

The background of the cover is a lush green field with rolling hills. In the middle ground, there is a stone wall and several sheep grazing. A small white dove icon is positioned above the end of the main title.

The Reformation **Messenger**

VOLUME 27, NUMBER 1, January 2020

Good Habits and Bad Habits

Page 4

Heart Circumcision

Page 7

And What do *YOU* think?

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

In This Issue:

3 In Green Pastures

4 Good and Bad Habits

7 Heart Circumcision

10 And What do *YOU* Think?

**14 Are the Old and New Mutually
Exclusive Concepts?**

18 Olaf and Laurentius Petri

**21 Health Matters: Physical Exercise—
Get Moving**

24 Children's Corner: The Reward

PHOTO CREDITS

Front Cover: Helen Marttinen, Ireland

Back Cover: Helen Marttinen, Ireland

Inside front cover: Helen Marttinen, Ireland

Page 3: Helen Marttinen, Ireland

The Reformation Messenger is published monthly. It is an Official Publication of the International Missionary Society the Seventh-Day Adventist Church Reform Movement, Canadian Field. Subscriptions can be paid online on the website or by mail.

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COST:

Black & White x \$27.00 per year. Colour x \$47.00 per year.
(Add \$10.00 North America and \$20.00 overseas shipping & handling)

Purchase all 26 years of the Messenger for \$200.00 (shipping included in price). Bound in books by year.

Catalogue is available upon request for all articles for 26 years.



In Green Pastures

"He maketh me to lie down in green pastures."

Psalm 23:2

"In David's song His grace is pictured also as the cool, 'still waters,' amid green pastures, beside which the heavenly Shepherd leads His flock." *-That I May Know Him, p. 24*

"As the watchful shepherd, Jesus labours for His sheep and lambs. He bids His flock draw near, and He will lead them to green pastures, to living streams of water to quench their thirst and refresh their spirits." *-Manuscript Releases, vol. 7, p. 147*

"Jesus is the good Shepherd. His followers are the sheep of His pasture. A shepherd is always with his flock to defend them, to keep them from the wolves, to hunt up the lost sheep and carry them back to the fold, to lead them beside green pastures and beside living waters." *-Lift Him Up, p. 215*

"There are in the fold of Christ not only the sheep, that He leads into green pastures, but the lambs, that the Shepherd gathers in His arms and carries in His bosom. Jesus cares for the weak and feeble in their simplicity, and would quicken their life by His own heart beats." *-The Signs of the Times, April 18, 1895*

"The education received by Moses, as the king's grandson, was very thorough. Nothing was neglected that was calculated to make him a wise man, as the Egyptians understood wisdom. This education was a help to him in many respects; but the most valuable part of his fitting for his life work was that received while employed as a shepherd. As he led his flocks through the

wilds of the mountains and into the green pastures of the valleys, the God of nature taught him the highest and grandest wisdom. In the school of nature, with Christ Himself for teacher, he contemplated and learned lessons of humility, meekness, faith, and trust, and of a humble manner of living, all of which bound his soul closer to God. In the solitude of the mountains he learned that which all his instruction in the king's palace was unable to impart to him, --simple, unwavering faith, and constant trust in the Lord." *-Fundamentals of*

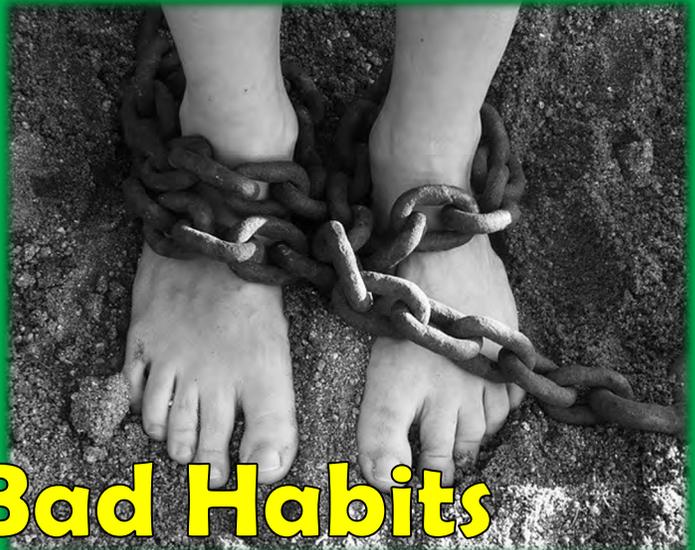
Christian Education, p. 342

"Many today think that when they begin their Christian life they will find freedom from all want and difficulty. But all who take up their cross to follow Christ come to a Rephidim in their experience. Life is not all made up of green pastures and cooling streams. Disappointment overtakes us, privations come, circumstances occur that bring us into difficult places. As we follow in the narrow way, doing our best as we think, we find that grievous trials come to us. We think that we must have walked by our own wisdom far away from God. Conscience-stricken, we reason that if we had walked with God we would not have suffered so." *-Christ Triumphant, p. 112*

"There will be no suffering ones in heaven, no skeptics whom we must labor to convince of the reality of eternal things, no prejudices to uproot, but all will be susceptible to that love which passeth knowledge. Rest, thank God, there is a rest for the people of God, where Jesus will lead the redeemed into green pastures, by the streams of living waters which make glad the city of our God. Then the prayer of Jesus to His Father will be answered: 'I will that they also, whom Thou hast given Me, be with Me where I am.'" *-Maranatha, p. 318*

"The more we know of His truth, the more we shall desire to know. There will be an eternity before us, in which to explore the mysteries of God. It will be the delight of our Lord to lead us in green pastures, beside flowing waters, and unfold to the redeemed the mysteries of redemption." *-The Signs of the Times, April 8, 1889*

Ellen G. White



Good and Bad Habits

We are very adaptable; we get used to different conditions easily, and change our habits. People can live in the north under extreme cold temperatures, and also in the constant heat of a hot climate. They can live in luxury, in mansions and riches, and also in poverty; they can even get used to living in prison. People can get used to living in the city among millions, and also in the country as hermits, alone.

A person can get used to living in sin, under continuous evil-thinking and planning. He can get used to living in bitterness, hatred and in a revengeful spirit. He can be corrupted, cruel, and hate others. He can get used to living in vanity, in continuous fun, parties, and fashions. He can become engrossed in business so much that nothing matters except money, and more money. People can get used to thousands of different religions, trusting that they will make it to heaven, and have eternal life.

But, also, people can become used to a life of holiness, purity, and self-denial. We are very habit-forming; anything we do a few times becomes a habit to us. First the new habit is like the thin line of a spider's web and can easily be broken, but every time we practice the habit, the stronger it gets, and finally it becomes as an iron chain, almost unbreakable.

We start forming our habits from the earliest years of childhood. How careful the parents must be in the education of their children. "The children begin young to deceive, cover up, tell things in a different light from what they are to their mother, as well as their father. Exaggeration becomes habit, and blunt

falsehoods come to be told with but little conviction or reproof of conscience. . . . Subdue them young; teach them to submit to you, and the more readily will they learn to yield obedience to the requirements of God. Encourage in them in a truthful, honest disposition. Let them never have occasion to doubt your sincerity and exact truthfulness." —*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 1, p. 157

This is our life work, to break up the bad habits and learn new, good habits. This is what churches are for, also. Some churches overlook some bad habits, and therefore they are known as fallen churches.

The Ten Commandments are the standard of right habits and practices, and God's Church, the Reform Church is to be the guardians of this law. We must prove to the world that the Lord can enable us to keep the law of God perfectly. Satan is claiming that the law of God cannot be kept. He tries to tempt us to commit the unpardonable sin.

When you are converted, being born again, sin can be overcome. "Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin; for his seed remaineth in him: and cannot sin, because he is born of God." 1 John 3:9

After we are born of God and are given strength from above to overcome every sin, Satan will not give up on us, but will continue to tempt us back into our old habits.

Jesus said, "Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation: the spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak." Matthew 26:41

A drug addict can stop using drugs with great effort, with God's help, but he must be very careful that he will not fall into the old habit. If he had never learned this bad habit, he would have no temptation towards it. Little sins are dangerous because we tend to pay no attention to them, because they are so small. Little sins, however, open the way to greater sins.

"But what an inferior, pitiful sacrifice, at best, to offer to a pure and holy God! Noble faculties have been paralyzed by wrong habits of sinful indulgence. The aspirations are perverted, and the soul and body defaced." —*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 3, p. 165. It works so slowly that we do not realize the danger we are in. Then suddenly we will wake up and find that we have no faith, our missionary spirit is dead, and sin does not look so bad anymore.

We must, however, make experiences with God, and see His goodness. "O taste and see that the LORD is good: blessed is the man that trusteth in Him." Psalm 34:8

Bad habits can be changed to good habits. Peter denied Jesus by swearing and cursing, but he repented and became a faithful servant of God. Paul persecuted the faithful followers of God, but he changed and became a faithful missionary for God.

God is testing us constantly to show us our bad habits; greater tests reveal what we are. Some, from habit, seek an easy life and comforts; others, by habit, follow duty and righteousness.

Together, Abraham and Lot were too crowded, and Abraham asked Lot, "Where would you like to go, to the right or to the left"? Naturally, from habit, Lot chose Sodom, the city, to live in. The choice of Lot seemed good for a while, but later he was disappointed. He lost his married daughters, his wife, his home, and all his belongings, and had to go and live in a cave, with nothing.

Our minds think in a certain way from habit. When we have to make important decisions, from past habits, we make either a right or wrong choice.

Many newly converted Christians have tremendous power to break every bad habit. I have seen people give up smoking, drinking, drugs, worldly entertainment, unhealthy foods, and bad language, all in a few weeks. Then if they go back into some of the old hab-

its, they have a terrible struggle to overcome them the second time. Some never overcome them again.

To practice a known bad habit makes it stronger every day. Today it is easiest to overcome it; tomorrow it will be harder, and every day neglected makes your willpower weaker, and your faith weaker.

"Some will be wayside hearers. They will be affected by the truths spoken; but they have not cultivated the normal powers, they have followed inclination rather than duty, and evil habits have hardened their hearts until they have become like the hard, beaten road. These may profess to believe the truth; but they will have no just sense of its sacred, elevated character. They do not separate from the friendship of the lovers of pleasure and corrupt society; but they place themselves where they are constantly tempted, and may well be represented by the unfenced field. They invite the temptations of the enemy and finally lose the regard they seemed to have for the truth when the good seed was dropped into their hearts." —*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 3, p. 111

"There are few who form evil habits deliberately. By frequent repetition of wrong acts, habits are formed unconsciously and become so firmly established that the most persistent effort is required to effect a change. We should never be slow in breaking up a sinful habit. Unless evil habits are conquered, they will conquer us and destroy our happiness." —*Ibid.*, vol. 4, p. 654

Come to church every week—it is a good habit—and it will help you escape the attacks of the wolves who are after you. Do not watch bad television shows—they are from the world, and create a bad habit, which is difficult to overcome. Rather, create a good habit of Bible reading—it will give you happiness.

"Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world. And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever." 1 John 2:15–17

Soon we will be divided and separated on account of what we love, or what has become a habit to us.

Sister White gives us counsel regarding the good habits the Lord wants to develop in us to prepare us for heaven. She also tells of bad habits we must overcome. I will mention a few of them here:

“One selfish thought indulged, one duty neglected, prepares the way for another. What we venture to do once, we are more apt to do again. Habits of sobriety, of self-control, of economy, of close application, of sound, sensible conversation, of patience and true courtesy, are not gained without diligent, close watching over self. . . . The record of wasted moments and unimproved opportunities must be met when the judgment shall sit and the books shall be opened and everyone shall be judged according to the things written in the books. Selfishness, envy, pride, jealousy, idleness, or any other sin which is cherished in the heart, will exclude one from the blessedness of heaven.” –*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 4, p. 452–453

“Cultivate the habit of speaking well of others. Dwell upon the good qualities of those with whom you associate, and see as little as possible of their errors and failings. When tempted to complain of what someone has said or done, praise something in the person’s life or character. Cultivate thankfulness. Praise God for His wonderful love in giving Christ to die for us. It never pays to think of our grievances. God calls upon us to think of His mercy and His matchless love, that we may be inspired by praise.” –*The Ministry of Healing*, p. 492

“It is a serious mistake to neglect the public worship of God. The privileges of divine service should not be lightly regarded. Those who attend upon the sick are often unable to avail themselves of these privileges,

but they should be careful not to absent themselves needlessly from the house of worship.” –*Ibid.*, p. 511

“There are young men and women who are very much opposed to order and discipline. . . . They pay no heed to rules for rising and retiring at regular hours, but burn the midnight oil, and then lie in bed in the morning. . . . Would it not be well to break up the habit of turning the precious hours into night, and turning the hours of night into day by the use of artificial light?

“As far as possible, it is well to consider what is to be accomplished through the day. Make a memorandum of the different duties that await your attention, and set apart a certain time for the doing of each duty. Let everything be done with thoroughness, neatness, and dispatch. . . .” –*Sons and Daughters of God*, p. 114

We must correct our eating habits, they are important in our character formation. We must practice strict honesty, also moral purity, and we need to practice patience.

By persistent effort and continuous practice, right habits will be formed, and we become sanctified and Christlike. The Lord will provide the necessary strength required to form good habits. Some bad habits are easy to overcome, like, smoking, drinking, drugs, and meat food; but the harder ones are: love of the world, sensualism, selfishness, pride, covetousness, and envy. These habits linger often when other sins have been put away. If we will overcome all bad habits, we will be in heaven and will continue to practice them throughout all eternity. Amen.

Timo Martin

“Those who take Christ at His word, and surrender their souls to His keeping, their lives to His ordering, will find peace and quietude. Nothing of the world can make them sad when Jesus makes them glad by His presence. In perfect acquiescence there is perfect rest. The Lord says, ‘Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on Thee: because he trusteth in Thee.’ Isaiah 26:3. Our lives may seem a tangle; but as we commit ourselves to the wise Master Worker, He will bring out the pattern of life and character that will be to His own glory. And that character which expresses the glory--character--of Christ will be received into the Paradise of God. A renovated race shall walk with Him in white, for they are worthy.” –*The Desire of Ages*, p. 331



Heart Circumcision

Circumcision was a covenant or law (as also referred to in other texts), first given to Abraham by God. "This is My covenant, which ye shall keep, between Me and you and thy seed after thee; Every man child among you shall be circumcised." Genesis 17:10. It was performed on the foreskin, eight days after the birth of a man child (verses 11–12). Promptly "in the selfsame day" (verse 26) Abraham obeyed the command of God to circumcise all that were with him (even those males bought with his money). The command had come at a time when Abraham and his son Ishmael were already past the set age for circumcision to take place; so Abraham and Ishmael were circumcised at the ages of ninety and nine (99) and thirteen (13) respectively (verses 24–25). As for Isaac, born afterwards, it was done on the eighth day as commanded (Genesis 21:4).

SIGNIFICANCE OF CIRCUMCISION

God demanded, saying to Abraham, circumcise: "every man child in your generations, he that is born in the house, or bought with money of any stranger, which is not of thy seed." Genesis 17:12. He [God] emphasized that the one not circumcised was to be cut off from his people (verse 14). (We will come back to that later).

Circumcision was to be "as a token that they were devoted to the service of God and thus separated from idolaters, and that God accepted them as His peculiar treasure. By this rite they were pledged to fulfill, on their part, the conditions of the covenant made with Abraham. They were not to contract mar-

riages with the heathen; for by so doing, they would lose their reverence for God and His holy law; they would be tempted to engage in the sinful practices of other nations, and would be seduced into idolatry. . . . It was a "condition by which [one] could be entitled to the blessings of God's covenant with Israel." – *Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 138, 255

Even though Abraham was circumcised at the age of 99, his circumcision was "a seal of righteousness of the faith which he had yet being uncircumcised." Romans 4:11–12 (last part). Before the circumcision, he was set apart by his faith in God and due to this faith, the circumcision done later in life had a retrospective effect upon him. What a wonderful picture here portrayed!!

Any neglect to perform circumcision was to incur the frown of God. Moses had just spoken with God in the burning bush; he had just been commissioned with the great task of freeing the Israelites from bondage in Egypt. He was God's special chosen servant, when, shortly afterwards, God wanted to kill him.

"And it came to pass by the way at the inn, that the LORD met him, and sought to kill him." Exodus 4:24. No reason was given. "Then Zipporah took a sharp stone and cut off the foreskin of her son and cast it at Moses' feet, and said, Surely you are a husband of blood to me!" (verse 25) NKJV. He had been dissuaded by his wife Zipporah not to perform circumcision on their youngest son, a divinely given rite she did not have pleasure in (verses 25–26). Though chosen by God, Moses could not be spared for ignoring such

an important institution. He could not be secure while neglecting a known duty. After the circumcision, he was left free to continue his journey (verse 26, first part).

PHYSICAL CIRCUMCISION REPLACED

“If man had kept the law of God, as given to Adam after his fall, preserved by Noah, and observed by Abraham, there would have been no necessity for the ordinance of circumcision.” *–Ibid.*, p. 364

In the gospel era, physical circumcision ceased to be a condition for acceptance before God. Now we have our circumcision made without hands—the baptism of faith in Christ.

“In Whom also ye are circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, in putting off the body of the sins of the flesh by the circumcision of Christ: Buried with Him in baptism, wherein also ye are risen with Him through the faith of the operation of God, who hath raised Him from the dead.” Colossians 2:11–12

“For circumcision verily profiteth, if thou keep the law: but if thou be a breaker of the law, thy circumcision is made uncircumcision. Therefore if the uncircumcision keep the righteousness of the law, shall not his uncircumcision be counted for circumcision?” Romans 2:25–26

“Was anyone called while circumcised? Let him not become uncircumcised. Was anyone called while uncircumcised? Let him not be circumcised. Circumcision is nothing and uncircumcision is nothing, but keeping the commandments of God is what matters.” 1 Corinthians 7:18–19 NKJV

The verses about how and why circumcision of the flesh faded and ceased to be a requirement after the death of Christ are many. We will not attempt to bring more of these texts in the quest to be brief. Let the above suffice.

INNER CIRCUMCISION AND ITS ASPECTS

Aside from physical circumcision/operation done on the skin, from earliest times, God demanded of His people—heart circumcision. “Circumcise therefore the foreskin of your heart, and be no more stiff-necked.” Deuteronomy 10:16. “Circumcise yourselves to the LORD, and take away the foreskins of your heart, ye men of Judah and inhabitants of Jerusalem:

Lest My fury come forth like fire, and burn that none can quench it, because of the evil of your doings.” Jeremiah 4:4. While being physically circumcised as God’s people, the heart was far from Him, not making them any different from the heathen (Jeremiah 9:26). God was pained that though physically circumcised, the heart was not renewed.

As it was in the time of old, today in the church the traits of the uncircumcised heart are still manifest. We may consider some of them here: The feeling of pain or as a burden when doing the will of God, a feeling of being forced to follow the spiritual paths (1 John 5:3; Matthew 11:28–30). The feeling of pain when one’s sin has been rebuked (1 Kings 13:4). Being hard and stubborn altogether to adhere to God’s directions, (stiff necked to abandon evil ways) (Deuteronomy 10:16; Proverbs 29:1). A feeling that God is too demanding or too hard on them (Numbers 14). Doing the works of God just out of formality (2 Timothy 3:5). Feeling that it’s you who has done something with your own power, a feeling that without you, the church cannot advance. Trying hard to show some good traits of character while still practicing a known sin secretly. The desire to be seen and noticed during or after worship services, love of display, seeking the praise of the people (Luke 20:46; Romans 2:29). The feeling that you are more talented and spiritual than others, “how can he preach a sermon while I am there?” (Philippians 2:3). The feeling that since God is not giving what I need, I will follow my own way to find what I want (Isaiah 30:21). Unforgiving spirit (Ephesians 4:32; Luke 17:3–4). Evil speaking of others (Joseph, BEING just, avoided) (Matthew 1:19). Dwelling upon impure thoughts and plans, etc. (Micah 2:1). Judging someone’s ability or not loving him based on his stature or physical appearance, etc. All these traits are offensive to God.

It is obvious from the above paragraph that the outer skin of the heart must be circumcised. It is what makes the heart unresponsive to the promptings of God’s Spirit for a change. But why must it be the heart? Why not other organs to stand as a symbol? The heart is the source of all actions, good or bad. Thus the Bible says: “My son, give Me thine heart.” Proverbs 23:26. If the heart is surfeited, the entire body is corrupted. Many portray outside goodness, trying to live in conformity to church requirements but lack the unction of the spirit; sooner or later they

become tired of good actions and start living the way of the world that is in them.

