

The Reformation
Messenger
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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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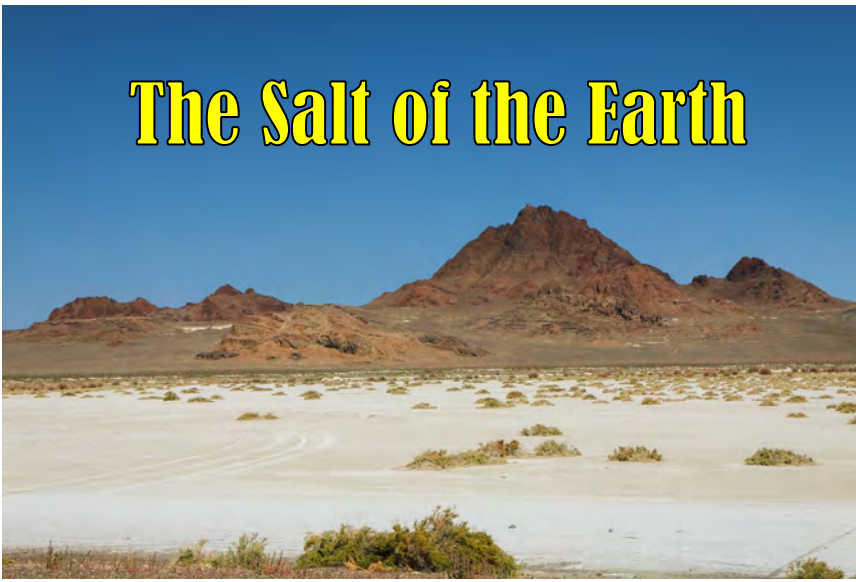
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The Salt of the Earth



“Ye are the salt of the earth: but if the salt have lost his savour, wherewith shall it be salted? it is thenceforth good for nothing, but to be cast out, and to be trodden under foot of men.” Matthew 5:13

“Salt is valued for its preservative properties; and when God calls His children salt, He would teach them that His purpose in making them the subjects of His grace is that they may become agents in saving others. The object of God in choosing a people before all the world was not only that He might adopt them as His sons and daughters, but that through them the world might receive the grace that bringeth salvation. . . .

“It must be mingled with the substance to which it is added; it must penetrate and infuse in order to preserve. So it is through personal contact and association that men are reached by the saving power of the gospel. They are not saved in masses, but as individuals. Personal influence is a power. We must come close to those whom we desire to benefit.

“The savor of the salt represents the vital power of the Christian—the love of Jesus in the heart, the righteousness of Christ pervading the life. The love of Christ is diffusive and aggressive. If it is dwelling in us, it will flow out to others. We shall come close to them till their hearts are warmed by our unselfish interest and love. The sincere believers diffuse vital energy, which is penetrating and imparts new moral power to the souls for whom they labor. It is not the power of the man himself, but the power of the Holy Spirit that does the transforming work.

“Jesus added the solemn warning: ‘If the salt have lost his savor, wherewith shall it be salted? It is thenceforth good for nothing, but to be cast out, and to be trodden under foot of men.’

“As they listened to the words of Christ, the people could

see the white salt glistening in the pathways where it had been cast out because it had lost its savor and was therefore useless. It well represented the condition of the Pharisees and the effect of their religion upon society. It represents the life of every soul from whom the power of the grace of God has departed and who has become cold and Christless. Whatever may be his profession, such a one is looked upon by men and angels as insipid and disagreeable.” —*Thoughts from the Mount of Blessing*, p. 35–37

“A profession of godliness without the living principle is as utterly valueless as salt without its saving properties. An unprincipled professed Christian is a byword, a reproach to Christ, a dishonor to His name.” —*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 2, p. 443

“Do not withdraw yourselves from the world in order to escape persecution. You are to abide among men, that the savor of the divine love may be as salt to preserve the world from corruption.” —*The Desire of Ages*, p. 306

“When Christians do not reveal Christ, of what value are they? Are they not like savorless salt, ‘good for nothing’? But when they reveal in their lives the saving properties of the truth, poor, sin-hardened souls are not left to perish in corruption. Good works are seen; for the living principles of righteousness cannot be hidden. The gospel acted is like salt which contains all its savor. It is powerful in the saving of souls.” —*This Day With God*, p. 25

“Whenever God blesses His children with light and truth, it is not only that they may have the gift of eternal life, but that those around them may also be spiritually enlightened. . . . And when God makes His children salt, it is not only for their own preservation, but that they may be agents in preserving others.

“The religion of Christ is not a selfish religion. It is not to be kept under lock and key, but it is to be an influence of power going forth from every genuine Christian to enlighten those that sit in darkness. Every soul connected with a true Christian will be made better thereby. We are to be God's light bearers, reflecting the steady beams of heaven upon others.” —*Reflecting Christ*, p. 205

“‘Ye are the salt of the earth,’ Christ said to His disciples; and in these words He was speaking to His workers of today. If you are salt, saving properties are in you, and the virtue of your character will be a saving influence.” —*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 6, p. 258–259

Ellen G. White



Patience

If you are driving a car and someone cuts in front of you and you have to step on the brakes hard to avoid a collision, what would your reaction be?

If you have been in the store for a long time, waiting to be served, and you are in a hurry, then someone new enters the store and gets served before you, what is your reaction?

Or someone takes your wallet and runs away, what would be your reaction?

These three examples would show you if you have patience or not. If you get angry, annoyed or even displeased, you have a lesson to learn before you are ready for heaven.

Patience and gentleness when suffering wrong are not prized by the people in the world (*–Thoughts from the Mount of Blessing*, p. 14).

Are they prized by professed Christians? When someone takes advantage of you or hurts or abuses you, and you must suffer innocently, do you value this as an opportunity to practice patience?

The world does not admire or value patience. Khrushchev, the leader of Russia said that, “if someone hit me, I will hit him back ten times harder.”

“And Lamech said unto his wives, Adah and Zillah, Hear my voice; ye wives of Lamech, hearken unto my speech: for I have slain a man to my wounding, and a young man to my hurt. If Cain shall be avenged sevenfold, truly Lamech seventy and sevenfold.” Genesis 4:23–24

This is a characteristic of the world. If these things upset you (losing time or money), you are not ready to go to heaven. You must learn the lessons of patience. Learn the lesson from Jesus, when they were nailing His hands and feet to the cross. He did not get angry; no, He prayed to God to forgive them. Also, learn a lesson from Job. He lost his animals, his ten children, and his health, and he did not get angry or upset.

“Here is the patience of the saints: here are they that keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus.” Revelation 14:12

The rich young man said that he had kept the commandments. But he did not have the patience of Job. The loss of his property was too difficult for him.

“Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us.” Hebrews 12:1

Lay aside every weight, and every sin, and let us run with patience, the race that is before us.

Have you watched races where people run, trying to win? The shortest race is 100 meters, and some can run it in less than ten seconds. Some races in the Olympic Games are 42 km long, called marathons. The runners put every effort into their race, trying to win.

“Know ye not that they which run in a race run all, but one receiveth the prize? So run, that ye may obtain. And

every man that striveth for the mastery is temperate in all things. Now they do it to obtain a corruptible crown; but we an incorruptible." 1 Corinthians 9:24-25

They run to get honour and a prize, but we run a race that gives us eternal life and heaven. Our race is not a quick dash, or even for a few days; our race lasts a lifetime. Therefore, the great danger to Christians is that, after a few months or years, they become tired of running and slow down and even fall into a sleep.

The early church, so fervent, so faithful, so sacrificing and missionary minded, lost this zeal and became lukewarm, not hot or cold. Can this happen to us in this Laodicean time period?

For some professed Christians, before their patience is perfect, like Christ's patience, they stop learning and stop advancing, being satisfied with their achievements and their character. After many years in the church they can still be impatient, and easily offended. Finally, the Holy Spirit that tried to bring them to perfection gives up on them, and leaves them alone to their quick temper, pride and impatience.

Jesus spoke a parable of the sower who went out to sow seeds. Some fell on the wayside, some on the stony ground, others among the thorns, and a few seeds fell on good ground that produced fruit, even one hundred fold. What was different between these different types of soil or human hearts?



"But that on the good ground are they, which in an honest and good heart, having heard the word, keep it, and bring forth fruit with patience." Luke 8:15. On the good ground represents people who bring forth fruit with patience.

Three other types of soil look like they have endurance and patience. They all were willing to hear the Word,

they all were interested, they all had Bible studies, some even joyfully accepted the Word, but patient endurance was lacking.

Have you seen young people who are very enthusiastic, full of zeal and love to God, having a missionary spirit, but after a little while it dies out? The first love is gone and they become lukewarm. What happened? Their patience ran out. Their endurance was short and limited.

They resisted the temptations for a while bravely, and they stayed away from the world and from worldly friends for a while, but after a prolonged battle and Satan's continuous attacks, they became tired and weary and started backsliding.

Jesus said, "But he that shall endure unto the end, the same shall be saved." Matthew 24:13. Be faithful unto death, and I will give you a crown of life.

"Patience pours the balm of peace and love into the experiences of the home life. . . . Patience will seek for unity in the church, in the family, and in the community. This grace must be woven into our lives." *-My Life Today*, p. 97

If the members of a family had patience towards one another, it would be a happy family. Impatience and angry words break the peace and harmony, and the happy atmosphere is gone and everybody feels miserable. Children do not enjoy the family life, but more so their friends outside. In the church, the same thing happens. When members have patience towards one another, it is a peaceful and united congregation.

Now, an important question is, how can I become patient? How can I develop this divine characteristic?

"And not only so, but we glory in tribulations also: knowing that tribulation worketh patience." Romans 5:3

"Knowing this, that the trying of your faith worketh patience. But let patience have her perfect work, that ye may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing." James 1:3-4

Is there no easier way to learn patience and to become perfect? If there would be, God would use an easier method, a less painful way to learn, but there is no other way, only through sorrows, affliction, and tribulation.

