



Readings for the Week of Prayer

To be read from
Friday, December 4,
through
Sabbath, December 12, 2009

*The Problem
of Sin and
Its Solution*

Introduction

We cannot fail to be astonished at the present spiritual and moral condition of society. Wherever we look, we see the terrible consequences of sin. In the lives of individuals—young and old, rich and poor, educated and uneducated—sin is pervasive, impacting society as a whole and doing its degenerative, destructive work. We confront it in our own personal lives, where it causes illness, destroys affection and sympathy, and robs us and those around us of happiness. How many can say that happiness is their lot in life?

And the situation is no better in families. In some countries, half of all marriages end in strife, lawsuit, and divorce, causing untold grief not only for the partners but also for the children who are left without the shelter and warm, nurturing atmosphere of the home God intended for them to have. But even in marriages that are not broken by the tragedy of divorce, all too often harmony and happiness are missing. Problems between parents, squabbles among the children, and difficulties between parents and children are the inheritance of too many families. Thus, the most fundamental unit of society is troubled and at risk.

And what about the church, the divinely designated place of peace and blessing, where every individual seeks to find peace, brotherly love, and blessing? What atmosphere permeates the church? Sometimes differences in education and experience, in character and intellect, and in understanding and interpretation are allowed to trouble this holy place. Those who are seeking for the heavenly, healing balm for their wounded hearts may not always find what they are looking for. Their own problems and those of others persist, and they enter the church empty and leave it empty.

Wherever it is present, sin is pervasive and destructive. It obstructs the

preaching of the gospel and hinders that unity which is essential among members, just as different languages can block understanding between individuals. Sin keeps young people from maturing, luring them into choosing their own or false friends' ways without considering the consequences of their choices.

The earliest records of human history reveal people who truly wanted to be freed from sin and its slavery. Abel, the second human being born into this world, sought forgiveness and freedom from sin. He looked to the future Redeemer of the world and in faith offered

READINGS FOR THE WEEK OF PRAYER

December 4-12, 2009

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625 West Ave. • Cedartown, GA 30125
Phone 770-748-0077 • Fax: 770-748-0095

Email: imssdarmgc@yahoo.com
Internet: www.ims1914.org

the sacrifice of atonement. The patriarchs Noah and Abraham did the same, presenting their prayers and offerings to God. In the Old Testament services, daily sacrifices were offered by faith to cleanse the people from sin. And the great day of atonement—the solemn day of fasting and prayer—was solely for the purpose of personal and national purification from sin.

Dear brothers and sisters, let us remember that every evil and every problem is rooted in sin—and we are in danger of not recognizing this. Let us not lose sight of the fact that this intruder—sin—required the greatest sacrifice in the universe and that the Lord offers us every divine means for facing it head on. It is precisely to help us in this great conflict that the Readings for this Week of Prayer will focus on the problem of sin and its solution. Presenting the divine remedy that will conquer sin, the Spirit of Prophecy states unequivocally: “God has made ample provision for His people; and if they rely upon His strength, they will never become the sport of circumstances. The strongest temptation cannot excuse sin. However great the pressure brought to bear upon the soul, transgression is our own act. It is not in the power of earth or hell to compel anyone to do evil. Satan attacks us at our weak points, but we need not be overcome. However severe or unexpected the assault, God has provided help for us, and in His strength we may conquer.” —*Conflict and Courage*, p. 110.

“Whatever may be man’s besetting sin, whatever bitter or baleful passions struggle for the mastery, he may conquer, if he will watch and war against them in the name and strength of Israel’s Helper.” —*God’s Amazing Grace*, p. 242.

“Every Christian must stand on guard continually, watching every avenue of the soul where Satan might find access. He must pray for divine help and at the same time resolutely resist every inclination to sin. By courage, by faith, by persevering toil, he can conquer. But let him remember that to gain the victory Christ must abide in him and he in Christ.... It

is only by personal union with Christ, by communion with Him daily, hourly, that we can bear the fruits of the Holy Spirit.” —*The Faith I Live By*, p. 135.

The Week of Prayer, this special season at the end of every year, offers every one of us the opportunity to thank the Lord for all the blessings and protection He has granted us and also to examine our personal record of the past year. What was not in harmony with God’s will, and what should be dispensed with in the future? What was lacking in our spiritual experience? Now is the time to ask for forgiveness and to seek for renewed power in the coming year. Let us be so united with Him every day that we may truly grow in experience as we advance in years.

During this time of prayer, we ask our brethren throughout the entire world to do everything possible so the believers can come together to call upon the Lord with thanksgiving, making their requests known to Him for their special needs, for the sick, for the members’ spiritual life and consecration, and for the needs of His work worldwide. Take time to visit with those who are unable to attend the meetings. In the early church, when the apostle was arrested, the church went into action. The Scriptures record that “Peter therefore was kept in prison: but prayer was made without ceasing of the church unto God for him” (Acts 12:5), and God opened the prison doors and set him free. Similar experiences will be made in our day if we are united in one spirit, loving the Lord.

The last Sabbath of this Week of Prayer, December 12, 2009, will be a day of prayer and fasting, in which all the believers may present their special offerings to the Lord for the progress of His work. These offerings will be used for the General Conference’s missionary projects. May the Lord of heaven bless the generosity of His people and unite them in the spirit of love and prayer and in preparation for greeting Him on that great day of His soon coming.

—*The brothers and sisters of the
General Conference*

Sin and God's Promises

By Ellen G. White

After his transgression, Adam at first imagined himself entering upon a higher state of existence. But soon the thought of his sin filled him with terror. The air, which had hitherto been of a mild and uniform temperature, seemed to chill the guilty pair. The love and peace which had been theirs was gone, and in its place they felt a sense of sin, a dread of the future, a nakedness of soul. —*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 57.

But by disobedience this was forfeited. Through sin the divine likeness was marred, and well-nigh obliterated. Man's physical powers were weakened, his mental capacity was lessened, his spiritual vision dimmed. He had become subject to death. Yet the race was not left without hope. By infinite love and mercy the plan of salvation had been devised, and a life of probation was granted. To restore in man the image of his Maker, to bring him back to the perfection in which he was created, to promote the development of body, mind, and soul, that the divine purpose in his creation might be realized—this was to be the work of redemption. This is ... the great object of life. —*Education*, pp. 15, 16.

When Adam sinned, man broke away from the heaven-ordained center. A demon became the central power in the world. Where God's throne should have been, Satan placed his throne. The world laid its homage, as a willing offering, at the feet of the enemy.

The transgression of God's law brought woe and death in its train. Through disobedience man's powers were perverted, and selfishness took the place of love. His nature became so weakened that it was impossible for

him to resist the power of evil; and the tempter saw being fulfilled his purpose to thwart the divine plan of man's creation and fill the earth with misery and desolation. Men had chosen a ruler who chained them to his car as captives. —*Counsels to Parents, Teachers, and Students*, p. 33.

Physical and spiritual degradation

It is not for want of evidence that men doubt divine truth; they are not infidels through ignorance of the character of the word of God. But through sin the whole human organism is deranged, the mind is perverted, the imagination corrupted. Temptations from without find an answering chord within the heart, and the feet slide imperceptibly into sin. And so it is that many hate the Bible. Some would not care if there were not a Bible in the world. —*Counsels to Parents, Teachers, and Students*, pp. 424, 425.

Sin not only shuts away from God, but destroys in the human soul both the desire and the capacity for knowing Him. Through sin, the whole human organism is deranged, the mind is perverted, the imagination corrupted; the faculties of the soul are degraded. There is an absence of pure religion, of heart holiness. The converting power of God has not wrought in transforming the character. The soul is weak, and for want of moral force to overcome, is polluted and debased. —*Prophets and Kings*, p. 233.

God's remedy

The plan for our redemption was not an afterthought, a plan formulated after the fall of Adam. It was a revelation of "the mystery which hath been kept in

silence through times eternal." ... God ... made provision to meet the terrible emergency. So great was His love for the world, that He covenanted to give His only-begotten Son, "that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life." John 3:16....

Remission of sins can be obtained only through the merits of Christ.... The name of Jesus is the only "name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved." Acts 4:12....

When the soul surrenders itself to Christ, a new power takes possession of the new heart. A change is wrought which man can never accomplish for himself. It is a supernatural work, bringing a supernatural element into human nature. The soul that is yielded to Christ becomes His own fortress, which He holds in a revolted world, and He intends that no authority shall be known in it but His own. A soul thus kept in possession by the heavenly agencies is impregnable to the assaults of Satan. But unless we do yield ourselves to the control of Christ, we shall be dominated by the wicked one. We must inevitably be under the control of the one or the other of the two great powers that are contending for the supremacy of the world. It is not necessary for us deliberately to choose the service of the kingdom of darkness in order to come under its dominion. We have only to neglect to ally ourselves with the kingdom of light. If we do not cooperate with the heavenly agencies, Satan will take possession of the heart, and will make it his abiding place. The only defense against evil is the indwelling of Christ in the heart through faith in His righteousness. Unless we become vitally connected with God, we can never resist the unhallowed effects of self-love, self-indulgence, and temptation to sin. We may leave off many bad habits, for the time we may part company with Satan; but without a vital connection with God, through the surrender of ourselves to Him moment

by moment, we shall be overcome. Without a personal acquaintance with Christ, and a continual communion, we are at the mercy of the enemy, and shall do his bidding in the end. —*The Desire of Ages*, pp. 22, 806, 324.

No other way to be saved from sin

But let none deceive themselves with the thought that God, in His great love and mercy, will yet save even the rejecters of His grace. The exceeding sinfulness of sin can be estimated only in the light of the cross. When men urge that God is too good to cast off the sinner, let them look to Calvary. It was because there was no other way in which man could be saved, because without this sacrifice it was impossible for the human race to escape from the defiling power of sin, and be restored to communion with holy beings—impossible for them again to become partakers of spiritual life—it was because of this that Christ took upon Himself the guilt of the disobedient and suffered in the sinner's stead. The love and suffering and death of the Son of God all testify to the terrible enormity of sin and declare that there is no escape from its power, no hope of the higher life, but through the submission of the soul to Christ. —*Steps to Christ*, pp. 31, 32.

Heavenly influence on the will

Far more than we do, we need to understand the issues at stake in the conflict in which we are engaged. We need to understand more fully the value of the truths that God has given for this time and the danger of allowing our minds to be diverted from them by the great deceiver....

As the sacrifice in our behalf was complete, so our restoration from the defilement of sin is to be complete. There is no act of wickedness that the law will excuse; there is no unrighteousness that will escape its condemnation. The life of Christ was a perfect fulfillment of every

precept of the law. He said: "I have kept My Father's commandments." John 15:10. His life is our standard of obedience and service.

God alone can renew the heart. "It is God who worketh in you both to will and to work, for His good pleasure." But we are bidden: "Work out your own salvation." Philippians 2:13, 12, A.R.V. —*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 8, p. 312.

Life by God's word

When, under the temptations of Satan, men fall into error, and their words and deportment are not Christ-like, they may not realize their condition, because sin is deceptive, and tends to deaden the moral perceptions. But through self-examination, searching of the Scriptures, and humble prayer, they will, by the aid of the Holy Spirit, be enabled to see their mistake. If they then confess their sins and turn from them, the tempter will not appear to them as an angel of light, but as a deceiver, an accuser of those whom God desires to use to His glory. Those who acknowledge reproof and correction as from God, and are thus enabled to see and correct their errors, are learning precious lessons, even from their mistakes. Their apparent defeat is turned into victory. They stand trusting not to their own strength, but to the strength of God. They have earnestness, zeal, and affection, united with humility, and regulated by the precepts of God's word. Thus they bring forth the peaceable fruits of righteousness. The Lord can teach them His will, and they shall know the doctrine, whether it be of God. They walk not stumblingly, but safely, in a path where the light of heaven shines. —*The Review and Herald*, December 16, 1890.