“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 to work outside and trying to work inward, has always failed, and will always 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.” –*Counsels on Diet and Foods*, p. 35

The world now is vigorously campaigning for physical circumcision in what they describe as a fight to prevent certain diseases. Many centers have been opened for that purpose. That is of the world!! Since it is a physical operation, they are able to perform it. Does it not remind us of how our hearts are before God? But the circumcision of the heart, the inner man, only God can perform it, not man. “And the LORD thy God will circumcise thine heart, and the heart of thy seed, to love the LORD thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, that thou mayest live.” Deuteronomy 30:6. “It is God That circumcises the heart. The whole work is the Lord’s from the beginning to the end.” – *Selected Messages*, bk. 1, p. 391

A new heart promptly acts on God’s requirements as soon as duty demands so. It always seeks a higher spiritual experience and opportunity to serve and save. It finds pleasure in doing the will of God and is perfectly at peace with Him (Romans 8:1).

CONCLUSION

Unlike the circumcision of the flesh which is no longer binding, heart circumcision remains enforced and a requirement for salvation. To Moses on his way from Midian to Egypt, the performance of the rite of circumcision could be ignored/neglected on pain of death. “And it came to pass by the way in the inn, that the LORD met him, and sought to kill him.” Exodus 4:24. To us, heart circumcision must be done now, or left alone at the cost of eternal loss. If not circumcised in the heart, we will sooner or later be cut off from among the people of God, as it was in the past (Genesis 17:14). “In the time of trouble just before the coming of Christ, the righteous will be preserved through the ministration of heavenly an-

gels; but there will be no security for the transgressor of God’s law. Angels cannot then protect those who are disregarding one of the divine precepts.” – *Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 256

Having crossed the river Jordan, just before they could possess the Promised Land, the Lord directed that sharp knives be made ready for the circumcising of the people. It was to be done before starting to live in Canaan. They had not been circumcised, those males born on the way. “Make thee sharp knives, and circumcise again the children of Israel the second time,” was the Lord’s directive. “And Joshua made him sharp knives, and circumcised the children of Israel at the hill of the foreskins.” Joshua 5:2–3

We too are on the borders of spiritual Canaan—the Heavenly Canaan. A short time separates us from that glorious day when Christ will come to claim His own. Is it not now imperative that we too must allow God to perform this wonderful heart circumcision operation fully before that greatest event of all history? Christ said: “Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God.” Matthew 5:8. While they see God acting in their lives all throughout their earthly sojourn, this will culminate in seeing Him now as He is, face to face in His glory. “And every man that hath this hope in Him purifieth himself, even as He is pure.” 1 John 3:3. Hence comes down to us the heavenly warning: “To day, after so long a time; as it is said, To day if ye will hear His voice, harden not your hearts.” Hebrews 4:7. Amen.





And What Do *YOU* Think?

Have you ever asked someone, “What do *you* think?” I think I can safely say that almost everyone has asked this question of someone else at one point in their lives. And, why did you ask this question? While there are several reasons why people ask this question, often the most important reason is because we want their advice, or opinion, on a difficult matter that we are having to make a decision on and we want to know what others would do in a similar situation.

In the Bible, anciently, kings had advisors to whom they resorted to when making important decisions. Here are two examples:

Absalom, son of King David, asked for advice. He was trying to take over the nation from his father. He drove his father and his father’s friends out of Jerusalem. He wanted to take full control of the nation and sought advice from two of his father’s best counsellors. One was supporting him, while one was secretly supporting his father. “And Absalom and all the men of Israel said, The counsel of Hushai the Archite is better than the counsel of Ahithophel. For the LORD had appointed to defeat the good counsel of Ahithophel, to the intent that the LORD might bring evil upon Absalom.” 2 Samuel 17:14. The Lord orchestrated matters and Absalom chose the “wrong” counsellors and was eventually defeated.

Rehoboam asked advice and heeded the wrong counsel. “And king Rehoboam took counsel with the old men that had stood before Solomon his father while he yet lived, saying, What counsel give ye me to return answer to this people? And they spake unto him, saying, If thou be kind to this people, and please them, and speak good words to them, they will be thy servants for ever. But he forsook the counsel which the old men gave him, and took counsel with the young men that were brought up with him, that stood before him. And he said unto them, What ad-

vice give ye that we may return answer to this people, which have spoken to me, saying, Ease somewhat the yoke that thy father did put upon us? And the young men that were brought up with him spake unto him, saying, Thus shalt thou answer the people. . . . My little finger shall be thicker than my father’s loins. For whereas my father put a heavy yoke upon you, I will put more to your yoke: my father chastised you with whips, but I will chastise you with scorpions. . . . King Rehoboam forsook the counsel of the old men, And answered them after the advice of the young men.” 2 Chronicles 10:6–11, 13–14. And we know the sad result of listening to the wrong advice—the nation was divided, never more to be united again.

As humans, we value the thoughts and advice we receive from our parents, co-workers, friends, relatives, church leaders, and ministers. There is nothing wrong with seeking advice and counsel. We are encouraged to do so, from those with more experience. “In the multitude of counsellors there is safety.” Proverbs 11:14. However, we must carefully and prayerfully consider their responses and choose whether to accept their thoughts and advice. We cannot make their thoughts our thoughts and ultimately any decision we make is our own. We have to take responsibility for it. We cannot blame anyone except ourselves for the outcome of the decision.

There are false advisors, who give wrong counsel because there is evil in their hearts. Peter warned the believers of these types of people. “Peter urged home upon the convicted people the fact that they had rejected Christ because they had been deceived by priests and rulers; and that if they continued to look to these men for counsel, and waited for them to acknowledge Christ before they dared to do so, they would never accept Him. These powerful men, though making a profession of godliness, were

ambitious for earthly riches and glory. They were not willing to come to Christ to receive light." –*The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 43–44

"There is danger that men will receive the counsel of men, when by so doing they will discard the counsel of God." –*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 8, p. 146

Now, the Lord is asking you, "What do *you* think?" Does He need your advice? When a school teacher asks his/her students, what they *think*, is the teacher seeking advice? No, they already know the answer, but they want to see what the students think the answer should be. Jesus asked this of His disciples. He asked them, "How think ye?" Mathew 18:12. Not that He wanted their advice. He simply wanted to ask them their thoughts on a parable He was about to relate. He already knew what the meaning was.

The thought processes that a person has are very private. No one can enter into the thoughts of another, unless divinely inspired, or revealed by the person who is thinking the thoughts. "And the scribes and Pharisees watched Him, whether He would heal on the sabbath day; that they might find an accusation against Him. But He knew their thoughts, and said to the man which had the withered hand, Rise up, and stand forth in the midst. And he arose and stood forth." Luke 6:7–8. Jesus could read their thoughts. Also, Daniel revealed to King Nebuchadnezzar what his thoughts were when he was going to sleep prior to having the dream of the image. "As for thee, O king, thy thoughts came into thy mind upon thy bed, what should come to pass hereafter: and he that revealeth secrets maketh known to thee what shall come to pass." Daniel 2:29

However, for the most part, the thoughts of a person are never revealed. One may be in a classroom at school, but their mind is on the football field. One may be in church, even participating well, but their mind is going for a walk in the park. One may be in the presence of another person in a social situation, and wishing they were not there, but too polite to bring the situation to a close, even though they wish they were elsewhere. One may have committed a crime, or told a lie, without getting caught, and they keep these thoughts hidden away in their minds. These thoughts are private. If not revealed, they will live and die with the person. They will be gone forever until the judgment when unrepented thoughts will come up again.

We have a saying in English, "A Penny for your thoughts." When we say this to a person, we are wanting to know what they are thinking at that moment. Although a penny is not of much value these days, this say-

ing originated over 400 years ago at a time when a penny was of much more value. In the time of Christ the workers worked all day for a penny (Matthew 20:1–2). So, in reality, there is much value to our thoughts.

If Jesus asked you, "A Penny for your thoughts," would you freely disclose to Him your thoughts? We do acknowledge that He can read our thoughts, "For I know their works and their thoughts." Isaiah 66:18. In the beginning the Lord asked Cain, "Why art thou wroth? and why is thy countenance fallen?" The Lord knew exactly what the problem was, but He was hoping Cain would acknowledge his negative thoughts and repent. The Lord asks you also about your thoughts, hoping you will repent if you have any negative thoughts; but, also, if you are thinking good and happy thoughts, He likes to hear those as well. We often speak what is in our minds, and Jesus likes to hold converse with His followers.

As I mentioned, our thoughts are more costly than a mere penny, for Solomon said, "For as he thinketh in his heart, so is he." Proverbs 23:7. The solemn thought is that your thoughts can make or break you spiritually. They can determine your eternal destiny. Thoughts become words; words become actions; actions become habits and habits become your destiny. From the very beginning, it is said that the evil thoughts of man led them to become corrupt. "And GOD saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every *imagination of the thoughts* of his heart was only evil continually." Genesis 6:5. Sadly, they perished in the flood. Their thoughts led to wicked deeds. King David was tempted with negative thoughts that he did not dismiss and he ended up committing adultery and murder (2 Samuel 11). Thankfully, he repented (Psalm 51).

"Many thoughts make up the unwritten history of a single day; and these thoughts have much to do with the formation of character. Our thoughts are to be strictly guarded; for one impure thought makes a deep impression on the soul. An evil thought leaves an evil impress on the mind. If the thoughts are pure and holy, the man is better for having cherished them. By them the spiritual pulse is quickened, and the power for doing good is increased. And as one drop of rain prepares the way for another in moistening the earth, so one good thought prepares the way for another." –*Messages to Young People*, p. 144

From the statement above, a key thought is that, "one impure thought makes a deep impression on the soul." Many take lightly one or two negative thoughts on occasion. "An evil thought leaves an evil impress on the mind." Read the above statement again slowly.

“When the thought of evil is loved and cherished, however secretly, said Jesus, it shows that sin still reigns in the heart.” —*Thoughts from the Mount of Blessing*, p. 60

Every day each person on this earth thinks. We all think many different thoughts. There is not a single person who does not think, and no two persons think the same things. We think of our daily needs and necessities—food, clothing, shelter, how we will pay the bills etc. Sometimes we face difficult situations and choices where we need to take more careful thought and consideration. At school or work, we have to think more carefully, more so than if we are just driving a car or relaxing at home. When no pressing task is at hand, some allow their thoughts to simply wander on any theme that comes to mind.

We may not have evil thoughts, but it may be possible to have meaningless thoughts, making little effort to think deeply. To these people the enemy will come and implant unholy thoughts and desires. We call these types of people “scatterbrains.” The thoughts of man do not naturally turn towards God, instead the natural man’s mind is both deceitful and wicked.