David was a man of God, but he lacked patience. What did he do when Nabal offended him?

"And David sent out ten young men, and David said unto the young men, Get you up to Carmel, and go to Nabal, and greet him in my name: Ask the young men,

and they will shew thee. Wherefore let the young men find favour in thine eyes: for we come in a good day: give, I pray thee, whatsoever cometh to thine hand unto thy servants, and to thy son David. And when David's young men came, they spake to Nabal according to all those words in the name of David, and ceased. And Nabal answered David's servants, and said, Who is David? and who is the son of Jesse? there be many servants now a days that break away every man from his master. Shall I then take my bread, and my water, and my flesh that I have killed for my shearers, and give it unto men, whom I know not whence they be? So David's young men turned their way, and went again, and came and told him all those sayings. And David said unto his men, Gird ye on every man his sword. And they girded on every man his sword; and David also girded on his sword: and there went up after David about four hundred men; and two hundred abode by the stuff." 1 Samuel 25:5, 8-13

With 400 men, David went to punish Nabal for his offense. It took five more years in the wilderness for David to learn patience.

Moses, by his rash act killed the Egyptian who oppressed an Israelite. He was not ready to lead the people of Israel. He had to learn patience, and it took 40 years to become the meekest man on the earth. Joseph had to learn patience in prison before he could be the Prime Minister of Egypt. Paul also learned patience in prison. In the school of affliction, we can learn patience, there is no easy way for us to learn.

"When you are almost ready to yield, to lose patience and self-control, to be hard and denunciatory, to find fault and accuse—this is the time for you to send to heaven the prayer, 'Help me, O God, to resist temptation, to put all bitterness and wrath and evil-speaking out of my heart. Give me Thy meekness, Thy lowliness, Thy long-suffering, and Thy love. Leave me not to dishonor my Redeemer, to misinterpret the words and motives of my wife, my children, and my brethren and sisters in the faith. Help me that I may be kind, pitiful, tenderhearted, forgiving. Help me to be a real house-band in my home and to represent the character of Christ to others.'" —*The Adventist Home*, p. 214-215

If it is your sincere desire to remain calm and patient, God will help you to control yourself, then instead of angry or impatient words, you will give a soft answer.

"A soft answer turneth away wrath: but grievous words stir up anger." Proverbs 15:1

This is Christlikeness, and we must learn it. "God has shown me that He gave His people a bitter cup to drink, to purify and cleanse them. It is a bitter draught, and they can make it still more bitter by murmuring, complaining, and repining. But those who receive it thus must have another draught, for the first does not have its designed effect upon the heart. And if the second does not effect the work, then they must have another, and another, until it does have its designed effect, or they will be left filthy, impure in heart. I saw that this bitter cup can be sweetened by patience, endurance, and prayer, and that it will have its designed effect upon the hearts of those who thus receive it, and God will be honored and glorified." —*Early Writings*, p. 47

Every one of us must drink the bitter cup, it is part of our life as a Christian. Jesus said to John and James, "Can you drink the cup that I drink?" This bitter cup that God will place on our life can be made sweet by patience. Paul took pleasure in persecutions, and Peter called the fiery trials more precious than gold.

"Not with sorrow, but with rejoicing, should they meet persecution. Each fiery trial is God's agent for their refining. Each is fitting them for their work as colaborers with Him. Each conflict has its place in the great battle for righteousness, and each will add to the joy of their final triumph. Having this in view, the test of their faith and patience will be cheerfully accepted rather than dreaded and avoided. Anxious to fulfill their obligation to the world, fixing their desire upon the approval of God, His servants are to fulfill every duty, irrespective of the fear or the favor of men.

"'Ye are the salt of the earth,' Jesus said. Do not withdraw yourselves from the world in order to escape persecution. You are to abide among men, that the savor of the divine love may be as salt to preserve the world from corruption." —*The Desire of Ages*, p. 306

"Now we exhort you, brethren, warn them that are unruly, comfort the feeble-minded, support the weak, be patient toward all men." 1 Thessalonians 5:14

Sister White called our life, the great battle for righteousness. The righteousness we are seeking is a result of a great battle, a result of running a race, a lifelong race. Satan, as a roaring lion, walking around each one of us, is seeking a weak moment to devour us. Patiently we must resist him. Not for a moment, but for as long as we live in this world of sin. Amen.

Timo Martin



Does He Care?

I greet thee, Dear Reader, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ and Saviour. This is my prayer for you, "Beloved, I wish above all things that thou mayest prosper and be in health, even as thy soul prospereth." 3 John 2

We are all threatened and worried over life issues in one way or another. Families and relatives, brethren and friends are caught up in various situations. You may be among the sick today or you may be lacking food and clothing, which makes you worry daily to the point of losing hope and forsaking your faith. "You may be perplexed in business; your prospects may grow darker and darker, and you may be threatened with loss; but do not become discouraged; cast your care upon God, and remain calm and cheerful." *-Steps to Christ, p. 122*

You are not alone in this. Our Father reminds us of our value. "Behold the fowls of the air: for they sow not, neither do they reap, nor gather into barns; yet your heavenly Father feedeth them. Are ye not much better than they?" Matthew 6:26. In what respect is man better than the birds? Why, is he of more value than they? It is not that man is better able to make a living than the birds are, for that idea would destroy the Saviour's lesson, which is one of trust in the Lord, and not in ourselves. No; but God who feeds the birds will much more feed us, who are of much greater value than they. Our minds at times dwell mostly on our perplexity and fears. We may forget the Lord's care and providence, not thinking of trusting, obeying and returning to Him in faith. Our insecurities may tell us this is not possible. That is not true; those who have been faithful unto the Lord before, believed, trusted and followed His will have tasted His Providence. He reminds us, "Call unto Me, and I will answer thee, and shew thee great and mighty things, which thou knowest not." Jeremiah 33:3

FIGHTING OUR BATTLES

As much as the Lord provides for us He also fights our battles. What a comfort to know that the Lord is fighting for us when we are attacked by the enemy. He is with us wherever we go in all our battles. We read, "We shall not fear them: for the LORD your God he shall fight for you." Deuteronomy 3:22. Yes, the Bible tells us not to be afraid, for the Lord our God Himself will fight for us.

As the Israelites were in their journey through the wilderness to the Promised Land, they were occasionally attacked by their enemies, but the Lord fought for them. Whenever they stopped trusting in Divine power and fought their battles alone, they lost. In like manner we, the spiritual Israelites, pass into the wilderness that is this world of sin. The Lord reminds us that He will fight for us. "Thus saith the LORD unto you, Be not afraid nor dismayed by reason of this great multitude; for the battle is not yours, but God's." 2 Chronicles 20:15. AMEN!

When you feel troubled from every direction of your life, all you have to do is to turn your focus to the Lord. Believe in the Lord. "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

He is faithful and will always be faithful to lead you through the valley of your wants and sorrows. With man, yes, it is impossible, but with God nothing is impossible. Remember, the battle is not yours, but the Lord's. Amen.

*Sherfield Bright
Kenya*



A Torn Bedsheet

We all know that God is perfect, He makes no mistakes. He is always on-time and He hears and answers all our prayers perfectly, in a manner that is best for our character development in preparation to live in heaven.

There are many Bible verses that state this, such as, “He is the Rock, His work is perfect.” Deuteronomy 32:4. The Lord never leaves His work unfinished or imperfect. He will carry through His plan of salvation to its perfect end.

Job describes Him as being “perfect in knowledge.” Job 37:16. Although sometimes we may not understand why He is permitting circumstances to occur as they are, in the end we will all acknowledge that He was all wise in His leading of our lives.

Through many trials, David learned that, “As for God, His way is perfect: the word of the LORD is tried: He is a buckler to all those that trust in Him.” Psalm 18:30. Yes, God’s way is always the best way. He is a wall of protection to those that trust in Him. Through all his trials prior to his coronation, he had learned to trust the Lord. He then added, that “God maketh my way perfect.” Psalm 18:32

The Lord also wants to make *you* perfect. When on this earth, Jesus mentioned this in the Sermon on the Mount. He clearly said that you are to *be*, “perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect.” Matthew 5:48. The fact that He used the word “*be*”, it implies right now. Not some future time.

From the beginning of time, the Lord has been encouraging His followers to be perfect. To Abram He said, “walk before Me, and be thou perfect.” Genesis 17:1. He not only told Abram to be perfect, but told him how it can be done—by walking with Him.

The Apostle Paul also encouraged the believers to be perfect. “Finally, brethren, farewell. Be perfect, be of good comfort, be of one mind, live in peace; and the God of love and peace shall be with you.” 2 Corinthians 13:11

So, what is perfection? I am sure we have all heard many sermons, and read many articles about perfection and the need to be perfect. I ask you, what would you answer if someone asked you, “are you perfect?” What does it mean to be perfect? The first thing that comes to mind is often, “without any blemish.” It makes me think of a pure white bedsheet, and thus with no blemishes it looks perfect. The most common definition that people think of is: free from any flaw or defect in condition or quality; faultless. When we get a perfect score on a test the score would be 100%—with no mistakes. It is excellence or complete, beyond practical or theoretical improvement. You cannot score more than 100% on the test.

Another definition I read from the internet was, “the condition, state, or quality of being free or, as free as possible, from all flaws or defects.” “Having all the required or desirable elements, qualities, or characteristics; as good as it is possible to be.” <https://www.lexico.com/en/definition/perfection>; <https://www.lexico.com/definition/perfect>

In these definitions we see the words, “as free as *possible* from all flaws or defects” and “as good as it is possible to be.” There is a bit of a provision here—“as possible.” How can we explain this, “as possible”? Let me take you back to the bedsheet. Perhaps, one day, it got a large tear in it. It is useless now, but rather than throwing it in the garbage, a person takes it and



carefully sews the tear. Now the bedsheet is useful again—as useful as it was before the tear. Is it perfect? It is as perfect as possible. The tear that has been sewn still bears a “scar” on the sheet but it is still as useful as before.