The heart that receives the word of God is not as a pool that evaporates, not like a broken cistern that loses its treasure. It is like the mountain stream, fed by unfailing springs, whose cool, sparkling waters leap from rock to rock, refreshing the weary, the thirsty, the

heavy-laden. It is like a river constantly flowing and, as it advances, becoming deeper and wider, until its life-giving waters are spread over all the earth. The stream that goes singing on its way leaves behind its gift of verdure and fruitfulness. The grass on its banks is a fresher green, the trees have a richer verdure, the flowers are more abundant. When the earth lies bare and brown under the summer's scorching heat, a line of verdure marks the river's course.

So it is with the true child of God. The religion of Christ reveals itself as a vitalizing, pervading principle, a living, working, spiritual energy. When the heart is opened to the heavenly influence of truth and love, these principles will flow forth again like streams in the desert, causing fruitfulness to appear where now are barrenness and dearth.

Give and receive

As those who have been cleansed and sanctified through a knowledge of Bible truth engage heartily in the work of soul saving, they will become indeed a savor of life unto life. And as daily they drink of the inexhaustible fountain of grace and knowledge, they will find that their own hearts are filled to overflowing with the Spirit of their Master, and that through their unselfish ministry many are benefited physically, mentally, and spiritually. The weary are refreshed, the sick restored to health, and the sin-burdened relieved. In far-off countries thanksgiving is heard from the lips of those whose hearts are turned from the service of sin unto righteousness.

"Give, and it shall be given unto you;" for the word of God is "a fountain of gardens, a well of living waters, and streams from Lebanon." Luke 6:38; Song of Solomon 4:15. —*Prophets and Kings*, pp. 233, 234.

Watchfulness and unceasing prayer

After the union with Christ has been formed, it can be preserved only by ear-

nest prayer and untiring effort. We must resist, we must deny, we must conquer self. Through the grace of Christ, by courage, by faith, by watchfulness, we may gain the victory. —*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 5, p. 231.

Jesus says, "What things soever ye desire, when ye pray, believe that ye receive them, and ye shall have them." Mark 11:24. There is a condition to this promise—that we pray according to the will of God. But it is the will of God to cleanse us from sin, to make us His children, and to enable us to live a holy life. So we may ask for these blessings, and believe that we receive them, and thank God that we have received them. It is our privilege to go to Jesus and be cleansed, and to stand before the law without shame or remorse. "There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit." Romans 8:1. —*Steps to Christ*, p. 51.

So long as we are in the world, we shall meet with adverse influences. There will be provocations to test the temper; and it is by meeting these in a right spirit that the Christian graces are developed. If Christ dwells in us, we shall be patient, kind, and forbearing, cheerful amid frets and irritations. Day by day and year by year we shall conquer self, and grow into a noble heroism. This is our allotted task; but it cannot be accomplished without help from Jesus, resolute decision, unwavering purpose, continual watchfulness, and unceasing prayer. Each one has a personal battle to fight. Not even God can make our characters noble or our lives useful, unless we become coworkers with Him. Those who decline the struggle lose the strength and joy of victory.... —*Gospel Workers*, p. 477.

Stern conflict, but possibility of victory

"Let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set

before us, looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith." Hebrews 12:1, 2. Envy, malice, evil thinking, evil speaking, covetousness—these are weights that the Christian must lay aside if he would run successfully the race for immortality. Every habit or practice that leads into sin and brings dishonor upon Christ must be put away, whatever the sacrifice. The blessing of heaven cannot attend any man in violating the eternal principles of right. One sin cherished is sufficient to work degradation of character and to mislead others....

Wrongs cannot be righted nor reformations wrought in the character by feeble, intermittent efforts. It is only by long, persevering effort, sore discipline, and stern conflict that we shall overcome. We know not one day how strong will be our conflict the next. So long as Satan reigns, we shall have self to subdue, besetting sins to overcome; so long as life shall last, there will be no stopping place, no point which we can reach and say, I have fully attained. Sanctification is the result of lifelong obedience. —*The Acts of the Apostles*, pp. 312, 560, 561.

Helping others overcome

The Lord has made every provision that the uplifted Saviour may be revealed to sinners. Although they are dead in trespasses and sins, their attention must be aroused by the preaching of Christ and Him crucified. Men must be convicted of the evil of sin. The eyes of the transgressor must be enlightened. Let all who have been drawn to Christ tell the story of His love. Let everyone who has felt the converting power of Christ upon his own soul do what he can in the name of the Lord.

The infinite value of the sacrifice required for our redemption reveals the fact that sin is a tremendous evil. God might have wiped out this foul blot from His creation by sweeping the sinner from the face of the earth. But He

"so loved the world, that He gave His only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life." John 3:16. Why are not all who claim to love God seeking to enlighten their neighbors and their associates, that they may not longer neglect this great salvation?

Christ gave Himself to a shameful, agonizing death, showing His great travail of soul to save the perishing. Oh, Christ is able, Christ is willing, Christ is longing, to save all who will come unto Him! Talk to souls in peril and get them to behold Jesus upon the cross, dying to make it possible for Him to pardon. Talk to the sinner with your own heart overflowing with the tender, pitying love of Christ. Let there be deep earnestness; but not a harsh, loud note should be heard from the one who is trying to win the soul to look and live.

First have your own soul consecrated to God. As you look upon our Intercessor in heaven, let your heart be broken. Then, softened and subdued, you can address repenting sinners as one who realizes the power of redeeming love. Pray with these souls, by faith bringing them to the foot of the cross; carry their minds up with your mind, and fix the eye of faith where you look, upon Jesus the Sin Bearer. Get them to look away from their poor, sinful selves to the Saviour, and the victory is won. They behold for themselves the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world. They see the Way, the Truth, the Life. The Sun of Righteousness sheds its bright beams into the heart. The strong tide of redeeming love pours into the parched and thirsty soul, and the sinner is saved to Jesus Christ. —*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 6, pp. 66, 67. Amen.

Reading 2 – Sabbath, December 5, 2009

The Origin of Sin and Its Consequences for Humanity

By Tzvetan Petkov, Sweden/U.S.A.

“To many minds the origin of sin and the reason for its existence are a source of great perplexity. They see the work of evil, with its terrible results of woe and desolation, and they question how all this can exist under the sovereignty of One who is infinite in wisdom, in power, and in love. Here is a mystery of which they find no explanation.... Others, however, fail of a satisfactory understanding of the great problem of evil, from the fact that tradition and misinterpretation have obscured the teaching of the Bible concerning the character of God, the nature of His government, and the principles of His dealing with sin.” —*The Great Controversy*, p. 492.

The correct understanding of the plan of salvation, restoration, and sanctification of our souls depends upon a correct understanding of the subject of sin, its origin, and its consequences. “It is impossible to explain the origin of sin so as to give a reason for its existence. Yet enough may be understood concerning both the origin and the final disposition of sin to make fully manifest the justice and benevolence of God in all His dealings with evil.” —*The Great Controversy*, p. 492.

The unnatural origin of sin

God created mankind in a perfect condition. Human nature was holy and in perfect harmony with God’s govern-

ment and law. Therefore, the origin of sin is not to be found in the nature of mankind. Sin does not have a natural character, and God cannot be blamed for the entrance of sin into the universe or our planet. Sin came to the human race from outside like a sickness, a virus that infected our nature and changed it. Satan is the originator of sin. "Nothing is more plainly taught in Scripture than that God was in no wise responsible for the entrance of sin; that there was no arbitrary withdrawal of divine grace, no deficiency in the divine government, that gave occasion for the uprising of rebellion. Sin is an intruder, for whose presence no reason can be given. It is mysterious, unaccountable; to excuse it is to defend it. Could excuse for it be found, or cause be shown for its existence, it would cease to be sin. Our only definition of sin is that given in the word of God; it is 'the transgression of the law;' it is the outworking of a principle at war with the great law of love which is the foundation of the divine government." –*The Great Controversy*, pp. 492, 493.

As a consequence of sin, man's nature became fallen. Satan's power, taking advantage of fallen human nature, insinuates sinful desires, rebellion toward God, and transgression of His commandments that causes sadness and unhappiness. "... Your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour." 1 Peter 5:8.

All our efforts to resist the satanic influence will be in vain if God does not intervene to release us from this slavery and give us a second chance to be free and happy and have eternal life. "Our condition through sin has become preternatural, and the power that restores us must be supernatural, else it has no value. There is but one power that can break the hold of evil from the hearts of men, and that is the power of God in Jesus Christ. Only through the blood of the Crucified One is there cleansing

from sin. His grace alone can enable us to resist and subdue the tendencies of our fallen nature." –*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 8, p. 291. We need to understand that the battle is against Satan and his angels. "For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places." Ephesians 6:12.

When our Lord Jesus Christ was led into the wilderness by the Spirit, Satan appeared to Him in order to tempt Him. Although Jesus in His human flesh, after 40 days of fasting, felt the weakness of hunger, the temptation came through a subtle way that Satan used to try to ensnare Him.

When the apostle Peter began to rebuke the Lord, saying "Heaven forbid!" "This shall never happen to you," Jesus' response was, "Get away from Me, Satan!" Matthew 16:23, *New English Bible*. By this we understand that the enemy of our souls was hiding behind Peter's words. Many times we do not recognize the originator of temptation and take too lightly the question of the origin of our motives and sins. We need to be aware that to commit sin consciously and willingly is nothing less than to give Satan a chance to take possession of us, thus taking over the control of our mind and nature. "Then goeth he, and taketh with himself seven other spirits more wicked than himself, and they enter in and dwell there...." Matthew 12:45. We need to thank God for His infinite grace, whereby He sets us free and gives us strength through His Spirit to overcome the enemy of our souls, to change our life, and to become children of God, heirs of the divine nature and eternal life, instead of being slaves to unrighteousness.

Sin is not inherited

Ancient Israel had a wrong concept of sin. The belief that the sins of the fa-

thers were transmitted to the children and that the latter would be punished or held responsible for the sins of their fathers was also held in the time when Jesus was preaching to the multitudes. The Lord spoke through His prophets to remove this erroneous understanding about the nature of sin. Through Moses He had revealed: "Fathers shall not be put to death for their children, nor children put to death for their fathers; each is to die for his own sin." Deuteronomy 24:16. He spoke clearly through the prophet Ezekiel, stating that no one could be held responsible or punished for the sins of others, but only for his own transgressions. "The soul that sinneth, it shall die. The son shall not bear the iniquity of the father, neither shall the father bear the iniquity of the son: the righteousness of the righteous shall be upon him, and the wickedness of the wicked shall be upon him." Ezekiel 18:20. Concerning this point, the inspired messenger wrote: "There were still many among the Jews who were ignorant of the character and the work of Christ. And the children had not enjoyed the opportunities or received the light which their parents had spurned.... The children were not condemned for the sins of the parents; but when, with a knowledge of all the light given to their parents, the children rejected the additional light granted to themselves, they became partakers of the parents' sins, and filled up the measure of their iniquity." *The Great Controversy*, p. 28.

In the same way, we inherit death as a consequence of Adam's sin; but we do not inherit the sin of Adam until we commit the same sin as Adam committed. It is written, "Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin, and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned...." Romans 5:12. Death passed to all men because "all have sinned." The law of inheritance does provide us with disad-

vantages because of the sins of our forefathers, but we suffer consequences also for our own sins. The nature we receive from the time of our birth is burdened with weakness, sinful tendencies, and propensities. However, we cannot be made responsible for this inherited nature. We are responsible for our own thoughts, decisions, and actions which additionally burden the inherited sinful nature. The fallen nature that we now possess is not in the same condition as was the fallen nature of Adam. Gradually, generation by generation, man's once-perfect nature has been degrading to its present condition. "God's law had once been written in the hearts of men and women. But their cherished sins dimmed and nearly effaced that writing. The impressions made by sin gradually wore away the impressions of the law." *Manuscript Releases*, vol. 9, p. 229.