“Satan cannot read our thoughts, but he can see our actions, hear our words; and from his long knowledge of the human family, he can shape his temptations to take advantage of our weak points of character. And how often do we let him into the secret of how he may obtain the victory over us.” —*The Faith I Live By*, p. 327. He knows when your mind is wandering.

If you have scatterbrained, uncontrolled, or meaningless thoughts, they will prove your demise one day. You will reap a reward that you will not be very happy with. This is why the Lord Jesus tells us to fill our minds with thoughts of God, “Watch ye and pray, lest ye enter into temptation.” Mark 14:38

The reality is that our thoughts determine who we are.

If we are plagued by uncontrolled or meaningless thoughts, it will be a challenge, but not an impossibility, to bring our thoughts under the control of Christ. It will take an earnest effort. “The corrupt thought is to be expelled. Every thought is to be brought into captivity to Jesus Christ.” —*The Adventist Home*, p. 127

It takes effort to constantly keep the mind thinking on positive themes and to control one’s thoughts, but the Apostle Paul tells us that we must do so. “Whatever things are true, whatever things are honest, whatever things are just, whatever things are pure, whatever things are lovely, whatever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things.” Philippians 4:8. These are the virtues that

should play an active part in your mind and life. If we want to develop a good Christian character, we must think right. Instead of thinking about differences with others or being anxious about our daily needs, we should exercise our minds on positive virtues. And as we make an effort, it becomes easier and easier, until it is natural to have good and pure thoughts. It is no longer a difficult task. The mind will wander less and less on meaningless themes. If we want pure hearts, we must make a diligent effort to think pure thoughts all the time.

“Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth.” Colossians 3:2. “Set your affections” in this verse is literally translated from the Greek, to “Continually think of, or continually pay attention to.” In other words, make an effort to continually be thinking positive thoughts—thoughts from above, not from this earth.

There are many false Christians who, while making a pretense of serving the Lord, in private, they fill their minds with sinful things. These thoughts will control them and they will find no joy in serving God.

“‘Thinking is the hardest work there is, which is the probable reason why so few engage in it,’ said Henry Ford at the front edge of the Great Depression in 1929. Of course, we suspect that what Henry Ford really had in mind was productive thinking because all of us are thinking all the time about something. I mean, even when we do not think about what we are thinking, we are still thinking.” <https://www.preaching.com/articles/preacher-to-preacher-thinking-about-thinking/>

“It is your duty to control your thoughts. You will have to war against a vain imagination.” —*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 3, p. 82

Emptying your mind of evil thoughts is only the first part. You must fill your mind with good thoughts. An empty mind is of no value.

“When the unclean spirit is gone out of a man, he walketh through dry places, seeking rest; and finding none, he saith, I will return unto my house whence I came out. And when he cometh, he findeth it swept and garnished. Then goeth he, and taketh to him seven other spirits more wicked than himself; and they enter in, and dwell there: and the last state of that man is worse than the first.” Luke 11:24–26

We need to pray the prayer of David, and accept the Lord’s answer, inviting Him to search our hearts. “Search me, O God, and know my heart: try me, and know my thoughts: And see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting.” Psalm 139:23–24. We must control our thoughts to the extent that the Lord will

not find anything negative when He searches.

The apostle Paul said, “And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.” Romans 12:2. It is interesting how he mentions here that we are transformed by the *renewing of our mind*. The sanctification of the mind and thoughts is what will produce the character of Christ more perfectly in the believer.

If our mind is pure and clean, our actions automatically follow. And the key word is “automatic.” Ask yourself, are your thoughts automatically Christlike? Or does it take extreme effort? When we are in a crisis, are we tempted to curse, or to call on God—automatically?

“Casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ.” 2 Corinthians 10:5. Paul again writes how there needs to be an effort on our part. The word “imaginations” in this verse comes from Greek *noemata* meaning, “reasonings or thoughts.” We are to cast down all unholy thoughts, bringing them into captivity, to the obedience of Christ. Then it is a fact that good deeds will automatically follow.

From the words of Solomon we read, “Commit thy works unto the LORD, and thy thoughts shall be established.” Proverbs 16:3. This verse seems to say the opposite of what we have been talking about (your thoughts will determine your actions), with Solomon stating that your good works will cause your thoughts to be established. If you think about it, though, in order to do good works, it takes a conscious decision (in your mind—your thoughts) on your part to surrender all to the Lord. You have already decided in your mind to serve God; and, therefore, following this decision (your thoughts), your actions follow. And once your actions follow regularly, your thoughts are firmly established in the right direction. They will no longer wander aimlessly. Thinking and acting go hand in hand. We will be judged, in the end, by our actions and our motives (thoughts behind the actions).

And finally, “Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus.” Philippians 2:5. Literally translated it reads, “let this thought be in you.” This means the same thoughts that Jesus would think. We say, “What would Jesus do?” but I will say that we should ask ourselves, “What would Jesus think?”

What we think about is very important. Our thoughts will determine our character. As I said before, they will make or break us spiritually. “Wherefore gird up the loins of your mind, be sober, and hope to the end for the grace

that is to be brought unto you at the revelation of Jesus Christ.” 1 Peter 1:13

“For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any twoedged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.” Hebrews 4:12. Paul here brings out the importance of Bible reading, and for what purpose? He does not state, “Read the Bible and obey all its rules.” He simply states, that if you read the Bible it is like a sword that will reveal what is in your heart and mind—discern your thoughts and motives. This is what will determine your character and your fitness for heaven. Thoughts produce corresponding actions.

Matthew puts the sin of evil thoughts together with murder, and adulteries, etc. in the same verse. “For out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies.” Matthew 15:19

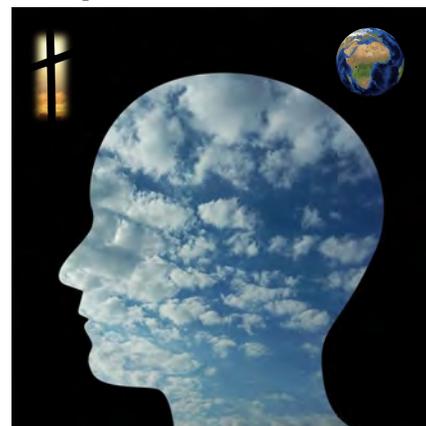
“Hear, O earth: behold, I will bring evil upon this people, even the *fruit of their thoughts*, because they have not hearkened unto My words, nor to My law, but rejected it.” Jeremiah 6:19. The warning is given that you will sow what you reap—not only with your actions, but Israel was bearing the fruit of their thoughts. What you do *is* the fruit of what you have been thinking.

Why are we told to “pray without ceasing”? 1 Thessalonians 5:17. The mind must never be empty or left to wander aimlessly, and it will not be, if we are constantly thinking of spiritual themes.

The good news for us is that our thoughts are ultimately under our control. No one else can control what we think unless we allow that to happen.

So when the Lord asks you, “What do *you* think?” what answer will you give? May it be an honest answer because He already knows what you are thinking. I pray that your thoughts will be of such a nature that you would not be ashamed to face them in the judgment. God is love. Praise the Lord for this promise: “Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts: and let him return unto the LORD, and He will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for He will abundantly pardon.” Isaiah 55:7

Wendy Eaton





Are the Old and New Mutually Exclusive Concepts?

Are the Adherence to Past/Original Truths, and the Belief that Light/Truth is Progressive, Two Mutually Exclusive Concepts?

If you have ever canvassed you have probably experienced a lot of rejection, having doors slammed in your face. Is it new truth that we are presenting to these people at their door? For many of them it is. So, why do they reject this new truth so vehemently? Either they have not been living up to the truth they have already received, or are satisfied with their current knowledge and experience.

Many of us have heard the idea that light and truth is progressive. This means that there exists greater truth that God will reveal to His people. Those that have a sincere love of truth and recognize this fact will be searching for this new truth rather than partaking of the Laodicean spirit and being satisfied with one's current spiritual condition, not feeling that there needs to be improvement.

"If it was necessary for God's ancient people to often call to mind His dealings with them in mercy and judgment, in counsel and reproof, it is equally important that we contemplate the truths delivered to us in His Word,—truth which, if heeded, will lead us to humility and submission, and obedience to God. . . . The Word of God presents special truths for every age. The dealings of God with His people in the past should receive our careful attention. We should learn the lessons which they are designed to teach us. But we are not to rest content with them. God is leading out His people step by step. Truth is progressive. The earnest seeker will be constantly receiving light from Heaven. What is truth? should ever be our inquiry." —*The Signs of the Times*, May 26, 1881

According to this quote, it is of utmost importance that we consistently keep moving towards greater truth.

However, in addition to being desirous of new truth and engaging in a pro-active pursuit of this new truth, the Ancient Israelites were told to remember the way that God had led them in the past and to contemplate the truths they had already been given. They were to seek a balance of having a deep appreciation and love for truth already given, but simultaneously not allow that love of previously attained truth to lull them into a false sense of security or cause them to be lifted up in spiritual pride, which would neutralize their motivation to earnestly seek for new truth. This is essential for us today as well.

"The Lord will not lead minds now to set aside the truth that the Holy Spirit has moved upon His servants in the past to proclaim. Many will honestly search the Word for light as those in the past have searched it; and they see light in the Word. But they did not pass over the ground in their experience, when these messages of warning were first proclaimed. Not having had this experience, some do not appreciate the value of the truths that have been to us as waymarks, and that have made us, as a peculiar people, what we are. They do not make a right application of the Scriptures, and thus they frame theories that are not correct. It is true that they quote an abundance of Scripture, and teach much that is true; but truth is so mixed with error as to lead to wrong conclusions." —*Manuscript Releases*, vol. 17, p. 12

There are a couple of important principles that we can see in this passage. First, we see that it mentions that "the Lord will not lead minds now to set aside the truth that the Holy Spirit has moved upon His servants in the past to proclaim." The Lord does not wish previous, or past, truth to ever be negated by new or present truth. Rather than substituting truth previously brought to light, present truth should complement past truths.

Another principle brought to light is that, within the

Seventh-day Adventist church, the pioneers who discovered the original tenets and beliefs of the Adventist message had a higher tendency to realize the great importance of these original beliefs as a distinguishing factor, which differentiated them from the other Protestant churches and the world. However, just as has happened in a wide variety of church organizations throughout history, as the years went by and new generations came to the forefront within the church, there was this tendency for the newer generations to place less emphasis upon the fundamental truths of the past.

How can this be avoided? The new generation should study these ancient truths for themselves and come to a personal realization as to their importance.