In our spiritual life, we all bear scars from our past history when we walked without Christ. We may be as the bedsheet that had a tear in it, but hopefully Jesus has sewn it up. We can still be perfectly useful, even with the scars—as perfect as possible.

Some have described perfection as sinlessness and basically left it at that. You are perfect when you no longer sin. Yes, a sinless person is perfect. But is a perfect person sinless? Think about it for a few minutes. Do you believe that you are not perfect unless you have reached the state of sinlessness, untouchable by Satan’s temptations any longer? Is perfection and sinlessness the absolute goal that we must reach to be accepted in Christ? I do agree, that this is the standard to be reached in order to enter heaven, but can we not be accepted in Christ today, as we are with the tears that may be in the sheet? Yes, as long as we allow Jesus to begin sewing them up and thus we can be useful again.

Ask yourself, have you ever gone to bed at night, reflected on your life for the day, and said, “wow, today I did no sin. No, not in thought, word, deed, or motive. I ate only good food. I helped my sick neighbour. I handed out some missionary tracts. I did not waste any time for things that do not pertain to heavenly righteousness. Every moment was used correctly. Every thought was of heaven and Jesus. I prayed without ceasing and had a constant connection with heaven all day.” If you have, I would like to hear from you and from your experiences.

Thus, if you cannot come to this conclusion at the end of the day, do you then admit that you are not sinless? Are you far from perfection? There are many sermons and Bible studies on the subject of perfection. I want to just add a little to the subject in this article. Picture yourself as that torn bedsheet that needs to be mended. Or perhaps in the process of being mended. Once you repent and your sins are forgiven, you can stand before God as a cleansed sinner.

In the Bible we read of some people who are said to have been perfect. One can ask, had they reached the state of sinlessness?

The first one mentioned was Noah. “Noah was a just man and perfect.” And why was he described as perfect? Because, he “walked with God.” Genesis 6:9. The only way that one can be considered perfect is by walking with God, not sporadically, but moment-by-moment. “Pray without ceasing.” 1 Thessalonians 5:17. Was Noah perfect every single day for the rest of his life? After the flood we find

that, “he drank of the wine, and was drunken; and he was uncovered within his tent.” Genesis 9:21. Was he forsaken of God? No, although the bedsheet had a tear in it, God sewed it up again.

We also have the example of Job. All that is written about him was good. “There was a man in the land of Uz, whose name was Job; and that man was perfect and upright, and one that feared God, and eschewed evil.” Job 1:1. The Lord described him as such to Satan in verse 8 and again in chapter 2:3. He must have been a remarkable man for God to describe him like this. But why did he have to go through all this suffering? Was he not perfect already? Was it just as an example for the unfallen worlds to witness? Was there a benefit for Job himself—although if we consider perfection as 100%, what more could Job gain from such an experience? He had already reached the final goal, had he not?

I think the Apostle Paul stated it well, “Blessed be God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies, and the God of all comfort; Who comforteth us in all our tribulation, that we may be able to comfort them which are in any trouble, by the comfort wherewith we ourselves are comforted of God.” 2 Corinthians 1:3–4. Job was very kind and gracious to the poor and needy. He sympathized with them well. Yet, perhaps God felt that, in order for him to do better service, he needed to go through a similar experience as the poor and the sick so that he could empathize with them better.

Never complain about your trials, as though you did something wrong. True, some difficulties and trials are a direct result of our misdeeds, but some are not. One thing is true, though, all trials are for character development. Praise God for the trials as did Job—the perfect man. “The LORD gave, and the LORD hath taken away; blessed be the name of the LORD.” Job 1:21

If someone is considered perfect, do they always remain that way? We just read about Noah and how he faltered after the flood; after God had declared him perfect. Also, we read of Lucifer. “Thou wast perfect in thy ways from the day that thou wast created, till iniquity was found in thee.” Ezekiel 28:15. He was created perfect, and remained such until he sinned.

That is the key. Sin mars perfection.

Although King Solomon was encouraged to serve the Lord with a perfect heart and he likely did so in his youth, but later it is stated that, “when Solomon was old, that his wives turned away his heart after other gods: and his heart was not perfect with the LORD his God, as was the heart of David his father.” 1 Kings 11:4. His sheet got terribly torn, but thankfully he allowed the Lord to repair it

and he repented in his later years.

Now let us read a little bit about King Asa. He was a king of Judah, and his “heart was perfect with the LORD.” 1 Kings 15:14. He did his best, but was it perfect? The Lord stated that he was, even though it was written that “the high places were not removed.” *–Ibid.* He tried and made many reforms, but he met with resistance from some people in his kingdom at times. He made a valiant effort.

Yet, what can we read about the end of the life of King Asa? “Herein thou hast done foolishly: therefore from henceforth thou shalt have wars. Then Asa was wroth with the seer, and put him in a prison house; for he was in a rage with him because of this thing. And Asa oppressed some of the people the same time.” 2 Chronicles 16:9–10. Although he was perfect in his early life, he did not remain so. His bedsheet was torn, but he did not want it repaired. He scorned the message of the prophet Hanani and threw him in prison. One foolish act led to another and Judah’s reformer became Judah’s tyrant and oppressor. Folly led to ingratitude, cruelty, and gross injustice.

Thus, if perfection is equated to sinlessness, when one is sinless, can they sin the next day? Being perfect and sinless today, does that mean that one has attained the ultimate goal? Reached the end of the road? Nothing more to learn or to improve upon? Beyond the reach of the tempter? They will never sin again? No, clearly not.

We may get 100% in one test but fail the next. We have more to learn. Having reached 100% on the first test does not mean we can walk out of school, believing we know it all and can begin to live the life of the career we have chosen. No, you have more difficult things to learn now also. If you fail, you repeat.

“God’s children are always being tested in the furnace of affliction. If they endure the first trial, it is not necessary for them to pass through a similar ordeal the second time; but if they fail, the trial is brought to them again and again, each time being still more trying and severe. Thus opportunity after opportunity is placed before them of gaining the victory and proving themselves true to God. But if they continue to manifest rebellion, God is compelled at last to remove His Spirit and light from them.” *–The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*, vol. 4, p. 1146. If you pass one spiritual test, be ready for another. There will be more difficult tests to come as you progress on your journey of sanctification. If you fail, then you must repeat.

Here is another king. “Amaziah was twenty and five years old when he began to reign, and he reigned twenty and nine years in Jerusalem. And his mother’s name was Jehoaddan of Jerusalem. And he did that which was right in

the sight of the LORD, but not with a perfect heart.” 2 Chronicles 25:1–2. Now, how can you do that which is “right in the sight of the Lord, but not with a perfect heart?” He worshipped the Lord, but not wholeheartedly. He made no effort to remove the high places. He apostatized later.

Then there was King Hezekiah on his death bed who prayed to the Lord stating, “I beseech thee, O LORD, remember now how I have walked before Thee in truth and with a perfect heart, and have done that which is good in Thy sight. And Hezekiah wept sore.” 2 Kings 20:3. He fully believed he was serving the Lord with a perfect heart. Was he? What happened when the Babylonians came to visit him after his recovery? The Lord revealed to him that he was not perfect. He was rather proud in showing off his wealth to these dignitaries. His sheet was torn and he did not notice it until Isaiah pointed it out to him.

Regarding King Hezekiah, let us read what is written in the book of Job regarding those who claim to be perfect. “If I justify myself, mine own mouth shall condemn me: if I say, I am perfect, it shall also prove me perverse. Though I were perfect, yet would I not know my soul: I would despise my life.” Job 9:20–21

Do you think you are perfect? Learn from the story of Hezekiah then. “He who bears with him a continual sense of the presence of Christ cannot indulge self-confidence or self-righteousness. None of the prophets or apostles made proud boasts of holiness. The nearer they came to perfection of character, the less worthy and righteous they viewed themselves. But those who have the least sense of the perfection of Jesus, those whose eyes are least directed to Him, are the ones who make the strongest claim to perfection.” *–Faith and Works*, p. 54

“From the time that I was 14 years old, if I knew what the will of God was, I was willing to do it. You never have heard me say I am sinless. Those that get sight of the loveliness and exalted character of Jesus Christ, who was holy and lifted up and His train fills the temple, will never say it. Yet we are to meet with those that will say such things more and more.” *–Selected Messages*, bk. 3, p. 354

When you are deemed perfect in the eyes of God (by God only), some of the following fruits will be manifested:

Peace: “Mark the perfect man, and behold the upright: for the end of that man is peace.” Psalm 37:37

Good works: “That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works.” 2 Timothy 3:17

Unity with our brethren and sisters in the faith: Jesus prayed that His followers would be, “made perfect in one.” John 17:23. And Paul mentions that the gifts of the

Spirit were given to the church so that they can reach the “unity of the faith.” They would have a “knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ.” Ephesians 4:13. They will have nothing bad to say about their brethren, and will not have any negative feelings or difficulties with them.

Helping our brothers and sisters. “Epaphras, who is one of you, a servant of Christ, saluteth you, always labouring fervently for you in prayers, that ye may stand perfect and complete in all the will of God.” Colossians 4:12

We could preach sermons and write articles on the next two points.

Not offend by words: “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.” James 3:2. James tells us that if we do not offend in words, we will not only be perfect, but be able to control every other aspect of our lives, “bridle the whole body.”

Your manner of speech can keep you out of heaven. “For by thy words thou shalt be justified, and by thy words thou shalt be condemned.” Matthew 12:37. Not just the words you speak, you will also be judged by the tone of your voice. Your words may be 100% true, but the tone unChristlike. Controlling the tongue is man’s most difficult challenge. A person who speaks only what is pure and honest and kind has attained to the goal of Christlikeness, according to James here. I would add, not only spoken words, but written words in emails and text messages are also included.