We should not forget that "Our only definition of sin is that given in the word of God; it is 'the transgression of the law....'" *That I May Know Him*, p. 15. Transgression of a commandment can happen externally and visibly, or internally, in our thoughts, but each and every transgression is a consequence of a personal agreement and decision. "There are thoughts and feelings suggested and aroused by Satan that annoy even the best of men; but if they are not cherished, if they are repulsed as hateful, the soul is not contaminated with guilt, and no other is defiled by their influence." *That I May Know Him*, p. 140. Since decisions cannot be inherited, but are part of our personal responsibility, the teaching about the inheritance of sin is unbiblical.

We need to understand and believe that, through the grace of God, we are not obligated to sin. "No man can be forced to transgress. His own consent must be first gained; the soul must purpose the sinful act before passion can dominate over reason or iniquity tri-

umph over conscience." —*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 5, p. 177.

The inspired word says that, unfortunately, we sin because we love sin more than we love the Lord and our salvation. "If you desire to be a Christian, now is your time; now is the golden opportunity. You can walk in purity only by looking and beholding, praying and believing in Jesus moment by moment. You have been living in adultery so long that sin does not appear heinous to you. You love sin. If now you want to leave sin, you must forever renounce it." —*Testimonies on Sexual Behavior, Adultery, and Divorce*, p. 141.

Through the grace of Christ, His infinite love, and His almighty power, the chains of this slavery can be destroyed. The Spirit of God can refresh our minds and enable us to resist temptation and depart from evil. "Resist the devil, and he will flee from you." James 4:7. "Ye have not yet resisted unto blood, striving against sin." Hebrews 12:4. By the grace of God, we will be able not only to resist temptation and overcome the weaknesses inherited from our ancestors, but we may even undergo great changes in our fallen human nature. "Many are suffering in consequence of the transgressions of their parents; they cannot be censured for their parents' sins, but it is nevertheless their duty to ascertain wherein their parents violated the laws of their being; and wherein their parents' habits were wrong, they should change their course, and place themselves, by correct habits, in a better relation to health." —*Healthful Living*, pp. 60, 61.

If our life is placed under the control of Christ and is ruled by divine principles, many of the weaknesses, sicknesses, and propensities can be subdued and crucified and we may be enabled to transmit a better inheritance to our children. Let us seek the kingdom of heaven. Let us allow Jesus to enter in through the door of our hearts.

He will supply the cure for our doubts; He will give us strength in His righteousness.

Sin and its consequences

The ultimate consequence of sin is death. The word of God speaks about two different kinds of death—the first and the second. "Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection: on such the second death hath no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with Him a thousand years." Revelation 20:6. The first death is the consequence of Adam's sin, which passed to all humanity and made us mortal. The second death is not related to the inherited human nature but is a consequence of our personal sins, if they have not been confessed and covered by the grace of our Lord Jesus. Because of this, before the final judgment, an investigative judgment takes place. "And the sea gave up the dead which were in it; and death and hell delivered up the dead which were in them: and they were judged every man according to their works." Revelation 20:13.

"In consequence of Adam's sin, death passed upon the whole human race. All alike go down into the grave. And through the provisions of the plan of salvation, all are to be brought forth from their graves. 'There shall be a resurrection of the dead, both of the just and unjust' [Acts 24:15]; 'for as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive.' [1 Corinthians 15:22.] But a distinction is made between the two classes that are brought forth. 'All that are in the graves shall hear His voice, and shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation.' [John 5:28, 29.] They who have been 'accounted worthy' of the resurrection of life are 'blessed and holy.' 'On such the second death hath no power.' [Revelation 20:6.]

But those who have not, through repentance and faith, secured pardon, must receive the penalty of transgression—'the wages of sin.' They suffer punishment varying in duration and intensity, 'according to their works,' but finally ending in the second death." —*The Great Controversy*, p. 544.

Every sin carries with it terrible consequences for us, for our nature, for the environment, for our family, and for our society. If a sin is committed several times, it becomes a habit and influences our nature and character. Therefore, we speak about an inherited and a cultivated sinful nature. Once the sinful practices become part of our character, they not only endanger our salvation but have an incredible influence on those with whom we come in contact. Consciously or unconsciously, through our words, gestures, and expressions, we are transmitting a wrong influence. "Solomon's repentance was sincere; but the harm that his example of evil-doing had wrought could not be undone. During his apostasy there were in the kingdom men who remained true to their trust, maintaining their purity and loyalty. But many were led astray; and the forces of evil set in operation by the introduction of idolatry and worldly practices could not easily be stayed by the penitent king." —*Prophets and Kings*, p. 84.

Our responsibility

Our responsibility before the heavenly court is related to our knowledge of the truth. "And the times of this ignorance God winked at;..." Acts 17:30. This means that the more knowledge we have, the higher are God's expectations for us. Therefore, the judgment will begin at "the house of God." 1 Peter 4:17. "And that servant, which knew his lord's will, and prepared not himself, neither did according to his will, shall be beaten with many stripes. But he that knew not, and did commit

things worthy of stripes, shall be beaten with few stripes. For unto whomsoever much is given, of him shall be much required: and to whom men have committed much, of him they will ask the more." Luke 12:47, 48.

"If light come, and that light is set aside or rejected, then comes condemnation and the frown of God; but before the light comes, there is no sin, for there is no light for them to reject." —*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 1, p. 116.

What the Lord expects from His faithful children is that they live according to the light He has given them. Because it is possible that sin may be committed through ignorance, even the most righteous man cannot pretend that he has reached a sinless state. Nevertheless, we can now achieve holiness and perfection in the sphere where the Lord in His mercy has placed us.

We are called to be messengers of the heavenly kingdom, to be pillars in His divine temple, showing the way to eternal life. This can be possible only through the work of the divine power of Christ. Not all consequences of sin will be removed now; but at the second coming of Christ, when our bodies will be changed and the resurrection of the righteous will take place, all consequences of sin will be exterminated. The devil, the author and originator of sin, will be cast into the lake of fire. Eternal life and happiness are awaiting those who have given their lives to Christ. Anything in this world which we love more than our Saviour becomes an idol and separates us from the spring of life, but through the grace of Jesus we can be made free. "Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you." Matthew 7:7. The promises of God are yes and amen, and His coming is soon. May the Lord bless His people is my prayer. Amen.

Secrets of Happy, Healthy Families

By Henry Dering, U.S.A.

Marriages are in serious trouble!! The family structure is under attack, tottering, and rapidly falling to pieces. Today in the United States, as well as in countries such as England, Finland, Belgium, Austria, Canada, Australia, and Russia, there is an increase in marital separations, trial marriages, spousal abuse, and violence. The high divorce rates are a warning indicator that something has gone desperately wrong in society. Nancy L. Van Pelt, a certified family professional in the United States, wrote the following: "Although people like to get married, it is more difficult to stay married. Current divorce statistics run at about 50 percent. When both partners are under the age of 21 or have dropped out of high school to get married, the divorce rate soars to 80 percent. In spite of such dismal statistics, we continue to marry rapidly." —*Highly Effective Marriage*, p. 10.

Here is another quotation that may shock you: "MARRIAGE IS SLOWLY DYING IN SCANDINAVIA. A majority of children in Sweden and Norway are born out of wedlock. Sixty percent of first-born children in Denmark have unmarried parents. Not coincidentally, these countries have had something close to full gay marriage for a decade or more. Same-sex marriage has locked in and reinforced an existing Scandinavian trend toward the separation of marriage and parenthood. The Nordic family pattern—including gay marriage—is spreading across Europe." —Stanley Kurtz, *The End of Marriage in Scandinavia*, www.weeklystandard.com.

Will the family structure survive the onslaught of the enemy? How do little children react to divorce? Are they psychologically damaged for life? Too often children are the ones who suffer the most.

They are the losers! Will they also pattern their parents' example? Divorce is ugly and hurts the good and the bad.

There is a close relationship between the breakdown of the divine moral code and the untold misery and hopelessness of people today. Breaking God's law will always result in dire consequences.

Is there any hope and solution for this menacing epidemic of marital failures? Happiness and fulfillment in marriage can be restored to couples who have wandered away from the divine marriage blueprint. Even Christian couples, including "Adventists" who may have seemingly sound marriages, could have better and healthier relationships.

Where can one find proven counsel for a healthy, vibrant marriage? The answers are found in the Holy Bible. This "book of books" contains the secrets to a fulfilling, happy marriage. They are within your immediate reach.

General principles within the family structure

As you consider the ideal relationship between husband and wife, remember that their love for each other is symbolized by the love between Christ and His bride—the church. This love is unselfish and boundless, seeking always the good and the happiness of the other.

The wife. The apostle Paul wrote in the New Testament: "Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as unto the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church: and He is the Saviour of the body. Therefore as the church is subject unto Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in every thing." Ephesians 5:22-24. "But it was not the design of God

that the husband should have control, as head of the house, when he himself does not submit to Christ. Neither the husband nor the wife should attempt to exercise over the other an arbitrary control. Do not try to compel each other to yield to your wishes. You cannot do this and retain each other's love." *—The Adventist Home*, pp. 117, 118.

The husband. "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, That He might present it to Himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish. So ought men to love their wives as their own bodies. He that loveth his wife loveth himself." "For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall be joined unto his wife, and they two shall be one flesh." Ephesians 5:25-28, 31.

As Christ loves the church, so the husband is to love his wife. In truly loving her, he will be richly blessed. What is true love? Is it infatuation? NO! Ellen White writes: "True love is a high and holy principle altogether different in character from that love which is awakened by impulse, and which suddenly dies when severely tested." *—The Adventist Home*, p. 50. Love is a precious gift which we receive from Jesus.

In 1 Corinthians 13, the apostle Paul described the wondrous gift of love in the following richly descriptive and moving words: "Love is patient; love is kind and envies no one. Love is never boastful, nor conceited, nor rude; never selfish, not quick to take offense. Love keeps no score of wrongs; does not gloat over other men's sins, but delights in the truth. There is nothing love cannot face; there is no limit to its faith, its hope, and its endurance. Love will never come to an end." 1 Corinthians 13:4-8, *New English Bible*.

The children. "Children are the heritage of the Lord, and the plan of redemp-

tion includes their salvation as well as ours. They have been entrusted to parents in order that they might be brought up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord, that they might be qualified to do their work in time and eternity....

"In childhood and youth you may have an experience in the service of God. Do the things that you know to be right. Be obedient to your parents. Listen to their counsels; for if they love and fear God, upon them will be laid the responsibility of educating, disciplining, and training your soul for the immortal life." *—The Adventist Home*, pp. 280, 298.

Practical suggestions for a successful married life

Watch your words. The wise Solomon wrote: "A soft answer turneth away wrath, but grievous words stir up anger." And "He that is slow to anger is better than the mighty, and he that ruleth his spirit than he that taketh a city." Proverbs 15:1; 16:32. Do not hurt each other by a sharp look or an angry word. Do not bring up mistakes made in the past. It really doesn't solve today's problems. Never go to sleep with unresolved anger. If you are both angry, the sparks of passion may burn you. An unkind word under any condition cuts deep, and it is hard to repair the damage. It usually leaves a scar. It can be forgiven, but it is hard to forget.

Years ago, the prophet for the last days wrote the following: "When about to speak passionately, close your mouth. Don't utter a word. Pray before you speak, and heavenly angels will come to your assistance and drive back the evil angels." *—Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 2, p. 82.

"Let all take Christ for their example, who never spoke a hasty, discourteous word, or performed a rude action." *—The Signs of the Times*, May 7, 1894.

Many marriage counselors consider the failure of proper communication between husband and wife to be a major cause of family problems. Take time for communication. Take time to understand

your partner. Take time to speak in LOVE. Proverbs 16:24 says: "Pleasant words are as an honeycomb, sweet to the soul, and health to the bones." Isn't this a wonderful truth? A kind word will go a long way toward a happy solution. Take time also to be a good listener. Determine to accept your mate unconditionally, even as you discover some weaknesses or character defects. The secret of a successful marriage lies not in having the right partner, but rather in BEING THE RIGHT PARTNER!

Make a goal of saying something complimentary and loving to your partner at least once a day. Your sincere expressions of love and appreciation will strengthen and enrich your marriage.

