his birth.

John separated himself from friends, and from the luxuries of life. The simplicity of his dress, a garment woven of camel's hair was standing rebuke to the extravagance and display of the Jewish priest, and of the people generally. His diet, purely vegetables, of locusts and wild honey, was a rebuke to the indulgence of appetite, and the gluttony that everywhere prevailed. The prophet Malachi declares, iBehold I will send Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord; and he shall turn the heart of the fathers to the children, and the heart of the children to their fathers.î Here the prophet describes the character of the work. Those who are to prepare the way for the second coming of

Christ, are represented by faithful Elijah, as John came in the spirit of Elijah to prepare the way for Christ's first advent.

THE TRUE FASTING

The true fasting which should be recommended to all, is abstinence from every stimulating kind of food, and the proper use of wholesome, simple food, which God has provided in abundance. Men need to think less about what they shall eat and drink of temporal food, and much more in regard to the food from heaven, that will give tone and vitality to the whole religious experience.

MEAT A TYPICAL STIMULANT

When the use of flesh food is discontinued, there is often a sense of weakness, a lack of vigour. Many urge this as evidence that flesh food is essential; but it is because foods of this class are stimulating, because they fever the blood and excite the nerves, that they are so missed. Some will find it a difficulty to leave off flesh eating as it is for the drunkard to give up his dram. But they will be the better for the change. CDF, p. 396, 397.

Flesh food is harmful. Its naturally stimulating effect should be a sufficient argument against its use; and the almost universal disease condition of animals makes it doubly objectionable. It tends to irritate the nerves, to excite the passion, thus giving the balance of power to the lower propensities.

IN PERFECT OBEDIENCE there is PERFECT HAPPINESS.

"THESE THINGS HAVE I SPOKEN TO YOU, CHRIST SAID, that MY JOY might REMAIN IN YOU, and that your JOY might be FULL." May the LORD BLESS US, and strengthen our faith, and lead us ONWARD to the heights to which we have not yet ascended. He gave CHRIST TO DIE for us, that we might be purified from all iniquity. He has promised to pour out HIS SPIRIT UPON US, that WE MAY BE SANCTIFIED THROUGH THE TRUTH. HE HAS GIVEN US HIS WORD, that through OBEDIENCE TO ITS TEACHINGS, WE MAY BE MADE HOLY. It is our privilege, our duty, to grow in grace. This is the WILL OF GOD, EVEN YOUR SANCTIFICATION. **AMEN**

Edeline P. Cosby, Romulus, MI, USA

Conversion

On this first day of January I find myself researching a topic I have meditated on for some time: conversion.

Conversion = 1) The act of converting or state of being converted. 2) A change in which one adopts a new religion. 3) The exchange of one type of security or currency for another.

Convert = 1) To change into another form, substance, etc.; transform. 2) To adapt to a new or different purpose.

[Latin—convertere, to turn around, to transform.]

NOTE: Before we are converted, we need to be convicted.

Convict= To find or prove guilty of an offense.

I myself feel need of a more thorough conversion. In 1975 I was changed; I felt my utter wretchedness, my lost condition; I fell on my knees as my last and only resource, and my Heavenly Father put His arms around me.

But since then many years have passed; I have been through many experiences; and from hindsight I can see that many weaknesses have been revealed, many mistakes have been made. I need a new, true, and thorough conversion: a character transformation.

The thing is—How? What must I do to be saved? How do I submit my will to God? Why? Where? When? How?

First of all we need to know that:

II SM 56. SINCERITY ALONE WILL NOT SAVE.

"Faith in a lie will not have a sanctifying influence upon the life or character. No error is truth, or can be made truth by repetition, or by faith in it. Sincerity will never save a soul from the consequences of believing an error. Without sincerity there is no true religion, but sincerity in a false religion will never save a man. I may be perfectly sincere in following a wrong road, but that will not make it the right road, or bring me to the place I wished to reach. The Lord does not want us to have a blind credulity, and call that the faith that sanctifies. THE TRUTH IS THE PRINCIPLE THAT SANCTIFIES, and therefore it becomes us to know what is truth. We must compare spiritual things with spiritual. We must prove all things, but hold fast only that which is good, that which bears the DIVINE CREDENTIALS, which lays before us the true motives and principles which should prompt us to action."

Kathleen Ross, Alberta, Canada

Baptism In Montreal

On Sabbath, Dec. 22, 2007, dear Br. Normand Hamel was baptized into the family of God in Montreal, Quebec. Br. Normand has already had a deep and varied experience in coming out of other churches and also the SDA church; and he rejoices in the fullness of the light of present truth found amongst God's people. He has written an excellent testimony pamphlet that also compares the way of salvation with leaving on a trip on Earth. He has freely offered this pamphlet for the use by any and all missionaries who want to share it with their families, friends or acquaintances. Please pray for Br. Normand as he is "burning brightly for the kingdom of heaven's sake" - that the same light that lights every man who has come into the Earth may guide him all the way to his heavenly home. Br. Jerry Eaton, Canada



The Use Of Learning



CHILDREN'S CORNER

"I am tired of going to school," said Herbert Allen to William Wheeler, the boy who sat next to him. "I don't see any great use, for my part, in studying geometry, and navigation, and surveying, and mensuration, and the dozen other things that I am expected to learn. They will never do me any good. I am not going to get my living as a surveyor, or measurer, or sea captain."