Forget the past: The final point I will bring out is where Apostle Paul writes, “Let us therefore, as many as be perfect, be thus minded: and if in any thing ye be otherwise minded, God shall reveal even this unto you.” Philippians 3:15. So, if we are to be perfect, we are to be “thus minded.” And what is “thus minded?” Let us read a few verses before. “This one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.” Philippians 3:12–13

Many people live in the past. They blame their past experiences and trials for their faults and failings today. They moan and groan about all the trials and challenges they are facing. They bring up unfair things that others did to them, misfortunes they faced in the past, and thus today their lives are miserable. Go forward—go with God. Forget the past. Yes, you bear scars from the past. Yes, your bedsheets may be torn, but God will sew it up and make you useful. He has a bright future for you, but you must let go of the past. Yes, you learn from the past, but do not let it define your future. Let God define and design your

future.

*We are not simply told to **be** perfect in the Bible; but, we are also given words of counsel in the Bible as to **how** to be perfect.*

Of utmost importance, make sure you regularly read your Bible. Guard selfishly the hour of worship. At the end of the day, reflect on how much time you took for worship. “All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works.” 2 Timothy 3:16–17. The reading of the Bible leads one to Christ and thus good fruits are produced and “the man of God may be perfect.”



Regarding the law we read: “For the law made nothing perfect.” Hebrews 7:19. “For the law having a shadow of good things to come, and not the very image of the things, can never with those sacrifices which they offered year by year continually make the comers thereunto perfect.” Hebrews 10:1. The keeping of the law will not make one perfect. The true keeping of the law is a fruit of one who has been made perfect in Christ. A true connection with Christ comes first—works will follow. Some have it backwards in thinking they are not accepted by Christ until they have proved themselves with good works.

Jesus came to the rich young ruler and said to him, “If thou wilt be perfect, go and sell that thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come and follow Me.” Matthew 19:21. Although I have heard it said many times that this was the requirement for the rich young ruler, it may not necessarily be required of us to sell all that we have. We have different requirements. But, is this true?

Jesus is not asking us to be homeless today, especially if we have a family, and children to raise. Remember, though, that all that we own is a gift of God and should be dedicated to His service as required. Faithful people have used their dwellings for church services. They have shown hospitality to those travelling from distances. They have been willing to part with their financial means gladly as they saw a need. All you have belongs to God. Use it wisely and take care of it. Thus, if your houses and lands belong to God, what kind of steward are you being? Are you keeping things in order as is honouring to God? Would He feel comfortable in His home that He has loaned to you? Are you willing to give back to Him when He asks? We are to sacrifice all material goods to the service of the Lord as He directs. What we should keep in mind is that we are only stewards of what we have been loaned, and we must keep everything in good condition, being willing to give it

up when the Lord asks.

And, yes, the Lord allows us to suffer in order to perfect our character. Jesus is our example and in His humanity, He was made “perfect through sufferings.” Hebrews 2:10. “But the God of all grace, who hath called us unto His eternal glory by Christ Jesus, after that ye have suffered a while, make you perfect, stablish, strengthen, settle you.” 1 Peter 5:10. We will be firmly established in the truth so that nothing can move us. The Apostle Paul knew this by experience. “He said unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee: for My strength is made perfect in weakness. Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me.” 2 Corinthians 12:9

Is perfection only when one produces fruit? In Isaiah we read, “For afore the harvest, when the bud is perfect, and



the sour grape is ripening in the flower, he shall both cut off the sprigs with pruning hooks, and take away and cut down the branches.” Isaiah 18:5. The bud is perfect, but pruning is required to produce excellent fruit. One who is new in the faith may appear perfect in their first love; however, they still will need the pruning of the Lord before

excellent mature fruit is produced.

“The disciple is not above his Master: but every one that is perfect shall be as his Master.” Luke 6:40. You are to do as Jesus did if you claim Him as your Master. Live as He did. It is only possible if He is living within you. “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*

I ask in closing, “was the thief on the cross perfect?” If perfection is a requirement for salvation, then was he perfect? He was being put to death for his crimes. The world had condemned him to death as an evil man. According to them, he was far from perfect. But if we go back to our original definition of perfection which was, being “as free as possible from all flaws and defects”, we can claim that, although he had sinned and his bedsheet was torn to shreds, Jesus sewed it up quickly and he had achieved the best perfection that was possible in his circumstance. He loudly proclaimed Jesus to be the Messiah in his dying moments on Calvary.

How long does it take for one to become perfect? Justification is immediate but sanctification a lifetime. Was the thief on the cross sanctified? He had a very short lifetime—perhaps a few hours—in order to be sanctified and

fit for heaven, but the Holy Spirit was working on his conscience prior to this point in time.

According to the definition, “Sanctification means habitual communion with God” (*—The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary, vol. 7, p. 908*), I have no doubt that the thief on the cross was habitually communing with God in his dying moments, until his last breath was taken.

“With untold love our God has loved us, and our love awakens toward Him as we comprehend something of the length and breadth and depth and height of this love that passeth knowledge. By the revelation of the attractive loveliness of Christ, by the knowledge of His love expressed to us while we were yet sinners, the stubborn heart is melted and subdued, and the sinner is transformed and becomes a child of heaven. God does not employ compulsory measures; love is the agent which He uses to expel sin from the heart. By it He changes pride into humility, and enmity and unbelief into love and faith. . . .

“Jesus said, Be perfect as your Father is perfect. If you are the children of God you are partakers of His nature, and you cannot but be like Him. . . . That life in you will produce the same character and manifest the same works as it did in Him. Thus you will be in harmony with every precept of His law; for ‘the law of the Lord is perfect, restoring the soul.’ Psalm 19:7, margin. Through love ‘the righteousness of the law’ will be ‘fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.’ Romans 8:4.” *—Thoughts from the Mount of Blessing, p. 76–78*

You may have scars from your past life. Your bedsheet may have been torn, but if you let Jesus sew it up, He will do so, tenderly and lovingly and you can be perfectly useful in His cause once more. You will then be ready to meet Him when He comes in the clouds of heaven. He will give you a new garment—His robe of righteousness, which has no tears or scars in it. The moment you allow Jesus to begin working in your life, you are perfected in Him. Go forward, do not look back. “Look up, and lift up your heads; for your redemption draweth nigh.” Luke 12:28. Amen.

Wendy Eaton



How Shall I Follow Him?



*How shall I follow Him I serve?
How shall I copy Him I love?
Nor from those blessed footsteps swerve
Which lead me to His seat above?*

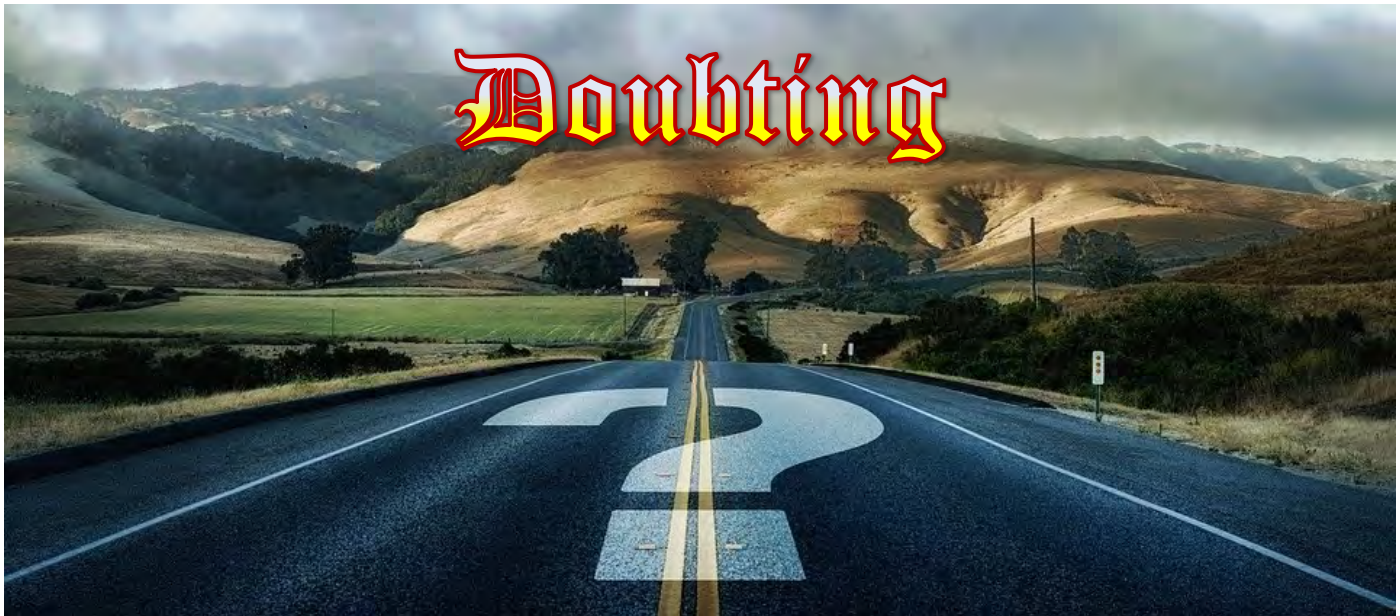
*Lord, should my path, thru suffering lie,
Forbid that I should e'er repine;
Still let me turn to Calvary,
Nor heed my grief, remembering Thine.*

*O, let me think how Thou didst leave
Untasted every pure delight,
To fast, to faint, to watch, to grieve,
The toilsome day, the homeless night.*



*To faint, to grieve, to die for me!
Thou camest not, Thyself to please;
And, dear though earthly comforts be,
Shall I not love Thee more than these?*

Josiah Conder (1824)



We are living in difficult times, scientifically and spiritually; things are not easy. Doubt and scepticism is reaching its climax. This philosophy is greatly influencing people to doubt even their own existence. There are many questions that cause people to doubt in this day and age, such as:

- Does God exist?
- Will this world end?
- Is resurrection real or is there life after death?
- Does God have a purpose for my life?
- The Bible, is it true?
- Does it pay to repent and become a real Christian?
- Are all denominations (churches) in error?
- Does God have only one true church?

