

The cover of 'The Reformation Messenger' magazine features a vibrant photograph of yellow Black-eyed Susans with dark brown centers. The flowers are scattered across the frame, some in full bloom and others as buds. They are set against a background of lush green foliage and several pieces of weathered, greyish-brown wood that appear to be part of a rustic fence or structure. The overall aesthetic is natural and serene.

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

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From Death Unto Life

“Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on Him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life.” John 5:24

“Every seed brings forth fruit after its kind. Sow the seed under right conditions, and it will develop its own life in the plant. Receive into the soul by faith the incorruptible seed of the word, and it will bring forth a character and a life after the similitude of the character and the life of God.” —*Christ’s Object Lessons*, p. 38

“The work of the sower is a work of faith. The mystery of the germination and growth of the seed he cannot understand, but he has confidence in the agencies by which God causes vegetation to flourish. He casts away the seed, expecting to gather it manyfold in an abundant harvest.” —*Child Guidance*, p. 501–502

“The seed dies to spring forth into new life. . . . ‘Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die,’ He says, ‘it abideth alone; but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit.’ John 12:24. So the death of Christ will result in fruit for the kingdom of God. In accordance with the law of the vegetable kingdom, life will be the result of His death.

“And all who would bring forth fruit as workers together with Christ must first fall into the ground and die. The life must be cast into the furrow of the world’s need. Self-love, self-interest, must perish. But the law of self-sacrifice is the law of self-preservation. The seed buried in the ground produces fruit, and in turn this is planted. Thus the harvest is multiplied. The husbandman preserves his grain by casting it

away. So in human life, to give is to live. The life that will be preserved is the life that is freely given in service to God and man. Those who for Christ’s sake sacrifice their life in this world, will keep it unto life eternal.” —*Christ’s Object Lessons*, p. 86–87

“In the new birth the heart is brought into harmony with God, as it is brought into accord with His law. When this mighty change has taken place in the sinner, he has passed from death unto life, from sin unto holiness, from transgression

and rebellion to obedience and loyalty. The old life of alienation from God has ended; the new life of reconciliation, of faith and love, has begun.” —*The Great Controversy*, p. 468

“We reveal that we have passed from death unto life when we act as faithful stewards of God’s grace. God has given us His goods; He has given us His pledged word that if we are faithful in our stewardship, we shall lay up in heaven treasures that are imperishable.” —*The Review and Herald*, May 15, 1900

“Many who profess to be Christ’s followers are unwilling to closely examine their own hearts, to see whether they have passed from death unto life. Some lean upon an old experience, seeming to think a mere profession of the truth will save them; but God’s Word reveals the terrible fact that all such are cherishing a false hope.

“Let us, as Christ’s followers, search our hearts as with a lighted candle to see what manner of spirit we are of. For our present and eternal good, let us criticize our actions, to see how they stand in the light of the law of God.” —*Our High Calling*, p. 162

“The formation of character is the work of a lifetime, and it is for eternity. If all could realize this, if they would awake to the thought that we are individually deciding our own destiny for eternal life or eternal ruin, what a change would take place! How differently would this probationary time be occupied, and what different characters would fill our world!” —*Child Guidance*, p. 162

Ellen G. White



One day the disciples were in a boat on a stormy sea, struggling against the wind, and suddenly they saw a person walking on the water towards them. "It is a spirit," they cried out in fear. Who was it? It was Jesus, walking towards them. What did Peter say now?

"Lord, if it be Thou, bid me come unto Thee on the water. And He said, Come. And when Peter was come down out of the ship, he walked on the water, to go to Jesus. But when he saw the wind boisterous, he was afraid; and beginning to sink, he cried, saying, Lord, save me. And immediately Jesus stretched forth His hand, and caught him, and said unto him, O thou of little faith, wherefore didst thou doubt?" Matthew 14:28-31

Normally in life what we do once, the next time we do it better, and as we practice it more and more, it becomes a habit. But, in religion it does not work that way. Elder Waggoner uses the example of Peter's experience. One minute he could walk on water, and then the next minute he could not. In our life, the same thing often happens. Which is easier—to walk on water, or to live a perfect, sinless Christian life? Both are impossible for us to do alone. The moment Peter turned his eyes away from Christ, and he saw the storm and the waves of the sea, he started sinking. In our morning prayer we ask God to help us to not sin, and the next moment we forget Jesus and turn our eyes away from Him. The same thing will happen to us as that happened to Peter when he turned his eyes away from Jesus.

After many years of walking with Jesus and learning of Him, can we then take a few steps alone? No, never.

What happened to Judas when he separated from Jesus and started to walk alone? The moment he left Jesus he made terrible mistakes, and finally he took his own life. We must learn the lesson, that alone we can do nothing. Some professing Christians are one day, humble, pious, missionary-minded, full of zeal for God, and then the next day are the complete opposite. This is how Peter was—very faithful in

one moment, and a moment later the complete opposite.

"He saith unto them, But whom say ye that I am? And Simon Peter answered and said, Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God. And Jesus answered and said unto him, Blessed art thou, Simon Barjona: for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but My Father which is in heaven. . . . Then Peter took Him, and began to rebuke Him, saying, Be it far from thee, Lord: this shall not be unto Thee. But He turned, and said unto Peter, Get thee behind Me, Satan: thou art an offence unto Me: for thou savourest not the things that be of God, but those that be of men." Matthew 16:15-17; 22-23

The Holy Spirit spoke through Peter, and the next moment, Satan spoke through him. One time Peter said to Jesus, "I will die for You," and the same night three times he denied that he knew Jesus.

Many people lose sight of Jesus when they are provoked to anger. A quick hasty temper can blind us in a moment, and we cannot see Jesus anymore; all the wonderful promises we made to God are forgotten. Now we can speak words that we regret later.

Sister White wrote to a brother: "Brother G, you are in great danger of losing your soul. You want to have the pre-eminence. At times you feel deeply if you think you are slighted. You are not a happy man. You will not be happy if you leave the people of God, taking offense at plain words and facts, as did many of the followers of Christ, because the truth spoken was too close. You will not be a happy man, for you will take yourself with you. You are not right; you make trouble for yourself. Your temperament is your enemy, and go where you will you will take yourself with your burden of unhappiness. It is an honor to confess a wrong as soon as it is discerned." *Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 4, p. 239-240

To another person she wrote, "Your hasty temper often causes you sincere and painful regret and self-condemnation. This passionate spirit, unless subdued, will increase to a peevish, faultfinding spirit; indeed, this is already upon you in a degree. You will be ready to resent everything. If jostled upon the sidewalk, you will be offended, and a word of complaint will spring to your lips. When driving in the street, if full half of the road is not given you, you will feel stirred in a moment. If asked to put yourself out of your course to accommodate others, you will chafe and fret, and feel that your dignity is imposed upon. You will show to all your besetting sin. Your very countenance will indicate an impatient spirit, and your mouth will always seem ready to utter an angry word. In this habit, as in tobacco using, total abstinence is the only sure remedy. An entire change must take place in you. You frequently feel that you must be more guarded. You resolutely say, 'I will be more calm and patient;' but in doing this you only touch

the evil on the outside; you consent to retain the lion and watch him. You must go further than this. Strength of principle alone can dislodge this destroying foe and bring peace and happiness." *Ibid.*, vol. 2, p. 425

A hasty temper is a lion inside. When all is favourable and well, the lion is sleeping, but when something is wrong and when we are hurt or offended, then the lion inside will roar, and be ready to fight. Before we were walking on water peacefully, but now we are ready to sink in the storm, as happened to Peter.

"One class have come up without self-control; they have not bridled the temper or the tongue; and some of these claim to be Christ's followers, but they are not. Jesus has set them no such example. When they have the meekness and lowliness of the Saviour, they will not act out the promptings of the natural heart, for this is of Satan. Some are nervous, and if they begin to lose self-control in word or spirit under provocation, they are as much intoxicated with wrath as the inebriate is with liquor. They are unreasonable, and not easily persuaded or convinced. They are not sane; Satan for the time has full control." *The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*, vol. 3, p. 1161

So long as we are in the world, we will be provoked and irritated; we will be severely tested. "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." *The Ministry of Healing*, p. 487

"It is much easier to play the martyr than to overcome a bad temper." *The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*, vol. 3, p. 1160

Yet, it can be done; every sin can be overcome, with the help of God. Satan is tempting everyone; he is offering riches—if only we disobey God and listen to him. Others are tempted by appetite; forbidden foods can destroy our faith. Samson was tempted by Delilah; David fell into sin with Bathsheba after many years of faithfulness. Satan knows our weak points, and he is tempting us in these points, and he does not give up; after many years of faithfulness, he still continues his temptations.

Sister White wrote to a brother in the church who had worked faithfully for many years, helping suffering humanity, but now was discouraged. "I want you to have heaven. I know of no one who would appreciate heaven more than you, who have worked so untiringly to relieve suffering

humanity, depriving yourself of sleep, neglecting to take food, bringing but little enjoyment into your life. At times there does not seem to be much sunshine in your path, only one long, continuous shadow. The afflictions you see, the dependent mortals looking and longing for help, your contact with depraved, corrupted human beings—this experience is of a character to undermine your faith in humanity.

"You must, indeed, look to Jesus, keeping your eyes fixed on the glory at the top of the ladder. Through Christ alone can you make sure of heaven, where all is purity, holiness, peace, and blessedness, where there are glories that mortal lips cannot describe. The nearest we can come to a description of the reward that awaits the overcomer is to say that it is a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory. It will be an eternity of bliss, a blessed eternity, unfolding new glories throughout the ceaseless ages. . . . I greatly desire that you shall come off more than conqueror through Him who gave His life for you." *Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 8, p. 130–131

"When temptations assail you, when care and perplexity surround you, when, depressed and discouraged, you are ready to yield to despair, look to Jesus, and the darkness that encompasses you will be dispelled by the bright shining of His presence. When sin struggles for the mastery in your soul, and burdens the conscience, look to the Saviour." *The Ministry of Healing*, p. 85

Look to Jesus. By beholding Him we are changed. (2 Corinthians 3:18).

"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

"Look unto Me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth: for I am God, and there is none else." Isaiah 45:22

Brothers and sisters, should we fail now so near to the end? Satan comes with fierce temptations in a last desperate effort to separate us from God. Not only young people and new members, but also brothers and sisters who faithfully stood like pillars in the church, they all will be tested to the utmost.