They must avoid the human tendency to view newer ideas as automatically better, to the detriment of older truths; avoiding the thought that all change is implicitly a positive.

To avoid partaking of the Laodicean spirit of being "rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing; (Revelation 3:17) we must constantly be seeking new truth, being careful that original truths are not lost of. We must ensure that the additional truth we find complements original truth rather than replacing it or making it redundant.

Most importantly, we are to prayerfully consider if there are times in which we should emphasize either returning to the old waymarks or pushing forward to seek greater truths.

The best manner of living up to original truth while ensuring that one simultaneously seeks for greater truth is found in the words of Jesus, "Sanctify them through Thy truth: Thy word is truth." John 17:17. To be sanctified means they have become holy; and because God/Jesus is holy it means they have become more like Him. Is it possible to make someone holy through an understanding of truth? It depends on what this understanding of truth leads to, or what the ultimate result of it is!

"Ye are clean through the word which I have spoken unto you." John 15:3. Jesus spoke words of truth and words that were in complete harmony with the rest of the Bible! However, do words have the power to cleanse us? It depends on how the individual being reacts to these words, and what they choose to do with them.

"Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave Himself for it; That He might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word." Ephesians 5:25-26. Christ cleanses the church

and the individuals within the church by giving His own life for the church, and by "the washing of the water by the word." There are multiple understandings of this verse, but the most fitting interpretation is that when we believe the words that we hear and actually want to live up to them, we thus make them part of our lives and decide to be baptized. Baptism is an outward sign that the words of Jesus will become what defines our life. They are real to us on much more than just on an intellectual level. We have become doers of the word rather than just hearers of the word! When Jesus states in John 15 that the disciples have become clean through the word spoken to them, let us think how they reacted to the preaching of Jesus. They left all and followed Him. Throughout their lives they dedicated every last ounce of their energy to living their faith in every respect and sharing it with others! These words had power to cleanse because they had been truly converted by these words! That is what we are talking about here, true conversion!

How can we ensure that the additional truth we find is compatible with the Bible and Spirit of Prophecy, and also complements the older or original truths that we have believed in? Jesus makes it plain on the Sermon on the Mount and gives a couple examples: "Ye have heard that it was said by them of old time, Thou shalt not kill; and whosoever shall kill shall be in danger of the judgment: But I say unto you, That whosoever is angry with his brother without a cause shall be in danger of the judgment: and whosoever shall say to his brother, Raca, shall be in danger of the council: but whosoever shall say, Thou fool, shall be in danger of hell fire. . . . Ye have heard that it was said by them of old time, Thou shalt not commit adultery: But I say unto you, That whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart." Matthew 5:21-22, 27-29. Here Jesus is showing the greater meaning of these commandments which was new light to those living in His day. He was showing the spirit of the law as opposed to just the letter of the law.

Although truth is always ultimately the same, with any additional truth and light given to God's people, the standard appears to become higher and a greater level of purity will be seen to be required. Therefore, if people claim that they have new truth, which, in fact, waters down or dilutes the original truth or compromises on certain points of truth then this new truth is almost certainly not from God. Jesus here emphasizes how far-reaching the requirements of the law really are; and He

also emphasizes that mere outward conformity to the law avails nothing.

Jesus consolidates the importance and validity of the old, or original, truth of the 6th commandment by providing what seemed like new truth to them. In reality, this “new light” assists them in the keeping of the original 6th commandment. If someone is consistently angry and jealous towards others and they allow these feelings to fester, their chances of killing or hurting them clearly increases. At the very least they often damage or hurt someone’s reputation by speaking badly about them, or they hurt them emotionally or mentally. By understanding that uncontrolled or unrepented of anger can lead to murder and that the outward act is merely an extension of the inward decision enables someone to keep the 6th commandment in its fullest sense. They are enabled to analyze their own feelings and emotions towards their brethren and do their absolute best to control their feelings, with the help of Jesus, knowing the great danger that can arise from negative feelings not given to God.

The other example that Jesus gave: “whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart.” Again, this new knowledge presented by Jesus will enable someone to more effectively keep the 7th Commandment. Jesus was again, clarifying the law, by giving what was new light to those living in His time. By understanding the dangers of looking lustfully at a woman and thus never dwelling upon these thoughts, the sin of committing the act of adultery could be completely avoided. There can be no adultery if one does not look inappropriately upon a man or a woman, or think in a lustful manner. Jesus provided the perfect manner in which the 7th commandment can be kept!

The Ten Commandments work so wonderfully together. Although James wrote that he who breaks one commandment is guilty of breaking them all (James 2:10), Jesus in His mercy also shows us that by keeping each



commandment in a thorough manner (the spirit of the law as opposed to the letter only), we are enabled to keep the other commandments and effectively love God and our fellow man, as the Moral Law requires. In presenting this “new” truth regarding the 7th Commandment, Jesus borrowed from the 10th commandment which requires

us not to covet. Therefore, by effectively keeping the 10th commandment and not lusting or coveting we are ensured of being able to effectively keep the 7th Commandment.

Did the expectation of how to keep the Ten Commandments become greater in the time of Jesus? Of course not! God’s standards and expectations, and His law are like Him—they never change. The reality is that all new truth is only old truth rediscovered or explained in greater detail. The Lord reveals additional truth and gives greater clarification of His law to people as they can handle it and are ready for it!

How does the Lord determine whether someone is ready for new truth or not? “And after certain days, when Felix came with his wife Drusilla, which was a Jewess, he sent for Paul, and heard him concerning the faith in Christ. And as he reasoned of righteousness, temperance, and judgment to come, Felix trembled, and answered, Go thy way for this time; when I have a convenient season, I will call for thee.” Acts 24:24–25. This convenient season never came. As a result, no further truth was given to Felix. It is important for us to share truth with all people, but only to continue sharing truth with those that are receptive and willing to live up to that truth they have received, otherwise we are truly throwing our pearls before the swine.

“And when Herod saw Jesus, he was exceeding glad: for he was desirous to see Him of a long season, because he had heard many things of Him; and he hoped to have seen some miracle done by Him. Then he questioned with Him in many words; but He answered him nothing. And the chief priests and scribes stood and vehemently accused Him. And Herod with His men of war set Him at nought, and mocked Him, and arrayed Him in a gorgeous robe, and sent Him again to Pilate. And the same day Pilate and Herod were made friends together: for before they were at enmity between themselves.” Luke 23:8–11. Why did Jesus remain silent and not share any truths with Herod? He could have shared incredible truths in the hopes of awakening Herod’s conscience! But, no, Jesus remained silent because Herod had rejected the truth brought to him by John the Baptist. He had seared his conscience to the point that hearing any greater truth would have had no benefit for him. Therefore no more truth would be given to him! The decision of whether someone is worthy to hear more truth or not is based on whether they have taken advantage of the current light that they have and whether they are living up to it! Is this a merciful measure?

“I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now. Howbeit when He, the Spirit of truth, is come, He will guide you into all truth: for He shall not speak of Himself; but whatsoever He shall hear, that also shall He speak: and He will shew you things to come.” John 16:12–13. Is this a merciful measure that God only shares truth a little at a time? Absolutely! Think about this—for three years, the disciples had been with the greatest Teacher the world has ever known, but there were still many things for them to learn. It was clear that they were not ready for these things yet, because the human mind is capable of only acquiring truth at a limited rate. Each person is different and God is very patient with each individual mind and only reveals truth as the person has the capacity to receive.

However, for some, new truth is withheld because they choose not to live up to the current light they have. In this scenario, new light will just be a stumbling block to them; it will overwhelm them. Having heard greater truth will make them more accountable before God; therefore they will be judged more harshly than if they had not heard any additional truth. God, in His mercy, only gives people the truth a little at a time. If they accept it, He gives more. If they reject it, no further truth will be given, thus minimizing their punishment. Also, they will more than likely not be able to comprehend any further truth.

Do you think the Israelites who had just danced around the golden calf were ready for new light? Do you think the true believers in time of the early Christian church were ready to receive new truth and light? What about the church at the time of Constantine? What about the Adventist church after the “Christ our Righteousness” message was rejected in 1888? In times of apostasy it is necessary to go back to the old waymarks, whereas in times in which God has a pure, faithful remnant, it is possible to receive new light!

Do you think the early Pilgrims and Puritans were in a position to receive new light after they came to America? Yes, absolutely they were, because they had faithfully been living up to the truth and thus had been persecuted for their faith, which is why they came to the New World. It is clear that an environment of religious freedom and being able to actually read and understand the Scriptures for oneself is really the only way to discover new truth and new light. The Dark Ages was a time of no spiritual advancement or new understanding of truth; it was a time of great error and darkness. This is what happens when people are unable to study the Bible for themselves. After the Dark Ages, where was

much of the important spiritual advancement made in terms of new truths over the next few hundred years? In America, with the Dark Day and the Falling of the Stars occurring there, with the Millerite Movement, the Advent Movement, etc.

Although we have said that truth can be progressive, people’s understanding of truth can also be regressive. When the early Advent believers began keeping the Sabbath in the 1840’s, was this new light or new truth? Of course not, but due to the fact that this truth had largely been forgotten, obscured, or people’s knowledge had regressed upon the topic, it certainly felt like new truth, from their perspective. As mentioned earlier, new truth is actually rediscovered old truth which has long since been forgotten about due to the corruption of society and the trampling upon of God’s truth in times past. We have the example of the Israelites at Mount Sinai. They received the “new” truth of the Ten Commandments, however, these commandments were “old” and had been in existence since eternity.

Going back to the original question:

Are the Adherence to Past/Original Truths, and the Belief that Light/Truth is Progressive, Two Mutually Exclusive Concepts?

Are there different times in which we should emphasize returning to the old waymarks or pushing forward to seek greater truth? I can answer clearly, from the evidence they are not mutually exclusive. They are to be blended in perfect harmony. Believed, taught and lived.

On the Day of Judgement, no one will be condemned because of a lack of knowledge which he never had an opportunity to obtain. God is merciful; but let us not abuse that mercy, but instead use our time to live up to all the truths we know and consistently seek for more truth. In a world that has abandoned truth, and routinely accepts falsehood in order to protect people’s feelings, let us be protectors of the original truth and value it more than life itself, while seeking for more. Let us all seek the Lord while He may be found! Amen.

Richard Eaton





Olaf and Laurentius Petri

The country of Sweden, as in other European countries had been under the rule of the Papal Roman Church. The people were steeped in poverty and ground down by oppression. They were destitute of the Holy Scriptures, and having a religion of mere signs and ceremonies, which conveyed no light to the mind. They were returning to the superstitious beliefs and pagan practices of their heathen ancestors.