The above questions may be answered differently by different people. The answers can be, yes, no, not sure, or maybe. When someone is not sure or maybe, this insinuates doubt. But, is doubting a sin?

Spiritual doubt has its beginnings with Lucifer. Lucifer's doubt is the opposite of belief or having faith. When someone is not fully clear on something, he may need faith to believe. When faith is absent, there is doubt and uncertainty.

"We are living in the time when Christ is about to close His work of mediation in our behalf. All should now closely examine their hearts to see whether they are in the faith. Instead of indulging doubt and unbelief, they should humble themselves before God, cultivate faith in His word and His work, and labor earnestly for the salvation of souls. It is no time now for caviling, dissension, and disunion. Where these exist, we may know that self is not dead. Those who have received the truth

into the heart will be so filled with joy and gratitude, and so absorbed in the desire that others may share its great blessings, that they will lose sight of petty doubts and evil surmisings." *—The Signs of the Times, September 27, 1883*

Discouragement is very common in our day, more than ever before. In the Bible, discouragement is called a disease; it robs us of our purpose, our sense of meaning, and we can only see our problems. We experience a loss of energy and strength. Discouragement does not bypass Christians. Christians are not immune to it. We live in this sinful world the same as everyone else does. We face the same events and challenges.

"While God has given ample evidence for faith, He will never remove all excuse for unbelief. All who look for hooks to hang their doubts upon will find them. And those who refuse to accept and obey God's word until every objection has been removed, and there is no longer an opportunity for doubt, will never come to the light." *—The Great Controversy, p. 527*

There are two very inspiring stories in the Bible about doubt and its consequences. To understand them better, we need to compare them, and then we shall have a clearer view of what doubting is, and when it is sinful to ask questions of uncertainty. The two stories are about the experience of Mary, the mother of Jesus, and Zacharias, the father of John the Baptist. John the Baptist was born a little bit before the birth of Jesus, according to the gospel of Luke.

Both of them had a child in a miraculous way.

To Mary it was declared "And the angel said unto her,

Fear not, Mary: for thou hast found favour with God. And, behold, thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and bring forth a son, and shalt call His name JESUS. He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest: and the Lord God shall give unto Him the throne of His father David: And He shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever; and of His kingdom there shall be no end. Then said Mary unto the angel, How shall this be, seeing I know not a man? And the angel answered and said unto her, The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee: therefore also that Holy Thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God. And, behold, thy cousin Elisabeth, she hath also conceived a son in her old age: and this is the sixth month with her, who was called barren. For with God nothing shall be impossible. And Mary said, Behold the handmaid of the Lord; be it unto me according to thy word. And the angel departed from her." Luke 1:30-38

Mary, was a virgin. How could she be pregnant and bear a child? How was this possible? Humanly speaking, it is impossible. If someone doubts the reality of this, they do have reasonable grounds to base their doubts on. Did Mary believe or doubt?

To Zacharias the Gabriel came and gave a clear message to him. "The angel said unto him, Fear not, Zacharias: for thy prayer is heard; and thy wife Elisabeth shall bear thee a son, and thou shalt call his name John. And thou shalt have joy and gladness; and many shall rejoice at his birth. For he shall be great in the sight of the Lord, and shall drink neither wine nor strong drink; and he shall be filled with the Holy Ghost, even from his mother's womb. And many of the children of Israel shall he turn to the Lord their God. And he shall go before Him in the spirit and power of Elias, to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the disobedient to the wisdom of the just; to make ready a people prepared for the Lord." Luke 1:13-17

To the message from Gabriel, Zacharias asked this question, "Whereby shall I know this? for I am an old man, and my wife well stricken in years?" (verse 18). This question showed his lack of faith. He was a priest, standing before God for the atonement of his people and judging according to God's law. But now he says "how can I be sure of this?" Gabriel immediately answers by saying, "I am Gabriel, that stand in the presence of God; and am sent to speak unto thee, and to shew thee these glad tidings. And, behold, thou shalt be dumb, and not able to speak, until the day that these things shall be performed, because thou believest not

my words, which shall be fulfilled in their season." (verses 19-20). And it was done. He became dumb, until the fulfillment of the promise, the birth of his son, John. If you were Zacharias would you doubt? Or would you believe without any doubt?

When comparing the two servants of God, we read that one asked, and she was answered. The other one asked, and he was disciplined for his unbelief.

Both of them wanted to be sure and to have more light regarding the words of Gabriel. While they both seemed to be asking the same thing, one was doubting and the other was asking for a better understanding.

Mary was simply asking, "How will this be, since I am virgin?" ESV. She wanted to understand.

Zacharias asked with doubt in his mind. "How can I be sure of this? My wife and I are very old." CEBA

What do we learn from these experiences? We believe that we are living in the end of time. Jesus is soon to come. Although we may not understand some of the experiences we are going through, we need to trust and not doubt. It is ok to ask in faith for understanding as did Mary, as opposed to asking with doubts in our mind as to the wisdom of the experiences we are going through. Do we believe that we are being led by God when we face difficult situations or do we doubt the Lord's leading and feel that we have been forsaken by God?

In the final days of this earth's history the conflict will be severe. The Apostle Peter warns us, "Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour." 1 Peter 5:8. His main target is the true children of God—the elect (Matthew 24:24). He tries, if possible, to deceive and mislead especially them, hoping to plunge them



into skepticism and criticism. He does this by trying to implant doubts into their minds especially in regards to the main pillars of Adventism; doctrines such as that of the sanctuary, the ministration of Jesus in the Most Holy Place, the prophecies of Daniel 8 and 9, and the manifestation of the gift of prophecy in the remnant church by the ministry of Ellen G. White.

In the Christian World, although there is only one Bible, there is much belief and doubt about key doctrines of faith. There are many different and conflicting beliefs which are based on tradition more than on Biblical truth. Thus, many doubt very clear truths such as that of the Sabbath and the true state of the dead.

Amongst Adventist believers there is also a crisis of true faith. We sadly see many independent movements, all believing slightly differently, or doubting some key doctrines, such as mentioned above.

SKEPTICISM AND UNBELIEF TODAY

Many people today, when they are given the plain truths of the Bible, doubt as did Zacharias and ask for clarification with a doubting spirit. Christian people often run to their church leaders to ask their opinion of these doctrines which seem so contrary to what they have been taught in their Sunday keeping churches.

There has been great attacks against the remnant church and the pure doctrines of the Bible. History repeats itself, and we see it happening still in these last days. Modern technology has greatly advanced, and some of the opposers of the truth have taken advantage of this. They introduce their poison in the media, the Internet in particular (YouTube, WhatsApp, Instagram, Facebook, etc.) to deceive and mislead souls, causing them to doubt the pure truth. There are many websites that bring forth suggestions and doubts regarding the fundamental truths of the Advent message, strongly attacking their doctrines and teachings, especially with reference to the Spirit of Prophecy manifested through the person of Ellen G. White, who was God's messenger.

Many people have been studied with and have come back to the church stating that they read this and that on the internet against the Adventists' key doctrines, and against Ellen G. White and thus they decide they do not want to study any longer.

Modern critics are not the first ones to do this work. The Spirit of Prophecy was already under attack in the last century. And who were the bitterest criticizers? Those who had once been strong defenders of the truth. "The most bitter opposers of truth today are found among

those who profess to be its defenders." *—Sketches from the Life of Paul*, p. 279. They knew the truth, but they were deceived by the enemy and were led to doubt the Adventist Message.

In the end of time we will see this happening again. Those who doubt and oppose the true believers will be their former brethren. Which side will you be on? To be on the right side, you must be in unity with your brethren today.

Many nominal Adventists no longer believe in the Spirit of Prophecy writings of Ellen G. White. If the enemy of souls could implant doubts in the minds of the people of God by leading them to disbelieve the Spirit of Prophecy, his triumph would be great. Sadly, we see that he has been somewhat successful in his deception. They have departed "Had Adventists, after the great disappointment in 1844, held fast their faith and followed on unitedly in the opening providence of God, receiving the message of the third angel and in the power of the Holy Spirit proclaiming it to the world, they would have seen the salvation of God, the Lord would have wrought mightily with their efforts, the work would have been completed, and Christ would have come ere this to receive His people to their reward. But in the period of doubt and uncertainty that followed the disappointment, many of the advent believers yielded their faith. . . . Thus the work was hindered, and the world was left in darkness. Had the whole Adventist body united upon the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus, how widely different would have been our history! *—Selected Messages*, bk. 1, p. 68

We read that Zacharias did not lose his way after his questioning with a doubtful spirit. Unfortunately, many today do question the truths and doctrines of Adventism with a spirit of doubt and end up overthrowing their faith completely. To doubt is dangerous.

"The angels of God in their messages to men represent time as very short. Thus it has always been presented to me. It is true that time has continued longer than we expected in the early days of this message. Our Saviour did not appear as soon as we hoped. But has the word of the Lord failed? Never! It should be remembered that the promises and threatenings of God are alike conditional." *—Ibid.*, p. 67

"And at what instant I shall speak concerning a nation, and concerning a kingdom, to pluck up, to build and to plant it, and to destroy it; . . . If it do evil in My sight, that it obey not my voice, then I will repent of the good,

wherewith I said I would benefit them.” (Jeremiah 18:7–10).