After many years of faithful service we can fall; this has happened to great ministers and spiritual leaders—bright stars have gone out in darkness.

To take the first step in our Christian walk, we need Christ, and when we take the last step in the end, we need Christ.

When you are tempted, cry to Jesus. "Lord save me," like Peter did, and He will lift you up. Look to Him and be saved. Amen.

Timo Martin



The Heart of the Matter

The heart is simply a muscle that pumps blood, but it is extremely essential to our physical lives. How long can you live without a heart? When your heart stops beating, no oxygen gets to the brain; and it is not long before the brain dies and life ceases to exist in a person. Without a heart the body simply shuts down. The heart is essential to life.

We use the word “heart” as a metaphor for many things that have nothing to do with the muscle. We have a saying in English, *The heart of the matter*. You can also say *The crux of the matter*. They basically have a similar meaning. The heart of the matter is the basic, central or critical point of an issue. Crux is Latin for ‘cross,’ but in English it means ‘difficulty’ or ‘puzzle,’ and it is from this expression that the “heart of the matter” is derived. The heart would indicate a vital part of the matter or problem. A

A problem arises, which may cause other smaller problems, but what is the major problem “at the heart of the matter”? If the major problem was addressed, the smaller ones would fall into place. For example, you decide to do renovations for the church. At the church meeting many people come up with great ideas and they keep talking and talking about these great plans, but then you get to the heart of the matter, “who will pay for it?”

Or then, a person may be overweight and have a heart condition, but what is the heart of the matter? The per-

son does not exercise, spends most days sitting in front of the TV, eating an extremely unhealthy diet. Quite naturally the heart will not function efficiently. If the person would change their lifestyle, which is at the heart of the matter, then the heart condition would improve and the weight would go down.

So “the heart of the matter” is the central and most important part of the problem—the core of the matter that is more important than anything else. It is the one thing that is indispensable and, if removed, would likely cause everything else to stop. No money? Then the church renovations cannot be completed. No lifestyle change? Then the heart condition and weight will likely not improve.

WHAT IS HEART OF THE MATTER IN THE CHRISTIAN LIFE?

When it comes to religion, there are many different Christian churches, all claiming to base their differing teachings on one book—the Bible. Some churches have few teachings, besides just to love Jesus and no need to change one’s lifestyle. It will change when you get to heaven. Enjoy life here on earth. Jesus wants you to be happy and if that means you enjoy some of the pleasures of this world, well then enjoy them. While there are other churches that have many doctrines and teachings in varying degrees of strictness. Although doctrine and teaching is important in understanding the will and

ways of God, when they become like the Ancient Jewish leaders in the time of Christ, who had over 600 laws on how to keep the Sabbath, then this is clearly too much. The true rest of the Sabbath is lost sight of in the midst of the stress of having to worry about the 600 laws. Sabbath becomes a burden. Today, you can find a Christian church to suit any lifestyle and each promise eternal life. But, what is the true heart of the matter as far as salvation is concerned? Yes, doctrine, the keeping of the commandments is important, but are they at the heart of the matter?

Jesus came to this earth to show us the heart of the matter. He taught and demonstrated the simple truths of Sabbath keeping and salvation. It is not founded on outward ceremonies. He healed on the Sabbath on occasion (Matthew 12:10–13) and did not concern Himself with all the unnecessary and cumbersome outward ceremonies and extra rules. It was within the keeping of the law for the disciples to pick grain on the Sabbath and eat when they were hungry (Matthew 12:1–8).

Jesus showed the heart of the matter also when He was seen eating with sinners. People started to whisper and gossip. Perhaps He is a sinner also. Many times they accused Him of blasphemy (John 10:33) and they said that He cast out devils in the name of Beelzebub (Luke 11:15–19).

They clearly had no understanding of the heart of the matter. It is not in outward ceremonies or a formal obedience to the commandments with no love for others. The life of Christ showed that His mission was “to seek and to save that which was lost.” Luke 19:10

Jesus also explained the heart of the matter to a scribe who came to ask Him. “And one of the scribes came, and . . . asked Him, Which is the first commandment of all?” Mark 12:28

Jesus spelled it out briefly. “And Jesus answered him, The first of all the commandments is, Hear, O Israel; The Lord our God is one Lord: And thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength: this is the first commandment. And the second is like, namely this, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. There is none other commandment greater than these. And the scribe said unto him, Well, Master, thou hast said the truth: for there is one God; and there is none other but He.” Mark 12:29–32. Here Jesus summarized the 10 Commandments with the word, “love”.

Jesus goes on to add: “And to love Him with all the heart, and with all the understanding, and with all the

soul, and with all the strength, and to love his neighbour as himself, is more than all whole burnt offerings and sacrifices.” Mark 12:33. The reality is that deeds done in love are of more value to Jesus than the greatest offerings given with no love. Yes, we may have heard this many times, but how many of us practice and perform deeds of love as Jesus did? Isaiah speaks of Sabbath keeping and genuine love. Love is to, “loose the bands of wickedness, to undo the heavy burdens, and to let the oppressed go free, and that ye break every yoke? Is it not to deal thy bread to the hungry, and that thou bring the poor that are cast out to thy house? when thou seest the naked, that thou cover him.” Isaiah 58:6–7. “God’s cause embraces every needy, suffering saint. We are not selfishly to single out a few relatives and friends and help them, letting our work end here. All the needy who come to our notice are to be helped, but especially those who are suffering for the truth’s sake. If we neglect this work, God will hold us accountable. Shall we not as a people who work righteousness, follow the conditions God has laid down, and be doers of His Word?” —*The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*, vol. 4, p. 1151

Isaiah ends this chapter with the words, “If thou turn away thy foot from the sabbath, from doing thy pleasure on My holy day; and call the sabbath a delight, the holy of the LORD, honourable; and shalt honour Him, not doing thine own ways, nor finding thine own pleasure, nor speaking thine own words.” Isaiah 58:13. This is the true meaning of the Sabbath rest—at the heart of the matter regarding Sabbath keeping.

Jesus said of the redeemed, “For I was an hungered, and ye gave Me meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave Me drink: I was a stranger, and ye took Me in: Naked, and ye clothed Me: I was sick, and ye visited Me: I was in prison, and ye came unto Me.” Matthew 25:35–36. If we have the true love of God in our hearts, our hearts will naturally be drawn to help the needy, as did Jesus when on this earth. We will be keeping the commandments, but it will come from the heart.

The Pharisees had a different mind frame. “Which say, Stand by thyself, come not near to me; for I am holier than thou.” These unfaithful leaders are “a smoke in my nose, a fire that burneth all the day.” Isaiah 65:5. Genuine love shown in deeds and actions done from the heart is what is necessary for salvation.

Salvation is not just faith plus works. Matthew Henry wrote. “No man’s faith justifies that which does not work by love.” True religion should be all pervading, in every aspect of our lives. It is to show love and compassion to

all—even our enemies. “But love ye your enemies, and do good, and lend, hoping for nothing again; and your reward shall be great, and ye shall be the children of the Highest: for He is kind unto the unthankful and to the evil.” Luke 6:35. Who are our enemies? Not only those who outwardly oppose us, but also loved ones and friends who do not love Jesus might turn into our enemies. Jesus said that it is possible that, “a man’s foes shall be they of his own household.” Matthew 10:36. Even though they show no remorse, our duty before God is to love them and forgive them. They may never repent, but we cannot harbour any ill feelings towards them, or then self is on the throne of our heart.

Again, quoting Matthew Henry: “Men may go far towards heaven, yet come up short and there will be many that go to hell with a good reputation.” Why would I add this quote here? How does it relate? Think about what this means. When you talk about reputation, it is what others think of you. It is what they see of your outward condition. They see your actions and hear your words and make judgements according to their standards. Therefore, people will sometimes do things against their conscience to preserve their reputation. The heart of their existence is to look good on the outside, to make a good impression. Self is on the throne of their earth rather than Jesus. They only love themselves. What is most important for them is others’ perception of them.

Many years ago, I had Bible studies with a lovely Pentecostal woman. One time she told me that, “God had no choice but to save the Pharisees because they kept the law so perfectly.” Is this really true? Jesus called them a “generation of vipers” (Matthew 3:7) because He could read their hearts. Many of them came far short of heaven. Your outward “faithfulness” will never excuse inward corruption—an evil heart. “For as he thinketh in his heart, so is he.” Proverbs 23:7. Sooner or later, the condition of the heart will be revealed outwardly.



Many go far towards heaven, but only God reads the heart. Outwardly they may be seen to be keeping all the commandments, but they come up short because their heart was in the wrong place.

1 Corinthians 13:1–13 spells it out clearly.

- If we speak with the tongues of men and of angels .
- If we have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries, and all knowledge. . .
- If we have all faith, so that we could remove mountains . . .
- If we bestow all our goods to feed the poor . . .
- If we give our body to be burned, . . .
- But have no love—it profits us nothing in the scope of eternity and heaven.

You may profit a little on this earth by lying, stealing and deception, or even false love. Satan can provide means for people who are not living in accordance with the will of God. But, “what shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?” Mark 8:36

Love is the heart of the matter as far as God is concerned. We can do many things, even good things without love, for selfish purposes, to be seen of men and preserve our reputation, as did the Pharisees when they gave their offerings in the synagogues. They made an outward show and display of their “faithfulness”. Some people do good things to try to buy God off—to try to purchase heaven, but their heart is not in it.

If the heart of the matter is to serve Jesus through love, we have little hope it seems because, “The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know it?” Jeremiah 17:9. Thankfully, the Lord is willing to give us a heart transplant, “A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you: and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh.” Ezekiel 36:26. He will perform heart surgery. “Ye are risen with Him through the faith of the operation of God.” Colossians 2:12

King David wrote to his son, “And thou, Solomon my son, know thou the God of thy father, and serve Him with a perfect heart and with a willing mind: for the LORD searcheth all hearts, and understandeth all the imaginations of the thoughts: if thou seek Him, He will be found of thee; but if thou forsake Him, He will cast thee off for ever.” 2 Chronicles 28:9. It is one or the other. Either found of Jesus or cast off by Jesus. You choose. Your eternal destiny is your own choice.