Keep up the courtship, and don't let the fire of love go out. In order to succeed in this regard, husband and wife need to contribute to the happiness of each other. There are many ways to make your spouse happy. About a hundred years ago, Ellen White wrote: "Continue the early attentions. In every way encourage each other in fighting the battles of life. Study to advance the happiness of each other." —*The Adventist Home*, p. 106. This is the key to a good marriage. Surprise each other from time to time with little presents. Whatever gift you give, it is another way of saying, "I love you." Remember birthdays, anniversaries, and other special days. "It is the little attentions, the numerous small incidents and simple courtesies of life, that make up the sum of life's happiness." —*The Adventist Home*, p. 109.

Don't forget that some of the best presents are non-material—such as giving of yourself. Your wife may ask you to bring her a glass of water in the middle of the night. Your time is a gift of total commitment. Another example is the unselfish gift of praying for each other. About 2,000 years ago, the apostle Paul said, "It is more blessed to give than to receive." Acts 20:35.

Admit your mistakes and faults. When you have done something wrong,

be ready to admit it and ask for forgiveness. Simple words, such as, "I am very sorry," or "Please forgive me," make all the difference. Hurts can be healed if there is humility, honesty, and a willingness to admit a mistake. Be willing to forgive, as Jesus forgave His persecutors. On the cross, Christ said, "Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do." Jesus showed love even for His enemies. The wonderful woman whom God has selected for the husband is not an enemy but a dear, beloved companion. If your wife makes mistakes, are you willing to forgive her? Wives, are you willing to forgive your husbands when they make mistakes, even 70 times 7? Put this into practice. To forgive is a sign of maturity and conversion.

Do things together and share responsibilities. This means working, eating, relaxing, visiting the discouraged, comforting the needy, being a blessing to your neighbors, and helping the family of God—together. Spend as much time as possible doing things together if you want to have a rich and fulfilled marriage.

Let both help out with household chores. Let there be a partnership in your home. Your home needs to be clean, orderly, and attractive. This will take work. Then the angels will love to visit you. From the pen of inspiration we read: "Order and cleanliness is the law of heaven, and in order to come into harmony with the divine arrangement, it is our duty to be neat and tasty." —*The Adventist Home*, p. 254.

Be committed to each other for life. Marriage is a covenant with God and with one another, and it is a lifelong commitment. "What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder." Matthew 19:6. Paul also wrote succinctly about the permanency of marriage. "The wife is bound by the law as long as her husband liveth; but if her husband be dead, she is at liberty to be married to whom she will; only in the Lord." 1 Corinthians 7:39.

Don't give up when problems arise.
Some days the sun doesn't shine; it's cloudy and stormy. Face the world together, and wait on the Lord. Don't ever say, "I made a mistake in my choice of a companion." "Though difficulties, perplexities, and discouragements may arise, let neither husband nor wife harbor the thought that their union is a mistake or a disappointment." —*The Adventist Home*, p. 106.

Believe that God puts people together.
God chose Eve for Adam. The marriage lasted hundreds of years. Was the marriage without problems? NO! They were evicted from their home. One son became a murderer. But they survived and were faithful to each other, because they were committed to each other.

Make Jesus Christ the center of your lives and the Lord of your hearts and home.
As the years come and go, the Lord Jesus will meet you in your joys and in your troubles, your laughter and your heartaches. There may be anxious days and uncertain hours; there may be circumstances which place you in a world of fear and seeming helplessness. God's promise to you, as you walk hand in hand through life, is that, when clouds appear, you will be secure forever in His love. A precious hymn says it this way:

*Under His wings,
I am safely abiding;
Though the night deepens
and tempests are wild.
Still I can trust Him,
I know He will keep me.
He has redeemed me,
and I am His child.*

When conflicts and problems arise, be sure to go to the right Marriage Counselor, the Lord Himself. He is the best One who is easily available. You don't have to spend much time to find Him or wait in His office for hours until your turn comes for an interview. And He doesn't ask you for money, either, as do marriage counselors. Furthermore, He has more wisdom than everyone else. He understands your

particular problem much better than any person in the world.

How do you find this Marriage Counselor? "Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you." Matthew 7:7. God's word clearly teaches that those who have problems can unburden themselves to Jesus. We can come to Him in faith, asking Him to untangle the tight knots of difficulty. "Come unto Me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." Matthew 11:28. Come just as you are—weak, sinful, polluted, and unworthy—and depend only on the merits of Christ.

Do not forget to have morning and evening worship with your family. The children also need to remember their loving Saviour. This communion with God will strengthen the Christian. "Jesus said unto him, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind." Matthew 22:37.

It is good for husband and wife to pray together when in trouble, but it is better to pray together daily as a regular habit. Many families have established what they call the "family altar." Remember the saying, "The family that prays together stays together."

Remember also to worship on the Sabbath day and to meet together with believers of like faith. Love Jesus and worship Him in the congregation of the saints. As husband and wife draw closer to Jesus, they will also have greater love for each other. In other words, the love of Jesus in their hearts will automatically radiate out to their spouse and children. Our wonderful Lord and Saviour performs miracles by transforming people's lives.

If you make Christ the foundation of your home, if He is the first and last and best in everything, He will bless and uphold your marriage. May you behold Him constantly, and may your love for Him grow and deepen daily. May God bless our families, is my prayer. Amen!

Young People Who Follow the Best Example

By Jose Vicente Giner, Spain/U.S.A.

To be young is both a privilege and a serious responsibility. It is a privilege, because it is the period of life when our physical faculties are at their peak. A young person can do heavy work and not get tired as an adult does; he can run, jump, walk and still have energy to do other things. Dear brothers and sisters, observe your own children or other people's children. How much energy they expend on a field trip or at a conference or camp meeting! What enthusiasm! This is wonderful, because they have a great potential to do good!

Youth is a time of challenges, aspirations, noble ideals, and conquests. As a general rule, today's successful adults were once young people full of vision, aspirations, emotions, and perseverance. They used all that energy to reach their goal. In fact, it can be said that youth is the springtime of our existence.

But, as we have already said, this age also encompasses great responsibility. Why? Because it is the most transitional period of life. Youth is the passage from adolescence to adulthood (maturity), from inexperience to experience. One's future life is conditioned and marked forever by what was done in his youth. Isn't this a solemn and at the same time worrying thought, dear youth? Solomon, without a doubt the wisest man in his time yet one who sank most deeply into the miasma of sin, could exhort the youth, because of his own experience: "Remember now thy Creator in the days of thy youth." Ecclesiastes 12:1.

The word "remember" is very significant. To remember is to call some-

one or something to memory. In this case, Solomon invited young people to remember God in their youth, not to forget that they were created by Him and that, therefore, they belong to Him. In Ecclesiastes 11:9, it appears that this wise man allowed young people to do as they please: "Rejoice, O young man, in thy youth; and let thy heart cheer thee in the days of thy youth, and walk in the ways of thine heart, and in the sight of thine eyes;" but he finishes the verse by saying, "but know thou, that for all these things God will bring thee into judgment." This "but" is a warning, a red light—"Beware!" It is all right to amuse yourself and enjoy life, but do not forget that what you think and do is weaving the tapestry of your life. You are the one who guides the shuttle of the loom; therefore, you are responsible for the final result of your work. Do not forget that you will one day give an account to God.

I ask myself what would have become of my friend Vicente if he had not decided, when he was young, to enter the world of alcoholism. Today I sometimes see him wandering along the streets of his city as if he were an eighty-year-old man, with a distant look in his eyes and not seeming to know what to do with his destroyed life. And what about that young man who attended church services when I was first ordained as a minister? He was very handsome, and the girls were very drawn to him; he came to a point where he could no longer restrain his passion. Today he is a schizophrenic. I met him not too long ago, after many years. He looked

like a gentle little child, 27 years of age, but absolutely useless in life. I know other stories of young people who took a wrong turn in life and thus wove an unattractive tapestry of a deformed life.

What kind of tapestry are you weaving? It is worthwhile to meditate upon the apostle Paul's words in Galatians 6:7, 8: "Be not deceived; God is not mocked; for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap. For he that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting."

Wrong examples

I am extremely sorry for people whom I once became acquainted with and who were my friends for a while. I spent time with them, and we shared our aspirations; but then they decided to follow a different way. I also had young friends who had noble ideals and high aspirations; today they are doctors or lawyers or they practice some profession and have nice, united families. But these cases are, unfortunately, very rare.

Seeking the reason why our present society is so sunk in degradation, I find that God's word teaches us that a terrible being is working from the world of darkness to destroy us. His main target is the young people, because he knows their great potential. The Bible calls him a roaring lion (1 Peter 5:8); the dragon (Revelation 12:7); a murderer and the father of lies (John 8:44); the old serpent, the devil, or Satan. Revelation 12:9.

What are the weapons that the enemy of man uses? There are many, but especially today he uses individuals who give wrong examples as patterns to be followed. Satan knows that if he presents himself to a young person as he actually is and invites him to do evil, the young person—especially if he is a Christian—will fully reject him. A direct approach usually doesn't work. That is why Satan used the serpent to tempt Eve and came to Jesus as an angel of light.

Today he comes wearing a suit and a tie in live TV shows, movies, and soap operas in the form of attractive actors. He also appears on the radio and in the press disguised as a gentle "seer" who promotes the most popular television channels. He disguises himself in rock, heavy metal, salsa, tango, and pop music. He has also developed a disguise where he seems unnoticed, and very few people have any suspicion of what is really behind it. I am referring to that music that speaks about Jesus, but the words are attached to the same degrading music. He appears in our society hidden behind one partner in a marriage who is unfaithful to the other. He is also hidden behind superficial friends who are fond of transgression. He is hidden in drugs, alcohol, illicit sex, or romanticism. The trap is set, and many careless young people and even adults fall into it.

The reason for this is very simple. Consider the Biblical principle (Matthew 6:21), confirmed by the Spirit of Prophecy: "By beholding we become transformed." —*Our Father Cares*, p. 340.

It is a natural law: If one follows the corrupt examples presented by our society, one will also become corrupt. The people of Israel faced the same situation, and God warned them beforehand: "And ye shall not walk in the manners of the nation, which I cast out before you: for they committed all these things, and therefore I abhorred them." Leviticus 20:23. The sad reality is that they did not heed this warning.

Why is the abortion rate so high in Spain as well as in other countries? (I speak about my country, because it is the example I know the best.) The reason is that the mass media presents to an extreme degree sexual licentiousness, divorce, and promiscuous relationships at the expense of serious commitment, abstinence, and chastity among the unmarried youth.

In Spain in 2006, approximately 40,000 abortions were performed, and

the tragedy is that most of the women who chose abortion were between 15 and 20 years of age. In 2003, 300,000 “morning after” pills were distributed. These pills cause a miscarriage, like a surgical abortion. But the greatest problem is that evil—in this case abortion—is legalized and considered normal and respectable. The same thing is happening with partial or total nudity on beaches, with sexual intercourse among teenagers, drinking alcohol, etc. When these practices enter society and are considered normal, they will of course be practiced. But the youth are not warned of the terrible results they will one day reap from such things.

In 2003, more than 34,000 people committed suicide in Japan. That was one of the highest rates in the world, and the real tragedy is that the victims were mainly young people and even school-age children. The Japanese authorities are trying to find a solution to the problem.

We should ask ourselves, What kind of examples do the young people in Japan have? And the suicide rate is also very high in other industrialized countries. Experts agree that TV programs are greatly to blame, along with the lack of principles in society and in schools. What is actually taught in educational programs nowadays?

Frank Lindbland, a child psychiatrist, says: “It has been proved and it is beyond discussion that people who watch much violence on TV develop aggressive conduct.... They have a high risk of developing criminal behavior. The border between virtual reality and the real world is vague and dangerous.” The American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry says that when a child sees a program in which violence is very realistic, he may imitate such behavior immediately or later in life, even if in his home there has been no inkling of violence. These experts corroborate the principle that we are transformed by what we behold.