Some may question genuinely for further understanding as did Mary. They are gems and we have to go and find them. “Instead of questioning and caviling concerning that which they do not understand, let them give heed to the light which already shines upon them, and they will receive greater light. Let them do every duty which has been made plain to their understanding, and they will be enabled to understand and perform those of which they are now in doubt.” –*The Great Controversy*, p. 528

Satan has always been working to cause God’s people to doubt. We must choose to ask in faith if we do not understand. “Light and darkness, truth and error, are before us. We are free to choose. God will never remove all excuse for unbelief. . . . It is far easier to suggest doubts than to inspire faith. Because the natural heart is at enmity with God, a greater effort is required to believe than to doubt the word of the Most High. And Satan himself opposes everything that would strengthen faith.” –*The Signs of the Times*, June 8, 1882

“If rational beings really desire the truth, God will give them sufficient light to enable them to decide what is truth. If they have a heart to obey, they will see sufficient evidence to walk in the light. But if they in heart desire to evade the truth, He will not work a miracle to gratify their unbelief. He will never remove every chance or occasion to doubt. . . . There are those who walk amid perpetual doubts. They feed on doubts, enjoy doubts, talk doubts, and question everything that it is for their interest to believe. To those who thus trifle with the plain testimonies of God’s word, and who refuse to believe because it is inconvenient and unpopular to do so, the light will finally become darkness; truth will appear to the darkened understanding as error, and error will be accepted as truth. When thus shrouded in error, they will find it perfectly natural and convenient to believe what is false, and will become strong in their faith.” –*The Review and Herald*, January 5, 1886. It is very dangerous to doubt. One small question asked in doubt can lead to greater doubts.

To picture the glories of the heavenly paradise is beyond our comprehension. Our imaginations cannot conceive what heaven is really like. We only know that God’s promises are sure, and if He has promised these things, and by faith we accept them, then, if we remain faithful, we will one day receive them. We may not fully understand, but we must not doubt. Ask with faith

for understanding.

Many today try to speculate and philosophize regarding certain doctrinal points in the Spirit of Prophecy because they do not understand them. They do not wait patiently for the Lord to reveal the truth to them in His own appointed time. Thus they begin to doubt their inspiration. It is true that not everything can be understood, or will be understood to the fullest, either in the Spirit of Prophecy or in the Bible, and we had to accept that. “The secret things belong unto the LORD our God: but those things which are revealed belong unto us and to our children for ever.” Deuteronomy 29:29. There are many things which we will learn only in the hereafter. If we prayerfully study the word of God, the Holy Spirit will reveal to us the truth we need for our salvation, if we ask for understanding by faith. Those who are looking to criticize will always find some grounds for doubt. “There are many things apparently difficult or obscure, which God will make plain and simple to those who thus seek an understanding of them. But without the guidance of the Holy Spirit we shall be continually liable to wrest the Scriptures or to misinterpret them.

“There is much reading of the Bible that is without profit and in many cases a positive injury. When the word of God is opened without reverence and without prayer; when the thoughts and affections are not fixed upon God, or in harmony with His will, the mind is clouded with doubts; and in the very study of the Bible, skepticism strengthens. The enemy takes control of the thoughts, and he suggests interpretations that are not correct. Whenever men are not in word and deed seeking to be in harmony with God, then, however learned they may be, they are liable to err in their understanding of Scripture, and it is not safe to trust to their explanations. Those who look to the Scriptures to find discrepancies, have not spiritual insight. With distorted vision they will see many causes for doubt and unbelief in things that are really plain and simple.” –*Steps to Christ*, p. 110–111. These people look for discrepancies to give them reasons to doubt because they want to doubt. This is true for the Bible as well as for the Testimonies.



"I know your danger. If you lose confidence in the testimonies you will drift away from Bible truth. I have been fearful that many would take a questioning, doubting position, and in my distress for your souls I would warn you. How many will heed the warning?" –*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 5, p. 98

"When you find men questioning the testimonies, finding fault with them, and seeking to draw away the people from their influence, be assured that God is not at work through them. It is another spirit. Doubt and unbelief are cherished by those who do not walk circumspectly." –*Selected Messages*, bk. 1, p. 45

"My brethren, beware of the evil heart of unbelief. The word of God is plain and close in its restrictions; it interferes with your selfish indulgence; therefore you do not obey it. The testimonies of His Spirit call your attention to the Scriptures, point out your defects of character, and rebuke your sins; therefore you do not heed them. And to justify your carnal, ease-loving course you begin to doubt whether the testimonies are from God. If you would obey their teachings you would be assured of their divine origin. Remember, your unbelief does not affect their truthfulness. If they are from God they will stand. Those who seek to lessen the faith of God's people in these testimonies, which have been in the church for the last thirty-six years, are fighting against God. It is not the instrument whom you slight and insult, but God, who has spoken to you in these warnings and reproofs." –*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 5, p. 234–235

Zachariah was struck dumb for his unbelief but he repented. "The Spirit of the Lord will be in the instruction, and doubts existing in many minds will be swept away. The testimonies themselves will be the key that will explain the messages given, as scripture is explained by scripture." –*Selected Messages*, bk. 1, p. 42

OPTIMISM CAN FACE REAL OBSTACLES

Regarding the twelve spies that went to spy out the Promised Land we can read that they "came back with a mixed report. Oh, they all agree that the Land is magnificent. They bring back a cluster of grapes so huge that it must be suspended on a pole carried by two men. On the other hand, ten of the spies report that the Land cannot possibly be conquered. They claim that Canaan is populated by giants. The cities, they say, are so well fortified that the walls reach up to the heavens. The Israelites, hearing the report of



their leaders, dispatched as spies, are disheartened. They sulk in their tents. They refuse to enter the Land promised to them. They lose their nerve and begin to doubt God's leading. They no longer believe that God will assure their safe passage into the Promised Land.

"God reacts swiftly to the people's crisis of faith. God announces a new plan: The Children of Israel will wander forty years. Those who fail to trust God, an entire generation, will die in the wilderness. Only their children will enter the Land of Israel, redeeming the ancient promise. Some rabbinical commentators argue that Joshua and Caleb are blessed because they tell the truth about the Land, while the other spies lie. A closer reading of the Torah itself, though, suggests a different scenario. Neither Caleb nor Joshua ever denies the presence of gigantic enemies in the Land. Neither do they insist that the cities' fortifications can easily be breached or scaled. Instead, Joshua and Caleb insist that, whatever the challenges that lie ahead, they can be met successfully, with God's help. God, who has redeemed Israel from slavery with ten plagues and a parting of the Sea can surely also overcome the people of the Land and their city walls, no matter how tall." –*Optimism in the Face of Real Obstacles*, Rabbi Barri Block. Their doubt cost them the Promised Land.

"We shall have trials of faith, but they will only tend to increase our spiritual sinew and muscle; for we shall have to exercise faith, and put forth our trembling hand to lay hold upon a 'Thus saith the Lord.' But in this way we shall bring honor and glory to God. The doubts and fears against which we have been called to struggle are the precious trials of our faith, God's workmen that work out for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory. Again and again we must raise our eyes to Him who has been lifted up upon the cross. 'Look and live,' were the words that were echoed throughout the encampment of Israel when the brazen serpent was erected. This required an act of faith on the part of the suffering victims who had been bitten by the fiery serpents, but they were assured that if they did look, they should live. We also are to look and live." –*The Signs of the Times*, April 18, 1895

My prayer for you is that you to trust in Him through every challenge you face in life. The Lord does not mind if you ask for understanding as long as you ask in faith, not doubting His leading. He will never fail nor forsake His children. One day in heaven, you will thank Him for how He led you through your sojourn on this earth. Why not begin by thanking Him today? Amen.

Victor Shumbusho, D R Congo Union

Consecration; Trust



“When we are humble and contrite we stand where God can and will manifest Himself to us. He is well pleased when we urge past mercies and blessings as a reason why He should bestow on us greater blessings. He will more than fulfill the expectations of those who trust fully in Him. The Lord Jesus knows just what His children need, how much divine power we will appropriate for the blessing of humanity; and He bestows upon us all that we will employ in blessing others and ennobling our own souls.

“We must have less trust in what we ourselves can do, and more trust in what the Lord can do for and through us. You are not engaged in your own work; you are doing the work of God. Surrender your will and way to Him. Make not a single reserve, not a single compromise with self. Know what it is to be free in Christ.

“The mere hearing of sermons Sabbath after Sabbath, the reading of the Bible through and through, or the explanation of it verse by verse, will not benefit us or those who hear us, unless we bring the truths of the Bi-

ble into our individual experience. The understanding, the will, the affections, must be yielded to the control of the word of God. Then through the work of the Holy Spirit the precepts of the word will become the principles of the life.

“As you ask the Lord to help you, honor your Saviour by believing that you do receive His blessing. All power, all wisdom, are at our command. We have only to ask.

“Walk continually in the light of God. Meditate day and night upon His character. Then you will see His beauty and rejoice in His goodness. Your heart will glow with a sense of His love. You will be uplifted as if borne by everlasting arms. With the power and light that God imparts, you can comprehend more and accomplish more than you ever before deemed possible.” *—The Ministry of Healing*, p. 513–514

Ellen G. White

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HEALTH MATTERS:



SEEDS, The Life of the Plant—Chia

What is a seed? Simply said, the seed is the part of a seed-bearing plant that can grow into a new plant. The outer covering is only a container, inside the seed is an embryo. The outer covering is known as the seed coat, is the protective covering for the embryo. This embryo contains all the earliest forms of the various parts of the plant—roots, stem and leaves. Also contained inside the seed is endosperm, the food source for the growing embryo. When conditions are right, when the embryo senses enough oxygen, water, and minerals in the surrounding environment, it begins to eat the endosperm. At a certain stage of growth, the embryo bursts out of the seed. Roots, stems and leaves begin to grow. This process, known as germination, results in a seedling which then grows into a mature plant. In other words, like a human embryo, it is the beginning of life for the plant. The seed contains high concentrations of vitamins, minerals, proteins, essential oils and enzymes, all the nutrition that a plant needs in order to grow. Many seeds are edible and can provide the same rich source of nutrition that plants require for growth, for those who consume these seeds.

Seeds come in all different shapes, sizes, and colours. However, not all plant seeds are edible, and some are actually toxic and potentially lethal. Each seed has its own unique combination of nutrients, with certain seeds being a much higher source of nutrition than other seeds.