"How are you going to get your living, Herbert?" his young friend asked, in a quiet tone, as he looked up into his face.

"Why, I am going to learn a trade; or at least, my father says that I am."

"And so am I," replied William; "and yet my father wishes me to learn everything that I can; for he says that it will all be useful some time or other in my life."

"I'm sure I can't see what use I am ever going to make, as a saddler, of algebra or surveying."



"The contrast in their appearance was very great."

"Still, if we can't see it, Herbert, perhaps our fathers can, for they are older and wiser than we are. And we ought to try to learn, simply because they wish us to, even if we do not see clearly the use in everything that we are expected to study."

"I can't feel so," Herbert replied, tossing his head, "and I don't believe that my father sees any more clearly than I do the use of all this."

"You are wrong to talk so," protested his friend, in a serious tone. "I would not think as you do for the world. My father knows what is best for me, and your father knows what is best for you; and if we do not study and improve our time, we will surely go wrong."

"I am not afraid," responded Herbert, closing the book which he had been reluctantly studying for half an hour, in the vain effort to fix a lesson on his unwilling memory. Then taking some marbles from his pocket, he began to amuse himself with them, at the same time concealing them from the teacher.

William said no more, but turned to his lesson with an earnest attention. The difference in the character of the two boys is plainly indicated in this brief conversation. To their teacher it was evident in numerous particulars—in their conduct, their habits, and their manners. William always recited his lessons correctly, while Herbert never learned a lesson well. One was always punctual at school, the other a loiterer by the way. William's books were well taken care of, Herbert's were soiled, torn, disfigured, and broken.

Thus they began life. The one obedient, industrious, attentive to the precepts of those who were older and wiser, and willing to be guided by them; the other indolent, and inclined to follow the leadings of his own will. Now, at the age of thirty-five, Mr. Wheeler is an intelligent merchant, in an active business; while Mr. Allen is a journeyman mechanic, poor, in embarrassed circumstances, and possessing but a small share of general information.

"How do you do, my old friend?" said the merchant to the mechanic, about this time, as the latter entered the counting room of the former. The contrast in their appearance was very great. The merchant was well dressed, and had a cheerful look; while the other was poorly clad, and seemed troubled and dejected.

"I cannot say that I do very well, Mr. Wheeler," the mechanic replied, in a tone of despondency. "Work is very dull, and wages low; and, with so large a family as I have, it is tough enough getting along under the best circumstances."

"I am really sorry to hear you say so," replied the merchant, in a

kind tone. "How much can you earn now?"

"If I had steady work, I could make twelve or fifteen dollars a week. But our business is very bad. The consequence is, that I do not average nine dollars a week, the year round."

"How large is your family?"

"I have five children, sir."

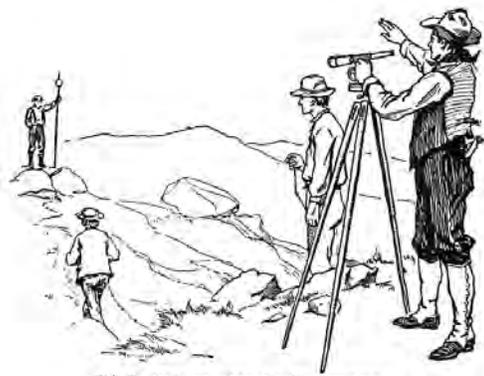
"Five children! And only nine dollars a week!"

"That is all, sir; but nine dollars a week will not support them, and I am, in consequence, going behindhand."

"You ought to try to get into some other business."

"But I don't know any other."

The merchant mused awhile, and then said: Perhaps I can aid you into getting into something better. I am president of a newly-projected railroad, and we are about putting on the line a company



of engineers, for the purpose of surveying and locating the route. You studied surveying and engineering at the same time I did, and I suppose you still have a correct knowledge of both; if so, I will use my influence

to have you appointed surveyor. The engineer is already chosen, and you shall have time to revive your early knowledge of these matters. The salary is one hundred dollars a month."

A shadow still darker than that which had before rested there, fell upon the face of the mechanic.

"But," he said, "I have not the slightest knowledge of surveying. It is true I studied it, or rather pretended to study it, at school; but it made no permanent impression on my mind. I saw no use in it then, and am now as ignorant of surveying as if I had never taken a lesson on the subject."

"I am sorry, my old friend," replied the merchant. "But you are a good accountant, I suppose, and I might, perhaps, get you into a store. What is your capacity in this respect?"

"I ought to have been a good accountant, for I studied mathematics

long enough; but I took little interest in figures, and now, although I was for many months while at school, pretending to study bookkeeping, I am utterly incapable of taking charge of a set of books."

"Such being the case, Mr. Allen, I really do not know what I can do for you. But stay; I am about sending an assorted cargo to Buenos Ayres, and then to Callao, and want a man to go as supercargo, who can speak the Spanish language. The captain will direct the sales. I remember that we studied Spanish together. Would you be willing to leave your family and go? The wages will be one hundred dollars a month."