Paul wrote, “But God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world.” Galatians 6:14.

He is saying that the most vital part of salvation is not our works, but Christ. This is where we must put our faith—in the heart of Jesus Christ, and the works will follow automatically if we have true love to Jesus in our hearts. This is the heart of the matter.

The greatest love shown was on Calvary. Jesus went to the cross because of love. In Gethsemane His human nature shrank from the impending ordeal, but it was love and only love that got Him through the trial. Love for you and for me. “Three times has He uttered that prayer. Three times has humanity shrunk from the last, crowning sacrifice. But now the history of the human race comes up before the world’s Redeemer. He sees that the transgressors of the law, if left to themselves, must perish. He sees the helplessness of man. He sees the power of sin. The woes and lamentations of a doomed world rise before Him. He beholds its impend-



ing fate, and His decision is made. He will save man at any cost to Himself. He accepts His baptism of blood, that through Him perishing millions may gain everlasting life. He has left the courts of heaven, where all is purity, happiness, and glory, to save the one lost sheep, the one world that has fallen by transgression. And He will not turn from His mission. He will become the propitiation of a race that has willed to sin. His prayer now breathes only submission: ‘If this cup may not pass away from Me, except I drink it, Thy will be done.’” – *The Desire of Ages*, p. 690, 693

Ralph Larson wrote: “Every Doctrine of the Bible, properly understood, is simply an answer to the question, ‘How does the love of God relate to this particular problem?’ Thus every doctrine is a further evidence that —God is love.” (written on the cover page of the book, *His Mighty Love*, by Ralph Larson)

So, to say that the cross of Jesus Christ is the heart of the gospel means that removing that central truth makes the gospel void. Jesus came into the world to die on a

cross for the sins of mankind—take that fact away and the sinner is hopeless. The cross is at the core of the message of grace, and we cannot experience salvation and the forgiveness of sins without the cross. It is the heart of God’s plan. “It would be well for us to spend a thoughtful hour each day in contemplation of the life of Christ. We should take it point by point, and let the imagination grasp each scene, especially the closing ones. As we thus dwell upon His great sacrifice for us, our confidence in Him will be more constant, our love will be quickened, and we shall be more deeply imbued with His spirit. If we would be saved at last, we must learn the lesson of penitence and humiliation at the foot of the cross.” –*The Desire of Ages*, p. 83

“The sacrifice of Christ as an atonement for sin is the great truth around which all other truths cluster. In order to be rightly understood and appreciated, every truth in the Word of God, from Genesis to Revelation, must be studied in the light which streams from the cross of Calvary, and in connection with the wondrous, central truth of the Saviour’s atonement. Those who study the Redeemer’s wonderful sacrifice grow in grace and knowledge.

“I present before you the great, grand monument of mercy and regeneration, salvation and redemption--the Son of God uplifted on the cross of Calvary. This is to be the theme of every discourse. Christ declares, ‘And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto Me.’” –*The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*, vol. 5, p. 1137

Yes, even the doctrine of hell fire is a doctrine of the love of God. The sinner cuts himself off from the love of God and would live in misery, if a life of crime, evil, and corruption were permitted to continue. God in His mercy and love puts an end to it all.

The counsel is: “Let your heart therefore be perfect with the LORD our God, to walk in His statutes, and to keep His commandments, as at this day.” 1 Kings 8:61. Can we say like David? “I will behave myself wisely in a perfect way. O when wilt Thou come unto me? I will walk within my house with a perfect heart.” Psalm 101:2

What is the heart of the matter in your life? Who is on the throne? Are you like Martha, with the burden of the cares of this life weighing most heavily on the throne of your heart? (Luke 10:40–42). Or is it the words and deeds of Jesus? To be like Jesus. The heart of the matter is simply this: It is your heart that matters. The condi-

tion of the heart is what Jesus is concerned about. What our life looks like every day says a lot about the condition of our heart and the direction of our life.

“But if from thence thou shalt seek the LORD thy God, thou shalt find Him, if thou seek Him with all thy heart and with all thy soul.” Deuteronomy 4:29. “Put your heart into it.” When we say this in English, we mean doing something with maximum effort and passion. You put your sincere efforts into it. Jesus is asking us to put our heart into the issues of salvation. Our heart is the heart of the matter. “The death of Christ on the cross of Calvary is our only hope in this world, and it will be our theme in the world to come. Oh, we do not comprehend the value of the atonement! If we did, we would talk more about it. The gift of God in His beloved Son was the expression of an incomprehensible love. It was the utmost that God could do to preserve the honor of His law, and still save the transgressor. Why should man not study the theme of redemption? It is the greatest subject that can engage the human mind.” —*The Signs of the Times*, December 30, 1889

God is a God of love, and that love He has promised to give to us for the asking. If Jesus and love are on the throne of your heart—at the heart of the matter in your life, you *will* keep all the commandments with a pure motive and you *will* make sacrifices for the salvation of sinners and the less fortunate. You *will* live the life of Christ—it will be automatic. “To love as Christ loved means to manifest unselfishness

at all times and in all places, by kind words and pleasant looks. . . . Genuine love is a precious attribute of heavenly origin, which increases in fragrance in proportion as it is dispensed to others.” —*Our High Calling*, p. 231

“When Jesus speaks of the new heart, He means the mind, the life, the whole being. To have a change of heart is to withdraw the affections from the world, and fasten them upon Christ. To have a new heart is to have a new mind, new purposes, new motives. What is the sign of a new heart?—a changed life. There is a daily, hourly dying to selfishness and pride.” —*The Youth’s Instructor*, September 26, 1901. The heart of the matter is a changed life—a new heart.

“The definition of heaven is the presence of Christ.” —*The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*, vol., 7, p. 989. “Christ alone can help us and give us the victory. Christ must be all in all to us, He must dwell in the heart, His life must circulate through us as the blood circulates through the veins. His spirit must be a vitalizing power that *will cause us to influence others to become Christlike* and holy.” —*The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*, vol. 5, p. 1144. The heart of the matter is, “Christ in you, the hope of glory” (Colossians 1:27) and in this manner you will be able to influence others to become Christlike. May this be the central purpose of your life—the heart of your matter; put your heart into it. Amen.

Wendy Eaton

“Dare to be a Daniel. Dare to stand alone. Thus, as did Moses, you will endure the seeing of Him who is invisible. But a cowardly and silent reserve before evil associates, while you listen to their devices, makes you one with them.

“Have courage to do right. The Lord’s promise is more valuable than gold and silver to all who are doers of His Word. Let all regard it as a great honor to be acknowledged by God as His children . . .

“Even though you may not feel able to speak a word to those who are working on wrong principles, leave them. Your withdrawal and silence may do more than words. Nehemiah refused to associate with those who were untrue to principle, and he would not permit his workmen to associate with them. The love and fear of God were his safeguard. He lived and worked as in view of the unseen world. And David said, ‘I have set the Lord always before me.’” —*The Review and Herald*, May 9, 1899



“Strive To Enter Through the Narrow Gate . . .” Luke 13:24

If there is a beautiful four-lane highway and there is also a small road where there is hardly any room for two vehicles to pass each other, with steep hills and curves so you constantly have to slow down, which road would you take? The problem is, that these two roads go in two different directions and the ends of the roads are two different destinations.

Jesus says that most people choose the wide road because it is easy. Just sit back and relax, follow the flow of the traffic. Jesus is not really talking about a road. He is talking about a way of life. It is so easy to be pulled in the wrong direction.

Chapter 64 in *The Adventist Home* is about business integrity, and here we are dealing with the 8th and the 9th commandments, stealing and lying. “The eighth commandment condemns . . . theft and robbery. It demands strict integrity in the minutest details of the affairs of life. It forbids overreaching in trade and requires the payment of just debts or wages.” —*The Adventist Home*, p. 392

How easily we get tempted to take advantage of others; many times that is easy to do, but it does not make it right. Be honest with your fellow man inside your family and outside. Make it a rule for yourself that you can always be trusted. “The world has a right to expect strict integrity in those who profess to be Bible Christians.” —*Ibid.*, p. 393

So, fair is fair; if you make a deal you stick to it, even if you find out it is not in your best interest. As far as borrowing money is concerned, we should always

pay our loans back on time as promised. However, circumstances may arise which are beyond our control and Sister White writes in regards to this, “If some are found to be in debt and really unable to meet their obligations, they should not be pressed to do that which is beyond their power. They should be given a favorable chance to discharge their indebtedness, and not be placed in a position where they are utterly unable to free themselves from debt. Though such a course might be considered justice, it is not mercy and the love of God.” —*Ibid.*, p. 394

We should always be balanced in our thinking. If things go well for some time, save up for a rainy day. Things can change very fast in our world. Just think about the coronavirus. In difficult times, hope and pray for better times. In good days, do not expect them to last forever. Do not forget the Lord’s cause while you are alive. The Spirit of Prophecy says, “Let no one think that he will meet the mind of Christ in hoarding up property through life and then at death making a bequest of a portion of it to some benevolent cause.

“Some selfishly retain their means during their lifetime, trusting to make up for their neglect by remembering their cause in their wills. But not half the means thus bestowed in legacies ever benefits the object specified. Brethren and sisters, invest in the bank of heaven yourselves, and do not leave your stewardship upon another.” —*Ibid.*, p. 397

In your travel on life’s journey Satan is not going to leave you alone but will try to push you off the nar-

row road. He is trying to get entrance into your mind through your eyes, your ears, and your speech. These are gifts from God, wonderful gifts. If you could not see, you would give everything you own to have your sight. If you could not hear, you would pay all you have to be able to hear again. The same if you were unable to speak, you would be ecstatic to be able to speak. Do we realize how blessed we are when we have these abilities? The problem is that we misuse these gifts. We watch things that we would be better off not to see. Horrendous soul destroying films are produced in our days; may God help us to be wise in choosing what we see. The same with music that is so popular in our days. Sometimes you stop at a traffic light and the music in the car next to you is so loud, so that you cannot understand how the driver can survive the noise. Ellen G. White writes, "Music, when not abused, is a great blessing; but when put to wrong use, it is a terrible curse." – *Ibid.*, p. 408

The Apostle James tells us that our tongue is a dangerous part of our body that can be hard to control. James 3:2 says, "For in many things we offend all. If any man offend not in word, the same is a perfect man, and able also to bridle the whole body."