We often speak of seeds and nuts together as part of a healthy diet. What are the differences between the two? By definition, nuts are a type of seed, surrounded by a very hard shell, which does not naturally open to release the seed when the plant matures. Whereas, the outer covering of a seed, the seed coat, is easily removed. Therefore, all nuts are also classified as seeds. However, not all seeds are nuts.

In Genesis, we are given a description by God of His creation of plants containing seeds, with an explanation of how plant forms begin. A plant produces seeds, which then germinate to produce other plants after its own kind. “And God said, Let the earth bring forth grass, the herb yielding seed, and the fruit tree yielding fruit after his kind, whose seed is in itself, upon the earth: and it was so. And the earth brought forth grass, and herb yielding seed after its kind, and the tree yielding fruit, whose seed was in itself, after its kind: and God saw that it was good. And the evening and the morning were the third day.” Genesis 1:11–13. Later on in the chapter, God gave Adam the instruction that these plants were to form the basis of his diet. “And God said, Behold, I have given you every herb bearing seed, which is upon the face of the earth, and every tree, in the which is the fruit of a tree yielding seed; to you it shall be for meat.” (verse 29)

In order to obtain the most nutrition from seeds, they should be eaten raw. Once seeds are exposed to heat,

they can produce toxic substances; also the nutritional content decreases—the vitamins, minerals, proteins and essential oils are denatured; in other words the original qualities of the seed is lost. A seed is a living organism. When it is heated, such as when it is roasted, it is no longer a live food, but a dead food. No seeds can be heated without this loss of nutrition.

This month we will learn about one of the most healthy seeds that we can add to our diet.

CHIA SEEDS

Measuring just 2 mm in width, chia seeds are very tiny. They are flat and oval-shaped, containing a variety of colours ranging from black, white, grey and brown. *Salvia hispanica*, commonly known as chia, is a desert plant native to central and southern Mexico, and Central America. Historically, chia was a staple part of the diet of the Aztecs and Mayans. As well as using whole chia seeds, they were also ground into flour, mixed into drinks, and pressed for its oil. They also used it medicinally to treat sore throats, sore eyes, joint pain, and wounds. Because of its value as a food, chia was also part of their religious ceremonies.

The chia seed, although small, is densely packed with nutrition and provides lots of energy for its size. In the Mayan language, “chia” means strength, and the ancient warriors of that area attributed their stamina to the chia seed. It was easily carried in a pouch and would provide nutrition for days on end without having to stop to prepare food. Even now, long-distance runners swear by the benefits of chia. Chia seeds are referred to as a “superfood” because of its dense nutritional content compared to other foods. They are also nicknamed “super seeds” and the “food of endurance runners.” Superfoods like chia are named as such because they contain high amounts of three important nutrients—proteins, fibre, and Omega-3 fatty acids. Chia seeds are known as “functional foods” which are foods that pro-



vide health benefits beyond their nutritional value. When they are added to foods, they improve the quality of less nutritious foods. However, we should note that no single food should replace a healthy, balanced diet.

When the Spanish conquered these ancient civilizations, they banned chia because of its religious uses; however, it was still being used in some parts of Mexico. More recently, commercial crops began to be planted in Argentina. It is now grown in several Latin American countries; more recently, Australia has become the biggest producer of chia. In the 1980s, chia seeds became known for their use in Chia Pets, animal-shaped earthenware containers that grew grass “hair”. It has been only in the last 20 years or so that chia has again become popular as a food.

Chia seed’s usefulness as a food has grown since vegetarian and vegan diets became popular. In the search for plant-based proteins, seeds were found to be good animal-substitute sources of protein. Chia is very nutritionally dense for its small size, each seed containing all the vital nutrients, vitamins, minerals, antioxidants, good fats, and enzymes that a plant needs in order to grow. They also have a delicate seed coat that is easily digested which does not need to be removed before eating, unlike flaxseed, another popular seed.

Chia seeds have that rare quality in the plant world in that they contain all the nine essential amino acids that we need to obtain from our food, and thus is considered a complete protein, equal to animal sourced proteins. They are also the highest plant source of Omega-3 fatty acids.

Once ounce or two tablespoons of chia seeds contains: 138 calories; 4.7 grams protein; 8.7 grams fat; 5 grams ALA; 11.9 grams carbohydrates; 11 grams fibre; 14% of the Daily Value (DV) calcium; 12% DV iron; 23% DV magnesium; 20% DV of phosphorus; 12% DV zinc; 15% DV Vitamin B1 (thiamine); 16% DV Vitamin B3 (niacin). These are impressive numbers considering that all this nutrition is contained in just two tablespoons of seeds. A small amount of chia per day provides a nutritionally packed addition to your daily diet.

ALA or alpha-linolenic acid is a type of Omega-3 found in plants. Seed oils provide the richest source of Omega-3s. However, many seed oils also contain high levels of Omega-6 (alpha-linoleic acid). If the ratio of Omega-6 to Omega-3 is too high, it contributes to many health problems because Omega-6 is pro-inflammatory. Inflammation is necessary to fight infections and heal



wounds; however chronically elevated inflammation leads to many serious diseases such as heart disease, diabetes, arthritis, Alzheimer's, and various types of cancers. Omega-3s, on the other hand, are anti-inflammatory. A diet that has a balanced ratio of Omega-6 to Omega-3 helps reduce the inflammation in the body to healthy levels. Chia seeds, along with flaxseeds are the only seeds that contain more Omega-3 fatty acids than Omega-6 fatty acids. Chia seeds, especially, are a rich source of Omega-3. This helps to balance out the Omega-6:Omega-3 ratio in a diet to a value that is health protective.

Scientists hypothesize that an imbalance of Omega-6 to Omega-3 is one of the most damaging aspects of the Western diet, and the main culprit in the diet that increases Omega-6 levels is seed oils such as sunflower, canola, and safflower. Most seeds themselves contain more Omega-6 than Omega-3; however, the oil made from seeds have even higher concentrations of Omega-6 than the raw seeds.

Seed oils contain even more Omega-6 than the seed itself because the manufacturing process has concentrates the seed. These oils, which contain significant levels of Omega-6 fatty acids have only been manufactured for the last 100 years or so, greatly increasing the amount of Omega-6 in mankind's diet. A normal Western diet now contains a ratio of Omega-6:Omega-3 up to 16:1. A healthy balance of Omega-6:Omega-3 in a diet is a ratio of 4:1 or less. Chia seeds contain a Omega-6:Omega-3 ratio of 1:3, with 3 times as much Omega-3 than Omega 6. Some other seeds and seed oils such as sunflower, safflower, and corn can have a ratio of Omega-6:Omega-3 up to 70:1. Not only are seed oils unhealthy due to their levels of Omega-6, heating during the processing of seeds into oil produces toxins and free radicals,

which damage DNA and protein in the body.

Even if you do not use these seed oils in cooking, many processed foods contain these unhealthy oils as they are inexpensive to produce. Experts plainly state that seed oils are absolutely bad for you. They have proven to be one of the leading causes of heart disease, cancer, and other life-degrading conditions.

Omega-3 fatty acids are beneficial for heart health by lowering cholesterol, regulating heart rhythms and blood pressure, preventing blood clots and decreasing overall body inflammation. Omega-3s have also been found to be helpful in improving mental illnesses such as depression, schizophrenia, and bipolar disorder.

We do not digest fibre, but its presence in food is vital to our health. Chia seeds contain large amounts of fibre; in fact, 35% of the chia seed is fibre. Most of the fibre in chia seeds is in the form of soluble fibre. This is responsible for the gel-like texture of chia seeds when they are moistened. This type of fibre also develops a gel-like texture when it enters the body and mixes with water and body fluids. Chia works as a prebiotic, a special type of plant fibre; once the fibre reaches the intestine, it feeds the healthy bacteria of our gut and promotes its growth. A healthy colony of bacteria in our intestines contribute to a host of healthy benefits to our body, including the prevention of inflammatory conditions such as diabetes. Insoluble fibre also reduces the body's ability to absorb fat. It also lowers cholesterol and triglycerides, thus reducing the risk of heart disease and diabetes. Also, in aiding to slow down digestion, fibre prevents blood sugar spikes in the blood and promotes a sense of fullness, helpful in weight control. As the fibre moves through the digestive system, it acts as a cleaning agent, removing toxins and potential cancer-causing substances, preventing them from entering the body.

Chia seeds are an excellent source of antioxidants. For the plant, these antioxidants prevent the sensitive fats in chia seeds from becoming rancid. When humans consume chia seeds, the antioxidant properties are protective by neutralizing free radicals, which are damaging if they build up our body. The specific antioxidants in chia seeds all have protective effects on the heart and liver, they lower inflammation, as well as containing anti-cancer properties.

Chia seeds also help build strong bones. They are high in nutrients such as calcium, phosphorus, magnesium and protein. The Omega-3 in chia seeds also contributes to bone health by increasing bone mineral density.

CHIA SEED OIL

What about oil made from chia seeds? Chia seeds can be pressed into an oil that is very nutritious. Many skin care products contain chia oil as a potential anti-aging ingredient due to its high fatty acid content. Along with the topical application, chia oil can be used as a food to provide a healthier skin membrane, locking in moisture and preventing dry skin, protecting against UV rays, and improving the hydration of the skin. Chia oil applied to the hair is also able to lock moisture into the hair, reducing its dryness and bringing out its natural shine.



Chia seed oil is a healthy source of Omega-3 fatty acids, and is a better oil than other seed oils in its heart protective properties. However, in chia oil, all the fibre is removed, therefore chia seeds are overall healthier than the oil. Chia oil can be used to add to salads or other dishes, however, it is not good for cooking with, because of its low smoke point.