The video game business makes a profit of more than ten billion dollars a year in the U.S. This is really worrisome, because, according to Michael Rich—a member of the American Academy of Pediatrics—people who play video games rehearse patterns of behavior that they will probably use in real life. Unfortunately, most video games are full of violence.

Research on violence on TV and in video games speaks about a phenomenon called “observational learning.” What is this? It refers to a conduct that is learned by watching, is stored in the brain, and very probably will be performed later on, when a similar circumstance arises. This is true for young people who watch programs, serials, and films where sexual depravity, fraud, theft, lies, etc., are shown without restraint. It includes the Internet as well.

Our best Example

It is becoming more and more difficult to avoid this phenomenon, since there is literally a flood of images, depraved music, and bad examples that are the results of a society without a spiritual compass. But we, as Christians, have something to do. Can we just sit and allow these destructive examples to destroy us? What do you think, young man, young woman? It is not easy for a young person to maintain his or her integrity in the times in which we are living; I understand that. But you have the privilege and right to do so—in fact, it is your only option if you want to be happy in this life.

Just think for a moment from how many chains the Lord sets you free if you decide not to accept these examples of behavior! How much bitterness, how many tears and traumas, you can avoid if you give your life to Jesus and decide to follow and obey Him! Look at the advice that Solomon gives you: “Keep thy heart with all diligence; for out of it are the issues of life. Put away from thee a froward mouth, and perverse lips put far from

thee. Let thine eyes look right on, and let thine eyelids look straight before thee." Proverbs 4:23-25. The prophet Isaiah reinforced this advice in Isaiah 33:15, 16: "He that walketh righteously, and speaketh uprightly; he that despiseth the gain of oppressions, that shaketh his hands from holding of bribes, that stoppeth his ears from hearing of blood, and shutteth his eyes from seeing evil; He shall dwell on high: his place of defence shall be the munitions of rocks: bread shall be given him; his waters shall be sure."

Young man, young woman, I do not want to give you the impression that Christianity is a long, tedious list of norms that prohibit this or that. I was also young once, and I did not appreciate it when people used to pluck feathers from the wings of my freedom. But I admit that, if it had not been for Jesus, I would have many things to regret today. Look at things from a different perspective: The gospel does not restrict your freedom; it sets you free from slavery.

Jesus is the best Example to follow at all times, and especially in this age of moral degradation. Jesus gives you the privilege to be happy in this life, free from the sinful practices of the world. There is no joy in degradation. Do not let anyone deprive you of the privilege of happiness.

I know it is not easy to have integrity when surrounded by a world that is collapsing under the weight of sin. The Lord Jesus Himself said, "In the world you shall have tribulation" (John 16:33), but He also left us His example to be followed so that we can find the joy of salvation. "... He that followeth Me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life." John 8:12. Today, Jesus invites you, beloved youth, to come to Him just as you are. He wants to embrace you and be your example. "... Him that cometh to Me I will in no wise cast out." John 6:37. Will you look to Him?

If your heart is full of the presence of Jesus, your life will be a blessing to those

around you. "He that believeth on Me, as the scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water." John 7:38. Say, "No!" to sin. Do not let others mess up and manipulate your life, making out of you a puppet that ends up imitating the world. (See John 2:15, 16).

If you make up your mind to imitate Jesus, to be His follower and love Him; if you make a covenant of love with Him, you will not be alone in this spiritual enterprise. Jesus will help you through the Holy Spirit, so that you may be able to say, "No!" to the devil. Make the decision to walk with Jesus every day of your life through prayer and the study of His word, because it is by beholding Him that you will be transformed.

In conclusion, I would like to share this testimony with you: "It is impossible for any of us by our own power or our own efforts to work this change in ourselves. It is the Holy Spirit, the Comforter, which Jesus said He would send into the world, that changes our character into the image of Christ; and when this is accomplished, we reflect as in a mirror the glory of the Lord. That is, the character of the one who thus beholds Christ is so like His that one looking at him sees Christ's own character shining out as from a mirror. Imperceptibly to ourselves, we are changed day by day from our ways and will into the ways and will of Christ, into the loveliness of His character. Thus we grow up into Christ, and unconsciously reflect His image...." *-In Heavenly Places*, p. 337.

"But we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord." 2 Corinthians 3:18. My sincere wish is that every young person may decide to enter wholeheartedly into the wonderful experience of faith, consciously following the best Example in this world.

May God bless every reader of this Week of Prayer Reading. Amen.

Church Problems and Collective Progress

By Parmenas Shirima, Tanzania

The church of God is in a greater danger today than at any time in the past. It would be good for every believer and member of God's remnant church to understand the real spiritual conditions to which we are exposed, so we may be on the alert. Let us first examine the situation in the light of God's revealed word.

In Revelation 12:12, we read: "Therefore rejoice, ye heavens, and ye that dwell in them. Woe to the inhabitants of the earth and of the sea! For the devil is come down unto you, having great wrath, because he knoweth that he hath but a short time."

And in 1 Peter 5:8, 9: "Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour: Whom resist stedfast in the faith, knowing that the same afflictions are accomplished in your brethren that are in the world."

Also in 2 Timothy 3:1-5: "This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come. For men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, without natural affection, trucebreakers, false accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers of those that are good, traitors, heady, highminded, lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God; having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof: from such turn away."

The most important conclusion we should draw from the foregoing verses is the fact that all heavenly intelligences are very concerned about the fate of the inhabitants of this world, because the devil is come down to this planet and his only objective is to devour them.

The Bible states clearly that all the believers, in all the world, regardless of who or where they are, are exposed to this danger.

The plight of God's remnant church

We read again in Revelation 12:17: "And the dragon was wroth with the woman, and went to make war with the remnant of her seed, which keep the commandments of God, and have the testimony of Jesus Christ."

Here we have an even clearer picture of the devil's ultimate target. He is determined to take captive the whole world, including the remnant few who keep the commandments of God and have the testimony of Jesus. Every member of God's remnant church is addressed here and warned of the spiritual dangers facing us. Every one of us who is aspiring to win heaven and eternal life should be very concerned and take action for self-defense, as admonished in Ephesians 6:10, 11: "Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of His might. Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil." We are at war! The Bible tells us that the church has been at war right from creation, all through the past ages, and up to our day. The war is between Jesus, represented by His faithful followers, and Satan and his allies. We can see that Satan is holding captive the greater portion of the inhabitants of this world. Only a small remnant is not yet under his control. This alarming information that we can receive from the Bible is proven by the conditions surrounding us. Therefore, the remnant few need to be well equipped if they

are to withstand the great pressures of the evil one.

Strategies and equipment needed for warfare

For any army to win a battle, it must take some important steps before entering the battlefield, such as:

1. ***Know the enemy.*** Investigative teams gather all the necessary information to determine the strength of the enemy, the type of weapons they use, as well as the tactics and strategy they apply in warfare. This provides a picture of the intensity or magnitude of the battle and what is needed to prepare for it.

2. ***Make appropriate preparation for winning the battle.*** This involves proper military training and acquiring suitable weapons and equipment, as well as devising appropriate strategies for fighting the enemy. In like manner, as Christians and members of God's church, we have enrolled as combatants in the battle against Satan and his allies. Many have fallen victim to the wiles of the devil, because, after joining the church, they neglected or did not know the seriousness of the decision they had made. They did not realize that Satan, as a mighty foe, takes advantage of every single opportunity we give him to entrap us.

Let us briefly consider the means and agents employed by the devil in attacking and overcoming God's people, thus leading them to violate God's law. Later we will study how we may resist and overcome him, so he will flee from us.

Satan himself and the host of fallen angels are on the front line. As we read in Revelation 12:9, 13, "And the great dragon was cast out, that old serpent, called the Devil, and Satan, which deceiveth the whole world: he was cast out into the earth, and his angels were cast out with him." "And when the dragon saw that he was cast unto the

earth, he persecuted the woman which brought forth the man child."

In a multitude of ways, Satan himself attacks the church, inflicting hardships, problems, and persecution on the believers. He causes war and bloodshed and brings on sickness and afflictions which lead some to draw back from the faith. He leads others to unbelief and atheism, deep apostasy, and wickedness.

Self, or ego, is the entering point. Satan takes advantage of our selfishness and self-centeredness. When Jesus was calling His disciples, He pointed out this weakness as a test of their discipleship. Thus we read in Mark 8:34-37: "And when He had called the people unto Him with His disciples also, He said unto them, Whosoever will come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me. For whosoever will save his life shall lose it; but whosoever shall lose his life for My sake and the gospel's, the same shall save it. For what shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? Or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?" Here we have the great battlefield where we meet the devil. Many of us in the church profess to have accepted the Lord Jesus as our personal Saviour, while, in fact, no denial of self has taken place. So, when Satan and his agents shoot the arrows of anger, hatred, jealousy, envy, evil surmising, backbiting, malice, greed, pride, dissension, and all manner of such sins, we easily fall victim to their snares.

Other well-devised methods and approaches used by Satan to entice and ensnare God's people and to destabilize their faith are material prosperity, influence, and worldly attainments which arouse pride and self-importance. Also, worldly lusts and lack of self-control through fleshly passion have caused many to make shipwreck of their faith. 1 Peter 4:1-5, 19. No aspect of our life

will be spared by Satan. We will be tested even in what we eat and drink; what we see and hear; what we talk about; and what we listen to. Everyone will be tested in religious, political, economic, and social matters. At home, in the family, and among the people with whom we associate, every one of us will be tempted by Satan. In our church fellowship, also, our faith and firmness in Christ will be tested. Our love and unity for one another, and our trust, loyalty, and faithfulness to God will be tested. All traits of our character will be tested and proved to see whether we serve God or Satan.

The spiritual warfare in which we are now engaged is more real and deadly than any other physical war that has ever been fought upon this earth. Billions have already died in captivity to Satan. Even their graves bear the banner of Satan. Today billions of this planet's inhabitants are serving Satan. Only a small, insignificant remnant serve God in spirit and truth. The question, then, is, Are we really determined to be victorious under the banner of Prince Immanuel? Glorious heavenly crowns are awaiting the overcomers. 1 Peter 5:4; 2 Timothy 4:8.

The needed preparation

Individually and collectively, like a united army, we need a born-again experience in the church. "Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say into thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God. Nicodemus saith unto Him, How can a man be born when he is old? can he enter the second time into his mother's womb, and be born? Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God." John 3:3-5.

"By nature the heart is evil, and 'Who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean? Not one!' Job 14:4. No human

invention can find a remedy for the sinning soul. 'The carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be.' 'For out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies.' Romans 8:7; Matthew 15:19. The fountain of the heart must be purified before the streams can become pure. He who is trying to reach heaven by his own works in keeping the law is attempting an impossibility. There is no safety for one who has merely a legal religion, a form of godliness. The Christian's life is not a modification or improvement of the old, but a transformation of nature. There is a death to self and sin, and a new life altogether. This change can be brought about only by the effectual working of the Holy Spirit." —*The Desire of Ages*, p. 172.

In John 1:12 we read: "But as many as received Him, to them gave He power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on His name." We need to have a strong faith established in Jesus as our only hope of salvation (Acts 4:12; 16:31; Titus 2:11-14), and by faith we receive the gift of the grace of God (Ephesians 2:5, 8). Let us run with patience the race of our faith, as we are admonished in Hebrews 12:1, 2; Jude 3; 1 Corinthians 9:24, 25.

"The message to the Laodicean church is highly applicable to us as a people. It has been placed before us for a long time, but has not been heeded as it should have been. When the work of repentance is earnest and deep, the individual members of the church will buy the rich goods of heaven. [Revelation 3:18 quoted.] Oh, how many behold things in a perverted light, in the light in which Satan would have them see.

"You may manifest great zeal in missionary effort, and yet because it is corrupted with selfishness, and tastes strongly of self, it is nought in the sight of God, for it is a tainted, corrupted of-

fering.” –(Manuscript 33, 1894) *Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*, vol. 7, p. 961.