Our mind is a wonderful creation, which is so complicated that no one can really understand it. It is very important that we control our mind. If we do not, the mind will control us. There is nothing the devil would like more than to get access to your mind and be able to control you. Therefore, it is important that we avoid seeing and hearing anything that is evil. We can know that if we struggle, angels are willing to help us. Impure thoughts lead to impure actions; therefore, let us always try to find good things to occupy our mind with. Ellen G. White writes in *The Adventist Home*



page 415, that many of our church members say, "I cannot afford our church papers." And, at the same time, they read several other magazines.

"Sow in the mind seeds of Bible truth." –*Ibid.*, p. 417

COURTESY AND KINDNESS

Canadians are known to be polite. This is a wonderful characteristic of the country in which we live. "Christian courtesy should reign in every household. It is cheap, but it has power to soften natures which would grow hard and rough without it." –*Ibid.*, p. 421

"Christian courtesy is the golden clasp which unites the members of the family in bonds of love, becoming closer and stronger every day." –*Ibid.*, p. 423

The golden rule Jesus gave us: "Do unto others what you would like them to do unto you," should be the rule in our families.

It is through social relations that contact is made with the world. Let the world know that we are not selfishly absorbed in our own interests, but that we desire others to share our blessings and privileges. If you are sad, unhappy, and complaining, it will also make others sad and unhappy.

SOMEONE MADE AN EXPERIMENT:

A group of people were put together in a room and asked to pretend to be sad for 15 minutes.

Another group were asked to pretend to be angry for 15 minutes

The third group were asked to pretend to be happy for 15 minutes.

Some of the people in the first group continued to be sad for 3 weeks.

Some of the people in the second group actually got angry at each other and never got over it.

The ones that were asked to pretend to be happy, some of them made new friends for life.

Never use harsh words. It is repeated so often in *The Adventist Home*, that you cannot miss it if you read the book.

Hospitality is important. Open your home to friends and strangers, but be careful who you choose to be your friends. Holidays are times when we come together with friends and family. Keep in mind that God should be honored and glorified, not man. God is the Creator who keeps us alive and gives us everything. There is nothing wrong by giving presents to friends and family, but give meaningful presents—things that have real value—not novelties that are

only good for a day or two. Always keep in mind that the home should be a missionary center.

WHAT ABOUT RECREATION?

If you are studying, you need a break. It is not healthy to sit in church or school all day long without taking a break. We must have periods of rest, periods of recreation, and periods of contemplation. Ellen G. White says that teachers should spend some relaxing time with their students. Here is a mission for those



who work as teachers. If you can spend some time with your students, nature is a very good environment for outdoor activities. It is interesting that you can easily recognize a tree by its

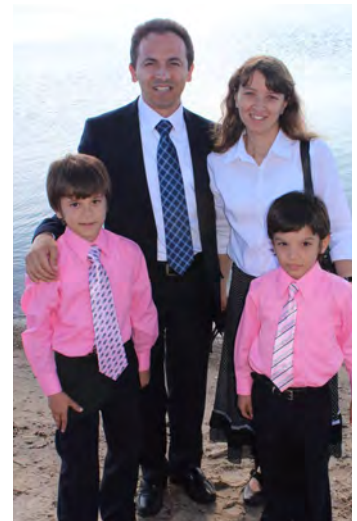
leaves; you can see what kind of tree it is. But notice that not two leaves are exactly the same, just as two human beings are different. Or you can pick up the phone and you can, by the voice, recognize who you are talking to, because no two voices are the same.

Take a ball out in nature and play with it; it is very good for the soul and for the body, but keep the competition out of the game. Sports and play should be for fun and exercise, not to see if we can outdo our friends.

I find it interesting that Ellen G. White writes around the year 1900, **“When Life Was Less Complex**—In early ages, with the people who were under God’s direction, life was simple. They lived close to the heart of nature.” *–Ibid.*, p. 501. Imagine what she would say if she was here today.

Do not be afraid to take a whole day off work for recreation; that is not going to be wasted time. It will benefit both soul and body; nothing will be lost, and much will be gained. Social gatherings are good for all of us; and, keep in mind that we want to encourage each other and whatever we do should benefit all of us in as safe a way as possible. Jesus visited rich and poor alike. We should take time to relax and enjoy nature and each other’s company. We can also

find recreation in doing work together. Do something that is a help for some poor people. Do something together inside or outside the church building. It will benefit ourselves and others and also give us the opportunity to socialize, spending time together. What man really needs is a change in occupation just as much as he needs a rest. God did not create Adam and say, “I have a good and well-paying job for you on the assembly line, or, here is a beautiful office with a big desk and a lot of papers to study.” If you work physically all day, it is good to relax in the evening with a good book. If you are in the office all day reading or writing, you need some physical exercise when you come home. How great it is when you can go into the garden or do some other outdoor activity so your body can move and your mind relax. The secret of saving your children lies in making your home lovely and attractive, pleasant and cheerful. “The work of wise parents will never be appreciated by the world, but when the judgment shall sit and the books shall be opened, their work will appear as God views it and will be rewarded before men and angels.” *–Ibid.*, p. 536



“We are homeward bound. He who loved us so much as to die for us hath builded for us a city. The New Jerusalem is our place of rest.” *–Ibid.*, p. 542

“There every power will be developed, every capability increased. The grandest enterprises will be carried forward, the loftiest aspirations will be reached, the highest ambitions realized. And still there will arise new heights to surmount, new wonders to admire, new truths to comprehend, fresh objects to call forth the power of body and mind and soul.” *–Ibid.*, p. 549

When we try to comprehend all the glorious things that Jesus is preparing for us, no effort that we can put forth will be too hard, as long as we keep our eyes on the goal. Amen

Evald Pedersen



Do Not Worry, God Cares!

*“Rejoice in the Lord always: and again I say, Rejoice.”
Philippians 4:4*

In this verse the Apostle Paul used the word “*always*” which would indicate that we are to rejoice “at all times.” Not only in the good times are we to rejoice, but also in times of temptation, trials, and problems. Paul goes on further to encourage us to “be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God” (Philippians 4:6), and in another letter he states, “in every thing give thanks: for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you.” 1 Thessalonians 5:18. The word “careful” can also be translated as “anxious” here.

How can we respond when someone says that a just God would protect all His people from all trouble at all times, which would imply that if we go through trials, God is not being just?

In this life, everyone has problems. Some problems are so great that it makes it difficult for a person to smile. However, we read from the Spirit of Prophecy that, “All trials, all afflictions, all peace, all safety, health, hope, life, and success are in God’s hands, and He can control them all for the good of His children. It is our privilege to be suppliants, to ask anything and everything of God, submitting our request in submission to His wise purposes and infinite will.” —*Our High Calling*, p. 318

Many Christians hold the incorrect view that because they have accepted Jesus, and because He loves them, therefore, He will use His mighty power to preserve them from pain and trial. One of the biggest questions is “does God care?” and “Why do good people or Chris-

tians suffer? Why does a loving God allow suffering and severe trials?” The Bible reveals to us that because He loves us, He will often permit us to pass through fires of affliction to purify us. He sees that this is the only way to prepare us to be with Him in heaven.

There are many scriptures that tell us that being a Christian does not free us from the cares and problems of this life. For example, “Many are the afflictions of the righteous: but the Lord delivereth him out of them all.” Psalm 34:19. We have the assurance that the Lord will deliver the righteous from their afflictions. “We need not expect all sunshine in this world. Clouds and storms will cluster about us, and we must be prepared to keep our eyes directed where we saw the light last. Its rays may be hidden but they still live, still shine beyond the cloud. It is our work to wait, to watch, to pray, and to believe. We shall prize the light of the sun more highly after the clouds disappear. We shall see the salvation of God if we trust in God in the darkness as well as in the light.” —*Our High Calling*, p. 318. Life experiences have proven this to be true.

Sickness, loss of a job, death, disappointment, hardship, privations, are a part of life. Many of these problems are inevitable. However, as people of God, our countenance is very important, because many people have known us, or have heard us preach the good news of our Lord Jesus. Unbelievers are watching to see if what we preach about our Saviour is truly reflected in our life. Thus, a sad countenance causes unbelievers to doubt our faith in what we preach.

“God cannot be glorified by His children living continually under a cloud and casting a shadow wherever they

go. The Christian should cast sunshine instead of a shadow. The unbeliever often receives the impression that religion is a gloomy thing, and that the life of the Christian has nothing inviting in it. If the Christian dwells too much upon the rough pathway, he makes it harder than it really is. If he dwells upon the bright spots in the way, and is grateful for every ray of light, and then dwells upon the rich reward that lies at the end of the race, instead of gloom, mourning and complaints, he will bear a cheerful countenance." *-The Review and Herald, April 28, 1859*

Yes, with the help of the Lord, it is possible to rejoice in times of trial and difficulties. Our God will not ask us to perform the impossible, but the word of God does bid us to, "Rejoice in the Lord alway: and again I say, Rejoice." Philippians 4:4

SOLUTION TO ALL PROBLEMS!

The undeniable truth is that there are indeed many problems we cannot solve by ourselves. "Often our trials are such that they seem almost unbearable, and without help from God they are indeed unbearable. Unless we rely upon Him we shall sink under the burden of responsibilities that bring only sadness and grief. But if we make Christ our dependence, we shall not sink under trial. . . . The Bible places the responsibility of our happiness upon ourselves. We are to look to the light of life." *-My Life Today p. 184*

The Holy Scriptures clearly tell us that having a sad countenance, murmuring, and complaining are all caused by a lack of faith and failure to submit completely to the will of God.

If we follow the word of God implicitly, always doing what He has commanded us to do, this alone will help us manage every difficulty. With the help of God, there are problems we can solve by ourselves. We have to thank God who has given us the ability to solve these problems.