HOW TO ADD CHIA TO YOUR DIET

Chia seeds are typically eaten raw. You can buy bags of dry chia seeds in most grocery stores. They can be eaten whole or ground. Chia seeds can be sprinkled on salads, added to vegan yogurts, smoothies, or into oatmeal. They can also be used in baking, by adding it to bread, crackers, homemade granola bars, or muffins. They can be added to salad dressings and pasta sauces or as a thickener for soups. As long as the recipe calls for moisture, it will hold the seed in place in the finished product. Chia seeds are unique in that they can absorb up to 12 times their weight in liquid. When soaked or added to a dish that contains liquid or is wet, chia seeds will swell up, similar to tapioca balls, which give food and drinks containing chia a gel-like texture. Chia seeds do not have a strong flavour, so they can be used in a variety of foods and beverages without altering the taste. If you want to eat a spoonful of raw chia seeds, soak it first for 5 to 10 minutes, as it could potentially cause a choke if it swells up in your throat. Chia seeds can also be sprouted and placed in salads and sandwiches. Because of their consistency, chia seeds are often used in vegan cooking as a substitute for eggs. They have a long shelf life and will keep for several years when stored in a cool, dry place.

Eating too many chia seeds in a day may cause bloating or diarrhea. The recommended amount is 1 ½ tablespoons, twice a day. You can incorporate them into your diet in so many different ways. My favourite way to add chia seeds to my diet is making a chia pudding. Puddings made from chia are a popular food item. A chia pudding can be made by combining ¼ cup of chia seeds and 1 cup of either fruit juice or a plant-based milk, then mixing in fruit, nuts, or other toppings. The pudding is ready to eat once the seeds have swelled up and the mixture is no longer watery. I will prepare my chia pudding before I go to bed, so that it is ready to take to work with me in the morning. Chia pudding can be kept in the fridge for several days before consuming.



When deciding whether to add chia to your diet, consider these facts. Chia contains: 2.5 times more protein than beans; 3 times stronger antioxidant than blueberries; 3 times more iron than spinach; 6 times more calcium than milk; 7 times more Vitamin C than oranges, 8 times more Omega-3 than animal sources; 10 times more fibre than rice; 15 times more magnesium than broccoli.

“Some of our people conscientiously abstain from eating improper food, and at the same time neglect to eat the food that would supply the elements necessary for the proper sustenance of the body. Let us never bear testimony against health reform by failing to use wholesome, palatable foods in place of the harmful articles of diet that we have discarded. . . . A diet lacking in the proper elements of nutrition brings reproach upon the cause of health reform. We are mortal, and must supply ourselves with food that will give proper sustenance to the body.” –*Counsels on Diet and Foods*, p. 92

Next month we will continue our series on seeds.

Helen Marttinen



Called by God



Hudson Taylor was born almost 200 years ago in Britain. He had a Christian mother and father, but when he got a little older, he decided he did not want to be a Christian. That is until he turned 15 years old. He found a Christian missionary tract and after reading it he decided to come back to being a Christian.

When he was 17 years old he decided he wanted to be a missionary to China. First, though, he had to attend university. He studied medicine because working as a missionary in China he would need medical training. It was in the year 1852 that he began studying in London. He also dedicated himself to learn the Chinese language called Mandarin. Of course he also spent a lot of time praying and studying his Bible.

Before starting university, he had moved to a poor neighbourhood so that he could be a medical assistant with Robert Hardey while he studied. He could not afford to live in a rich area. It was there that he began preparing himself for a life of faith and service, devoting himself to helping the poor people and exercising faith that God would provide for his needs. He gave out many missionary flyers and preached and visited the poor people in his spare time.

During that time, he had little money, but he trusted God to provide for him. There are many books that you can find about the story of the life of Hudson Taylor and his missionary work in China. He spent 51 years in that country.

The following story is just two experiences Hudson Taylor made showing the challenges he faced as a medical student and how his faith in God was tested and strengthened.

It was midnight and Hudson Taylor was just about to retire for bed. His little room that he rents is in an old house right by the canal. The people throw all of their garbage into this canal so it smells terrible at times. Suddenly someone hammered on his room door. "Please

come quickly, my wife is dying. Pray for my wife with us."

Hudson jumped up and grabbed his coat and hat and set off with the stranger. The passageways they walked through were narrow and dark. Gloomy scowling people crossed their path now and then. As they walked he looked at the stranger from the side studying him. "Is it really true what he told me? Or does he want to rob me?" he wondered. Meanwhile in his pocket he folded his fingers around a silver coin—it was really his last coin.

"Why didn't you go to the priest?" asked Hudson.

"He would have asked us for money and I don't have any," the man answered. "We haven't had anything to eat for days. And we can't afford a doctor either."

"If I had two coins I could give them one," thought Hudson despairingly "but if I hand over my last coin, the only money I have, then I will starve tomorrow. No one could expect that of me." "God, what should I do? God, you can hear my prayer. Please help me," he prayed in his heart. They soon reached their destination.

Hudson Taylor had not expected to see what he did. The man lived with his family in a room without furniture. There were windows without curtains, empty boxes in one corner and in the other corner lay a meagre, pale woman on a sack of straw with a newly born baby next to her. A little candle was lying on the ground which gave off some light. There were older children sitting in the shadows staring at Hudson with big, hungry eyes. Hudson thought about his coin again and turned it over again and again in his pocket. "If I only had two coins. . . ." he thought. "Enough now!" he reminded himself. "It is my job to preach the gospel to these people." He began slowly: "You do not need to despair. We have a God in heaven who cares for us and loves us if we believe in Him and place our trust in Him. . . ."

Hudson barely managed to get those words out of his

mouth when he felt the conviction from the Holy Spirit reprimanding him. "You talk about trust in God and you are holding on to the coin in your pocket with all of your trust." He then remembered the word of Jesus: "Give to those who ask it of you." "Give it!" His conscience spoke louder to Him.

Hudson Taylor slowly pulled his hand out of his pocket and handed over his last coin to the family. Then he suddenly felt free inside, and was able to give the dying woman the best message possible: "Jesus loves you, believe in Him and confess your sins to Him. Then He will forgive you your sins. You will be saved by Him and live with Him in heaven forever."

Hours later Hudson arrived back home. He now had nothing. No money and only enough food for one meal. In his Bible he read, "He that hath pity upon the poor lendeth unto the LORD; and that which he hath given will He pay him again." Proverbs 19:17. Now he understood. The money which he had given to the poor family the day before was actually lent to God. Somehow it will be returned to him one day.

The next morning he sat at the table and ate his last bowl of porridge. He does not know what he will eat the next day, but he is not worried. He trusted the Lord to provide. After he finished eating, he heard a knock on the door. It was his landlady and she had a package for him that had been delivered by the mailman. "Who would send me a package?" he wondered. As Hudson opened the package he found a pair of gloves wrapped in silk paper. "Strange," he mumbled and carefully studied the interesting present.

Suddenly something fell to the ground. Hudson picked it up. It was a gold coin! There was no letter in the parcel and no sender on it. Hudson Taylor never found out who sent him this parcel with money. However he learned a great lesson from this experience. He learned the principle of God's "bank". He had loaned a silver coin to God and God had given him a gold coin in return. While studying, he could only save a little money so his daily rations were scant: black bread, apples and water.

That evening, Hudson Taylor put together his much-needed notebook so he could take notes while studying. The notebook was put together by cutting paper to the right size and then sewing the pages together. Hudson managed to prick his right hand with a needle while sewing.

The following day, at the university, Hudson took part in an autopsy on a man who died from a terrible fever.

Everyone worked with great care. A few hours later his right arm became swollen and he could not move it because of the pain. Did he catch something from the work at the university that day?

Hudson immediately went to the doctor and the diagnosis was dreadful. He had been infected by a deadly fever through the tiny little wound from the sewing needle on a finger on his right hand. "Go home as quickly as possible to make arrangements. You do not have long to live. Hurry!" is the only advice the doctor gave him.

"I will be healthy again," Hudson told the doctor, "God has given me this task of going as a missionary to China. I have already made that arrangement with God for my whole life." Hudson then returned home and fell to the ground unconscious.

It was his uncle who lived nearby who found him half dead in his room. He helped him and called the doctor to make an urgent house-call. However, the diagnosis was devastating. The doctor again repeated that Hudson had an illness which will lead to certain death. Only a miracle would help now. Hudson lay in his bed for days suffering from the fever before a miracle happened. The fever suddenly went away and in a couple of weeks he could stand up for a couple of hours. It is now that he discovered that two other medical students he was working with had also been infected but they had both died. "Why did I survive?" he wondered. It became clear to him once again. A big job working as a missionary was waiting in China for him.

When the doctor saw Hudson Taylor's happy face he was deeply moved and said, "I would give everything to have faith like you have. Such trust in a God which we cannot see and cannot hear—I have never seen anything like it."

"You can also have the faith. Everyone is allowed to believe in God. Everyone—no exceptions," answered Hudson calmly. The doctor, who had previously despised religion now was open to hear the word of God and Hudson Taylor preached a mighty sermon to this man.

I do not know what plan God has for your life, but He does have a plan for you. Every person has been called by God to do a special work for Him. Although Satan may try to stop the work, if God calls you, He will make sure the work will get done if you are willing. Satan cannot stop the work of God. Just pray and ask Him to guide you, and even if you face troubles while serving the Lord, do not give up.

"Call upon Me in the day of trouble: I will deliver thee, and thou shalt glorify Me." Psalm 50:15

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“Ye are the salt of the earth,” Jesus said. . . .

“Hearts that respond to the influence of the Holy Spirit are the channels through which God's blessing flows. Were those who serve God removed from the earth, and His Spirit withdrawn from among men, this world would be left to desolation and destruction, the fruit of Satan's dominion. Though the wicked know it not, they owe even the blessings of this life to the presence, in the world, of God's people whom they despise and oppress. But if Christians are such in name only, they are like the salt that has lost its savor. They have no influence for good in the world. Through their misrepresentation of God they are worse than unbelievers.” *–The Desire of Ages, p. 306*