“Halfhearted Christians are worse than infidels; for their deceptive words and noncommittal position lead many astray. The infidel shows his colors. The lukewarm Christian deceives both parties. He is neither a good worldling nor a good Christian. Satan uses him to do a work that no one else can do.” –(Letter 44, 1903) *Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*, vol. 7, p. 963.

“But unless the members of God’s church today have a living connection with the Source of all spiritual growth, they will not be ready for the time of reaping. Unless they keep their lamps trimmed and burning, they will fail of receiving added grace in times of special need.” –*The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 55.

“I saw that many were neglecting the preparation so needful and were looking to the time of ‘refreshing’ and the ‘latter rain’ to fit them to stand in the day of the Lord and to live in His sight. Oh, how many I saw in the time of trouble without a shelter! They had neglected the needful preparation; therefore they could not receive the refreshing that all must have to fit them to live in the sight of a holy God.... I saw that none could share the ‘refreshing’ unless they obtain the victory over every besetment, over pride, selfishness, love of the world, and over every wrong word and action. We should, therefore, be drawing nearer and nearer to the Lord and be earnestly seeking that preparation necessary to enable us to stand in the battle in the day of the Lord. Let all remember that God is holy and that none but holy beings can ever dwell in His presence.” –*Early Writings*, p. 71.

“We are today to watch that we offend not in word or deed. We must today praise and honor God. By the exercise of living faith today we are to conquer the enemy. We must today

seek God and be determined that we will not rest satisfied without His presence. We should watch and work and pray as though this were the last day that would be granted us.” –*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 5, p. 200.

The promised help and assurance of God's power

John 14:16, 17; Luke 11:9-13; Hebrews 2:17, 18. “To the consecrated worker there is wonderful consolation in the knowledge that even Christ during His life on earth sought His Father daily for fresh supplies of needed grace; and from this communion with God He went forth to strengthen and bless others. Behold the Son of God bowed in prayer to His Father! Though He is the Son of God, He strengthens His faith by prayer, and by communion with heaven gathers to Himself power to resist evil and to minister to the needs of men. As the Elder Brother of our race He knows the necessities of those who, compassed with infirmity and living in a world of sin and temptation, still desire to serve Him. He knows that the messengers whom He sees fit to send are weak, erring men; but to all who give themselves wholly to His service He promises divine aid. His own example is an assurance that earnest, persevering supplication to God in faith—faith that leads to entire dependence upon God, and unreserved consecration to His work—will avail to bring to men the Holy Spirit’s aid in the battle against sin....

“When Christ gave His disciples the promise of the Spirit, He was nearing the close of His earthly ministry. He was standing in the shadow of the cross, with a full realization of the load of guilt that was to rest upon Him as the Sin Bearer. Before offering Himself as the sacrificial victim, He instructed His disciples regarding a most essential and complete gift which He was to bestow upon His followers—the gift that would bring within their reach the

boundless resources of His grace. 'I will pray the Father,' He said, 'and He shall give you another Comforter, that He may abide with you forever; even the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth Him not, neither knoweth Him: but ye know Him; for He dwelleth with you, and shall be in you.' John 14:16, 17. The Saviour was pointing forward to the time when the Holy Spirit should come to do a mighty work as His representative. The evil that had been accumulating for centuries was to be resisted by the divine power of the Holy Spirit....

"If the fulfillment of the promise is not seen as it might be, it is because the promise is not appreciated as it should be. If all were willing, all would be filled with the Spirit. Wherever the need of the Holy Spirit is a matter little thought of, there is seen spiritual drought, spiritual darkness, spiritual declension and death. Whenever minor matters occupy the attention, the divine power which is necessary for the growth and prosperity of the church, and which would bring all other blessings in its train, is lacking, though offered in infinite plenitude.

"Since this is the means by which we are to receive power, why do we not hunger and thirst for the gift of the Spirit? Why do we not talk of it, pray for it, and preach concerning it? The Lord

is more willing to give the Holy Spirit to those who serve Him than parents are to give good gifts to their children. For the daily baptism of the Spirit every worker should offer his petition to God. Companies of Christian workers should gather to ask for special help, for heavenly wisdom, that they may know how to plan and execute wisely. Especially should they pray that God will baptize His chosen ambassadors in mission fields with a rich measure of His Spirit. The presence of the Spirit with God's workers will give the proclamation of truth a power that not all the honor or glory of the world could give." —*The Acts of the Apostles*, pp. 56, 47, 48, 50, 51.

"Now the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that ye may abound in hope, through the power of the Holy Ghost." Romans 15:13. "But grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. To Him be glory both now and for ever. Amen." 2 Peter 3:18.

"Grace be to you and peace from God the Father, and from our Lord Jesus Christ, Who gave Himself for our sins, that He might deliver us from this present evil world, according to the will of God and our Father. To whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen." Galatians 1:3-5. Amen.

"If you have peace in Christ, His precious blood is speaking pardon and hope to your soul. Yes, more, you have joy in the Holy Spirit, through accepting the precious promises. Jesus says, 'In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world.' John 16:33. Therefore the world shall not overcome you if you believe in Me. It is a world that I have conquered. Because I have overcome, if you believe in Me, you shall overcome." —*Our High Calling*, p. 329.

Getting Rid of the Copper Nails

By Pablo Hunger, Austria/U.S.A.

One day after the sermon ended, a young man approached the pastor and, with concern written on his face, said, "Pastor, you put me on the spot. I am ashamed to admit it, but I must change my attitude. As you know, I am a shipbuilder, and the man I work for is not a believer. Several times I have spoken to him about his need of Christ and invited him to come to church, but he scoffs at spiritual things. Now, after having heard your sermon, I feel guilty for something that has happened in connection with my job which, if I acknowledge it to my boss, will ruin my reputation forever."

The young man went on to explain that he had started to build a ship in his yard. He said that in his work he used copper nails, because they do not rust. These nails were very expensive, and the young man had been taking home large quantities of nails from his work. He knew that was stealing, but he tried to quiet his conscience with the thought that there were many employees at his work place who did not receive the salary they deserved. But the sermon had convinced him that what he was doing was not right and that he had to give back what he had stolen. The problem was that, if he confessed to his boss what he had done and paid for the nails, he would look like a hypocrite.

After some days, the young man returned and exclaimed with relief, "Pastor, those copper nails were driven into my conscience, and I knew I would never have peace until I settled this matter. I have solved the problem of the nails, and at last I have a clear conscience and the joy of peace."

Sin destroys our Christian resolutions and even our life. When we allow ourselves to be led by the Spirit of God, He appeals to our conscience and admonishes us in the same way that the copper nails denounced the young man's sin. Only by confessing our sins will we find forgiveness and obtain peace.

"Conscience is the voice of God, heard amid the conflict of human passions; when it is resisted, the Spirit of God is grieved." —*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 5, p. 120.

"In all our business transactions, in every word and deed, we are to maintain a pure purpose and a clear conscience. We are to commit our works to God and then leave them in His hands. Our work is to be done in the strictest integrity. Nothing is to be cherished that we cannot carry into the heavenly courts. As we labor let us ask God's help, realizing that this is the only thing that can keep our work free from selfishness." —*That I May Know Him*, p. 290.

Confession and forgiveness

We do not know when our names will pass in judgment before God; the only assurance we have of being forgiven and one day dwelling in the eternal mansions among the redeemed is if we confess our sins with all our heart, trusting in the atoning sacrifice of Christ. The Lord Jesus was crucified to redeem us from guilt; He took our place, since we are guilty of sin, so that we may have life.

It is sad that many times we do not realize the seriousness of our errors; and, like the young man with the copper nails, we sin and excuse our actions

so as not to hear God's admonishing voice or feel the pain of the nails penetrating our conscience. How dangerous it is to play with sin and think that we are not to blame, for this may cause the loss of our salvation! "And David said unto Nathan, I have sinned against the Lord. And Nathan said unto David, The Lord also hath put away thy sin; thou shalt not die." 2 Samuel 12:13. Death is the wages of all sin.

"It is not safe for us to close our eyes and harden our conscience so that we shall not see or realize our sins. We need to cherish the instruction we have had in regard to the hateful character of sin, in order that we may truly confess and forsake our sins. 'If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.' 1 John 1:9. Are you willing to be cleansed from all unrighteousness?" —*That I May Know Him*, p. 242.

"He that covereth his sins shall not prosper: but whoso confesseth and forsaketh them shall have mercy." Proverbs 28:13.

We often think that if we confess our sins we will lose the respect of others, that we will lose any influence we might have over those who hear our acknowledgment, or that we will lose our good reputation among the people around us. In the experience of the young man with the copper nails, his sincerity in confessing his sin, in spite of the pain caused by that acknowledgment, led his boss to exclaim: "I always thought that you were just a hypocrite, but now I am beginning to think that there is something, after all, in this being a Christian. If being a Christian makes a dishonest worker admit that he has been stealing copper nails and offer to pay for them, then it is worthwhile to be a Christian." Thus, the result was quite the opposite of what was expected. To acknowledge our sins is to gain the victory over the evil one; it is to lift our head after having fallen in order to continue advancing.

When we acknowledge our sins with all our heart, God forgives us and gives us strength to overcome—to obtain the victory over evil.

"Brethren and sisters, we need the reformation that all who are redeemed must have, through the cleansing of mind and heart from every taint of sin. In the lives of those who are ransomed by the blood of Christ, self-sacrifice will constantly appear. Goodness and righteousness will be seen. The quiet, inward experience will make the life full of godliness, faith, meekness, patience. This is to be our daily experience. We are to form characters free from sin—characters made righteous in and by the grace of Christ.... Our hearts are to be cleansed from all impurity in the blood shed to take away sin." —*Counsels on Health*, pp. 633, 634.

After the young man experienced repentance and confession, he felt the assurance of forgiveness and, as its fruit, peace, joy, and the courage to overcome other temptations. He felt mercy for others who had fallen and the joy of paying for the copper nails, in spite of their high price.

Many parents would have better results if they shared with their teenagers the experiences of their own struggles and victories. In this way, they would win their children's hearts and help them in their own conflicts.

To acknowledge sin with our whole heart implies true repentance, something that goes beyond mere words. It consists of feeling pain for what one has done and resolving firmly to change and not to make the same mistake again, because it is an offense, in first place, to God.

"Those who have not humbled their souls before God in acknowledging their guilt have not yet fulfilled the first condition of acceptance. If we have not experienced that repentance which is not to be repented of, and have not with true humiliation of soul and brokenness

of spirit confessed our sins, abhorring our iniquity, we have never truly sought for the forgiveness of sin; and if we have never sought, we have never found the peace of God. The only reason why we do not have remission of sins that are past is that we are not willing to humble our hearts and comply with the conditions of the word of truth.... Confession of sin, whether public or private, should be heartfelt and freely expressed.... The psalmist says, 'The Lord is nigh unto them that are of a broken heart; and saveth such as be of a contrite spirit.' Psalm 34:18." —*Steps to Christ*, pp. 37, 38.

Beware, danger!

We can compare the sense of guilt to the red warning lights on the instrument panel of a car. They light up to show that there is a serious problem that needs to be taken care of immediately. To continue driving while ignoring this light may result in the engine being ruined and the car becoming useless forever. In the same way, we should be careful not to ignore the signals that God gives us in our life.

The servant of God wrote: "I know the danger of those who refuse to walk in the light as God gives it. They bring upon themselves the terrible crisis of being left to follow their own ways, to do after their own judgment. The conscience becomes less and less impressible. The voice of God seems to become more and more distant, and the wrongdoer is left to his own infatuation. In stubbornness he resists every appeal, despises all counsel and advice, and turns from every provision made for his salvation, and the voice of the messenger of God makes no impression upon his mind. The Spirit of God no longer exerts a restraining power over him, and the sentence is passed, '[He] is joined to idols, let him alone.' Hosea 4:17. Oh, how dark, how sullen, how obstinate, is his independence! It seems that the

insensibility of death is upon his heart. This is the process through which the soul passes that rejects the working of the Holy Spirit." —(*The Review and Herald*, June 29, 1897) *Ye Shall Receive Power*, p. 32.