Then there are problems we cannot solve by ourselves. In that case, we must hand them over to God who alone can solve those problems as they are beyond our ability. The apostle Peter wrote, "Casting all your care upon Him; for He careth for you." 1 Peter 5:7. Unfortunately, many try to solve these types of problems by themselves, which often causes them to sin against God. "We try too hard to take care of self ourselves. We are uneasy and

greatly lack a firm trust in God. Many worry and work, contrive and plan, fearing they may suffer need. They cannot afford time to pray or to attend religious meetings and, in their care for themselves, leave no chance for God to care for them. And the Lord does not do much for them, for they give Him no opportunity." *Testimonies for the Church, vol. 2, p. 196*

We think of Joseph in the Bible who did his best to serve God, and he found himself as a slave in a foreign land and then later on in prison. However, it was for the greater good of, not only Joseph, but his family, and for the nation of Egypt. Although Joseph never complained, he may have been led to wonder what the purpose of God was in all of his trials. I am sure when he was made prime minister in Egypt it all became clear to him. If you have been through similar experiences, it is easy to look back later and recognize that the disappointments have really been a part of God's plan. What about your experience *during* the trials? Can you have the faith to trust that the hardship you are currently going through is a part of God's plan? Someday, in the future, every redeemed soul will recognize that God's

Sad countenance, murmuring, and complaining are all caused by a lack of faith and failure to submit completely to the will of God

leading was the best, even through all the trials. God delights in those who will take Him at His word (as He promised in Romans 8:28) even while the heart is breaking with sorrow: "All things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to His purpose." The life of Joseph, His trials, slavery, and imprisonment, may help you to understand the leading of God. The clouds may surround the soul and the purpose cannot be understood, but we must have faith to believe that God is still with us. How was Joseph's long-suffering, faith and patience rewarded? "Joseph's faith and integrity were to be tested by fiery trials." *-My Life Today, p. 76*

WHY MUST WE ENDURE TRIALS?

God has a purpose in every affliction. No trial is without value. "Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened unto you: But rejoice, inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ's sufferings; that, when His glory shall be revealed, ye may be glad also with exceeding joy." 1 Peter 4:12-13

"One evening a gentleman who was much depressed because of deep affliction was walking in a garden, where he observed a pomegranate tree nearly cut

through the stem. Greatly wondering, he asked the gardener why the tree was in this condition, and he received an answer that explained to his satisfaction the wounds of his own bleeding heart. 'Sir,' said the gardener, 'this tree used to shoot out so strong that it bore nothing but leaves. I was obliged to cut it in this manner; and when it was almost cut through, it began to bear fruit.'

"Our sorrows do not spring out of the ground. In every affliction God has a purpose to work out for our good. Every blow that destroys an idol, every providence that weakens our hold upon earth and fastens our affections more firmly upon God, is a blessing. . . . We should receive with gratitude whatever will quicken the conscience, elevate the thoughts, and ennoble the life. The fruitless branches are cut off and cast into the fire. Let us be thankful that through painful pruning we may retain a connection with the living Vine; for if we suffer with Christ, we shall also reign with Him. The very trial that



taxes our faith the most severely and makes it seem as though God had forsaken us is to lead us more closely to Him, that we may lay all our burdens at the feet of Christ and experience the peace which He will give us

in exchange.... God loves and cares for the feeblest of His creatures, and we cannot dishonor Him more than by doubting His love to us. O let us cultivate that living faith that will trust Him in the hour of darkness and trial!" *—My Life Today, p. 93*

"In Christian experience, the Lord permits trials of various kinds to call men and women to a higher order of living and to a more sanctified service. Without these trials there would be a continual falling away from the likeness of Christ, and men would become imbued with a spirit of scientific, fanciful, human philosophy, which would lead them to unite with Satan's followers. In the providence of God, every good and great enterprise is subjected to trials, to test the purity and the strength of the principles of those who are standing in positions of responsibility, and to mold and substantiate the individual human character after God's model. This is the highest order of education." *—Selected Messages, book 2, p. 160–161*

"The purification of God's people cannot be accomplished without suffering. . . . He passes us from one fire to another, testing our true worth. True grace is willing to be tried. . . . God would have His servants become

acquainted with their own hearts. In order to bring to them a true knowledge of their condition, He permits the fire of affliction to assail them, so that they may be purified. The trials of life are God's workmen to remove the impurities, infirmities, and roughness from our characters, and fit them for the society of pure, heavenly angels in glory.... The fire will not consume us, but only remove the dross, and we shall come forth seven times purified, bearing the impress of the Divine." *—My Life Today, p. 92*

When we pray for God to eradicate sin from our life, we must be ready to accept His ordained method of accomplishing that work. More Christians have lost their faith over this issue than any other.

GOD GIVES POWER TO BEAR EVERY TRIAL

"There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it." 1 Corinthians 10:13

"Christ will never abandon the soul for whom He has died. The soul may leave Him and be overwhelmed with temptation; but Christ can never turn from one for whom He has paid the ransom of His own life. Could our spiritual vision be quickened, we should see souls bowed under oppression and burdened with grief, pressed as a cart beneath sheaves and ready to die in discouragement. We should see angels flying swiftly to aid these tempted ones, who are standing as on the brink of a precipice. The angels from heaven force back the hosts of evil that encompass these souls, and guide them to plant their feet on the sure foundation. . . .

"To us, as to Peter, the word is spoken, 'Satan hath desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat; but I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not.' Thank God, we are not left alone. [Therefore] let us stand the test manfully, grasping the hand of Infinite Power. God will work for us. We have only to live one day at a time, and if we get acquainted with God, He will give us strength for what is coming tomorrow, grace sufficient for each day, and every day will find its own victories, just as it finds its trials. We shall have the power of the Highest with us, for we shall be clad with the armor of Christ's righteousness. We have the same God that has worked for His people in ages past. Jesus stands by our side, and shall we falter? —No, as the trials come, the power of God will come with them. God will help us to stand in faith on His Word, and when we are united, He will work with special power in our behalf." *—My Life Today,*

JESUS OUR PATTERN

Jesus spent His life in loving service, comforting the sorrowing, ministering to the needy, and lifting up the heavy laden. He had no home in this world, but relied on the kindness of His friends who provided shelter for Him as He journeyed from place to place. Yet it was heaven to be in His presence. Day by day He met trials and temptations, yet He did not fail or become discouraged. He was always patient and cheerful, and the afflicted hailed Him as a messenger of life and peace and health.

ENDURING JOYFULLY IS A BLESSING

“Trust Him with all your heart. He will carry you and your burdens. The Lord designs that His people shall be happy, and He opens before us one source of consolation after another, that we may be filled with joy and peace in the midst of our present experience. We are not to wait until we shall get into heaven for brightness and comfort and joy. We are to have them right here in this life. . . . We miss very



much because we do not grasp the blessings that may be ours in our afflictions. All our sufferings and sorrows, all our temptations and trials, all our sadness and griefs, all our persecutions and privations, and in short all things, work together for our good. . . . All experiences and circumstances are God’s workmen whereby good is brought to us. Let us look at the light behind the cloud. Our happiness comes not from what is around us, but from what is within us; not from what we have, but from what we are.” *-Ibid.*, p. 185

Many professed believers misrepresent the true faith when they worry about one problem or another. Some, through murmuring and having a sad countenance, are showing unbelievers that things are not going well with them. As people of God, if we carefully study the Word of God, we shall discover that problems or difficulties do not have to make us unhappy.

Many professed believers misrepresent the true faith when they worry about one problem or another. Some, through murmuring and having a sad countenance, are showing unbelievers that things are not going well with them. As people of God, if we carefully study the Word of God, we shall discover that problems or difficulties do not have to make us unhappy.

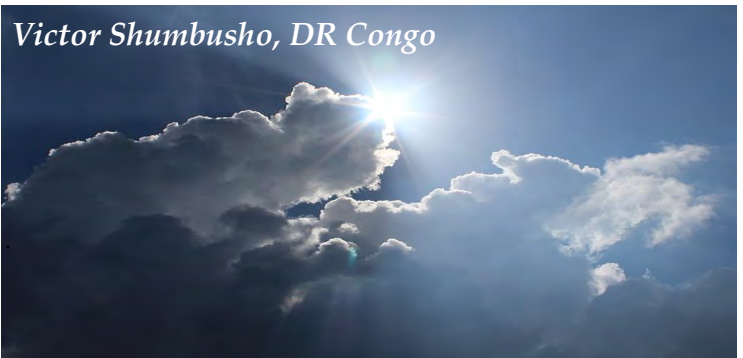
“Count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations; Knowing this, that the trying of your faith worketh patience.” James 1:2–3. We must believe that there are blessings associated with trials and suffering even if we do not understand them at the time. James here men-

tions that trials and temptations develop patience which is a vital character trait that the redeemed believers must possess. In Revelation the saints are described by John like this, “Here is the patience of the saints: here are they that keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus” (Revelation 14:12). Yes, patience is a requirement for those who are redeemed out of this world, and as James stated, patience is developed by tests and trials. Therefore suffering may indeed be a necessary molding process in our preparation for heaven. David, who also suffered much, came to this beautiful understanding, “It is good for me that I have been afflicted; that I might learn Thy statutes.” Psalm 119:71. Again, he wrote, “Before I was afflicted I went astray.” Psalm 119:67

Christians should not misunderstand the source of afflictions. Sin is the cause of all suffering in the world today. God is often blamed for doing the devil’s work. Not one cancer has ever been caused by God. In the experience of Job we have a perfect picture of Satan’s evil program to afflict God’s faithful children. In His permissive will, He allowed Job to be tested by the great adversary, and the triumphant conclusion of the story reveals why God permitted things to go as far as they did. Job emerged from the devastating trials with a stronger faith and greater prosperity than he had before.

There may be many reasons that God allows Satan limited access to His followers, but one of the most important reasons is to keep Christians constantly on guard against sin. “And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to His purpose.” Romans 8:28

Christians may try to look for the reason when trials appear. Sometimes the reason may not be known until eternity, however, many times, God will open a new door. If indeed the hardships are necessary to prepare us for entrance into heaven, then they should be looked upon as a part of God’s great election plan for our salvation. May the Lord grant this in our hearts. Amen.



Victor Shumbusho, DR Congo



Deliverance from the Enemy.

Personal Testimony (1990)

After baptism, some days later, suddenly my mind became clouded with doubt and strange unbelief. I thought that somehow I was not accepted by the Lord, for I did not right away feel the joy and peace expected, though I made earnest preparation in confession, repentance and searching of heart and many prayers beforehand.