"I have forgotten all my Spanish, sir. I did not see the use of it while at school, and therefore it made no impression on my mind."

After thinking a moment, the merchant replied:--

"I can think of but one thing that you can do, Mr. Allen, and that will not be much better than your present employment. It is a service for which ordinary labourers are employed, that of chain carrying for the surveyor to the proposed railroad expedition."

"What are the wages, sir?"

"Forty dollars a month."

"And found?"

"Certainly."

"I will accept it, sir thankfully," the man said. "It will be much better than my present employment."

"Then make yourself ready at once, for the company will start in a week."

"I will be ready, sir," the poor man replied, and then withdrew.

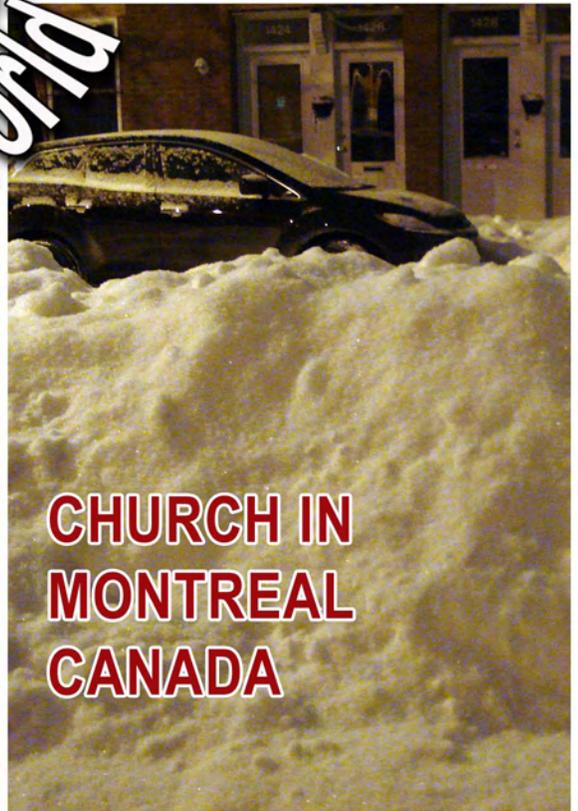
In a week the company of engineers started, and Mr. Allen with them as a chain carrier, when, had he, as a boy, taken the advice of his parents and friends, and stored his mind with useful knowledge, he might have filled his surveyor's office at more than double the wages paid to him as chain carrier. Indeed, we cannot tell how high a position of usefulness and profit he might have held, had he improved all the opportunities afforded him in youth. But he perceived the use and value of learning when it was too late.

I hope that none of my young readers will make the same discovery that Mr. Allen did, when it is too late to reap any real benefit. Children and youth cannot possibly know as well as their parents, guardians, and teachers, what is best for them. They should, therefore, be obedient and willing to learn, even if they cannot see of what use learning will be to them.



YOUTH OUTING
TORONTO, CANADA

IMS
around the world



**CHURCH IN
MONTREAL
CANADA**



New Years In Toronto

On the last day of the year the members of the Toronto church came together to reflect on the past year and to make plans for the coming year of 2008.

Brother Timo Martin spoke about the seriousness of the time in which we live. Although the Lord has been patient with us, waiting for us to get ready, yet suddenly the probationary time will end and then it will be too late to seek salvation. It is very possible that in this new year our sealing takes place and then the Sunday law and the latter rain.

After this new year's message we were invited to eat the delicious food that our sisters had prepared. Then the rest of the evening was spent in testimonies, special songs and thanksgiving. An important part of the get-together was the new year's resolutions, which were as follows:

Sister Rosario: To obey the Bible teaching always.

Brother Alberto: I want to be real Christian in this new year.

Elaine: I want to finish reading the book about Daniel and the Revelation.

Sister Emelinita: I want to use the Lord's money wisely and be more faithful to Him.

Brother Leone: I want to make sure that all my past sins are confessed and to obey God's law more strictly.

Brother Abel: I want to practice more self-control.

Sister Wendy: I want to spend more time in prayer and in Bible study.

Sister Pasita: I will pray that God will give me a pure heart and help me to serve Him better and help me to change my character.

Brother Joaquin: I want to read the Bible through this year and to cooperate more with the missionary leader.

Nidya: I want to run for exercise more.

Matthew: I want to be good.

Sister Raquel: I want to do more physical exercise three times a week.

Sister Deborah: I want to speak words of cheer to others.

Sister Irene: I want to stop eating junk food and exercise more.

Juan: I want to cut down on junk food.

Sister Emelina: I want to pray more and be more patient.

Brother Mike: I want to establish God's work in Scarborough.

Sister Sescia: I want to be more patient and have more faith in God.

Cyrus: I want to eat no more junk food and obey my parents and be faithful.

Sister Lucia: I want to do more missionary work and speak more with the Lord.

Brother Timo: I want to spend more time in God's work.

We finished our meeting with a prayer that the Lord will help us to fulfill our resolutions in this new year.