Yet this country was not left to languish in darkness. The Lord raised up two faithful reformers who brought the light of the scriptures to Sweden. Orebro [Sweden] was the home of these two leaders, Olaf and Laurentius Petri. Their father was a blacksmith. They were born respectively in 1497 and 1499.

The two boys received their early education at a Carmelite cloister school, from which Olaf, at the age of nineteen, went to Wittenberg to study. Olaf is said to have been in the crowd around the door of the Castle-church of Wittenberg when Luther nailed his Theses to it. Laurentius joined him later and both studied under Luther and Melancthon where they received the doctrines of the reformed faith.

Olaf and Laurentius were eminent for their piety, for their theological attainments, and the zeal and unflinching courage with which they advocated their faith. They are said to have resembled the great reformers of Germany. Like Melancthon, Laurentius, the younger, was

learned, thoughtful, and calm, while Olaf, by his powerful eloquence, aroused the people like Luther. For this reason Olaf was often violently assailed by the mob. The Catholic priests stirred up the prejudices of the ignorant and superstitious people, so that upon several occasions he barely escaped with his life.

Having had drunk from the well of Wittenberg the two young men returned to Sweden to carry the water of life to their countrymen. On their return journey to Stockholm in 1519 they got stranded and nearly lost their lives as the boat ran aground on Gotland island during a storm. Having survived the storm, they settled on the island, and Laurentius became headmaster at a school while Olaf became assistant to a priest. Not long after, Olaf travelled with the priest to Stockholm at the crowning of King Gustav. Subsequently, he managed to get on friendly terms with the King, and soon moved to Stockholm where he worked in the vicinity of the King. His brother joined him later.

The brothers continued to faithfully teach the Reformation truths which they had learned. As the Reformation progressed, enemies arose. Bishop Brask, of Linkoping, in 1523, received information from Upsala of the dangerous spread of Lutheran heresy in the Cathedral-church at Strengnas. Brask, an active and fiery man, a politician rather than a priest, was filled with indignation against the Lutheran teachers. He ordered a ban against all who should buy, or read, or circulate their writings, and denounced them as men who had impiously trampled under foot ecclesiastical order for the purpose of gaining a liberty which they called Christian, but which he would term "Lutheran," nay, "Luciferian." The opposition of the bishop but helped to fan the flame; and the public disputations to which the Protestant preachers were challenged, only helped to kindle it the more and spread it over the kingdom. The doctrine of Luther passed from the school into the private dwelling.

At one of the disputations, in the presence of the king and leading men of Sweden, Olaf Petri with great ability, courageously preached the doctrines of the reformed faith against the Romish champions. He declared the Fathers [of Rome] to be below and not above Scripture, and that their interpretations were to be received only when in accordance with Scriptures. He denied that the word of God is obscure when laying down the fundamental doctrines of the faith, and he presented the Bible's own testimony to its simplicity and clearness; that the essential doctrines of the faith are presented in the Bible in a clear and simple manner, so

that all men may understand them. Christ said, "My doctrine is not mine, but His that sent Me," and Paul declared that should he preach any other gospel than that which he had received, he would be accursed (Galatians 1:8). "How, then," said the Reformer, "shall others presume to enact dogmas at their pleasure, and impose them as things necessary to salvation?" He showed that the decrees of the church are of no authority when in opposition to the commands of God. And maintaining the great Protestant principle, "The Bible, and the Bible only as the rule of faith and practice."

This contest was more obscure in comparison to those that Luther attended in Worms and Augsburg, but it served to show us the sort of men that formed the rank and file of the army of the Reformers. They were not illiterate, sectarian, noisy controversialists—far from it; They were men who had studied the word of God, and knew well how to wield the weapons with which the armory of the Bible supplied them.

As the result of this disputation the king of Sweden accepted the Protestant faith. These Reformers were, thus now, much more favored and protected by the king. On October 1524, the Uppsala Cathedral's chapter excommunicated both brothers on grounds of heresy. They remained, however, confident in the new Swedish King's strong support.

Leaving the teachings and practices of the Papal Roman church, both priests got married in 1525. Later that year Laurentius married Elisabeth Didrikdotter, a daughter of the King's cousin.

King Gustav was so determined upon a reformation in the State and the Church that he welcomed these able and powerful assistants in the battle against Rome. In 1531 at the Uppsala Council he confirmed the kingdom's Lutheran alignment taking the final step of breaking with the Roman Catholic Church. These reformers were favored and powerfully assisted by the king. Their zeal and prudence had been so well tested, the king employed them in the instruction of his subjects in the doctrines of Protestantism. Olaf Petri he made preacher in the great Cathedral of Stockholm, and Laurentius Petri he appointed to the chair of theology at Uppsala.

After these light-bearers came the Light itself—the Word of God. Olaf began to translate the New Testament into the Swedish language. Taking Luther's version, which had been recently published in Germany, as his model, he labored diligently at his task, and in a short time, he placed, amid the murmurs of the bishops,

the New Testament in Swedish in the hands of the people, who now looked with open face on what they had formerly contemplated through a veil.

After the New Testament had been issued, the two brothers, at the request of the king, undertook the translation of the whole Bible. The work was completed in due time, and published in Stockholm. "New controversies," said the king, "arise every day; we have now an infallible judge to which we can appeal.

The two brothers had given the people of that country, for the first time, the word of God in their native tongue. "It was ordered by the Diet that throughout the kingdom, ministers should explain the Scriptures and that the children in the schools should be taught to read the Bible." —*The Great Controversy*, p. 244

Laurentius held the position of archbishop for 42 years. However, Olaf's relationship with King Gustav deteriorated sharply. Olaf was arrested and put on trial for treason, supposedly because he had learned about a conspiracy against the King during [confession](#), and not revealed it. One historian suggests that Olaf's writings criticizing the King's harsh punishments, as well as taxation policies also contributed to the criminal trial. King Gustav also wanted to control the church, while Olaf wanted to keep church and state separate. On January 2, 1540, he received his death sentence, and even his brother Laurentius signed the death sentence. It has been disputed whether Laurentius was doing this because of a weak character or if he thought it better to formally obey so that he could continue to spread the reformation ideas.

Due to his influential friends, Olaf eventually received a royal pardon in 1542 as a reward for completing the massive biblical translation project, and in that year was appointed inspector over Stockholm's schools. The following year, he was promoted to dean of St. Nicholas' Church (Storkyrkan) in Stockholm, and fulfilled that priestly position during the final nine years of his life.

Olaf Petri died on April 19, 1552 and was buried at Storkyrkan, which became the national cathedral (supplanting Uppsala Cathedral) two centuries later. Laurentius lived another 21 years, completing the Swedish church's alignment with Lutheran reformed practices. He passed into the grave on October 27, 1573.

There now stands in Orebro, in a little park in front of the college, a monument erected over fifty years ago to the memory of these remarkable men, and bearing the inscription, "In memory of Olaf and Laurentius Petri,

the first preachers of the Lutheran doctrine in Sweden, born in Orebro. Daniel 12:3.”

“When we confine our attention to such brilliant centers as Wittenberg and Zurich, and to such illustrious names as those of Luther and Melancthon, of Zwingli and Oecolampadius, we are apt to be told, these were the leaders of the movement, and we should naturally expect in them prodigious power and vast acquisitions; but the subordinates were not like these. Well, we turn to the obscure theater of Sweden, and the humble names of Olaf and Laurentius Petri --from the masters to the disciples--what do we find? . . . Scholars and theologians; men who have thoroughly mastered the whole system of gospel truth, and who win an easy victory over the sophists of the schools and the dignitaries of Rome.” --*The Great Controversy*, p. 243

“Steadily and surely the darkness of ignorance and superstition was dispelled by the blessed light of the gospel. Freed from Romish oppression, the nation attained to a strength and greatness it had never before reached. Sweden became one of the bulwarks of Protestantism. A century later, at a time of sorest peril, this small and

hitherto feeble nation--the only one in Europe that dared lend a helping hand--came to the deliverance of Germany in the terrible struggle of the Thirty Years' War. All Northern Europe seemed about to be brought again under the tyranny of Rome. It was the armies of Sweden that enabled Germany to turn the tide of popish success, to win toleration for the Protestants,--Calvinists as well as Lutherans,--and to restore liberty of conscience to those countries that had accepted the Reformation.” --*Ibid*, p. 244

Information taken from:

Historical Sketches of the Foreign Missions of the Seventh-day Adventists (1886), Notes of Travel. By Mrs. E.G. White, pp. 201-202

The History of Protestantism. By James Wylie

Great Controversy, by Ellen G. White

Wikipedia:

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Laurentius_Petri

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Olaus_Petri



WHAT LOVE IS NOT

Pray tell, hath thou seen love come by this way I hear he comes this way each day. My name is Hate and I lie in wait to show to Love that this land is mine and I know it's but a matter of time to let my light and not his shine.

Sir, hath thou not seen, hath thou not heard that Love fainteth and weary not and not a stranger within this land is He! But he too hath a home that mightily stands. He bareth all things, hopeth all things and endureth all things. But thou oh Hate, seeketh thine own, love all evil, rejoiceth in wrong and so easily provoked. You then are what love is not.

But doth not the world speak for itself and hath crowned me King and Lord of all? Thou hath only to look around and my glory to behold. Compared to Love I stand victorious over every soul.

My Friend, judge nothing before the time until Love comes your way. He brings to light the hidden things of darkness. He will make manifest the councils of the heart and then and only then shall every man know what Love is not.

Alas dear Hate, go thy way before the night is spent as Love is fast approaching this way. He has a job to do, to undo the wrongs that you have done and show the world what love is not and when that which is perfect is come then that which is in part shall be surely put to nought.

Be gone! Be gone! Be gone with you thou wretched Hate.

Rose Powell



components, both internal to the person, and external, in the environment. Some aspects of our physical health are not under our control. These include such things as our biological makeup. We are born with certain tendencies towards health or illness. This is something that we cannot modify or change. An individual can be predisposed to certain illnesses such as diabetes and cancer from birth. Inherited tendencies are the result of passing on the weaknesses of the parents to the children, and even to subsequent generations.