Notwithstanding, I said I will patiently wait for the salvation of the Lord.

However, Satan took advantage and began to press clouds of darkness upon me which caused me great distress of mind. I could not understand what was suddenly happening to me. My faith began to dwindle, and I felt being dragged into a mire against my will with a force that frightened me terribly.

When this was getting unbearable, I fled to the Lord in ardent prayer, and the heaviness left me. However, the darkness came over me repeatedly, seeming to get ever worse. I just could not endure this, for this was plain torture and hell.

I felt a frightening spiritual weakness; the effect of the beautiful, encouraging promises of God only shortly comforted my troubled soul. I was like one drowning in a rough and raging sea.

I stretched my arms desperately out to the Saviour to

hold myself onto Him, my only hope and refuge, but at the same time I felt a force pulling me away from Jesus, and this terrified me dreadfully. Jesus seemed to be so far away...

When I had spiritual troubles in the past, fierce onslaughts from the devil, I read *Steps to Christ*, and had always been greatly blessed and straightened out, so to speak.

So, I did the same now again. One night I went to the little book to read further on. There my eyes were suddenly opened at page 53: "Satan is ready to steal away the blessed assurances of God. He desires to take every glimmer of hope and every ray of light from the soul; but you must not permit him to do this. Do not give ear to the tempter, but say,

"Jesus has died that I might live..."

This was what I needed; now I had the remedy! Then I prayed and confessed, pleaded with the Lord and told Him all the troubles and said that I am His alone, would He please deliver me from the hand of the enemy...

Then I rebuked Satan in the name of Jesus, to leave me alone, he has no right to make a claim on me, I am the Lord's. Jesus died for me, He shed His precious blood for me and crushed the head of the serpent at Calvary!

Then I had a dream. There was a lovely scene of a few

houses in classic Mediterranean style, with balconies and upward winding paths, that had lovely balustrades at the edge, for the setting was on the top of a very high cliff, above a deep abyss.

All looked serene, peaceful, bathed in golden sunlight. I was happily living there, daily walking up the path to the church at the end. From the window of my house I saw the church and the path, nothing else, which seemed to me to illustrate my life interest.

As I looked with contentment to the scene, there passed words in golden letters which were familiar to me from the Scriptures, however, they passed from my view and I cannot remember them.

But I pressed forward to read the end of the sentence which stood a bit apart, each word more separate as to emphasize the meaning.

I could see them in their crystal-clearness: ...TO BE OF GOD! In the most perfect carved letters of gold that had

a radiating light and luster, a purity, which only gold from heaven can diffuse.

On the end was a beautiful glistening cross in gold, like the letters.

I was deeply impressed and comforted and awoke with the scene vividly sealed into my mind and knew that the Lord in His lovingkindness and mercy had heard my cry. I cannot express my gratitude to Jesus, and the peace that now came over me...

God help me to ever humbly walk before Him, and have the assurance, that whatever comes in my life, is directed by Him, that I can fully trust Him every step of the way, for it will be of God! Amen.

Edda Tedford, Canada



Aged Workers



"The history of John affords a striking illustration of the way in which God can use aged workers. When John was exiled to the Isle of Patmos, there were many who thought him to be past service, an old and broken reed, ready to fall at any time. But the Lord saw fit to use him still. Though banished from the scenes of his former labor, he did not cease to bear witness to the truth. Even in

Patmos he made friends and converts. His was a message of joy, proclaiming a risen Saviour who on high was interceding for His people until He should return to take them to Himself. And it was after John had grown old in the service of his Lord that he received more communications from heaven than he had received during all the former years of his life.

"The most tender regard should be cherished for those whose life interest has been bound up with the work of God. These aged workers have stood faithful amid storm and trial. They may have infirmities, but they still possess talents that qualify them to stand in their place in God's cause. Though worn, and unable to bear the heavier burdens that younger men can and should carry, the counsel they can give is of the highest value.

"They may have made mistakes, but from their failures they have learned to avoid errors and dangers, and are they not therefore competent to give wise counsel? They have borne test and trial, and though they have lost some of their vigor, the Lord does not lay them aside. He gives them special grace and wisdom.

"Those who have served their Master when the work went hard, who endured poverty and remained faithful when there were few to stand for truth, are to be honored and respected. The Lord desires the younger laborers to gain wisdom, strength, and maturity by association with these faithful men. Let the younger men realize that in having such workers among them they are highly favored. Let them give them an honored place in their councils.

"As those who have spent their lives in the service of Christ draw near to the close of their earthly ministry, they will be impressed by the Holy Spirit to recount the experiences they have had in connection with the work of God. The record of His wonderful dealings with His people, of His great goodness in delivering them from trial, should be repeated to those newly come to the faith. God desires the old and tried laborers to stand in their place, doing their part to save men and women from being swept downward by the mighty current of evil. He desires them to keep the armor on till He bids them lay it down." -*The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 572-574



HEALTH MATTERS:

Food Guides: The Evolution of Milk

Food Guides have been created by many countries' health ministries to inform their population as to the foods that are necessary for a healthy and balanced diet. These food guides have been in existence for many decades. In this next series of articles, we are going to focus on the food guides that have been published in Canada throughout the years. The first Food Guide was introduced in July 1942. This guide was published during World War II when wartime food rationing was in place. They took food rationing into account when producing the guide, with the overall aim of preventing nutritional deficiencies and improving the health of Canadians with proper nutrition.

Since 1942, the Food Guide has been changed and updated many times, however, its purpose has always been to guide food selection and promote the nutritional health of Canadians. The 1942 Food Guide was named "Canada's Official Food Rules", with the introduction stating, "These are the Health-Protective Foods. Be sure you eat them every day in at least these amounts (Use more if you can)." The Food Rules consisted of six different categories as follows: Milk, Fruits, Vegetables, Cereals and Bread, Meat and fish, etc, Eggs. Each category listed the amount of food that should be eaten daily within that category. From the beginning, the guidelines also recommended a source of Vitamin D as essential for children, and advisable for adults. In the early years of the Food Guides, small changes within these categories were made. For example, in the category of Meat, Fish, etc, the 1942 Food Rules recommends "one serving a day of meat, fish, or meat substitutes. Liver, heart or kidney once a week." In 1944, the instructions now included "drink plenty of water". Under the Meat and Fish category, the foods to eat expanded to "One serving of meat, fish, poultry, or meat alternates such as beans, peas, nuts, eggs, or cheese." Eggs were no longer in a category of their own, therefore the num-

ber of categories was reduced from six to five. The remaining categories remained the same. Much of the earlier Food Guides were promoting the consumption of foods produced by the agricultural sector, versus what was the most nutritious foods.

The year 1977 brought sweeping new changes into Canada's Food Guide. Now, the number of categories decreased from five to four. Fruits and vegetables were combined into one category, acknowledging that it did not matter whether a fruit or a vegetable was consumed, they provided similar nutritional content. Now each category indicated the amount of "servings" that should be consumed, with a range of servings in each category, instead of exact amounts. This change reflected the recognition that there could be a range in amounts of each food consumed, and still maintain proper nutrition. However, with the emphasis on the amount of foods from each category, people had to ensure that they had enough servings from each to provide proper nutrition. In the next three Food Guides produced, (1982, 1992, and 2007), the amount and type of categories remained the same, "cereals and breads", "vegetables and fruit," "meat and alternates," and "milk products". The evolution of Food Guides often reflected new knowledge about nutrition and thus the nutritional needs of the human body.

In 2019, the Food Guide was revolutionized. The categories were reduced to three and now the Food Guide illustration was in the shape of a plate: "have plenty of fruits and vegetables" takes up half the plate, "choose whole grain foods" takes up one-quarter of the plate, "eat protein foods"



takes up one-quarter of the plate, and off to the side of the plate is a glass of water with the heading, “make water your beverage of choice.” No longer did the Food Guide recommend serving amounts. This new visual guides the individual in terms of how to fill a plate of food at each meal: half the meal should contain either fruit or vegetables, and protein and grains should each be a quarter-portion of each meal, with water as one’s beverage. Milk and meat products no longer have categories of their own. There is no longer an emphasis on meat and dairy as necessary staples in a healthy diet. Instead the guide recommends consuming more plants and plant-based proteins.

The director of health policy at the Heart and Stroke Foundation, also voiced his approval of the new structure of the Food Guide. “The previous guide—with different serving sizes for different foods, and specific advice on how many of those servings to eat—was difficult for most people to understand.” Now the recommendations of “eat more of this”, is much easier to understand and act on. And he hopes that it will encourage changes in the diets of Canadians. The Food Guide not only guides what to eat, but how. on what to eat, but how, with advice such as “cook more often” and “eat meals with others,”. These recommendations help people develop healthy eating habits.

The 2019 Food Guide also recommends replacing foods that contain mostly saturated fat (cream, high fat cheese, butter) with foods that contain mostly unsaturated fats, like nuts, seeds and avocados. A diet higher in vegetables and fruits is linked to a lower risk of cardiovascular disease, eating more nuts or soy protein can help improve blood fat levels, and processed meat has been linked to higher risks of colorectal cancer.

It is interesting to notice how current medical science is now discovering what was revealed through the Spirit of Prophecy over 100 years ago. “Grains, fruits, nuts, and vegetables constitute the diet chosen for us by our Creator. These foods, prepared in as simple and natural a manner as possible, are the most healthful and nourishing. They impart a strength, a power of endurance, and a vigor of intellect that are not afforded by a more complex and stimulating diet.” —*Counsels for the Church*, p. 376

David Hammond, a professor at University of Waterloo states: “Even if we had the advantage of another century of research,” he said, “we’re probably going to be recommending the same thing, which is that we should

eat more fruits and vegetables, limit processed foods and don’t drink too much sugar.”

No longer is fruit juice listed under the fruit and vegetable category. The premise is that fruit juice is just “liquid sugar”, not fruit. The best beverage within the new guide is water. Food choices recommend “eat more plant-based proteins,” and “limit consumption of processed foods.”



Health advocates say the new proposals are in line with the current understanding about nutrition, and with the kinds of recommendations dietitians have been making. The group, Dietitians of Canada, have been promoting an emphasis on fruits, vegetables, whole grains, and plant proteins such as nuts, seeds, lentils and chickpeas. for years but Canadians are not necessarily consuming enough of them. The current recommendations on which foods should be consumed on a regular basis will easily provide the nutrients that meat and milk once provided, however without the negative effects of saturated fats.