I remember the experience of a woman who did not want to curb her indulgence of appetite. Instead of exercising temperance and thus solving her weight problem, she began buying clothes in larger sizes and gave full rein to her impulses. After time passed, a doctor warned her that she needed to lose weight, since she now weighed 105 kilos (231 lbs.). She was very surprised and asked, "Are you sure that is how much I weigh?" The doctor simply asked her to look at the scale on which she was standing. She did not want to acknowledge her own sin and its alarming results.

"For if we sin wilfully after that we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins." Hebrews 10:26. Every time we reject the appeal made to our conscience, we close the door a little more to the impressions of the Holy Spirit. His warning is not heard as clearly as it once was. We lose the sensibility and capacity to recognize what sin is. Let us be sensitive and respond to the voice of the Holy Spirit so God's mercy may continue to guide us.

"For Thou, Lord, art good, and ready to forgive; and plenteous in mercy unto all them that call upon Thee." Psalm 86:5. "And it shall come to pass, that before they call, I will answer; and while they are yet speaking, I will hear." Isaiah 65:24. "Who forgiveth all thine iniquities; who healeth all thy diseases." Psalm 103:3. "And I will cleanse them from all their iniquity, whereby they have sinned against Me; and I will pardon all their iniquities, whereby they have sinned, and whereby they have transgressed against Me." Jeremiah 33:8. "If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins,

and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." 1 John 1:9. There are many more such promises of mercy, but they will be a reality and a benefit only to one who confesses his sin.

Rescuing the lost

"... If thou dost not speak to warn the wicked from his way, that wicked man shall die in his iniquity; but his blood will I require at thine hand. Nevertheless, if thou warn the wicked of his way to turn from it; if he do not turn from his way, he shall die in his iniquity; but thou hast delivered thy soul." Ezekiel 33:8, 9. What a great responsibility rests upon each one of us who knows the truth of God and His will! We should be watchmen warning about the coming danger. Satan wants us to sin so he can lead us to destruction.

"But if the watchman see the sword come, and blow not the trumpet, and the people be not warned; if the sword come, and take any person from among them, he is taken away in his iniquity; but his blood will I require at the watchman's hand." Ezekiel 33:6.

It is a mistake to think that love should lead us to be tolerant of sin so we do not lose our good relationships with others. We should be patient with the sinner but warn him of his sin. True love does everything possible to protect others from ruin. True love cannot look the other way when a person is harming himself by sinning. True love leads us to speak with the person affected, being as tactful as possible, but with clear words, so he may see his error. In those moments, remember that you too have fallen and needed a merciful hand to help you. Now He asks you to reach out to someone else in need.

"Christ never made peace by anything like compromise. The hearts of God's servants will overflow with love and sympathy for the erring, as represented by the parable of the lost sheep; but they will have no soft words for sin.

They show the truest friendship who reprove error and sin without partiality and without hypocrisy. Jesus lived in the midst of a sinful and perverse generation. He could not be at peace with the world unless He left them unwarned, unreprieved, and this would not be in accordance with the plan of salvation." —(Letter 12, 1890) *Evangelism*, p. 368.

"All who name the name of Christ must put on the whole armor and entreat, warn, and seek to win souls from sin. Lead all you can to listen to the truth in the house of God. We must do much more than we are doing to snatch souls from the burning." —*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 5, p. 495.

"Crowns, immortal crowns, are to be won. The kingdom of heaven is to be gained. A world, perishing in sin, is to be enlightened. The lost pearl is to be found. The lost sheep is to be brought back in safety to the fold. Who will join in the search? Who will bear the light to those who are wandering in the darkness of error?" —(*The Review and Herald*, July 23, 1895) *Evangelism*, p. 16.

What if he were my brother?

The Lord does not want among His children or in His church any sin that affects their peace and harmony. He has given a Bible rule to help and rescue one who does not realize his danger and has sinned against his brother. In Matthew 18:14-17, we are told: "Even so it is not the will of your Father which is in heaven, that one of these little ones should perish. Moreover if thy brother shall trespass against thee, go and tell him his fault between thee and him alone: if he shall hear thee, thou hast gained thy brother. But if he will not hear thee, then take with thee one or two more, that in the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established. And if he shall neglect to hear them, tell it unto the church: but if he neglect to hear the church, let him be unto thee as a heathen man and a publican."

As followers of Christ, let us never allow an offense to lodge in our hearts. Every Christian who has gone through a transformation of character will feel compassion for the offender.

Another bad habit is speaking to others about a brother's mistake without following the Biblical rule of first speaking alone with the person in order to help him. "Thou shalt not go up and down as a talebearer among thy people: neither shalt thou stand against the blood of thy neighbour: I am the Lord.

"Thou shalt not hate thy brother in thine heart: thou shalt in any wise rebuke thy neighbour, and not suffer sin upon him." Leviticus 19:16, 17.

The inspired messenger writes: "Difficulties are often caused by the vendors of gossip, whose whispered hints and suggestions poison unsuspecting minds and separate the closest friends. Mischievous-makers are seconded in their evil work by the many who stand with open ears and evil heart, saying: 'Report,... and we will report it.' This sin should not be tolerated among the followers of Christ." —*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 5, pp. 241, 242.

"You may feel it no sin to gossip and talk nonsense, but this grieves your Saviour, and saddens the heavenly angels." —*Fundamentals of Christian Education*, p. 457.

On the contrary, the follower of Christ will be an instrument to help the sinner. We shall remember how much we have been forgiven, and we will deal with our neighbor with the same love that God has manifested toward us.

The servant of God writes about how we should do this work: "Show Christ-like love for your brother by seeking to adjust the difficulty 'between thee and him alone.' Talk quietly together. Let no angry words escape your lips. Present the subject in a way that will appeal to his best judgment. And if he will hear you, you have gained him as a friend." —*The Upward Look*, p. 106.

How many cases there are in which members of a family have been at odds with each other for many years, without having any contact or exchanging a word! A father or mother knows immediately when there is difficulty among their children, because they can read it on their faces. Is it possible to notice when something is not in order within the spiritual family?

"Feel that it is a duty and privilege to do this, for the sake of the unity and peace of the church, which is very dear to the heart of Christ. He does not want any wound to remain unhealed on any member of His church. All heaven is interested in the interview between the injured member and the one who has been guilty of error. After settling the difficulty, pray together, and angels of God will come to you and bless you. There is music in heaven over this union." —*The Upward Look*, p. 106.

"What if they hear to no good purpose, and pursue the evil course they have begun? This will frequently occur. Sometimes the mildest and tenderest reproof will have no good effect. In that case the blessing you wanted another to receive by pursuing a course of righteousness, ceasing to do evil and learning to do well, will return into your own bosom. If the erring persist in sin, treat them kindly, and leave them with your heavenly Father." —*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 2, pp. 53, 54.

On his mother's birthday, a boy about nine years old visited the chief of police who had commanded that his parents be arrested and, moved by hatred for Christians, had been responsible for their murder. The child, with a bouquet of flowers in his hands, told him: "Captain, I used to give my mother a bouquet of flowers on her birthday. Please take this bouquet that I would like to give to your wife since my mother is no longer alive." The heart of that cruel captain was broken by the forgiving attitude of

this small child and a few days later he gave his heart to Christ as a result of that great pardon. The love of that child had touched the captain's heart, demonstrating what it means truly to be a Christian. Brothers and sisters, let us follow this example with all the people who have hurt us, and we shall win souls for Christ.

Living the peace of God

Satan wants, by all means, to cause God's children to fall into sin so he can destroy them. We should live our life clinging to Jesus. But "... if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous." 1 John 2:1.

"If they have wronged others, they continue the work of repentance, confession, and restitution; and the disease is healed. They are fully set to do good to one another. This is the fulfilling of the law of Christ." —*The Upward Look*, p. 106.

God is speaking to our consciences, because He wants to help and bless us:

"Say unto them, As I live, saith the Lord God, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked; but that the wicked turn from his way and live: turn ye, turn ye from your evil ways; for why will ye die, O house of Israel?" Ezekiel 33:11.

David exclaimed: "For I am ready to halt, and my sorrow is continually before me. For I will declare mine iniquity; I will be sorry for my sin." Psalm 38:17, 18.

Just as happens in the home when mistakes are acknowledged and forgiveness is sought—the bonds of unity between the parents and the children are strengthened—so God desires peace and unity to reign among the members of His spiritual family.

How wonderful the peace is that God gives us when we confess our sins! We have the assurance of forgiveness, and He sets us free from those copper nails. Brothers and sisters, let us confess our sins, and we shall be pronounced free of guilt when our names are called before the highest court. Amen.

"The example of Christ shows us that our only hope of victory is in continual resistance of Satan's attacks. He who triumphed over the adversary of souls in the conflict of temptation understands Satan's power over the race and has conquered him in our behalf. As an overcomer He has given us the advantage of His victory, that in our efforts to resist the temptations of Satan we may unite our weakness to His strength, our worthlessness to His merits. And, sustained by His enduring might under strong temptation, we may resist in His all-powerful name and overcome as He overcame." —*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 3, p. 480.

Jesus, Our Only Solution

By Idel Suarez, U.S.A.

"I waited patiently for the Lord; and He inclined unto me, and heard my cry. He brought me up also out of an horrible pit, out of the miry clay, and set my feet upon a rock." Psalm 40:1, 2.

The degrading power of sin

Several years ago, I had the opportunity to visit the Yucatan Peninsula and tour some of the ancient Mayan cities and pyramids. Near the Mayan city of Chichen-Itza are many underground caves filled with water, called *cenotes*. Inside these caves, archeologists have discovered skeletons of females ranging in age from infants to women in their early twenties. They had been carried to the tops of pyramids, sacrificed to pagan gods, and then buried in these caves.

Caves were sacred to the Mayans. Through these caves, they thought they could reach the "water-filled underworld-Xibalba, the Place of Fright[,]... the dwelling place of monstrous supernatural beings but also the source of life-giving rain and corn, and the home of the beloved dead." –David Roberts, *National Geographic*, November 2004.

Around the ninth century, a catastrophe of grand proportions shook the entire Mayan civilization to the core. Perhaps a drought had caused the desperation that was visible in sacrificial sites. The Mayans sought to appease their rain god, Chac, in the hope that he could save them; but their prayers went unanswered. A sealed cave named Balankanche, or "throne of the jaguar," discovered in 1959 near Chichen-Itza, was filled with offerings to Tlaloc, a god worshipped by other peoples, nearly a thousand miles away. Great pains had been taken to conceal the cave, which could

indicate that the Mayans had switched allegiance. Their blind devotion to pagan gods who could not help them may have led to the mysterious disappearance of the Mayan civilization. The deserted cities and horrifying human sacrificial remains visually and dramatically testify that, without the true God, the only future that awaits unrepentant sinners is destruction and death. "Righteousness exalteth a nation: but sin is a reproach to any people." Proverbs 14:34.

As we enter the last year of the first decade of the third millennium of the Christian era, the words of the apostle Paul still apply: "And you ... who were dead in trespasses and sins; Wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience: Among whom also we all had our conversation [lifestyle] in times past in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind; and were by nature the children of wrath even as others." Ephesians 2:1-3.

"Sin not only shuts us away from God, but destroys in the human soul both the **desire** and the **capacity** for knowing Him. All this work of evil it is Christ's mission to undo. **The faculties of the soul, paralyzed by sin, the darkened mind, the perverted will, He has power to invigorate and to restore....**

"Not only intellectual but spiritual power, a perception of right, a desire for goodness, exists in every heart. But against these principles there is struggling an antagonistic power.... There is in his nature a bent to evil, a force which, unaided, he cannot resist. **To withstand this force, to attain that ide-**

al which in his inmost soul he accepts as alone worthy, he can find help in but one power. That power is Christ."

—*Reflecting Christ*, p. 106.

Jesus is the only solution

"There is [ONLY] one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus; who gave Himself a ransom for all." 1 Timothy 2:5, 6. Jesus says: "Come unto Me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest... I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest in your souls." Matthew 11:28, 29.