An external component of our health is our environment. This include basic needs such as access to fresh water

“All should have an intelligent knowledge of the human frame that they may keep their bodies in the condition necessary to do the work of the Lord. The physical life is to be carefully preserved and developed that through humanity the divine nature may be revealed in its fullness. The relation of the physical organism to the spiritual life is one of the most important branches of education. . . . All need to become acquainted with their physical structure and the laws that control natural life. He who remains in **willing** ignorance of the laws of his physical being and who violates them through ignorance is sinning against God. All should place themselves in the best possible relation to life and health.” – *Christ’s Object Lessons*, p. 348

We have a responsibility to God to take care of our physical bodies. It becomes a sin to us if we violate the laws of nature, and allow our bodies to become enfeebled and diseased through neglect of the laws of health. It is as great a sin to ignore the laws that govern our health as it is to break one of the Ten Commandments. We cannot continue to abuse our physical health, and denying the significance of our decision. “A continual transgression of nature’s laws is a continual transgression of the law of God.” – *Christian Temperance and Bible Hygiene*, p. 8

“It is a truly a sin to violate the laws of our being as it is to break the Ten Commandments. To do either is to break God’s laws. Those who transgress the law of God in their physical organism, will be inclined to violate the law of God spoken from Sinai.” – *Ibid.*, p. 53

The physical health of an individual involves many

and nutritious food. Depending on where we live our health can be affected by pollutants and toxins. Those living in large cities are more likely to be exposed to air pollution than those who live in the country. Most times we are not able to make changes to our living environment. If possible, we can mitigate the impact that our environment has on our health by choosing to live in an area that provides benefits and reduces risk. However, many people cannot choose where they live.

Another external determinant of health is the healthcare organization of the country we live in. How accessible is health care? Do we have the ability to have our health assessed on a regular basis, is screening available to rule out diseases, and if we become ill, do we have access to doctors, and treatments? Countries which provide free and universal access to healthcare have populations that are healthier than in countries where healthcare is limited, or is only available to those who are wealthy.

The final determinant of health which we do have control over is our lifestyle. There are many lifestyle choices that we make that determine whether we are healthy or whether we develop diseases. Many illness are as a direct result of our choices. Thus, health is maintained through biology, the practice of medicine, through laws which govern the health of the environment, and our own individual effort.

Often as Reformers we are very mindful of certain components of our physical health, such as adhering to a healthy diet, as our way of taking care of our physical health. But, is it enough to be a vegetarian or even a vegan? Are we doing enough to be physically healthy just

by ensuring we eat a healthy diet? Our diet is definitely one component that impacts our physical health, but it is not enough. There are many other ways also in which we can take the initiative to improve our health. These include getting adequate sleep, reducing stress, and avoiding bad habits.

The next set of articles will focus on one aspect of our physical health that often gets overlooked, and this is our physical activity and physical fitness. As an introduction, let us see what the Bible tells us about physical activity.

In Genesis chapter 1, the very first thing that God gave man for his physical health was guidelines on what he should eat. "And God said, Behold, I have given you every herb bearing seed, which is upon the face of the earth, and every tree, in the which is the fruit of a tree yielding seed; to you it shall be for meat." Genesis 1:29

After God created man, He also planted a garden from him to live in. "And the LORD God planted a garden eastward in Eden; and there he put the man whom He had formed. . . . And the LORD God took the man, and put him into the Garden of Eden to dress it and to keep it." Genesis 2:8, 15. God provided manual labour for man. Adam was commanded to look after the garden. God knew that Adam could not be happy without some kind of employment. No sooner had God created him, than He gave him his appointed work. Had happiness consisted of doing nothing, man would have been left unemployed.

"Work is not a curse, but a blessing. God gave sinless Adam and Eve a beautiful garden to tend. This was pleasant work, and none but pleasant work would have entered our world had not the first pair transgressed God's commandments." –*Counsels to Parents, Teachers, and Students*, p. 147

From the very beginning, God gave man work to do, something to keep him physically active. Man was not to sit in idleness, just gazing at and enjoying the works of God's hands. No; he was to labour to maintain the garden where he was placed.

What happened when sin entered into the earth? Did God's guidelines for physical labour change?



"And unto Adam he said, Because thou hast hearkened unto the voice of thy wife, and hast eaten of the tree, of which I commanded thee, saying, Thou shalt not eat of it: cursed is the ground for thy sake; in sorrow shalt thou eat of it all the days of thy life; Thorns also and thistles shall it bring forth to thee;

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

The Spirit of Prophecy states that the man's work in the Garden of Eden, before sin entered, was "pleasant." Now, after sin came into the world, man would labour "in the sweat of thy face". The work given to man was no longer pleasant, but a hardship. And, not only would man struggle to provide for himself and his family, but thorns and thistles would also rise up, to pollute the crops; men would continually need to remove these unwanted weeds from his fields. But, we see that it was in God's mercy that man would now need to work hard.



"From that time the race would be afflicted by Satan's temptations. Instead of the happy labor heretofore appointed them, anxiety and toil were to be their lot. . . . And the life of toil and care which was henceforth to be man's lot was appointed in love. It was a discipline rendered needful by his sin, to place a check upon the indulgence of appetite and passion, to develop habits of self-control. It was a part of God's great plan of man's recovery from the ruin and degradation of sin." –*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 59–60

Thus, instead of it being a curse, having to experience a life of hard labour, it would be a blessing, to prevent idleness. There is a famous saying we have all heard many times. "The devil finds work for idle hands". This is not a direct quote from the Bible, but Sister White confirms to us that this is so. "Delicate idleness and selfish gratification make invalids; they can make the life empty and barren in every way. God has not given human beings reason, and crowned their lives with His goodness, that they may be cursed with the sure results of idleness." – *Counsels to Parents, Teachers, and Students*, p. 147

We have the example of the great wickedness of the inhabitants of Sodom and Gomorrah. The inhabitants were very wealthy; everything they could possibly want, their luxuries and treasures, could be obtained without labour. They had become rich



and idle; the lives of these inhabitants was continual feasting and parties. "This was the iniquity of thy sister Sodom, pride, fullness of bread, and abundance of idleness was in her and in her daughters." Ezekiel 16:49. Their useless, idle life made them prey to Satan's temptations, and they defaced the image of God, and became satanic rather than divine." *-Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 156

Jesus, in His early life, was an example to all of humanity as to the benefit of useful labour. He was obedient and helpful in the home. He learned the carpenter's trade, and worked with His own hands in the little shop at Nazareth. Thus as a young man, Satan could not tempt Him through a life of idleness. "As He worked in childhood and youth, mind and body were developed. He did not use His physical powers recklessly, but gave them such exercise as would keep them in health, that He might do the best work in every line. . . . By precept and example Christ has dignified useful labour." *-the Adventist Home*, p. 507

"Diligent labor keeps many, young and old, from the snares of him who 'finds some mischief still or idle hands to do.' Let no one be ashamed of work, for honest toil is ennobling. While the hands are engaged in the most common tasks, the mind may be filled with high and holy thoughts." *-The Youth's Instructor*, Feb 27, 1902

We also have the example of Paul, who, not only spent his life in missionary endeavours, but also continued to engage in his craft of tent making to support himself financially. This was physically taxing work. He was teaching through example that those working in missionary lines also needed to work their physical bodies. Too much focus on intellectual attainments at the expense of physical activity would cause an imbalance in the body. "He desired to teach young ministers that by working with their hands, by bringing into exercise their muscles and sinews, they would become strong to endure the toils and privations that awaited them in the gospel field. And he realized that his own teachings would lack vitality and force if he did not keep all parts of the system properly exercised." *-The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 352

Paul recognized the value of exercising, not only his mind, but his body. During his sojourns he often had to go without food, was beaten, and had to travel many miles as he took the message of the gospel throughout the Gentile lands. Paul needed a significant degree of physical ability to endure the toll on his physical body through trials and temptations. If Paul had not worked to maintain his physical strength, his usefulness as a missionary for Christ would have been diminished.

"The misuse of our physical powers shortens the period of time in which our lives can be used for the glory of God. And it unfits us to accomplish the work God has given us to do... By neglecting physical exercise, by overworking mind or body, we unbalance the nervous system. Those who thus shorten their lives and unfit themselves for service by disregarding nature's laws, are guilty of robbery toward God. And they are robbing their fellow men also. The opportunity of blessing others, the very work for which God sent them into the world, has by their own course of action been cut short. And they have unfitted themselves to do even that which in a briefer period of time they might have accomplished. The Lord holds us guilty when by our injurious habits we thus deprive the world of good." *-Christ's Object Lessons*, p. 346. This is a strong statement regarding effects of the physical feebleness and shortened life that is brought about by neglecting our physical health. If we damage our health we are breaking the 8th commandment. We are committing robbery towards God if we deprive the world of the good that we might have done if we had not abused our bodies and left us unfit for His service.

Thus, the physical exercise that was so beneficial to mankind, even before sin entered into the world, to keep the body healthy, is even more necessary today for our health. We must also protect our spiritual health by keeping busy, and avoiding the idleness that brings about evil acts and thoughts.

"Man came from the hand of the Creator perfect in every organization and beautiful in form. The fact that he has for six thousand years withstood the ever-increasing weight of disease and crime is conclusive proof of the power of endurance with which he was first endowed. . . . Had Adam originally possessed no greater physical power than men now have, the race would ere this have become extinct." *-Christian Temperance and Bible Hygiene*, p. 7

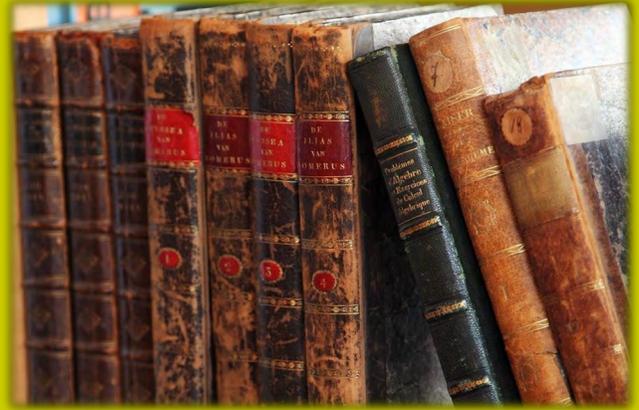
Physical activity, which leads to physical well-being (fitness), is an important component of physical health. However, most of us no longer need to tax ourselves physically to provide for our basic needs, and physical activity is no longer part of our daily routine. Thus, we need to ensure that regular physical activity is one of the lifestyle choices we make to ensure good health.

NEXT MONTH: IMPACT OF PHYSICAL EXERCISE ON HEALTH



CHILDREN'S CORNER:

The Reward



"I think I am sure I will receive a reward," said Edward, as he stood with his school friends.

It was examination day, and many a young heart was beating quick with the hope of receiving a reward, or with the fear of failure.