The food guide is a reference point for doctors and nutritionists, and used by public institutions such as hospitals and cafeterias in creating meal plans. The changes have been met with fierce opposition. Health Canada chose to not meet with food industry leaders in the creation of the new guide, despite continued lobbying by the meat, dairy, processed food and beverage industry. The Alberta Beef Producers voiced concerns about grouping together meat with plant-based proteins. “That can be dangerous, especially if people think that they’re getting the same nutrient equivalency when they eat a serving, of, say, black beans, as beef.” However, again their concerns are driven by loss of income if people switch to consuming more plant proteins in place of meat proteins. It has long been known that a purely plant-based protein diet is able to supply all the nutritional protein needs of humans.

For the first time, the Food Guide was no longer driven by promoting Agriculture Canada’s food supply, but about healthy food choices. The new guide was based on rigorous scientific review, using the best available evidence, excluding industry reports to reduce perception that the guide was based on any conflict of interest, and from pressure from lobby groups. The food guide is more holistic, more inclusive and recognizes the growing numbers of Canadians going vegetarian or vegan.

Scientists say that a plant-focused “planetary diet”—one drastically low in red meat and high in legumes (beans and lentils)—could save millions of lives and the planet. The “Planetary Health Diet” has been created by a leading group of 30 scientists; their consensus is that we need to choose a diet that is nutritious also and sustainable. It looks at making changes on a global scale, to promote personal health, and also the health of our planet. Their recommended diet is rich in plant-based foods, moving away from foods from animal sources. Plant-based diets use less of the world’s resources than do meat and dairy-based diets. Livestock farming is harsh on the planet. It drives climate change due to greenhouse gas emissions, and uses lots of fresh water. Farming vegetables, grains and beans is gentler on the planet.



THE EVOLUTION OF MILK IN CANADA’S FOOD GUIDES

This month we will focus on the category of Milk. As mentioned in the introduction, milk had its own category in the first Food Rules guide, with recommendations as to the amount of milk that should be consumed on a daily basis. In 1942, the guidelines suggested ½ pint per day for adults, and for children, more than 1 pint. With cheese as available. In the next food guide, (1944), milk still retained its own category; however, the amount of milk to be consumed on a daily basis increased, “adults ½ to 1 pint, children 1 ½ pints to 1 quart.” Cheese now was placed in a different category (Meat and Fish) and was no longer included in the milk category. In 1949, distinction was made in terms of amounts between children under 12 (1 pint) and adolescents (1 ½ pints), with adolescents requiring more milk than children. The 1961 Food Guide now introduced milk requirements for expectant and nursing mothers.

Also, in 1977, the milk category was now expanded to state “milk and milk products.” However, the focus was still on milk that was obtained from dairy-producing animals. Under the category, the recommendation states, “skim, 2%, whole, buttermilk, reconstituted dry or evaporated milk may be used as a beverage or as the

main ingredient in other foods. Cheese may also be chosen.” The Guide provided examples of how much was contained in a “serving” in each category: children (2–3 servings), adolescents and pregnant and nursing women (3–4 servings), and adults (2 servings). There was still an emphasis on the need for dairy milk throughout a person’s lifetime. The 1982, 1992 and 2007 Food Guide did not change in terms of its suggestions regarding milk consumption.

As was mentioned, the 2019 Food Guide was no longer recognizable as a natural progression of the previous Food Guides. For the first time, milk consumption was no longer emphasized by having its own category. What happened in the 12 years between 2007 and 2019?

I was born in Canada after the 1961 Food Guide was published. Milk was considered a necessary part of a child’s diet, and we would have milk delivered to our door daily by the milk truck. In fact, my whole family drank milk on a daily basis. My aunt recently told me that in Finland during, World War II, the government provided milk to families as part of their food rationing program. Each family was given coupons that could be used at the grocery store, with adults allowed 2 deciliters (1 cup) of milk per day, and children 6 deciliters (3 cups). Those who had their own cows or goats could provide milk for their families, but those who did not have dairy animals would be allotted a daily milk ration for each member of the family.

As mentioned earlier, Canada’s Food Guide is reducing its emphasis on meat and dairy in a healthy diet and instead is recommending consuming more plants and plant-based protein with milk no longer having its own category. One may ask why milk was so vital at one point in time, and is now not considered as a necessary part of a balanced diet. We find that milk is still listed as a food Canadians can consume, but it is now under the more general category of proteins. The strongest opponent of this change was the Dairy Farmers of Canada, who supply milk for the Canadian consumer. They feel that milk contains vital nutrients that average Canadians are lacking, such as calcium. “Putting all those foods [proteins] together in one food group sends the wrong message that these foods are interchangeable.” The Dairy Farmers are not concerned about the necessity of milk in the Canadian people’s diet, but about the loss in income when people start consuming other products in place of milk.

The current Food Guide does not go so far as to recommend one should not eat dairy, but it no longer suggests

dairy as a necessary food, in and of itself. Instead it encourages using plant-based milk alternatives, such as soy, almond, cashew, rice, and oat. Many of these products have been fortified with calcium, which negates the argument from the Dairy Farmers regarding the need of calcium from dairy-based milk. In fact, many vegetable products also provide the diet with good amounts of calcium.

In most European countries, the dairy aisle in grocery stores is very small; you can barely find milk products, indicating that many countries have recognized that milk is not a necessary part of one's diet. Scientists such as Dr. Walter Willett, a Harvard nutrition expert has argued that "humans have no nutritional requirement for animal milk whatsoever." In the past there has been an erroneous assumption that equates animal milk to human milk in its importance to human health. In fact, approximately 65% of the total world's population develops lactose intolerance after infancy. This is a strong indication that consuming milk after a child has been weaned from breastfeeding is not only unnecessary but goes against the body's natural development which appears to indicate that we no longer require nutrition from milk.

In fact, humans are the only mammals that continue to drink milk after infancy, and not only do we continue to drink milk, but we drink the milk of another animal species. Each mammal species produces milk specific for its own babies, including human beings; the content of proteins, fats, carbohydrates, and minerals is specific to provide the best nutrition for that particular species. Hence, the combination of nutrients in cow's milk is different than the combination of nutrients in human milk. Thus the health problems that come with consuming cow's milk should not come as a surprise.

In terms of its impact on the environment, a glass of dairy milk produces almost three times more greenhouse gases than any plant-based milk because of the methane produced by cows, a significant factor in driving climate change. Using dairy milk also consumes nine times more land than any of the non-dairy alternatives. Land is required to pasture the cows and grow their food.

Milk and other dairy products are the main source of saturated fat in the North American diet, and consuming these products contributes to high cholesterol, high blood pressure, cancer, heart disease, type 2 diabetes, chronic inflammation, autoimmune disorders and Alzheimer's disease. Casein is the main protein in dairy, and studies have shown that it facilitates the

growth and development of cancer. Studies have linked dairy to an increased risk of breast, ovarian, and prostate cancers. Dairy products do not have any beneficial effects on bone health, and in fact have been shown to increase fractures because of the high content of calcium which causes Vitamin D in the body to malfunction, reducing the ability for bones to take up calcium. In fact, the American population, which consumes the most milk, has the highest hip fracture rates in the world. Dairy cows are also treated with hormones and antibiotics which then are consumed by those who consume dairy products. The largest use of antibiotics worldwide is in livestock to proactively prevent disease and improve growth. Humans who consume these antibiotics in dairy products develop antibiotic resistance, so that when one develops an infection, antibiotics may not be able to treat the infection. Hormones ingested in dairy products disrupt the normal hormones in our bodies, and cause disease. Our bodies are no different from other mammals; we are not designed to consume the milks of other mammals. In drinking cow's milk, we are ingesting foreign antigens and proteins from another animal species. Our body has similar components, and results in our immune system becoming confused and attacking our own tissues as foreign. This immune response is considered the potential cause of some serious autoimmune conditions, including Type I diabetes and multiple sclerosis. Even pasteurized milk can contain pathogens, leading to outbreaks of food poisoning.

"Let the diet reform be progressive. Let the people be taught how to prepare food without the use of milk or butter. Tell them that the time will soon come when there will be no safety in using eggs, milk, cream, or butter, because disease in animals is increasing in proportion to the increase of wickedness among men. The time is near when, because of the iniquity of the fallen race, the whole animal creation will groan under the diseases that curse our earth." –*Counsels on Diet and Foods*, p. 349. (Written in 1902). The time that Sister White speaks about is now here. Thus, these products should no longer be part of a disease-free, healthy, nutritious diet. Fortunately, there are many healthy alternatives to dairy milk readily available to most of the world's population; consuming these options on a regular basis also provides us with many health benefits.

NEXT MONTH: DAIRY MILK ALTERNATIVES



CHILDREN'S CORNER:

PROJECT SMILE



Cheryl was raised in a good Christian home. Her parents were very active in the church. They often brought people home for lunch after the Sabbath services. Many visitors came and went from their household. Her parents especially had a burden for people who were from the poorer class and very needy. They loved to bring them food and clothing and tell them of the love of Jesus. There was always a happy atmosphere in their home. Several times her parents had volunteered to do missionary work overseas in countries that were quite impoverished. Cheryl learned many valuable lessons from her parents. Although her sister sometimes was not as accepting of the sacrifices her parents made, as she felt they should spend more on family—specifically herself, Cheryl was appreciative of her parents' sacrifices and hoped to be able to follow in their footsteps.

When Cheryl was 19 years old, she left home to attend college. She was noted by her friends for being a bubbly, outgoing and friendly young woman who was willing to help anyone who may ask her. She seemed to always have a ready smile on her face, even in the most difficult and challenging circumstances. Some of the assignments and projects were very difficult, but she always smiled and trusted God to help her with her studies. No matter how busy she was with her school work, she always made sure to take time every morning and evening to talk to God and study the Bible. She knew that only with the help of God could she succeed in life and be a blessing for those she came into contact with. Cheryl had joined a Christian youth group where she was quite active and had made some good friends.

Because she loved helping people, Cheryl was studying Sociology and hoped one day to graduate and become a Christian counsellor for troubled teenagers.