Only Jesus cleanses us from sin. Only Jesus frees us from painful memories and regrets. Only Jesus inspires and teaches us to live new lives. Only Jesus gives us the power to become the sons and daughters of God. Only Jesus saves. "Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved." Acts 4:12.

The name of Jesus literally means "**Jehovah saves.**" "And thou shalt call His name Jesus: for He shall save His people from their sins." Matthew 1:21. Jesus saves us through His continual work of intercession. In their council of peace held in ages past, God and Christ devised a plan so sophisticated, and yet so simple, that it would both uphold the requirements of the holy law **and** save every sinner willing to accept God's solution. That divine solution is called atonement.

"Sin brought separation between God and man, and the atonement of Christ alone could span the abyss and make possible the communication of blessing or salvation from heaven to earth." —*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 67.

Atonement defined

What exactly is atonement? In English, "atonement" is defined as "being **at one** with God."¹ By eating the forbidden fruit, Adam and Eve plunged all mankind into such depths of guilt and

sorrow that only one who has broken God's law can understand it. At one time, wearing the impress of the image of God upon their countenances, Adam and Eve cherished every moment spent with their Creator. They gazed upon His glory. Now their legacy to all humanity is separation from God. "For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous." Romans 5:19. It is by the obedience of Christ as a man, and in the flesh of a man, that He bridged the gap between man and God.

In Greek, the word for atonement is *katallage*,² which means "reconciliation."³ It brings to mind the image of two people who are enemies, who are continually fighting, and who cannot even bear the sight of each other. Yet, over the course of time, these former opponents become friends and allies. After being estranged for a very long time, they are now reconciled. God wants to reconcile us to Himself and does so through the Son of Man and the Son of God—Jesus Christ. "For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of His Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by His life ... by whom we have now received the atonement." Romans 5:10, 11.

Yet the Hebrew word for atonement gives us the deepest insight into how God reacts to our confession and repentance of sins in Jesus' name. It is *kipurrim*, meaning "a covering."⁴ When Jesus pardons our sins, He conditionally covers our sins with His blood. This meaning implies a type of robe which **covers** us. It is His righteousness and His atoning blood that conditionally cover our sins when we repent. It is as if we hid ourselves under the **coverings** of a living tabernacle in the desert of sin.

"As the penitent sinner, contrite before God, discerns Christ's **atonement** in his behalf, and accepts this **atonement** as his only hope in this life and the future life, his sins are pardoned. This is

justification by faith.” –*Reflecting Christ*, p. 74.

The Hebrew verb for atonement, *kapar*,⁵ first appears in Genesis 6:14, *Revised Standard Version*, where Noah was instructed to “cover [*kapar*] it [the ark] inside and out with pitch.”⁶ Both internal and external applications of pitch were equally and vitally important to the ship’s being able to stay afloat during the violent tempests of the rising flood waters. One neglected area could have led to the loss of the entire ship. Like Noah’s ark, we need to be pitched within and without with that holy pitch, Jesus’ own blood, so that we will not drown in the waters of sin and presumption. We need a thorough purging, cleansing, and atonement from sin both inside—our heart, our mind, our conscience, our spirit—and outside—our apparel, our words, our expressions, our actions, and our habits.

The conditional atonement: Calvary

As Adventists, we believe that all truth finds its nucleus in the sanctuary doctrine. Jesus removes our sins in a two-phase process, as He taught the children of Israel in the sanctuary ceremonies.

There are many “twos” in the Bible which are part of the plan of redemption. There are two deaths, two resurrections, two testaments, two types of sin, and two rooms in the tabernacle. There are even two comings of Jesus, or two phases of His messiahship. Likewise, there are two phases of atonement—the conditional and the final.

“Important truths concerning the atonement are taught by the typical service. A substitute was accepted in the sinner’s stead; **but the sin was not canceled by the blood of the victim.** A means was thus provided by which it was **transferred** to the sanctuary. By the offering of blood the sinner acknowledged the authority of the law, confessed his guilt in transgression, and expressed his desire for pardon through faith in a Redeemer to come; **but he was not yet entirely re-**

leased from the condemnation of the law.” –*The Great Controversy*, p. 420.

The first phase of the atonement occurred at Calvary. Jesus removed our sins, transferred them to His person, and was crucified with them on the cross. He then ascended into the heavenly sanctuary to continue and complete the work of atonement—putting us at one with God and reconciling us to Him. The initial phase of atonement is conditional and reversible. In this first phase, our sins are conditionally covered and transferred to Christ and, through Him, to the heavenly sanctuary.

“As anciently the sins of the people were by faith placed upon the sin offering and through its blood transferred, in figure, to the earthly sanctuary, so in the new covenant the sins of the repentant are by faith placed upon Christ and transferred, in fact, to the heavenly sanctuary.” –*The Great Controversy*, p. 421.

Do you remember the Old Testament sanctuary stories? Every time an Israelite sinned, he had to sacrifice a spotless lamb or goat as a sin offering. The sin he had confessed over the animal before slaying it was transferred to the sacrificial animal. The priest then transferred the sin into the sanctuary in one of two ways. Either he took the animal’s blood inside the sanctuary and sprinkled it upon the second veil, or he ate the flesh and carried the sin in his own body into the tabernacle.

“‘Without shedding of blood,’ says the apostle Paul, ‘there is no remission of sin’ [Hebrews 9:22]. ‘The life of the flesh is in the blood.’ Leviticus 17:11. The broken law of God demanded the life of the transgressor. The blood, representing the forfeited life of the sinner, whose guilt the victim bore, was carried by the priest into the holy place and sprinkled before the veil, behind which was the ark containing the law that the sinner had transgressed. By this ceremony the sin was, through the blood, transferred in figure to the sanctuary. In some cases the blood was not taken into the holy place; but the

flesh was then to be eaten by the priest, as Moses directed the sons of Aaron, saying: 'God hath given it you to bear the iniquity of the congregation.' Leviticus 10:17. Both ceremonies alike symbolized the transfer of the sin from the penitent to the sanctuary." —*The Great Controversy*, p. 418.

Jesus became the antitype of both means of transferring the sin of the believer to the heavenly sanctuary. He was the innocent, spotless lamb whose blood was shed at the altar of Calvary. He is also the priest who carries in His flesh all our sins into the heavenly sanctuary. So, by His atoning blood on Golgotha and through His atoning intercession in the heavenly sanctuary and simultaneously in our souls, Jesus solves our sin problem.

"The **atonement of Calvary** vindicated the law of God as holy, just, and true, not only before the fallen world, but before heaven and before worlds unfallen." —*Reflecting Christ*, p. 53.

The final atonement: The heavenly sanctuary

Unlike most modern Protestants, we do not believe that atonement was completed at Calvary. This becomes obvious when one studies the day of atonement as described in Leviticus 16. Not only did the Israelites need atonement, but the physical sanctuary with all its contents did as well. The Bible says that the tabernacle needed atonement because it had become defiled with the sins of Israel. Hence, the high priest needed to ceremonially cleanse and purge the sanctuary and the people of Israel.

"He shall make an atonement for the holy place, because of the uncleanness of the children of Israel, and because of their transgressions in all their sins: and so shall he do for the tabernacle of the congregation, that remaineth among them in the midst of their uncleanness." "And he shall go out unto the altar that is before the Lord, and make an atonement for it." Leviticus 16:16, 18.

"As the priest entered the most holy once a year to cleanse the earthly sanctuary, so Jesus entered the most holy of the heavenly, at the end of the 2300 days of Daniel 8, in 1844, to make a **final atonement** for all who could be benefitted by His mediation, and thus to cleanse the sanctuary." —*Early Writings*, p. 253.

The fact that the testimonies describe a **final atonement** implies that there is an **initial, or conditional, atonement**. The final phase of atonement occurs in the most holy place of the heavenly sanctuary, where records, or registries, of our sins are kept. Here Jesus applies His blood to erase, or blot out, our sins from the heavenly books. This second phase of atonement is complete and irreversible. It is the final phase of atonement—of purging all record of our sins from heaven and from our consciences. It finalizes our reconciliation with God.

The rabbis taught that, on the great day of atonement, God sealed Israel for another year. Likewise, we believe that it is during this final atonement taking place in heaven that God will seal His people for eternity.

The apostle Peter spoke of Jesus not returning until He blots out all the sins of the saved from the records in heaven during the time of the latter rain. "Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord; and He shall send Jesus Christ, which before was preached unto you: whom the heavens must receive until the time of restitution of all things." Acts 3:19-21.

How are sins blotted out? Solely by the blood of Christ. "The blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanseth us from all sin." 1 John 1:7. "The cleansing, both in the typical and in the real service, must be accomplished with blood: in the former, with the blood of animals; in the latter, with the blood of Christ. Paul states, as the reason why this cleansing must be performed with blood, that without shed-

ding of blood is no remission. Remission, or putting away of sin, is the work to be accomplished. But how could there be sin connected with the sanctuary, either in heaven or upon the earth? This may be learned by reference to the symbolic service; for the priests who officiated on earth, served 'unto the example and shadow of heavenly things.' Hebrews 8:5....

"As in the typical service there was a work of atonement at the close of the year, so before Christ's work for the redemption of men is completed there is a work of atonement for the removal of sin from the sanctuary. This is the service which began when the 2300 days ended. At that time, as foretold by Daniel the prophet, our High Priest entered the most holy, to perform the last division of His solemn work—to cleanse the sanctuary." —*The Great Controversy*, pp. 417, 418, 421.

"And he said unto me, Unto two thousand and three hundred days; then shall the sanctuary be cleansed." Daniel 8:14. When Daniel heard the saint say, "**cleansed**," it meant that the sanctuary will be atoned for through the blood of Christ. Through an investigative judgment, God will determine who has complied with the conditions of salvation so that their sins may be blotted out.

"And as the typical cleansing of the earthly was accomplished by the removal of the sins by which it had been polluted, so the actual cleansing of the heavenly is to be accomplished by the removal, or blotting out, of the sins which are there recorded. But before this can be accomplished, there must be an examination of the books of record to determine who, through repentance of sin and faith in Christ, are entitled to the benefits of His atonement. The cleansing of the sanctuary therefore involves a work of investigation—a work of judgment. This work must be performed prior to the coming of Christ to redeem His people; for when He comes, His reward is with Him to give to every man according to his works." —*The Great Controversy*, p. 421.

Have you tasted my Jesus?

At the University of Chicago, a Protestant picnic was organized. A prominent theologian was invited to give the discourse for the luncheon. He presented the research of many leading scholars showing that Jesus never really was resurrected. As he concluded his presentation, the theologian asked his audience if there were any questions. After some silence, an elderly African-American pastor raised his hand and said, "Doctor, I got just one question." Reaching into his lunch bag, the pastor pulled out a red apple and began to bite into it. "Doctor, my question is a simple question." The preacher continued munching on his apple. "Doctor, I can't recite all them scholars. Nor can I read the original Greek. But all I want to know is this: Was the apple that I just ate bitter or sweet?"

The theologian answered in his scholarly, pragmatic tone, "I cannot possibly answer that question, for I haven't tasted your apple."

The old pastor immediately responded as he lifted the core of his apple: "Neither have you tasted my Jesus."

In the end, only those who have tasted Jesus, those who have eaten His flesh and drunk His blood in the spiritual sense, will understand by practical experience that Jesus is our only solution to every problem. With the old pastor, I ask you, Have you tasted my Jesus? "Whoso eateth My flesh, and drinketh My blood, hath eternal life; and I will raise him up at the last day." John 6:54. Amen.

¹ *The Oxford English Reference Dictionary* (1995), Oxford: Oxford University Press, p. 86.

² *Strong's Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible*, No. 2643.

³ Vine, W.E. (1996), *An Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words*, Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson Publishers, pp. 43, 44.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 10.

⁵ *Strong's* No. 3722.

⁶ *Seventh-day Adventist Bible Dictionary*, revised edition (1979), vol. 8, Washington, DC: Review and Herald Publishing Association, p. 98.