Some had looked forward to this day, studying hard, knowing how carefully they would be examined. They knew they would be either rewarded or punished according to how well they had learned their lessons.

Others did not seem to care. They wasted the time they should have used for study. How they wished now they would have made more of an effort to study.

In the centre of the schoolroom was placed a long table that had books of various sizes and values on it. There were Bibles and Testaments, both large and small, the histories of Rome, of Greece, and of England. There were volumes elegantly bound and old pamphlets just stitched together.

The school was large, and it was their plan that every boy who had exerted himself to the best of his ability, however little that might be, would be rewarded and carry home a gift to remind him of his diligence and perseverance of work well done.

Like the servants to whom the Lord intrusted the talents, some had five, and some had but one. Yet those with one could not be excused for neglecting their duty because their talent was small. Even the youngest and the simplest child at school may make good use of the talents and opportunities the Lord has given him to improve.

With anxious hearts and earnest faces, the boys arranged themselves around the table. They were examined with great care and patience by their teachers, as to the progress they had made in their studies.

Now, Edward had set his heart on one particular book,

the Roman History, neatly bound, and making two very pretty volumes, which he thought would handsomely fill up a vacant spot on his bookshelves.

All he could do was think of this set of books until no other prize was of any value in his sight. This is a great fault often committed by children as well as adults. Instead of thankfully receiving whatever gift the Lord provides them. They would choose for themselves; they become discontented and unhappy in the midst of blessings, because the wisdom of God sees fit to withhold one thing that their folly deems necessary to their happiness.

Edward passed his examination with much credit, and one of the first gifts was awarded to him; but instead of the Roman History, a very neat Bible, in excellent large type, was placed in his hands.

Many of his schoolmates had longed for that Bible, but Edward did not care for it.

The eyes of the foolish boy filled with tears, as he saw the elegant History of Rome presented to another boy, who, perhaps would gladly have exchanged with him.

The next day Edward shared his disappointment to his parents, who thought his desire for the Roman History was a good choice; but since he had done so well in his examination, they did not care what reward he had been given.

Edward's family lived in the country, not far from the seaside, in a most delightful and healthful location.

At this time his mother's brother, whose health was very poor, came to enjoy the benefit of the sea breezes, and rest a little from the toil and bustle of active life in the big city of London.

Mr. Lewis was a young man of the most pleasing manners and appearance. He was gentle and serious, but not at all gloomy or sad.

His health was poor and this only served to increase his patience in enduring it without a murmuring word or discontented look. Edward, who was really a kind-hearted and affectionate boy, soon became very much attached to his uncle, who had not seen him for any years and who was much pleased with the time he could spend with his nephew now.

It was only three days after Edward's school was over, that he went bounding over the grounds in search of his uncle, whose society he already preferred to his usual amusements.

Mr. Lewis was seated under a fine old oak, A rich and extensive tract of country lay spread before his eyes; and, at a distance the mighty ocean, whose deep green waters were seen in beautiful contrast with the pale yellow cliff, bounded the view of the landscape.

Mr. Lewis had a book in his hand, into which he frequently looked, and then raised his eyes again to gaze upon the beauties of nature that surrounded him.



He seemed so deep in thought that Edward did not want to disturb him, until his uncle, seeing him at some little distance, kindly beckoned him to come near.

"Is not this a beautiful place, uncle" asked Edward, as he seated himself beside him; "and do you not find the breeze from the water very refreshing?"

"It is beautiful indeed, my dear boy; and I am refreshed as I look around me."

"Is that a Bible you are reading, Uncle?"

"Yes. I always find it the best commentary upon His works;—they explain each other."

"I love the Bible too, Uncle," said Edward, "and got a good grade in Scripture class this last half-year."

"And which did you enjoy most, Edward, the Scriptures, or the grade you got for studying them?"

Edward looked a little embarrassed and did not immediately reply.

"It is quite right to take pleasure in the well-earned

praise from your teachers," continued Mr. Lewis, "and I was glad to hear that you were given a reward at the last examination also."

"Yes, Uncle, but not the prize I wanted most. There was a Roman History that I would have liked better, and it was exactly of equal value with the Bible that I got."

"Of equal value, Edward?"

"I mean that it was not considered a higher prize, and it would have been a nicer book for me."

"Then you had a Bible already?"

"Why, no, Uncle, not of my own, but it is easy to borrow one on the Sabbath; and I had gone through all my memory verses, and do not want it on other days."

"Read these four verses for me," said Mr. Lewis, pointing to the sixth chapter of Deuteronomy "commencing with the sixth verse."

Edward read: "And these words which I command thee this day, shall be in thine heart; and thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and shall talk of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up. And thou shalt bind them for a sign upon thine hand, and they shall be as frontlets between thine eyes, and thou shalt write them upon the posts of thy house, and on thy gates."

"To whom did the Lord give this command, Edward?"

"To the Jews, Uncle."

"Yes; and the word of God, which cannot pass away, is as much binding on us as on them, in everything excepting the sacrifices and ceremonies, which foreshadowed the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ, and which were done away. For by His death He fulfilled all those types and shadows."

"Then," said Edward, "we are commanded to write the Bible on our hands and on our doorposts."

"No, my dear boy, not literally, but in a figure of speech; as the Lord, when declaring He never will forget Zion, says, 'I have graven thee upon the palms of My hands; thy walls are continually before Me.'

"The meaning of the passage you first read is, that we must have the word of God as continually present in our minds as anything written on our hands, and on every object around us, would be to our bodily sight. And how are we to get our thoughts so occupied by it, Edward?"

"By continually reading it I suppose," replied Edward, rather sullenly.

“By reading it often, and meditating on it much,” said his uncle; “and that we can do without interfering with our other business. Without prayer, you cannot obtain any spiritual blessing, nor maintain any communion with God; and without reading the Scriptures you will have but little desire to pray.

“We are like people wandering in the dark while the Bible is as a bright lamp held out to direct us in the only safe path. You cannot be a child of God if you do not His will; you cannot do it unless you know it, and it is by the Bible that He is pleased to have that knowledge known. Do you begin to see, Edward, that the Bible is more suitable as an every-day book than your profane history?”

“Why, yes, Uncle; but the Bible is a serious book, and if I read it so constantly, I would never be happy.”

“There is no happiness among the lost, Edward; and that will be your final reward if you neglect the great salvation that you can read of in the Bible. Besides, there is no foundation for what you suppose to be the effect of reading the Bible. I have known people naturally sad all the time, become cheerful and happy by studying it; but I never in my life saw an instance of persons becoming unhappy because they had a hope of going to heaven.”

“I remember, Uncle, that it is written concerning wisdom, that ‘her ways are ways of pleasantness, and all her paths are peace.’”

“Most true, my dear boy, ‘quietness and assurance forever’ is the portion of God’s people.”

“Rejoice in the Lord always, and again I say, rejoice.”

“The ransomed of the Lord shall return, and come to Zion with songs, and everlasting joy upon their heads; they shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away.”

“Are such expressions as these likely to make us gloomy, Edward?”

“O no, Uncle; and I often wonder that you, who suffer so much pain, and read the Bible constantly, are not unhappy.”

“How can I be, Edward, when the Bible tells me that all these things are working together for my spiritual good? That He who spared not His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, will with Him also freely give us all things?”

“When I think of what my sins deserve, and see the Lamb of God bearing the chastisement that should fall upon me, how can I be melancholy!”

“When I feel that the Spirit of God is bringing these

things to my remembrance, and enabling me to love the Lord Jesus, who has done so much for me, I can only rejoice.

“I know that in me, that is, in my flesh, dwelleth no good thing; and since God has promised forgiveness to all who seek that blessing through His Son; and since I feel assured that I have sought that blessing, and feel peace and joy in believing, surely the song of praise, not the moan of lamentation, becomes me.

“Yet I do lament, Edward, daily lament my many sins against God; but I am assured that Christ’s blood cleanseth from all sin, and that in Him I have a powerful and all-prevailing Advocate with the Father. I know in whom I have believed, and that He will never cast off nor forsake me.

“I am sinking into the grave, my dear boy, but I do not shrink from that prospect, because the bitterness of death is taken away by my Saviour, who died for my sins, and rose again for my justification; and though this body returns to dust, I shall live again, and enter into the presence of my Redeemer, and rejoice there evermore.”

Edward looked at the animated countenance of his uncle, and then cast down his eyes; they were full of tears. At last he said:—

“Indeed, Uncle, I am a very sinful boy, neglecting the Bible, because I know it would show me my sin, and the consequences of it.

“But I will trifle no more with God’s displeasure. I will get that precious Bible, worth a thousand times more than the Roman histories, and I will read it daily, with prayer that I may be wise unto salvation.”

Mr. Lewis did not live long after this. He died, rejoicing in the hope of life eternal; and as often as Edward had time from school work, he was seen under the oak tree, with the Bible in his hand, from which he learned more and more the will of his God and Saviour, the utter sinfulness of his own nature, and his inability to help himself. From this holy word he learned to place all his dependence upon the merits of his Saviour, to follow the example of his Saviour, in prayer, in resignation, and in doing good to the poor.

He often thought of his dear uncle, and counted that day happy when he sat to listen to his kind advice, which brought him to a knowledge of himself, and of his heavenly Father.

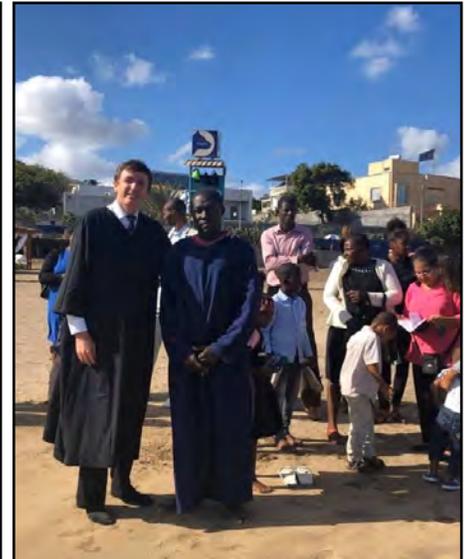


Believers in Philippines



**Left:
Missionary activity
in
Ziguinchor, Senegal**

**Below:
Cape Verde,
Africa**



“Search for truth as for hidden treasures. The key of knowledge needs to be held in every hand that it may open the storehouse of God's treasury, which contains stores of precious gems of truth. When a man is craving for truth from God's Word, angels of God are by his side to lead his mind into green pastures.” –*The Ellen G. White 1888 Materials*, p. 72