At the age of 20, she was in her second year of university and her teacher in the Sociology class, Miss Bird, was very enthusiastic and inspiring. In the last week of the semester she gave them one more project for the year. She called this project the "Project Smile".

During the course of the next few days, each student was asked to smile at three complete strangers. They could not be on campus, but had to be random people on the street. They had to smile and try to engage them in a positive conversation, and see their reactions. Cheryl, being a friendly person already and often smiled at everyone and said hello often, figured this would be a very simple project.

The next day Cheryl and her friends walked into town to visit the local café to buy some lunch. It was a cold winter's day and although the sun was shining, the wind was blowing hard, sending a chill straight to their bones. They were happy to step inside the café to buy a sandwich and a warm drink. This was one of their favourite places to go for lunch because the large picture window looked out over the fields and the white snow was sparkling in the sunshine.

As the girls were in line, waiting to be served, all of a sudden everyone around them began to back away, including the girls, except for Cheryl that is.

Cheryl did not move an inch. An initial feeling of panic

welled up inside of her as she turned to see why they had moved. As she turned around, she smelled a horrible "dirty body" smell, and there standing behind her were two poor homeless men. As she looked down at the short gentleman close to her, he was smiling. His beautiful sky blue eyes were full of God's light as he searched for acceptance. He said, "Good day" to Cheryl as he counted the few coins he had been clutching. Cheryl just stood there and allowed the men to go in front of her.

The second man fumbled with his hands as he stood behind his friend. Cheryl realized the second man was mentally challenged and the blue-eyed gentleman was his helper. Cheryl held her tears as she stood there waiting for them. The young lady at the counter asked the man what they wanted to order.

He said, "Just one cup of Chamomile tea is all, Miss" because that was all they could afford. If they wanted to sit in the restaurant and warm up, they had to buy something. The men just wanted to be warm.

Cheryl's heart really felt warmed. The compulsion to embrace the little man with the blue eyes was very great, but she just stood there and watched them go and take a seat in the back corner.

Cheryl now noticed that all eyes in the café were watching what she would do. They seemed to be judging her every action. Cheryl's friends had gathered themselves together and ordered their sandwich and hot drink. Then it was Cheryl's turn. The woman behind the counter smiled and asked Cheryl what she wanted. Cheryl ordered her own sandwich and then she ordered two more, and two bowls of soup, asking the woman to put the extra meals on a separate tray.

Cheryl then walked around the corner to the table that the men had chosen to sit at. She smiled the biggest smile she could as she put the tray on the table and laid her hand on the blue-eyed gentleman's cold hand. He looked up at her, with tears in his eyes, and said, "Thank you. I was so hungry and I prayed to God this morning asking Him to provide a meal for us. All I had money for was one cup of tea and I was going to let my friend drink most of it. I am not living on the street because I want to. I lost my job and my home and have had a hard time finding another home, and taking care of Charlie here has been a challenge, but he needs my help. I was going to go somewhere else, but Charlie insisted on coming here, even though it is a little more expensive. I am glad now that Charlie insisted." Cheryl leaned over, began to pat his hand and said, with a

smile on her face, "I did not do this for you only. God is here working through me to give you hope." She then gave him a religious pamphlet which she always had in her purse. And she walked away to join her friends.

Cheryl started to cry as she walked away. When she sat down her friends smiled at her and said, "That is why God gave you your smile and willing heart to give others hope." They then bowed their heads to thank God for their meal. They knew that only because of the grace that God had given them were they able to give. That day showed Cheryl and her friends the pure light of God's sweet love.

Cheryl returned to college, on the last evening of class, with this story in hand. She handed in "her project" and the instructor read it. Then Miss Bird looked up at Cheryl and said, "Can I share this?" Cheryl slowly nodded as the teacher got the attention of the class. She began to read and that is when Cheryl realized with greater understanding that we, as human beings, are called to be tools in the hands of God to share His love to heal people. In this manner we will be find our happiness and be healed ourselves. In her own way, she had touched the people at the café, her friends, her teacher and every soul that was in the classroom on the last night of the semester. Cheryl had learned one of the biggest lessons she would ever learn: God's unconditional love and acceptance.

God gives every bird its food, but He does not throw it into its nest. Thus He provides for all people. Some have more, and some have less. He blesses some with more to test them, to see what they will do with their wealth. Will they keep it to themselves and buy bigger houses and cars or will they give to help those who have less? Jesus said, "for ye have the poor always with you." Matthew 26:11. May God help each one of us to help those who are less fortunate than we are.

There is a song that goes, "Smile, God loves you, He's your dearest friend. Smile God loves you, He'll love you 'til the end."

Try the project "smile" yourself and see what kind of blessing and happiness you can bring to others. Smile to everyone you meet—not just your friends and family, those well dressed and clean. Smile to everyone. The blessing will return to your heart. You will feel very happy. The other person will also be very happy. This is a very simple way to help others, and as you smile, God will open doors for you to be more of a blessing than you ever imagined possible.

Eswatini—Missionary work in the villages



Sister Dorcas (aptly named), has a passion for healthful cooking and educating others in the art of cooking. She and her husband, Judicael, are seen here in one of the villages in Eswatini. With the help of members and interested souls they presented lectures on healthful living, gave instructions on healthful cooking and provided food for the needy. They have a passion to do missionary work in the villages outside of the main thoroughfares. We pray that the Lord will bless and prosper their work and that the gospel can find its way into these outlying villages through their self-sacrificing work.



The Divine Service

Sabbath in Vancouver, Canada, August 29



Ethiopian Union: seminar for leaders

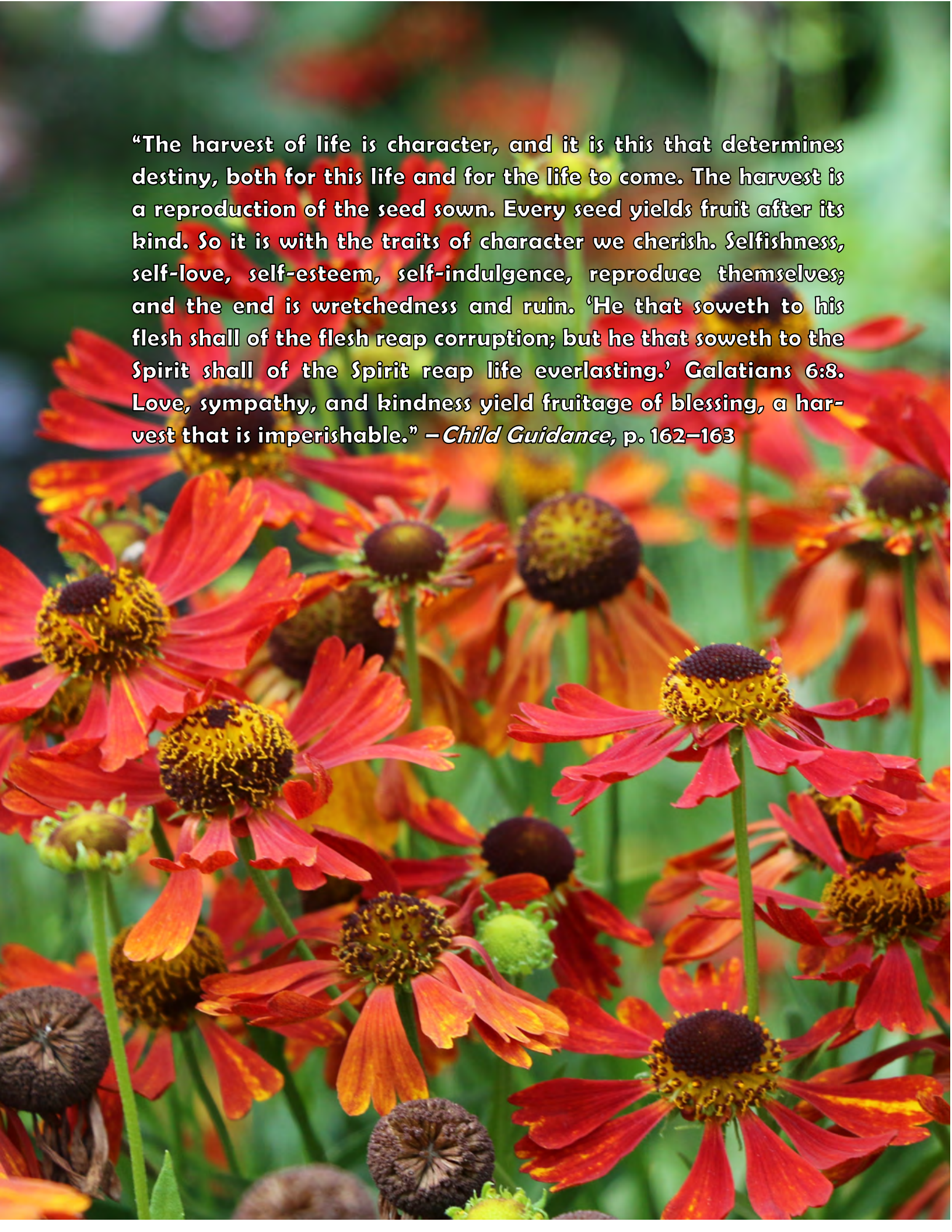


Baptism in Hamilton, Canada



Sabbath July 18th was a very happy day for the Hamilton church members. Brother Miguel Climaco was baptized. Due to the Corona virus pandemic only a few members were permitted to be present at the baptism, but we were all overjoyed that Miguel surrendered his life to Christ and joined the church. He is very enthusiastic and loves to tell others about the wonderful hope that we have in Jesus. He has a special burden to help other youth on their Christian journey.

There was an innumerable number of angels present as the songs of joy rang through the gates of heaven. One soul saved, brings much rejoicing in heaven. Let us pray that Brother Miguel can continue to be a blessing to the cause of God, that he loves so dearly.



“The harvest of life is character, and it is this that determines destiny, both for this life and for the life to come. The harvest is a reproduction of the seed sown. Every seed yields fruit after its kind. So it is with the traits of character we cherish. Selfishness, self-love, self-esteem, self-indulgence, reproduce themselves; and the end is wretchedness and ruin. ‘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.’ Galatians 6:8. Love, sympathy, and kindness yield fruitage of blessing, a harvest that is imperishable.” –*Child Guidance*, p. 162–163